

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili Meets with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in Brussels

By Liza Mchedlidze

Georgian PM Irakli Gharibashvili met with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. During the briefing, Stoltenberg affirmed that Georgia holds a significant position as one of NATO's close partners and assured continued support from the alliance. Furthermore, he expressed his expectations that Georgia would intensify its efforts towards implementing reforms.

"We talked about the NATO-Georgia partnership and how we can further strengthen it. In particular, we talked about the essential NATO-Georgia package."

I welcome Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. You can count on political and practical support from NATO.

On the other hand, I hope that Georgia will redouble its efforts on internal reforms and uphold the standards of democracy," Stoltenberg said, adding that that is why he didn't welcome the introduction of the 'foreign influence' bill.

"It was incompatible with Euro-Atlantic values and the protection of fundamental freedoms."

The Georgian people have clearly stated that they want a democratic, economically prosperous country that will be integrated into the Euro-Atlantic region. NATO will continue its partnership on the way to fulfilling your aspirations", Jens Stoltenberg said.

At the meeting, the Secretary General of NATO reiterated his unwavering support for Georgia's territorial integrity. He went on to address the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, condemning Russia's military intervention as a 'toxic pattern' that needs to come to a permanent end.

"I was in Kiev last week and my message to President Zelensky was clear. NATO stands by Ukraine today and will



go as far as necessary. We don't know when the war will end, but we do know that Russian aggression is a toxic pattern that must end once and for all. Georgia and the Georgian people understand this very well.

Ukraine defends itself according to the UN Charter, and the members of the Alliance support this," Jens Stoltenberg said.

The Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili expressed gratitude towards the NATO Secretary General for the alliance's continued support of

Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, as well as its commitment to safeguarding the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Additionally, he affirmed his willingness to engage in further discussions with the North Atlantic Alliance in order to strengthen their partnership.

"I would like to point out that we have made significant progress over the last 10 years. We signed an association agreement with the European Union, a free trade agreement, and visa-free travel.

Last year, we already adopted the European perspective, which was a historic

decision, and we will actively continue working on the work of the so-called 12 priorities, which will be completed very soon. I am sure that Georgia deserves to receive the candidate status.

Also, I would like to mention that it was a privilege for us to open a joint training center in 2015, which is an excellent example of how NATO and Georgia cooperate with each other, and for that I want to thank you again. We are ready to further deepen our political dialogue and practical cooperation with NATO in all dimensions," said Gharibashvili.

Georgia's Progress on EU Integration Discussed in Meeting between Georgian Prime Minister and European Council President

By Liza Mchedlidze

During his visit to Brussels, the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, held a meeting with the President of the European Council, Charles Michel. The main focus of their discussion was the progress made by Georgia towards joining the European Union. Gharibashvili updated Michel on the efforts made by his government to fulfill the 12 priorities of the European Commission, emphasizing the ongoing consultations with EU institutions, member states, as well as the Venice Commission and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR).

The PM emphasized the need for Georgia to be granted candidate status for EU membership

by the end of the year.

Gharibashvili stated that the majority of the recommendations have already been implemented and, therefore, Georgia deserves to be granted candidate status by the end of the year based on the progress made.

The Minister highlighted that the current government has made significant progress in Georgia's path towards European integration, including the signing of an association agreement, a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement with the European Union, visa-free travel, and the granting of a European perspective.

The parties also discussed the current conflict in Ukraine and its implications for the overall security situation in the region.



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5046; Euro - 2.7618; GBP - 3.1237; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.0738; Swiss Franc - 2.8224

Georgia's Progress on EU Integration Discussed in Meeting between Georgian Prime Minister and European Council President

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President of the European Council, Charles Michel, took to Twitter to respond to his meeting with the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, in

Brussels. In his tweet, Michel affirmed the European Union's unwavering support for Georgia's journey towards European integration, highlighting the historic opportunity that the European perspective represents

for the Georgian people. "The EU stands by you every step of the way and remains firmly committed to this European perspective and the historic opportunity it represents for the people of Georgia," Michel wrote.

According to Michel, the future of Georgia is in the European Union. "Georgia's future is in the EU. To advance on the European path, now more than ever, implementation of key priorities

is crucial. In my meeting with PM, I stressed the need to deepen reforms on the judiciary, rule of law and freedom of the press," Michel wrote.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

President of Georgia Meets with Parents of Children with Achondroplasia to Discuss Essential Medicine



The meeting between the President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili and parents of children diagnosed with achondroplasia took place in the Orbeliani palace. After the meeting, one of the parents, Makuna

Gochiashvili, stated that the president would assist them in persuading the government to provide the necessary medicine. Gochiashvili reported that the President expressed her full support to them and had consulted with experts on the medicine for achondroplasia. Zourabichvili confirmed that the medicine is nec-

essary and safe for their children. "The President expressed her full support, and noted that in recent days she had consulted with qualified individuals regarding the medicine. She confirmed to us that it is necessary

and safe for our children. The President also expressed her joy at the news that there is money in the budget, as the Prime Minister had mentioned. Since the funds are available and the Prime Minister has expressed his readiness, the President will assist us in the procedures," Gochiashvili stated.

For the past few months, parents of children diagnosed with achondroplasia have been protesting, urging the government to provide funding for Voxzogo, a vital medication approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA). The Ministry of Health has stated that there is limited information available on the drug, and as a result, developed countries worldwide are taking a cautious approach to ensure patient safety.

First Phase of Evacuation of Georgian Citizens from Sudan Completed, Says Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Af-

fairs of Georgia has reported the completion of the first phase of the evacuation of Georgian citizens from Sudan. Georgian citizens who were in the capital city



of Khartoum have been relocated to the neutral zone located at the Sudan-Egypt border. The Ministry has ensured that their health and lives are not at risk. The next step is for them to be transferred to Egypt and eventually back to Georgia, as per the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"Now the citizens of Georgia are on the border of Sudan and

Egypt, in the neutral zone. We expect them to have already left Sudan and moved to Egypt, from where they will be transported to their homeland, Georgia.

It can be said that with the involvement of our embassies, partners and companies, this evacuation was carried out successfully and no Georgian citizen is in Sudan today. Everyone has been safely taken out of this country," states the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aleksandre Khvtisiashvili.

Good governance: new EU-Council of Europe projects presented in Georgia

The European Union and the Council of Europe have presented four new projects to be carried out in Georgia under the third phase of the European Union and Council of Europe joint programme 'Partnership for Good Governance' (PGG III) in 2023-2027.

Four country-specific projects will be implemented in Georgia, with a total budget of Euro 3 million, co-funded by the EU and the



Council of Europe. They will aim at assisting Georgian authorities to further strengthen the independence of justice and the modernisation of court management, as well as enhancing the institutional and operational frameworks to prevent and combat corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing, and combating hate

speech. The PGG will provide support to the country in the context of its European perspective agenda, in line with the Council of Europe standards.

At the regional level, Georgia will take part, together with other countries, in three projects aimed at fighting economic crime, promoting equality and non-discrimination, and facilitating access of women to justice.

The Partnership for Good Governance (PGG) is a joint initiative of the European Union and the Council of Europe for strengthening good governance in the Eastern Partnership region.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, April 26

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 22°C

Night 🌧️ T-storm
Low: 12°C

Thursday, April 27

Day 🌧️ T-storm
High: 23°C

Night 🌧️ T-storm
Low: 12°C

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