

## Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili meets with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz

By Liza Mchedlidze

Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili together with Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Olaf Scholz held a press conference discussing Georgia's role in helping Ukraine during the war against Russian aggression, Georgia's path to European Union, and the situation in the Caucasus region.

About Ukraine, Gharibashvili noted that Georgia is doing everything to help Ukraine, within the limits of its capabilities.

"We are in a very difficult situation, we are having a difficult time today not only in the region, but around the world, because after Russia's unjustified aggression and large-scale war, the situation in Ukraine has changed radically, including in our region, but as you mentioned, Georgia was the first to experience such war in 2008 and since then, you know that a significant part, 20% of our country's territory, is occupied. Russia continues to occupy our country, and since then we have had to avoid many provocations and manage the process related to modernization and many other problems.

I also want to say that we have given maximum support to Ukraine, we stand in solidarity with them, we have sent more than 1,000 tons of humanitarian cargo, as you mentioned, we have supported a lot of resolutions, statements of support for Ukraine, and we are doing the best that we can within our capacity", said the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili when asked about how far in the future he envisions Georgia joining the European Union, said that they have a specific plan on how to transform, modernize, develop and carry out reforms in the country.

As the Prime Minister explained, the European perspective and the European path are the choices of the Georgian people. He also mentioned a 'historic de-



cision' that had been reached, which gives the country a European perspective.

"Our government is consistent in the issue of joining our country to the European Union. The European perspective and the European way is the choice of our people. It is a path and a process that is irreversible and our government has accelerated it as much as possible in the last few years. I would like to remind you that during our government we signed the Association Agreement, and we have adopted a visa-free regime.

Now, at this historical time, a historic decision has been reached, which is related to giving a European perspective.

As for the question of how soon we envision joining, of course, it does not depend on desire, it is a process that we all follow with maximum responsibility. We understand that it is impossible to speed it up, there are certain criteria that we have to fulfill. It is necessary to prepare our country for the day when the country becomes a member of the European Union.

We have a specific plan on how to transform, modernize, develop and carry out

reforms in the country. This is related to the implementation of 12 recommendations, which will allow us to receive the status of a European candidate. We will do our best to achieve this as soon as possible", said the Prime Minister.

Irakli Gharibashvili was also asked about the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and he said that the Georgian government is observing the events unfolding in neighboring countries with great concern, expressing hope that the parties will soon return to the path of a dialogue:

"We are watching the events unfolding in our neighborhood with great concern. Armenia and Azerbaijan are our friendly states, and what is happening in these countries is unacceptable to us, and we observe these events with great concern. I also want to tell you that we had a successful mediation between the two states when with my personal involvement, we were able to release 15 prisoners of war from Azerbaijan, and in return, Armenia handed over very important maps related to mined areas. I

want to say that, in general, all the actions that will change the security environment and make it worse should be the excuse and reason for our common concern, therefore, I hope that the parties will soon return to the path of dialogue, sit down at the table and this conflict will end soon," Irakli said. Gharibashvili.

As for the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, when asked about what steps will Germany take to support Georgia for integration into the European Union, he said that 'The European Union is doing everything to support Georgia in fulfilling the criteria necessary for membership'. According to him, in addition to supporting legal and political measures, Germany will also help Georgia's economy.

"First of all, political support is important. The European Union is doing everything to support Georgia in fulfilling the criteria necessary for membership. This is the central view of everyone and ultimately it is the job of the candidate countries to fulfill these criteria, but from us, Georgia will have all the support to implement the legal and political measures. In addition, we are talking about the development of economic development prospects, that's why we have excellent cooperation in the field of development policy, this can be expanded, there are many other areas for future development, this is the field of energy, and that's what we were talking about today," said Olaf Scholz.

As Scholz noted, Germany will help Georgia on its way to Europe.

"In the Council of the European Union, we agreed to give Georgia the perspective of the European Union - the recommendations of the European Commission are important in this way. It is known that this requires a joint, national effort of all political forces".

Olaf Scholz also discussed Russia's aggression and Germany's military, political and humanitarian support towards Ukraine:

"Russia's aggression against Ukraine is the main event of the year. Germany supports Ukraine and helps it in military, political, and humanitarian frameworks. It is good that Georgia supported the UN resolution that condemned Russia's aggression."

By Liza Mchedlidze

## Parliament of Georgia chairman signs so-called wiretapping law, vetoed by the president

According to Shalva Papuashvili, the chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, he signed the law on secret investigative activities, which the president vetoed.

According to Papuashvili, the reason for the "political veto" of the president was that he heard criticism "from some groups" about the topic of the law and the involvement of the parties.

"Today I signed the law on making changes to the Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia, which refers to secret investigative actions. As you know, the President used a veto regarding this law on June 23 of this year, which she called a political veto, thus emphasizing that she had no legal comments regarding this law. However, she considered its adoption politically inadvisable, as she heard criticism from some groups about the pace of the review process of this law and the involvement of the interested parties," said Shalva Papuashvili.

According to Papuashvili, after the



President's address, the Venice Commission published an opinion on August 26, where, according to Papuashvili, it could not establish the law's contradiction with any European or international standards related to human rights.

He said the Venice Commission "based on interviews with individual actors" reiterated arguments about pace and stakeholder engagement.

