

## Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili Rejects Claims of Georgian Government Requesting Resumption of Direct Flights with Russia

By Liza Mchedlidze

Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, shared his perspective on the resumption of direct flights between Georgia and Russia. Putin expressed his surprise at the unexpected reaction from Georgia, as he had expected to receive 'gratitude' instead.

"For me, the reaction that ensued was entirely unexpected. I had thought that everyone would express gratitude, saying, 'Well, thank you.' But instead, there was an entirely incomprehensible uproar about it. It was very strange, all of a sudden. When I observe from an outsider's perspective, I can't help but wonder: Have they lost their minds or something? It's unclear what's happening there," Putin said.

According to Russian media reports, Putin has stated that the topic of initiating a direct flight and abolishing the visa regime was brought up by representatives of the Georgian government and Moscow, in response to this, took the step of implementing these measures.

Putin stated that the current situation in Georgia is 'not their business', and he believes that the citizens of Georgia should have the freedom to determine the path and development of their country. However, Russia will proceed with its own actions independently.

"We are prepared to fulfill our role. As I mentioned, we are taking measures and will continue to do so based on how our partners respond to this," stated Putin.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilia Darchiashvili, refuted any claims of negotiations between the authorities of Georgia and Russia regarding the commencement of direct flights and the cancellation of the visa regime. According to



Darchiashvili, they were not part of the negotiation process.

"I don't know why this matter was given such a shape. Regarding the flights, we have repeatedly stated that we have not made any efforts in this process, neither in relation to the lifting of visa restrictions nor in the lifting of restrictions related to flights. We have said this

many times, and it has been commented on at all levels.

We remain in the format of our statements, the main leitmotif of our statements was that we did not participate in this process, and we confirm the same to you now," said Darchiashvili after the end of the Diaspora Forum.

Nevertheless, the Minister of Foreign

Affairs expresses appreciation for the initiation of a direct flight, as he believes it will enhance the mobility of the Georgian diaspora.

"With this decision, it will become more convenient for our esteemed compatriots, the members of our diaspora residing in the Russian Federation, to visit their homeland," stated Darchiashvili.

## Prime Minister Gharibashvili Highlights Economic Importance of Direct Flights with Russia at Diaspora Forum

By Liza Mchedlidze



During his address at the Diaspora Forum, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili expressed a positive assessment of the commencement of direct flights with Russia. In his speech at the Diaspora Forum, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili emphasized that the direct flights with Russia are a part of economic trade relations, separate from politics.

He highlighted the importance of facilitating the movement and business activities of the Georgian diaspora and their families.

Gharibashvili cited examples of other countries, such as Moldova and Ukraine, having visa-free regimes, and expressed support for measures that make it easier for citizens and diaspora

members to travel and conduct business.

He questioned the significance of restricting movement at the border and urged continued trade and economic cooperation. Gharibashvili also highlighted the significant financial contributions made by the diaspora through remittances, emphasizing the responsibility to support Georgian people wherever they are.

"We said that flights are a component of economic trade relations. This has nothing to do with politics or anything else. We mentioned that our 1 million diaspora and their relatives, families need free movement. Moldova currently has a visa-free regime, and I believe Ukraine still has a visa-free

CONTINUED ON Page 2



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5876; Euro - 2.7752; GBP - 3.1985; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2357; Swiss Franc - 2.8564

# Prime Minister Gharibashvili Highlights Economic Importance of Direct Flights with Russia at Diaspora Forum

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

regime, or at least it had one before the war, if I'm not mistaken. Therefore, there is nothing special here; on the contrary, anything that facilitates the movement and business activities of our fellow citizens and

diaspora is highly beneficial. I would like to add one more thing: every day, thousands of cars cross the border at the Lars checkpoint, including both passenger and cargo vehicles. What's the difference? I don't understand! Should we close it then? The next step would be to

close the borders and halt trade. We receive hundreds of millions of dollars annually in transfers from our diaspora. We are talking about billions. Hundreds of millions of dollars are coming in from our diaspora living in Russia, supporting family members, developing businesses, and

aiding relatives. Why should we block it? What is happening? It is our obligation, on the contrary, to assist our people everywhere," said Gharibashvili. Gharibashvili attributed the discontinuation of direct flights to Georgia in 2019 to the opposition's actions. The Prime

Minister further expressed criticism towards the West, noting that although the Western nations had criticized Russia for halting the flights at that time, nothing substantial has changed since 2019, except for the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Shalva Papuashvili Expresses Hope for President Zourabichvili's European Parliament Speech to Prioritize and Promote EU Integration



Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia Shalva Papuashvili expressed his hope that the Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili's speech in the European Parliament would prioritize and promote the country's European integration.

"I hope that, during this critical moment, the speech delivered by the President of Georgia will strongly advocate for the advancement of the country's European integration and not the other way round so that there will be no hindrances or obstacles impeding this progress," Papuashvili said.

Papuashvili, while assessing the President's speech during the event commemorating Independence Day, expressed his de-

sire for "everything to have its place, form, and traditions."

"I don't want to engage in controversy with the president. I simply wish for one thing: everything to have its place, form, and traditions. This includes the atmosphere at the parade and the desired mood, as well as the speeches. It should undoubtedly evoke a sense of reverence when

Hence, it is crucial that the addresses of the nation's highest officials embody this spirit, as it is a solemn day that deserves fitting content and presentation," stated Shalva Papuashvili.

