

EU Ambassadors Inform Economy Minister of Demarche on Direct Flights with Russia

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Levan Davitashvili, met with ambassadors representing the member states of the European Union. During the meeting, the ambassadors conveyed the position of the 27 member countries, informing the minister on their demarche regarding Georgia's decision to accept direct flights with Russia.

Pawel Herczynski, the Ambassador of the European Union, together with ambassadors representing all EU countries conveyed their collective regret over the decision made by the Georgian government to accept direct flights from Russia. It was emphasized that this decision stands in direct contradiction to the unanimous agreement reached by all 27 member states, which clearly stipulated the avoidance of direct flights to and from Russia, as well as the prohibition of Russian aircraft crossing EU airspace.

Furthermore, the ambassadors expressed deep concern that this decision undermined the concerted efforts to isolate Russia and exert pressure on the country to alter its behavior, particularly in light of the ongoing brutal and aggressive war Russia has been waging in Ukraine. They emphasized the importance of maintaining a united front and upholding the determined stance against such actions.

Herczynski emphasized the importance of acknowledging that while Russia took the unilateral decision to resume flights with Georgia, it was crucial to understand that the approval of the Georgian government was also necessary for implementation of these flights.

According to Herczynski, The Euro-



pean Union ambassadors emphasized the significance of maintaining solidarity among member states and adhering to the unanimous decisions taken in order to effectively address and respond to the challenges posed by Russia's actions.

Pawel Herczynski emphasized that despite the arguments put forth by the Georgian government, which included assurances that no sanctioned or Western-produced aircraft would be used, these arguments lacked a broader political significance.

"On the Georgian side, the Vice Prime Minister mentioned the arguments that we have already heard, that the Georgian government ensures that neither sanctioned aircraft nor aircraft produced in the West are used. Unfortunately, this lacks a larger political essence. I would like to remind you that the European Union has collectively decided to ban all flights from and to Russia, of all types, within the territory of the European Union. And this is a very important step for all 27 member states and other part-

ner countries to put pressure on Russia and change Russia's behavior towards Ukraine," Herczynski said.

Herczynski stated that he is unaware of any discussions within the European Union regarding the imposition of sanctions on the Georgian government. He acknowledged that the development was viewed unfavorably but mentioned that it would be up to the 27 EU member states to evaluate the potential impact on Georgia's aspirations to join the European Union.



Minister Davitashvili Informs EU Ambassadors of Strengthened Customs Control at Georgian Airports Amid Resumption of Direct Flights with Russia

By Liza Mchedlidze

In response to a demarche from 27 EU member states, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Levan Davitashvili conveyed that he has informed the ambassadors of EU countries about the strengthening of customs control at the airports of Tbilisi, Batumi, and Kutaisi following the resumption of direct flights with Russia. This measure aims to prevent any potential violation of internationally imposed sanctions and ensure compliance with them.

The minister clarified to the ambassadors that Georgia's context in relation to Russia differs from that of the EU member states, primarily due to the fact that

Georgia shares a border with the state that occupies 20% of its territory.

Davitashvili pointed out that there is no uniform stance among EU members regarding trade relations, as some countries have actually increased their trade with Russia. According to the Economy Minister, in light of this, the Georgian government seeks a clear dialogue to clarify the matter.

"The situation in Georgia cannot be compared to that of EU member states. While we have made progress and hope for appropriate recognition, it is important to acknowledge that Georgia is not yet a member of the European Union. Our

CONTINUED ON Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5823; Euro - 2.7664; GBP - 3.1881; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2250; Swiss Franc - 2.8556

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CONTINUED FROM Page 1

situation is specific, particularly regarding security and economic relations,” emphasized the minister.

According to Davitashvili, there exists a divergence of opinions, as reflected in the demarche of the European Union. He further expressed that the government is prepared for dialogue, discussions, and

the open exchange of frank perspectives.

“This is an ongoing process where we engage in dialogue on numerous issues. It has been acknowledged from their side, and we also value the opportunity to openly communicate in a direct manner,” stated the minister.

When questioned about the topic of sanctions, Davitashvili stated that there were no discussions regarding sanctions.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Samkharadze Urges EU to Seek Explanation from Russian Government on Revocation of Visa and Flight Ban



Nikoloz Samkharadze, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, commented on the demarche and stated that the position of the European Union was already known. He emphasized that the demarche provided an opportunity for the Vice Prime Minister to explain to the ambassadors Georgia’s policy, which primarily focuses on pursuing economic and security interests. Samkharadze shared these remarks with journalists.

According to Samkharadze, he believes that the European Union should demand an explanation from the Russian government regarding their decision to revoke visas and lift the flight ban at this time. He also questioned why not all Russian airlines are subject to sanctions by the European Union.

“We were already aware of the European Union’s position on this matter. Regarding today’s

demarche, it presents a valuable opportunity for the government representative, specifically the vice-prime minister, to provide a comprehensive explanation to the ambassadors of the European Union regarding Georgia’s ongoing policy and its previous implementation. It is also an opportu-

nity to discuss the reasoning behind the decision taken by the Russian authorities.

While it may seem unusual, it is logical to demand answers from the Georgian government regarding the Russian government’s decision. How-

ever, in this case, I believe it is equally important to seek answers from the Russian government regarding their timing for revoking visas and lifting the flight ban.

As a legislator and a citizen of this country, I personally find it intriguing why not all Russian airlines have been subjected to sanctions by the European Union. Perhaps this question will be addressed, and the responses provided by the ambassadors will be of great interest,” stated Samkharadze.

Gia Volski Highlights Absence of Diplomatic Relations and Territorial Occupation in Georgia Amidst Demarche on Flights to Russia

Gia Volski, the First Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, while speaking to reporters, highlighted the absence of diplomatic relations between Georgia and Russia, as well as the significant territorial occupation within Georgia. According to Volski, in contrast, European countries enjoy diplomatic

relations with Russia and maintain extensive trade connections. Volski made these remarks in reference to the demarche presented by the ambassadors of EU member states regarding flights



to Russia.

“I believe it is important to bear in mind that the resumption or suspension of flights represents a unilateral decision that establishes a particular regime. When flights are resumed and then halted, it carries the specific implication of imposing sanctions, which may have con-

sequences. Therefore, entering into a sanctions regime in an already challenging situation... We do not even have diplomatic relations, and a significant portion of our country is occupied,

unlike European countries that maintain diplomatic relations and engage in substantial trade. Hence, it is necessary to engage in discussions on this topic, and I consider it an ongoing process that requires constant consultations, including with our European partners. Let us explore how this will unfold,” said Volski.

Last Bell: Young European Ambassadors attend major school leaving event in Georgia

On 22 May, Young European Ambassadors (YEAs) in Georgia joined the Last Bell event marking the end of high school classes in Zugdidi, in the Samegrelo region, organised by the local Youth Council in cooperation with Zugdidi City Hall. The traditional end of school event attracts thousands of local young people every year.

Ten YEAs used this opportunity to talk to young people about EU-Georgian relations, especially in the context of Georgia’s European path, and to raise awareness of European values. YEAs engaged local young



people by organising fun activities such as quizzes. In addition, YEAs organised a side event called ‘The EU and Chocolate’, during which YEAs approached local people, told one interesting fact about the EU and gave away EU-branded chocolates.

During the festival, the YEAs interacted with around 250 young people of the region.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Tuesday, May 30

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 29°C

Night T-storm

Low: 17°C

Wednesday, May 31

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 27°C

Night T-storm

Low: 16°C

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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

Samuel Barber

PETER AND THE WOLF

(Musical Fairy Tale)

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>