

President Salome Zourabichvili Meets with US Senators in Orbeliani Palace

By Liza Mchedlidze

President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili met with US Senators, Jeanne Shahin and Dick Durbin, according to the information released by the President's Administration.

According to the administration, among the discussed issues were Georgia's European integration, the war in Ukraine and the security environment created in the Black Sea region.

The American senators stated at the meeting held in the Orbeliani palace that they appreciate the role and position of the Georgian president in the direction of European integration, to which the president noted that she expresses the will and say of the Georgian people regarding the country's European integration.

According to the position of the president, the Georgian people deserve the status of a candidate for the European Union, because she has been serving European values for 30 years.

The President Zourabichvili said that a strategic decision should be made regarding the granting of the EU membership candidate status to Georgia, and Georgia should not be refused a second time.

The conversation touched on the war in Ukraine, the security environment in the region and the importance of the Black Sea



security issue.

It was noted that the issue of

opening a second front in Georgia is only organized by Russia,

which not only carried out aggression on Georgia in August

2008, but has been doing so for the second century.

Georgian Dream to Support Bill by People's Power, Mamuka Mdinardze Confirms

By Liza Mchedlidze

Mamuka Mdinardze, chairman of the Georgian Dream party said at the briefing held after the majority meeting in Parliament that the ruling party will support the law "On Transparency

of Foreign Influences" initiated by People's Power deputies who formally left the party.

Mdinardze told reporters that this draft law is not similar to the US and Russian laws, adding that everyone who says otherwise is 'lying'.

"On behalf of the Georgian Dream faction, I can say that we have agreed on the principles and will support the bill, of course, the details will continue to be discussed. If we are talking about the principles, we must not forget that there were a thousand speculations in relation to dif-

ferent countries, including the legislation of the occupier country, and I can say that whoever says that this is analogous to Russian law, they are simply lying.

It is not similar to the American legislation either, due to the fact that in both cases there are many restrictions, and if someone promises to bring an analogy to these restrictions in the draft presented by the "People's Power", they will not be able to do so, because no restrictions on the People's Power have been written in the bill," said Mdinardze.

According to him, there are restrictions in the Russian and American law, but there are no such restrictions in the People Power bill.

"There are different restrictions in Russia, there are other restrictions in the United States of America. There are very strict norms, common in both cases may be that there is criminal liability for non-fulfillment of certain obligations - people are simply arrested and so on, not to mention the right to audit entry.

Also, in the USA, for example, one of the points is that the Prosecutor General can reduce, or increase, or exempt or on the contrary limit the deadlines for submission of declarations, etc.

There is no similar or even similar limitation in the bill presented by the people's power," said Mdinardze.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

U.S. Embassy in Georgia Says Kremlin Targeting Civil Society



The draft law 'Agent of foreign influence' initiated by People's Power was registered at the session of the Parliament's Bureau

on February 20, 2023 and handed over to the Legal Committee for consideration.

American Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan met with civil sector representatives. After the meeting, the American

Embassy issued a statement saying that without a strong civil society, democracy has no hope of success.

"It is no coincidence that civil

society in Georgia is one of the Kremlin's targets. Undoubtedly, a strong democracy brings prosperity and security. But without a strong civil society, democracy has no hope of success.

The United States will continue to support and work with Georgian civil society to strengthen Georgian institutions. "Georgia must continue its democratic reforms to achieve the goal of a more secure and prosperous European future - this is what the citizens of Georgia want and what they deserve," the statement reads.

President Zourabichvili Does Not Support 'Foreign Influence' Bill

The President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili has issued a statement regarding the "Agent of Foreign Influence bill".

"It is at the time when the initial evaluation of the implementation of the 12 recommendations of the European Commission is being prepared, when the approach of February 24, for all three countries of the associated trio, makes the issue of the European future more and more urgent, it is at this time that one of

the political groups chooses to initiate a law, which in its content It brings us closer to the vicious model of Russia, not Europe.

And this happens at a time when a delegation of American senators has arrived in the country! We can't really blame all this on chance. A force has been developed that, instead of strengthening Georgia's European path, considers another path as Georgian interest.

The President of Georgia cannot support such legislation and the prosecution of new agents," the President wrote.



High gas prices and inflation dampen growth in EBRD regions



High gas prices and persistent inflation continue to weigh on the economic outlook, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) says in an update to its

Regional Economic Prospects forecasts.

Output in the Bank's regions, which stretch across three continents from North Africa to Central Asia and includes the countries of the Eastern Partnership, is now expected to grow by 2.1 per cent in 2023, down from the 3.0 percent predicted in its last report in September. Growth forecasts have been adjusted downwards in more than half of the 36 economies in which

the EBRD works, with very few upward revisions.

Among the individual EBRD economies and regions, the Bank forecasts a rise in Ukraine's GDP of 1 per cent this year (down from the 8 per cent forecast last September). This would amount to a stabilisation of real output at around 70 per cent of its 2021 level. The Bank's fore-

cast for 2024 is for 3 per cent growth.

Output in eastern Europe and the Caucasus (excluding Ukraine) exceeded expectations in 2022, driven by high growth in Armenia and Georgia. Growth is, however, expected to slow to 2.7 per cent in 2023 before accelerating moderately to 3.6 per cent in 2024 amid the waning

impact of extraordinary factors related to the rerouting of trade around Russia and the inflow of capital and skilled migrants, the EBRD says.

A more comprehensive Regional Economics Prospects report will be issued in May.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Tuesday, February 21

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 6°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 1°C

Wednesday, February 22

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 10°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 3°C

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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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