

Olivér Várhelyi, European Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement, Presents Report on Georgia's Progress



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Following an informal meeting of European Union ministers in Stockholm, Olivér Várhelyi, the European Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement, delivered a report. Várhelyi acknowledged that Georgia has successfully implemented three recommendations. These include promoting gender equality and combatting violence

against women, considering the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights during the judicial review process, and appointing the public defender through a transparent process.

In terms of the remaining recommendations, Georgia has made some progress on seven of them. These areas include overcoming political polarization, ensuring the full functioning of state institutions, reforming the judicial sys-

tem, strengthening the fight against corruption, combating organized crime, protecting vulnerable groups and human rights, and involving civil society in decision-making processes.

However, there is still work to be done. Georgia has made little progress in deoligarchization and has not made any progress in ensuring the free, professional, and independent functioning of pluralistic media. Várhelyi em-

phasized the need for effective parliamentary work, strengthening parliamentary oversight, and reforming the Central Election Commission. He also stressed the importance of an independent anti-corruption agency and the protection of freedom of assembly and expression.

Regarding deoligarchization, Várhelyi stated that the law should not be adopted in its current form and a systematic ap-

proach should be used, in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission.

In terms of media, Georgia is urged to adopt a law that ensures the safety of media representatives and journalists to address the lack of progress in this area.

Várhelyi, the European Commissioner, recommended that the Georgian authorities expedite the implementation of reforms in all areas. He emphasized that the issue of enlargement is currently one of the top priorities for the European Union. Várhelyi encouraged all countries aspiring to join the EU to seize this window of opportunity and make the most of it.

The European Commissioner stressed that now is a unique opportunity, and the government should accelerate its efforts in all directions to ensure a comprehensive report on Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova can be presented in October. According to him, The European Union is ready to provide assistance, but it is crucial for all requirements to be met.

The European Commissioner advised Georgia not to focus on the fact that it does not yet have the status of a candidate, unlike Moldova and Ukraine. Instead, he urged the country to concentrate on its own progress and fulfill the recommendations set for the country. Olivér Várhelyi emphasized that granting a European perspective to Georgia was a strong and significant message in itself, and Georgia should make use of it. He encouraged Georgia to focus on what it can do to move forward rather than comparing itself to others.

German Minister of European Affairs Expresses Concerns over Georgia's Incomplete Reforms

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

According to the German Minister of State for European Affairs, Anna Lührmann, based on the current assessment of the European Commission, the Georgian government is not properly implementing the reforms required by the European Commission for obtaining candidate status. Anna Lührmann made these remarks prior to the informal meeting of the European Union Council in Sweden, where the European Commission presented an interim report on the reforms carried out by Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova.

Lührmann emphasized that these reforms are not only crucial for EU integration but also for establishing a freer country

that upholds the rule of law. According to the German Minister, the challenges regarding the rule of law, judicial system reforms, and treatment of civil society need to be addressed. Nonetheless, Germany maintains its support for Georgia's European integration aspirations.

"Georgia's place is clearly in Europe, and I have met many Georgians who are very eager for Georgia to become a member of the European Union.

Unfortunately, based on what we have heard from the European Commission so far, the government has not been able to adequately meet the existing expectations. Reforms are not being implemented as they should be.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6260; Euro - 2.8891; GBP - 3.3552; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.1393; Swiss Franc - 2.9390

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It is evident that the citizens of Georgia demand that the authorities fulfill these priorities

not only for EU integration but also because it will make Georgia a freer country where the rule of law is valued.

As per our knowledge from

the European Commission, and what we will hear in more detail today, many challenges persist in terms of the rule of law and judicial system reforms. We

will also discuss the treatment of civil society and obtain more specific information.

However, Germany's position is clear: we want to see Georgia

as a part of the European Union, and we support everyone in Georgia who desires European integration," stated Lührmann.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgia Still Has Work to Do Despite Progress, Says Jessica Roswal



After the informal meeting of European Union Ministers in Stockholm, where the European Commission presented an oral report on the progress of reforms implemented by Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova, Jessica Roswal, the Swedish Minister for European Union Affairs, re-

marked that although there has been some progress, it is evident that Georgia still has remaining tasks.

Roswal emphasized the importance of conveying a coherent

tation to Olivér Várhelyi, the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, to present the progress of reforms in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, as well as their applications for EU membership.

While there has been some progress, it is clear that Georgia still has work to accomplish. It is crucial to send a clear and unified message to Georgia, emphasizing the need for additional reforms. I am confident that Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia will carefully examine the content of the update and use it as a guide for future reforms before the implementation of the enlargement package in the fall. As mentioned earlier, Georgia has made some progress, and it is essential to observe their journey towards the European Union," stated Roswal.

Roswal emphasized that although Georgia has made advancements in implementing reforms, they are still on the path towards joining the European Union. She stressed the utmost importance of the European Union and its member states providing support to Georgia throughout this journey.

Irakli Kobakhidze: Politicization of Justice Contradicts EU Values

Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of Georgian Dream, expressed his concerns about the

interference of the United National Movement and their leaders in the independence of the judiciary.

"I firmly believe that the politicization of justice goes against the values upheld by the European Union. We have witnessed multiple instances where blatant attempts were made to interfere with the judiciary's independence. One such example

2012. Back then, justice was heavily politicized, and those in power, along with their allies, interfered with the judiciary's independence," Irakli Kobakhidze said.

Kobakhidze emphasized that the government of Georgian Dream follows a different approach.

"Therefore, today, we cannot permit the same 'United Na-



was the summoning of Judge Chkhikvadze, demanding a report from him and imposing unjust sanctions, while refusing to visit him. It was a clear violation of justice. We will not tolerate such actions. We will not allow anyone to rudely disrupt the independence of our justice system. Naturally, we cannot let others do what we ourselves abstain from. We have left such practices in the past, prior to

the 'United National Movement' and their supporters to undermine the independence of our justice system. Safeguarding the independence of the judiciary is one of the most significant accomplishments of our government, and we are committed to protecting it. Neither the government nor any other entity should attempt to meddle with the independence of our justice system."

Georgia: EU and UNDP Inaugurate renovated clinic in Mejvriskhevi village

The European Union and UNDP have inaugurated the renovated building of the Mejvriskhevi village clinic in



Georgia's Shida Kartli region.

The clinic provides vital health services to over 6,000 people, including more than 1,000 children, residing in the villages adjacent to the administrative boundary line with Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia.

The renovation project included the installation of plumbing, electrical and heating systems, as well as re-designing the interior and installing new medi-

cal equipment and furniture.

In addition, the clinic space was redesigned to make it accessible to people with disabilities.

The renovation of the outpatient clinic in Mejvriskhevi village has been implemented as part of the EU-funded EU4Dialogue project focused on improving the lives and livelihoods of local communities affected by conflict.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Friday, June 23

Day Showers
High: 22°C

Night Cloudy
Low: 16°C

Saturday, June 24

Day Cloudy
High: 26°C

Night Clear
Low: 16°C

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