### Salome Zourabichvili scheduled to deliver a speech at the European Parliament in Brussels on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

President Biden Extends Best Wishes to Georgia on Independence Day, Affirms Commitment to Partnership

The President of the United States, Joe Biden, sent his heartfelt wishes to the President of Georgia and Georgian people on the occasion of Independence Day. He acknowledged the longstanding partnership between the United States and Georgia, which has contributed to regional peace and prosperity.

According to Biden, both nations share a strong bond rooted in people-to-people connections and shared values of democracy and the rule of law.

Biden wrote the United States

has actively supported Georgia's aspirations for further integration into Euro-Atlantic institu-

sion, including the unjust occupation of Georgian territory.

President Biden expressed his

Dear Madam President:

On behalf of the people of the United States, I send our best wishes to you and the people of Georgia as you celebrate your Independence Day.

For more than three decades, the partnership between Georgia and the United States has helped advance peace and prosperity across the region and around the world. The people of our two countries have an enduring and unbreakable bond based on our close people-to-people ties and our shared values—including democracy and rule of law. We've stood together to help advance Georgia's aspirations for further Euro-Atlantic integration, including into the EU and NATO. And, the United States will continue to support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and stand against Russia's aggression—including its unjust occupation of Georgian territory and efforts to stoke conflict and division.

In the years ahead, I look forward to strengthening the partnership between Georgia and the United States even further as we continue to forge a more secure and prosperous future for all of our people. And, I wish you a joyous national holiday.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Biden Jr.

tions like the EU and NATO.

The US President's letter reaffirmed the United States' commitment to upholding Georgia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and opposing Russia's aggres-

eagerness to strengthen the partnership between the two countries, working towards a secure and prosperous future for their respective peoples.

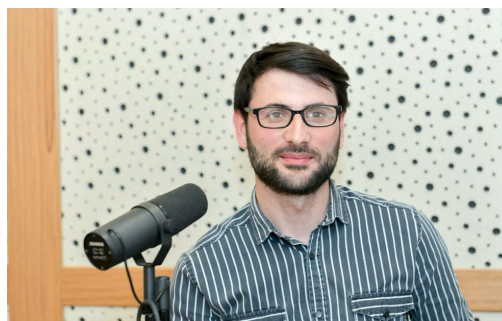
we march alongside our country's troops and the enlisted men taking the oath.

### EU4Independent Media launches online self-paced courses for journalists and media managers

The EU-funded EU4Independent Media project has launched a series of online courses for journalists and media managers. All courses are designed to be self-paced, so you can take them whenever it suits you.

The project EU4IndependentMedia aims to foster resilience and financial sustainability of the independent media sector in Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine).

The online resources developed by the project help media



organisations to enhance management and editorial skills and to support journalists working in politically and economically challenging environments, with a special focus on reporters covering the war in Ukraine.

For example, e-courses on reporting war and risk assessment have been developed by Chris Booth, former BBC Moscow and BBC Baghdad Bureau chief.

The War reporting course covers the ethical considerations of war reporting and aims to

maximise the quality of reporting, while minimising the risk of doing harm to others and journalists themselves.

The Risk assessment course is a comprehensive webinar, a guide on how to assess risks when you have newsroom staff working in hostile environments covering military conflicts and wars.

The Management Kit course is a resource for leaders in newsrooms across the EAP countries. The kit aims to support the mentoring and training of newsroom editors in independent news organisations. It aims to help them with the fundamentals of news management and its practical implementation with templates of essential documents and supporting videos.

The course has been developed by Zoe Porter, Independent Consultant in News, UK, and Natalia Mumladze, Director of News, Palitra Media, Georgia.

The recently published course on editorial guidelines is developed by Miranda Hurst, lecturer in Journalism at Edinburgh Napier University. The course provides a detailed explanation of why editorial guidelines matter and how they help editorial work in the newsroom.

The courses are hosted on the dedicated page Media page of the EU NEIGHBOURS east website, where you can also find details of other EU-funded opportunities for media, including training, funding and grants, as well as latest news and stories, information about EU-funded media support projects, and media studies and reports.

([euneighbourseast.eu](http://euneighbourseast.eu))

## Weather

Monday, May 29

Day Mostly Cloudy  
High: 29°C

Night T-storm  
Low: 18°C

Tuesday, May 30

Day Mostly Cloudy  
High: 31°C

Night T-storm  
Low: 18°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](mailto: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.



*On the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brazil-Georgia diplomatic relations the Ambassador of Brazil in Tbilisi, H.E. Mr. Oswaldo Biato Júnior organized concert of popular Brazilian and Georgian music, performed by Tbilisi Big Band on May 24.*













ROYAL DISTRICT THEATRE

MAKA MAKHARADZE'S BALLET STUDIO AND  
ETERI ANDJAPARIDZE'S "PIANOTHEATRE"

Cast:  
Eteri Andjaparidze,  
Datuna Aladashvili  
Piano Duo

„Vera District Dance Class” Students  
Actors: Maka Makharadze, Nata Murvanidze,  
Tamar Makashvili, Nika Tetradze

Choreographer – Gvantsa Gavasheli  
Costume designer – Anka Kalatozishvili  
Manager – Nino Metreveli

Project Director  
Maka  
Makharadze



Sergei Prokofiev

# PETER AND THE WOLF

(Musical Fairy Tale)

Samuel Barber

# SOUVENIRS

(The Plaza Hotel Divertissement)

**Thursday, 1 June**  
To International Children's  
Protection Day

**Friday, 2 June**  
To Lexo Toradze

**Saturday, 3 June**  
To Temur Chkheidze

2023

20:00



Tickets: <https://biletebi.ge/maka-makharadze-ballet-studio/Schedule>