

Concerns Arise Over Georgia's Decision to Restore Flights with Russia, Says Peter Stano



The decision of the Georgian authorities to restore flights raises concerns regarding Georgia's trajectory towards closer integration with the European Union and its obligation to adhere to the European Union's foreign policy, as stipulated in the EU-Georgia Association Agreement," stated Stano at the briefing.

Furthermore, Stano drew attention to the decreasing level of Georgia's compliance with the European Union's foreign policy. He noted that the percentage of Georgia's adherence to the decisions and declarations of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union has decreased from 44% last year to 31% this year, according to the current data. Stano further reiterated that the International Civil Aviation Organization of the United Nations has raised grave concerns regarding the safety of Russian aircraft.

Stano also responded to the issue of the resumption of flights with Russia at the briefing held last week. He then called on Georgia to join the sanctions against Russia, "including in the aviation sector," noting that in light of significant security problems, Georgia should not allow dangerous Russian aircraft on its territory.

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The resumption of flights between Georgia and Russia has raised concerns within the European Union, according to Peter Stano, EU's Lead Spokes-

person for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

During a briefing, Stano expressed his apprehension regarding Georgia's decision to resume air traffic with Russia following the lifting of the ban.

Stano emphasized that this decision raises concerns regarding Georgia's progress towards closer integration with the European Union and its obligation to align with the European Union's foreign policy, as out-

lined in the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

"We express our concern regarding Georgia's decision to resume air traffic with Russia after Russia lifted the ban on air traffic last week.

Embassies and International Representatives Urge Action to Protect LGBTQI+ Rights in Georgia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

A joint statement was issued by the embassies and international representative offices accredited in Georgia on the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT).

The statement says that LGBTQI+ individuals face daily harassment, discrimination, and stigmatization, and are subjected to hostility and violence. The embassies emphasize that these individuals are denied the opportunity to live with dignity as free and equal members of Georgian society. The statement urges the government of Georgia, as well as political, civil, and religious leaders, to safeguard human rights in general and to actively denounce hatred, discrimination, and violence.

Furthermore, the statement underlines that the stigmatization, discriminatory expressions, and hate speech propagated by certain public officials, politicians, media representatives,

and members of the clergy intensify the harassment faced by LGBTQI+ individuals, placing their lives in jeopardy.

"We welcome the growing pub-

lic support for the protection of minority rights in Georgia. Since 2015, the number of individuals advocating for the protection of LGBTQI+ rights has doubled.

Additionally, we commend the provisions in the Georgian Law 'On the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination' since 2014 that protect individuals from dis-

crimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We acknowledge the diligent efforts of government agencies and civil society organizations in ensuring comprehensive protection of human rights and freedoms."

However, we are concerned that despite the efforts, progress in this direction has been delayed. The newly adopted national policy documents, in particular, the National Human Rights Protection Strategy of Georgia for 2022-2030, the State Concept of Gender Equality of Georgia and Vision 2030 - Development Strategy of Georgia, do not include mechanisms for strengthening the protection and inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons.

Stigmatization, discriminatory expressions and hate speech by some public officials, politicians, media and clergy contribute to further harassment of LGBTQI+ persons and endanger their lives. In recent years, the majority of people who clearly



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5638; Euro - 2.7925; GBP - 3.2135; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2075; Swiss Franc - 2.8700

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instigated and committed violence against LGBTQI+ persons, including the organizers of the violent disruption of the July

2021 Pride Week, have not been brought to justice. This further limits the ability of LGBTQI+ persons to exercise their right to peaceful assembly," the statement reads.

The joint statement was pub-

lished by the United Nations Organization in Georgia, the European Union Representation in Georgia, various embassies in Georgia such as the United States, New Zealand, Belgium, Bulgaria, United Kingdom, Ger-

many, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Canada, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Greece, France, Slovakia, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the

Czech Republic. As well as the European Investment Bank Regional Representative Office in the South Caucasus and the Head of the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Shalva Papuashvili Meets with Parliament Chairman of Azerbaijan



According to the press service of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, held a meeting with Sahiba Gafarova, the Speaker of the

Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Papuashvili noted that it is an honor for him to participate in the special session of the Milli Mejlis, which is dedicated to the 100th anniversary of President

Heydar Aliyev.

The close and amicable relations between the two countries and their people were positively acknowledged by the parties. Emphasis was placed on the

importance of enhancing ties between sectoral committees and friendship groups at the parliamentary level, with the aim of benefiting the people of both Georgia and Azerbaijan.

The current events in the South Caucasus region were also discussed during the meeting. Special attention was given to the trilateral cooperation between Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. The parliamentary chairpersons of Georgia and Azerbaijan reached an agreement on further enhancing their parliamentary relations.

Andriy Yermak Raises Concerns Over Direct Flights Between Russia and Georgia

The initiation of direct flights between Russia and Georgia by Georgian Airways and the Russian airline 'Azimuth' has prompted a response from Andriy Yermak, the head of the administration of the President of Ukraine. Yermak expressed concern over a perceived acceptance of interaction with terrorists and murderers among certain individuals in Georgia.

"History always remembers those who appear to be oblivious to genocide, Nazism, and their perpetrators, and I believe nobody appreciates such a historical memory..."

The Georgian people have consistently shown solidarity toward Ukraine. We share a common enemy, responsible for the loss of Georgian lives in the 90s, the events of 2008, and the ongoing killings of Ukrainians since 2014. This enemy poses an existential threat to our nations.

However, it seems that some individuals make a deliberate effort to overlook the rocket bombings in Kyiv, the destruction of Maryinka, the tragic loss of children in Bucha, Irpin, Izium, and the abductions of innocent children. They also appear to have forgotten the tragic events in Gori.

Perhaps certain individuals believe that these atrocities do not concern them and that interacting with terrorists and murderers is acceptable.



This is an erroneous standpoint, as history will eventually bring everything to light and place it in its rightful context," wrote Yermak.

EU-supported Ukraine Task Force on energy facilitates 2,000 tonne donation of methanol to Ukraine

The Ukraine Support Task Force, managed by the Energy Community Secretariat, has announced the delivery of a substantial donation of 2,000 tons of methanol from Equinor, a leading Norwegian energy company, to the largest Ukrainian gas producer UkrGasvydobuvannya JSC (UGV), a subsidiary of Naftogaz Group.



Methanol, a critical raw material for natural gas production, treatment, and transportation, was delivered to Ukraine with support from the European Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

The delivery of 2,000 tonnes from Europe to UkrGasvydobuvannya marks an important milestone – it is the first rail-based shipment of methanol from Europe in UGV's history, says a press release by the Energy Community Secretariat, co-chaired by the European Commission.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, May 17

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 23°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 12°C

Thursday, May 18

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 19°C

Night Showers
Low: 12°C

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