

Kobakhidze Expresses Concern Over President's Visit to Brussels and its Potential Impact on Georgia's EU Candidacy Status

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

According to the information provided by the presidential administration, the President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili has not yet obtained approval for her visit to Brussels on April 27.

As per invitation, President Zourabichvili, is scheduled to deliver a speech at the European Parliament in Brussels on May 31. The presidential administration confirmed that the Georgian President received an official letter from Roberta Metsola, the President of the European Parliament, on April 27 and that the invitation letter was promptly forwarded to the government on the same day to seek approval for the visit to Brussels.

Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of "Georgian Dream," addressed a journalist's question regarding the presidential administration and the recent statement indicating that the government has not yet authorized the president's visit to Brussels. In response, Kobakhidze expressed concern, stating, "We are apprehensive that the president's visit and her statements may have a detrimental impact on our efforts to achieve candidate status. As you were present in the parliament building and heard the president's statements during his report, I believe you will concur that these statements directly contradict Georgia's aspiration to attain candidate status in December, especially given the current circumstances."

Irakli Kobakhidze commented on Zourabichvili's recent statements, stating that it is incomprehensible to connect Russia's resumption of flights with the President's visit to a foreign country. He criticized Zourabichvili for speculating in such a manner and expressed regret over a person in the president's position engaging in such speculation.

Kobakhidze emphasized that granting approval for the visit is solely the prerogative of the Government of Georgia. If the government believes that the president's visit will hinder Georgia's



chances of obtaining candidate status, they have the constitutional right to deny permission for the visit.

"The president should not speculate on the connection between Russia's unilateral resumption of flights and the president's visit to a foreign country. It is an entirely incomprehensible comparison and mere speculation. It is disheartening when a person in the position of the president engages in such speculation; it is truly regrettable.

Regarding granting consent for the visit, this authority lies exclusively with the Government of Georgia. If, for instance, the government believes that the president's visit will hinder Georgia's chances of obtaining candidate status, they have the constitutional right to withhold permission for the visit," stated

Kobakhidze.

In response to the question about whether the statement suggests that the president will not receive permission, Kobakhidze clarified that he does not make any assertions. He stated that he is unaware of the current status of the government's decision on granting permission. It is possible that permission may be granted at a later time, as it is within the prerogative of the government.

Kobakhidze stated that it would be logical for the government to be concerned about the president's 'erroneous' statements. He mentioned that the president's statements, which imply that the parliament merely fulfills recommendations in a formal manner without taking real steps towards candidacy, could be harmful to the process of obtaining candidate status.

"But it would be logical for me that if the government is concerned about the president's erroneous statements—since we have heard statements from the president that could be detrimental to obtaining candidate status, such as suggesting that the parliament merely fulfills recommendations in a formal manner without taking any real steps towards candidacy—these are harmful statements. It would be preferable if the president refrained from making such damaging statements, especially in a public setting, to avoid compromising the process of obtaining candidate status. This seems entirely reasonable. As for the decision to grant the president permission to travel to another country, that remains within the government's prerogative," Kobakhidze explained.

Diplomatic Corps Representatives Hold Meeting with Rati Bregadze at Ministry of Justice in Georgia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in Georgia met with Justice Minister Rati Bregadze at the Ministry of Justice. The meeting was attended by representatives from the embassies of the European Union, its member states, the USA, the United Kingdom, and Norway.

The meeting was organized at the initiative of the Ministry of Justice, with the primary focus on the recent decision made by the Strasbourg court concerning the former president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili.

Anna Maria Siko, the Ambassador of Hungary to Georgia, stated that during the meeting with Minister of Justice Rati Bregadze, the representatives of the diplomatic corps were provided with assurances that Georgia is committed to taking care of all prisoners, including Saakashvili. According to Siko, the meeting was engaging and productive, with a fruitful discussion taking place. Anna Maria Siko told the media that the Ambassadors were given reassurances during the meeting that Saakashvili would receive adequate medical care.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5310; Euro - 2.7358; GBP - 3.1460; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.1550; Swiss Franc - 2.8097

Diplomatic Corps Representatives Hold Meeting with Rati Bregadze at Ministry of Justice in Georgia

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“Our concern is to ensure that Georgia demonstrates care for all prisoners. Regardless of whether a prisoner was a former politician or has any other background, they should be treated fairly. On

the path to EU membership, the principles of the rule of law, fairness, and equality for all must prevail. We received a guarantee that Georgia takes care of all prisoners, including Saakashvili,” stated Siko.

Maria Theodorou, the Ambassador of

Greece to Georgia, also expressed that the meeting between the representatives of the diplomatic corps and Minister of Justice Rati Bregadze was productive. According to her, during the meeting, various aspects concerning the Strasbourg court’s decision on Saakashvili’s case were explained in detail.

