

Pawel Herczynski Meets with Chairman of Parliament of Georgia Shalva Papuashvili

By Liza Mchedlidze

Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia Pawel Herczynski and the ambassadors of the member states of the European Union met with the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia Shalva Papuashvili. The chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Nikoloz Samkharadze, also attended the meeting.

After the meeting, the ambassador of the European Union, Pawel Herczynski told reporters that the discussion about the draft law on 'agents of foreign influence' was not easy and EU representatives expressed their concerns over the matter.

According to him, the representatives of the European Union in Georgia and the ambassadors will closely observe the process, how it will develop around this draft law.

"At this moment we finished a very important meeting. I was accompanied by all the ambassadors of EU member states who are located in Tbilisi. We were invited by the Speaker of the Parliament to exchange views on the initiative on "foreign agents"..."

We had a very frank, open exchange of views with the Chairman of Parliament of Georgia and the two Chairmen of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament, going deep into the details.



Concern was expressed not only by me, but also by the ambassadors who are in Georgia, we had a very open exchange of ideas, we discussed the details - it was

not an easy discussion. We said that this initiative is not compatible with the values of the European Union, and we reiterated that this initiative is in contradic-

tion with at least two points of the recommendations of the European Commission. We have great hope that this initiative will not be turned into law," he said.

Irakli Gharibashvili Meets with Special Representative of NATO Secretary General for Women, Peace and Security Irene Fellin

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili met with the Special

Representative of the NATO Secretary General for Women, Peace and Security Irene Fellin.

At the meeting held in the government

administration, the conversation touched on NATO's open door policy and the process of Georgia's integration into the North Atlantic Alliance. It was noted that

aspirant Georgia has always been one of the most reliable and capable partners of the Alliance and made the greatest contribution to the common Euro-Atlantic security.

As the Prime Minister noted, Georgia acts as an ally in many ways, and the decision of the allies to adopt support measures for Georgia is welcome as it will help to further strengthen Georgia's defense capabilities.

They discussed the security environment and challenges in the region and the world. The important role of Georgia in strengthening the security of the Black Sea region was emphasized.

Among the discussed issues was the second national strategy for the protection of human rights, which was approved by the Georgian government in 2022 and covers the years 2022-2030. It was noted that the strategy has a significant focus on gender equality and provides for the continuous improvement of equality and anti-discrimination legislation.

The conversation also touched on the "2022-2024 Georgian National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security" and the "2022-2024 Action Plan for Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and Protecting Victims." It was noted that both documents include specific actions and aim to promote gender equality in a number of areas.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

President's Representative not Invited to National Security Council

The administration of the President has released a statement expressing concern that the representative of President Salome Zourabichvili was not invited to attend the meeting of the National Security Council held on February 28, 2023.

"Discussed issues, which include important world and regional security trends, including, 'war actions in Ukraine', chal-

lenges facing Georgia, ongoing processes in the occupied territories, or the review of the threat assessment document, in all cases, required the presence of the President's representative at the Council.

It should be noted that the President has repeatedly raised the issue of convening the National Security Council. She also emphasized, in this format, the need to study the challenges of the entry of Russian citizens into Georgia, which did not lead to a response.

Given the challenges facing the country, it is hard to understand leaving a representative of the country's supreme commander out of these discussions,"

the statement issued by the President's administration reads.

Voting for 'Agents of Foreign Influence' is Damaging for Georgia's Euro-Atlantic Future, Kelly Degnan Says

US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan spoke to reporters about the "Agents of Foreign Influence" bill and said that Georgia does not need this law, and it is clear that whoever votes for this bill will be directly responsible for damaging Georgia's Euro-Atlantic future.

According to her, if this law



is adopted, it will stop those organizations and groups that work to help Georgians and try to improve public life.

"Therefore, my question is, what does this [draft law] need for Georgia, what is the real purpose of this project, what is really behind the initiation of these

proposals, which Georgia does not need and which will be responsible for damaging the Euro-Atlantic future of Georgia, while the majority of Georgia has declared its own priorities and about aspirations," said Kelly Degnan.

New EU study shows resilience and response in EU neighbouring countries during COVID-19 pandemic

A new study, developed through the joint efforts of the European Training Foundation (ETF) and Eurofound, shows the resilience and response that citizens in the EU and ten EU neighbouring countries, including Georgia and Moldova, demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report, "Living, working and COVID-19", highlights that despite the challenges, citizens from these countries remain optimistic.

The report says that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cast a shadow of financial insecurity and social turmoil over residents in the European

Union's neighbouring countries. Up to 81% of people in these countries are facing exposure to poverty and one in five people have lost their jobs or have seen their working hours be reduced, with 75% of young adults aged 18 to 44 reporting depression. Despite this, a substantial 63% of people remain optimistic about their future, outpacing the Europeans at 50%.

Concerning teleworking, a significant number of individuals in EU neighbouring countries lack the technology and equipment needed for remote work. The report shows that these countries have a higher proportion of employees who never work from home (62%) compared to the EU (23%). At the same time, 53% of employed respondents stated that their employers did not pay for job-related training.

These findings highlight the importance of investing in edu-

cation and the potential of teleworking as a tool for work-life balance and flexibility, says ETF.

"With the imminent European Year of Skills, the report is a call to action for the development of

essential skills," says a press release by the ETF. "The EU's initiative will support small and medium-sized enterprises in addressing skills shortages and promote reskilling and upskilling of the workforce to

boost the EU's 2030 social targets, which include 60% of adults participating in yearly training and 78% in employment."

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, March 2

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 15°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 7°C

Friday, March 3

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 9°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 4°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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