

President Salome Zourabichvili Delivers Speech at Summit for Democracy 2023

By Liza Mchedlidze

The President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili delivered a speech at The Summit for Democracy held by the US President Joe Biden.

In her speech, Salome Zourabichvili thanked President Biden and noted that this year democracy needs to be protected and consolidated more than ever.

President spoke about the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine and noted that the world is facing a more direct, cruel and comprehensive challenge in the form of the invasion of the Russian military in Ukraine. According to her, the war against Ukraine is a war against democracy, freedom and human dignity.

"Last year, we already mentioned the important challenges faced by both long-established democracies and countries in the process of building democratic institutions. Everyone faces destructive challenges in the form of polarization, various forms of disinformation, pandemics, social tension and discrimination, conflicts and occupied territories.

These challenges, brewing inside and outside our borders, ultimately erode people's trust in their governments, institutions, and democracy itself.

However, none of us realized that the world would face a more direct, brutal and comprehensive challenge in the form of the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, which would cause unimaginable destruction, suffering, loss of life and deprivation of human rights. The war against Ukraine is really a war against democracy, freedom and human dignity.

It is yet another reminder of the consequences of unfettered authoritarian regimes with ancient and long-standing imperialist ambitions. A reminder that democracies must be strong from within, that is, supported by a united civil society and united in the international arena to defend the established principles of in-



ternational law.

As we gather today, in these even more challenging times, we must reaffirm our unwavering support for our shared values and solidarity and deliver on the commitments we have made," Zourabichvili said.

President Zourabichvili also spoke about protests in Tbilisi and noted that the Georgian people have achieved significant progress. She said that Georgia's path to democracy, European and Euro-Atlantic integration, which is written in the constitution, is the basis of the country's stability and there is no alternative to it.

"Despite the difficult geopolitical environment and internal tensions, Georgia has made progress on two main

priorities: the work on the National Human Rights Strategy has been completed, the National Civil Plan for the Elimination of Violence against Women and measures for women's economic empowerment have been adopted. Nevertheless, the implementation of judicial reform through an inclusive process, which is our set priority, still requires our due diligence.

While these changes were part of Georgia's declared obligations and were solved by adopting new laws or action plans, the Georgian people achieved significant progress by protesting against any restrictions on civil rights in the streets of Tbilisi and demonstrating their commitment to democratic principles, which inspired and continues to inspire our country on the path of European integration.

This protest succeeded both in repealing the Foreign Agents bill, which was a victory for democracy and in demonstrating the ability to overcome polarization when united around a common goal. From this point of view, the process of national consent has started.

Our path to democracy, European and Euro-Atlantic integration, written in our constitution, is the basis of our stability and there is no alternative to it.

I want to repeat Georgia's strong promise of building an even stronger democracy and express our readiness to cooperate with all our international partners in building a more democratic, peaceful and sustainable world, in which Georgia will find a place as a reliable partner," Zourabichvili said.

Parliament Delegation of Council of Europe Meets with Members of Parliament of Georgia



By Liza Mchedlidze

The members of the Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe held meetings in the Parliament of Georgia.

As the parties participating in the meeting state, their topic of conversation is the 12 recommendations of the European Commission and current political processes in Georgia.

The first group that representatives of the European structure met with was the United National Movement. UNM leaders Tina Bokuchava and Levan Bezhashvili stated that they talked about the 12 recommendations as well as the issue of Mikheil Saakashvili.

Bezhashvili emphasized the need to reform the court, the Council of Justice, the anti-corruption, de-oligarchization and

electoral system at the meeting.

The group of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe met with the members of the "Strategy Agmashenebeli" faction - Giorgi Vashadze, Khatuna Samnidze and Teona Akubardia.

According to Khatuna Samnidze, they talked about the anti-Western rhetoric carried out by the Georgian Dream, as well as attacks on the opposition and the Foreign Agents law.

"We talked about political statements, Russian law, attacks in the parliament. We emphasized that, despite this difficult situation, we are in favor of and request the status of a candidate from our partners, because this is an opportunity for the country to move forward and be protected from Russian aggression," said Khatuna Samnidze.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Negotiations on Accession of Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova to EU Should Begin by End of 2023, Charles Michel says



The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, during his visit to Moldova, said that negotiations on the accession of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia to the European Union should begin by the end of the year.