“We met with the Minister of Justice to get the last information regarding the Saakashvili case, after the decision of the Strasbourg court. Our discussion was productive and friendly as always. In my opinion, many things have been explained

regarding this situation”, said Maria Theodorou.

When asked about whether the matter of Saakashvili’s health was addressed during the meeting, Maria Theodorou responded:

“We are not medical professionals. Like everyone else, we rely on information provided through the media. Our primary focus is that Georgia adheres to the same standards as other European countries, particularly in terms of respecting the rights of all citizens. This remains our primary concern,” stated Theodorou.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

US Ambassador Kelly Degnan Raises Question on Putin’s Offers to Georgia: Why Now?



US Ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan, raised important questions regarding the recent offers made by Putin to Georgia. She emphasized the need to understand the motives behind

these offers and the potential costs associated with them, such as direct flights, the cancellation of the visa regime, and the potential restoration of the railway line. Degnan stated that it is crucial to recognize that Putin does not offer anything without expecting something in return.

“A country with 20 percent of its territory occupied by Russia, eight of its citizens held by Russian-backed forces in South Ossetia, and continued pressure from Russia should be wary of

what looks like Russia’s attempt to normalize relations with Georgia.

I think the important questions are: Why? Why now? Why is Putin now making these concessions and offers to Georgia? What fees will Georgia have to pay for this, for direct flights, for the cancellation of the visa regime, with the potential restoration of the railway line that will connect Georgia to Russia through Abkhazia? These are very important questions, because we know that Putin does not give anything without a price. When asked why Russia is doing this now, we have to draw conclusions based on the facts to understand what they might want to receive in terms of this step, this gesture,” Kelly Degnan said.

Gov’t Is Committed to Protecting Country and Its People from Harmful Decisions, Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze says

According to Kakha Kaladze,

the mayor of Tbilisi, the government of Georgia has repeatedly stated its refusal to participate in sanctions. He emphasized that the government is committed to making decisions that prioritize the well-being of the country and its citizens, avoiding any



potential harm.

Kakha Kaladze expressed his approval of Putin’s decision, stating that there is nothing wrong with visa-free travel and flights being made possible.

“I welcome the decision that visa-free travel and flights are possible, there is nothing wrong with that,” said Kaladze.

When asked by journalists about the possibility of restoring railway traffic and whether the government would agree to such a concession, Kakha Kaladze responded, “This is the first time I am hearing about it. What concessions and steps has Georgia

taken in general? The sanctions were unilaterally imposed by Russia, and they have made the decision to lift these sanctions. The government of Georgia does not support these sanctions. We have reiterated multiple times that we will not make decisions that are detrimental to our country and its people.”

Check Out”. Evening Song. So Good! Check Out.

Weather

Friday, May 19

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 24°C

Night Showers

Low: 16°C

Saturday, May 20

Day Showers

High: 20°C

Night Light Rain

Low: 15°C

Author Nino Davadze, Tamar Okhikiani, David Khorbaladze, Natia Chikvaidze
Director Davit Khorbaladze
Scenography by Tamar Okhikiani
Costumes Designer Tamar Okhikiani
Choreographer Natia Chikvaidze
Composer / musical adaptation Nino Davadze
Assistant to the director - Cast Natia Chikvaidze, Tano Chkheidze, Valeria

Khripach, Anastasia Kovalenko, Marina Makasarashvili
Date of the premiere May, 21-22
Duration / Intermissions 80 min (1 break)

Short annotation about performance / Synopsis (Not less than 100 and not more than 200 words)

Please deliver the context of



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the performance together with the content of the script. The three-part choreographic performance "Evening Song. So Good! Check Out" is a synthesis of dance and physical theater that depicts a chronic post-traumatic condition. On the one hand, the play portrays the drama of individuals in an ever-changing time and space. On the other hand, it employs sharp humor and irony to depict the collective attempt to forget and conceal trauma.

The Hotel "Georgia", where the performance takes place, symbolizes the act of forgetting and banishing trauma. Situated on one of the city's main avenues, the once-glorious hotel no longer serves its original function. Over time, it has been sold multiple times, and its purpose has shifted from a casino to a club, a legal company, or unex-

pected shelter. Since the war in Abkhazia, displaced individuals have lived there "temporarily," to this day.

Drawing inspiration from these contexts and the architecture of the building, the performance's creators have devised a three-part choreographic experience that immerses the audience in a transitional time and space.

Poster Design: Iva Kimeridze
Photo and video: Saba Shengelia
Light Design : Aleksandre Gujabidze

The project is supported by @thisiswisg, @womenfundgeorgia, st. Tbilisi City Hall and Abkhazia Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Agency.

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