According to Papuashvili, there was an attempt to form such a perception toward this law. However, according to him, the draft law was initiated in April 2022, and there was no request for its consideration in an accelerated manner, therefore its consideration was conducted in a standard manner.

Papuashvili stated that the review process was extended by 3 weeks at the

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8299; Euro - 2.8327; GBP - 3.2708; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.7272; Swiss Franc - 2.9447

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request of international partners, and the parliament adopted the law in 2 months after its initiation, in the third reading, and in 5 months, taking into account the overcoming of the veto, which, according to Papuashvili, is “everything but speed”.

According to him, all interested parties were involved in the discussion of the draft law, as well as in overcoming its veto: state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international actors. The Chairman of the Parliament states that “everyone had the opportunity and enough time to submit substantive remarks regarding the non-compliance of

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this project with any standard of European or international law”.

The Speaker of the Parliament declares that the draft law fully complies with international legal standards and the practice of the European Court of Human Rights.

As for the expediency of adopting the law, according to Papuashvili, the question of the expediency of adopting the law is fully within the competence of the Parliament of Georgia, and the Parliament

has fully studied the issues related to the draft law for 5 months and confirmed the decision on September 6.

According to Papuashvili, there is no legal or expediency argument that would prevent the implementation of this law, and therefore I signed this law.

“The question of the appropriateness of this or that law is fully within the competence of the Parliament of Georgia. The Parliament deliberated on this issue for a total of 5 months and finally confirmed

its decision on September 6, including the feasibility of adopting the law.

Therefore, there is no legal or expediency argument that would prevent the implementation of this law, and therefore I signed this law,” said Shalva Papuashvili.

The Parliament of Georgia overcame the President’s veto on the wiretapping law on September 6 and adopted it in its original version.

## Signing ceremony



**D**evelopment of Intelligent Traffic System and Transit Corridors Gets Launched in Tbilisi with the Support of German Government.

Loan and Grant Agreements for the Sustainable Urban Mobility Project were signed by and between Kreditanstalt fuer Wiederaufbau (KfW) on behalf of German Government and the Ministry of Finance of Georgia.

Signatories to the Agreements were H.E. Lasha Khutsishvili, Minister of Finance of Georgia and Birgit Holderied-Kress, KfW South Caucasus Regional Office Director. The Signing Ceremony was attended by H.E. Peter Fischer, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Georgia.

Agreement envisages allocation of 47 million Euros by KfW with concessional terms and conditions, along with a grant

financing of 1.5 million Euros.

The project aims to finance the development of a municipal infrastructure of urban transportation. Namely, an intelligent transport system and transit corridors will be developed in Tbilisi.

These interventions will contribute to the increased safety on the roads, traffic congestion relief and improvement of environmental conditions in the capital city of the country.

Project will be implemented by the Municipality of Tbilisi through its legal entity of public law (LEPL) – Municipal Transport and Urban Development Agency of Tbilisi.

Respectively, Separate Agreement was signed by and between the KfW and Tbilisi Municipality. Signatories were Andria Basilia, Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi and Birgit Holderied-Kress, KfW South Caucasus Regional Office Director.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Mdinardze: Call from McCain Institute director to open a second front in Georgia is disturbing

Mamuka Mdinardze has responded to the letter of the MPs, who left “Georgian Dream”, regarding the interview of Evelyn Farkas, an executive director of the McCain Institute with “Radio Tavisupleba”:

### Weather

Thursday, September 15

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 28°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 15°C

Friday, September 16

Day Clear  
High: 30°C

Night Clear  
Low: 16°C



“The direct call from the executive director of the McCain Institute to open a second front in Georgia is really disturbing. When we talk about the fact that this is a threat to Georgia, someone may think, and there may be a sign of objectivity in this, that all this can help Ukraine against Russia. But what will happen to Georgia in this case, these people don’t think about it”.

“It is understandable that some people, including the person who made this statement, do

not think about it, but the fact that the citizens of Georgia, the Georgian opposition forces, do not think about it, confirm all this, do not criticize and do not isolate themselves, this is particularly disturbing.

So what if Georgia gets involved in the war and receives a blow and military actions from Russia - then what does it mean? What will be the result for Georgia, should someone think about it? Who wants to separate within the country and say that no, we separate from this position? When the basis of this position is not in Georgia, some representatives of our partner country or some representatives of the country of Ukraine will take up such calls”, Mdinardze said at the briefing.

According to the deputies’ as-

essment, Farkas openly called on the Georgian authorities to impose sanctions on Russia, “which the American ambassador, Kelly Degan, still does not dare to say openly.”

### Ministry of Defense Budget to increase by 80 million GEL

With the changes planned in the current year’s budget, 80 million GEL is added to the Ministry of Defense.

According to the project of amendments to be introduced in the 2022 state budget, the allocations of the Ministry of Defense increase by 80.0 million GEL and are determined in the amount of 1,082.4 million GEL.

As the government explains,

the increase is mainly related to the development of defense capabilities and the smooth financing of logistics costs.

The government has already submitted the project of changes in the 2022 state budget to the parliament. The Bureau of the Parliament approved the schedule for considering the budget changes, according to which all parliamentary committees and factions will consider the draft budget.

The process of committee discussions will start on September 15. The Finance and Budget Committee of the Parliament will hold a summary session on September 28, and the amendments will be submitted for approval during the session week of October 3.

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