

Ned Price Says 'People's Power' Initiated Draft Law Threatens Georgia's Euro-Atlantic Integration

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

A group of deputies who left the 'Georgian Dream' initiated a bill in the parliament "on the transparency of foreign influence" according to which, the sources of income of politicians, NGOs and media should be transparent to the public.

Ned Price, the spokesperson of the United States State Department responded and said that they are deeply concerned about the bill submitted to the Parliament of Georgia.

As Price noted at the briefing, this bill may affect freedom of speech and democracy in Georgia. According to him, Washington has already expressed its concern on the mentioned issue to the Georgian side.

The State Department sees the similarity of the Georgian bill with the law on foreign agents of Russia and Hungary. Price stated that such a law will create a potential threat to Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration. According to his statement, it is false that this bill of "People's Power" is based on American laws.

"We are seriously concerned. We know about the draft law in the Georgian parliament. We are deeply concerned about the



consequences [the draft law] might bring for freedom of speech and democracy in Georgia. We have already reported our indignation to the authorities of the Georgian side. The proposed law

will force the independent citizens of Georgia, those citizens who yearn for a better future, to remain silent.

We believe that such a law can create a potential threat to

Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration. As for the comparison with our laws, this comparison is false, including FARA's statements that the Georgian bill is based on FARA, these state-

ments are false. In fact, this bill is based on similar Russian and Hungarian bills, not on any other American bill," said Ned Price.

Irakli Kobakhidze Thanks Hungarian MEP For Not Supporting Adopted Resolution on Saakashvili by European Parliament

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Irakli Kobakhidze, chairman of the Georgian Dream, evaluated the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on February 15, calling on the government to transfer Mikheil Saakashvili abroad for treatment as 'absurd' and adding that it has no value.

According to Kobakhidze, it seems that the Hungarian MEPs are not, in his opinion, subject to common coordination against Georgia, because they did not support the resolution about Saakashvili. He called Hungary's position 'healthy':

"In this case, Hungary had a healthy position. Which, of course, is very welcome and we would like to thank each and every MEP.

Second, it seems that the Hungarian MEPs are not subject to the common coordination that is against our country, against the key interests of our state," said Irakli Kobakhidze.

Irakli Kobakhidze evaluated the resolution as an attack on the national interests of Georgia by MEPs.

"Absurd records cannot have any value, and I will say once again that such a degree of absurdity would make the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union envious. It is simply incredible how absurd the resolutions are that the European Parliament adopts, this is the third time, and this third time is even more absurd than its previous two options.

Therefore, the absurd resolution cannot have any value for us. Especially since neither the first nor the second resolution was shared with either the European Commission or the European Council," said Kobakhidze.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Nika Gvaramia's Friends Start 'Nika Gvaramia Freedom Movement'



A movement was started for the freedom of imprisoned Nika Gvaramia, the founder of Mtavari Arkhi TV Company. The members of the movement made statements at the Rustavi prison.

As one of the founders of the movement, Bachana Shengelia,

explains, they plan to release Nika Gvaramia by increasing pressure on all branches of the government, in close coordination with strategic partners and friends outside the country.

"Friends of Nika Gvaramia

tion with international partners," said Bachana Shengelia.

According to movement members, the European future of the country is threatened by the imprisonment of the General Director of Mtavari Arkhi.



Irakli Garibashvili Meets Minister of Internal Affairs of Kingdom of Spain

Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili met with Minister of Internal Affairs of the Kingdom of Spain Fernando

Grande-Marlaska.

According to the information of the government administration, the conversation touched on the fruitful cooperation between Georgia and the Kingdom of Spain in various directions. The friendly and partnership relations of the two countries and the high level of political dialogue between the countries were emphasized.

"He noted that the Ministries of Internal Affairs of Georgia and the Kingdom of Spain cooperate fruitfully and this cooperation is based on international agreements, partnership and prin-

ciples of mutual trust.

The conversation also touched on the progress achieved by Georgia on the path of European integration and the importance of the report published by the European Commission on the compatibility of the national legal base of Georgia with the legislation of the European Union. The Prime Minister thanked the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Kingdom of Spain for his steadfast support of Georgia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and European integration," the released information reads.

EU and UNDP select six local projects improving governance, policies, and services in Georgia's regions

The European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG), have chosen six municipalities across



Georgia to implement local projects focused on urban renewal, maintenance and development of public spaces, protection of historical and cultural heritage, preschool education, and quality public services.

The jury selected the six best local projects out of 52 ideas sub-

mitted by 22 municipalities. Each winner will receive funding between •4,500 and •6,000. The total value of the grant programme is •30,800.

In Tskaltubo Municipality (Imereti region), a modern recreational venue at Niko Lortkipanidze Museum in Chune village, with free WIFI access, will be organised.

In Zestaponi Municipality (Imereti region), four kindergartens will be equipped with a play-and-learn inventory to assist children in learning and physical activities.

In Lagodekhi Municipality (Kakheti region), a multifunctional space will be created and equipped at the library of the newly renovated Lagodekhi Museum, serving as a venue for educational activities, film screening and youth meetings.

In Telavi Municipality (Kakheti region), 96 staff in 32 kindergartens will be trained and certified in first aid services. Two kindergartens will receive additional support to equip doctors' offices at their premises.

In Oni Municipality (Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti re-

gion), an open air cinema at one of Oni's newly renovated plazas will provide young people with a comfortable space for film screenings, educational work and discussion club activities.

In Tsageri Municipality (Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo

Svaneti region), the e-document project will support the digital transformation of the municipal preschool education system. Electronic tools will be introduced for registering children with kindergartens and training teachers.

The initiative is supported by the EU-funded programme EU for Integrated Territorial Development (EU4ITD), promoting balanced territorial development and improved living standards in Georgia's regions.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Friday, February 17

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 3°C

Night Mostly Cloud Low: -3°C

Saturday, February 18

Day Partly Cloudy High: 7°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: -1°C

published by

The Messenger

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The English - Speaking Union

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Invites 16-20 year old young speakers to take part in the

Public Speaking Competition

The theme of the competition is "Relations between nations are too important to be left to governments alone". Speakers may interpret this theme in any way they see fit, but they should not use the theme as their title. Each speaker will be allocated 5 minutes. The competition will be held in three rounds. The first round March 8, 11, 13 at the English Language Centre "British Corner". The date and theme of the second round will be announced later.

The competition is sponsored by the Bank of Georgia.

ESU-Georgia will send the lucky winner to London to take part in the final and organize 5 day stay in England.

The deadline for registration is March 6

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On the occasion of the National Day-The Emperor's Birthday, Ambassador of Japan H.E. Mr. Imamura Akira and Mrs. Imamura Miyuki held a Reception on February 15.