“The European Commission should publish the next report on the accession process to the European Union, concerning the European perspective for Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, as well as the Western Balkans. I would like to confirm that I intend to raise this issue before the

European Council by the end of the year. This means that by the end of the year, the Council should make a decision on the issue of starting the process of negotiations on joining the European Union with these countries. This will be a po-

litical decision, taking into account the report that the European Commission will prepare.

I sincerely hope that a positive decision will be possible by the end of the year”, said Charles Michel.

President Salome Zourabichvili meets with Princess Victoria of Sweden



The President of Georgia met with Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden. Salome Zourabichvili hosted the Swedish princess in Orbeliani Palace.

As reported by the Swedish Em-

bassy, Princess Victoria’s visit to Georgia will last until March 30. The mentioned visit is carried out during the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, during the first half of 2023.

“The EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia is a prime example of how EU civilian CSDP missions can help ensure stability, promote security and build confidence in the countries where they are

active. With her visit to Georgia, the Crown Princess also wants to highlight the long-standing ties between our countries and peoples. friendship and partnership,” the statement reads.

A gala awards event announcing the winners of the EUNEIGHBOURS EAST – FOTOFESTIWAL photo contest takes place on Friday 31 March 2023 at the Tbilisi Photography & Multimedia Museum (TPMM) in Georgia.

The photo contest, funded by the European Union, invited professional photographers from the six Eastern Partnership countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine – to enter a set of photographs around the theme of Family Connections.

From a total of more than 400 applications, the team of five top international judges have drawn up a shortlist of three photographers from each country. All 18 finalists have been invited to the Georgian capital Tbilisi, where six winners – one from each country – will be announced at the gala awards event on Friday, 31 March, taking home a prize of Euro 1,000 each.

And the winner is... photo contest awards to be unveiled at Tbilisi gala on Friday



The gala awards event will be hosted by Pawel Herczynski, Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, and Nestan Nizharadze, the co-founder of Tbilisi Photography & Multimedia Museum, and attended by local personalities, and media, bloggers and influencers from across the region.

On Thursday, 30 March, the shortlisted photographers will also take part in a masterclass

with the international judges of the competition.

Each shortlisted entry has a special page on the EU NEIGHBOURS EAST website, where you can view the selected photo stories. The 18 shortlisted photographers are:

Armenia

Nazik Armenakyan – My War (Fragmentary Experience)

Mane Hovhannisyan – Fabula
Hrant Khachatryan – New Born

Azerbaijan

Orkhan Azimov – Remote from Education
Aziz Karimov – Azerbaijan Implements Measures to Tackle the Coronavirus Outbreak
Ilkin Yagubov – Interlacement

Belarus

Pasha Kritchko – Belarusian connections
Veranika Maliauka – Memories of home
Tatsiana Tkachova – Motherland

Georgia

Natela Grigalashvili – The Final Days of Georgian Nomads
Ekaterine Kolesnikova – Morning Comes Too Soon
Tako Robakidze – Peacekeepers

Moldova

Maria Gutu – Homeland
Ramin Mazur – Left Bank
Katerina Shosheva – Sem’ya

Ukraine

Artem Humilevskiy – Roots
Olena Morozova – Granny
Marysia Myanovska – Oh, brother, where art thou?

The contest is organised by the EU NEIGHBOURS EAST programme, in partnership with Fotofestival. EU NEIGHBOURS EAST is an EU-funded regional communication programme that raises awareness of the European Union, its policies and support projects in its Eastern Neighbourhood. Fotofestival was established in 2001 as a collective of professionals working with photography, and has since grown into one of the most significant photographic festivals in Europe.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, March 30

Day Cloudy/Windy
High: 9°C

Night Cloudy/Windy
Low: 2°C

Friday, March 31

Day Cloudy
High: 6°C

Night Cloudy
Low: 2°C

published by

The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli

Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze

Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili

Layout Designer, Photographer

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia’s English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.