

President Zourabichvili Vetoes Changes to Election Process for CEC Chairman and Members

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

According to reports from the presidential administration, the amendments made to the "Election Code" that modify the process of electing the Chairman and members of the Central Election Commission (CEC) have been vetoed by the President of Georgia.

Salome Zourabichvili expressed concerns that reducing the required number of votes from 100 to 76 for electing the chairman and members of the Central Election Commission (CEC) could undermine the need for consensus-based decisions and potentially lead to increased polarization.

The President has put forward a proposal to the Parliament suggesting that the Chairman and members of the Central Election Commission (CEC) be elected with a minimum requirement of 90 votes.

"According to the current edition, the President of Georgia, an independent and non-partisan official, announces the competition and creates a candidate selection commission. The President will present the selected candidates to the Parliament.

According to the changes, the commission's creation, candidate selection, and presentation will be carried out by the chairman of the parliament, and the election will be decided by a



simple majority of the parliament, which implies a one-party decision.

Electing the chairman and members with 76 votes instead

of 100 eliminates the need for consensus-based decisions and increases the risk of polarization.

The veto serves the purpose of maintaining this consensus.

The President proposes to the parliament that the chairman and members of the CEC should be elected with at least 90 votes, as was the case with the public

defender.

This is necessary to uphold and strengthen trust in elections and the administration of elections," the statement reads.

Minister of Economy, Levan Davitashvili, Affirms Reliable Partnership in Sanctions Enforcement and Evasion Prevention

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

During the discussions surrounding the EU Special Representative for Sanctions, David O'Sullivan's visit to Georgia, the Minister of Economy, Levan Davitashvili, stressed the utmost importance of closely collaborating with strategic partners to ensure effective enforcement of sanctions and prevent any attempts to evade them.

Davitashvili highlighted that Georgia is an exceptionally trustworthy partner when it comes to enforcing sanctions.

"In this regard, Georgia emerges as an exceptionally reliable partner for the European Union, the United States of America, and Britain. We maintain regular communication with our partners at a personal level, including representatives from the customs structure and the Ministry of Finance, among others. The Ministry of Finance and relevant entities have imple-

mented several precautionary measures to counter attempts at circumventing EU sanctions.

We acknowledge that the implementation of sanctions is not an easy process for the countries imposing them. There are inherent risks, including the potential misuse of Georgia as a transit point by these countries. However, Georgia has been proactive in responding and has successfully thwarted dozens of such cases. Additionally, there is a risk of sending sanctioned cargo to a sanctioned country through third countries. In this context, Georgia actively engages in close cooperation with partner countries to facilitate the exchange of relevant information," stated Davitashvili.

As highlighted by Levan Davitashvili, during David O'Sullivan's visit, they will review and summarize the progress made in their collabo-



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6284; Euro - 2.8663; GBP - 3.3439; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.1057; Swiss Franc - 2.9427

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rative efforts with partners since the imposition of sanctions.

“In order to ensure the effective implementation of sanc-

tions, we conduct various trainings, meetings, and seminars. It is crucial to have clear guidelines and to communicate these guidelines effectively to the relevant executive officers. We

have established multiple forms of cooperation and good practices in this regard. During our discussions with partners, we will specifically address these issues and assess the progress made

since the imposition of sanctions. A comprehensive report, prepared by various agencies, will be shared with our partners,” said Davitashvili.

During the briefing following

the conclusion of the government session, Davitashvili reiterated in response to a question that Georgia does not evade sanctions.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Mamuka Mdinardze Affirms Majority of Recommendations Implemented for Georgia’s EU Candidacy Status



Mamuka Mdinardze, the chairman of “Georgian Dream”, stated that the majority of the recommendations have been implemented. He further mentioned that there are a few remaining issues, which they are actively addressing, and expressed hope that these recommendations will be duly evaluated by foreign colleagues.

He also mentioned that there will be additional consultations with partners concerning these

specific points.

“At the same time, we will need additional consultations to address each point, and European colleagues will not even be able to use a tone of reproach towards us in relation to any of them. Three recommendations were considered fully implemented. Taking a critical and

tations with partners because we ask and demand not to be oppressed, and that the evaluation criteria are also fair.

We observed the evaluation criteria in the previous case, and as a result, the country faced injustice. If only a fair decision based on these criteria had been made, we would have obtained the candidate status. We witnessed their own published evaluation criteria, which demonstrated significant progress in all crucial aspects. However, despite these achievements, we were unable to achieve the candidate status. The European perspective seemed promising, but that was all we received. Therefore, our efforts continue, with a focus on addressing the remaining points. In the end, we will do everything so that no one has an excuse to discuss reasons for non-compliance with the recommendations,” stated Mdinardze.

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili Holds Farewell Meeting with Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, held a farewell meeting with Ulrik Tideström, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden. The meeting took place at the gov-

ernment administration and focused on discussing the productive cooperation between Georgia and Sweden. Attention was particularly given to the assistance provided by Sweden in various areas of Georgia’s development.



Gharibashvili acknowledged Sweden as one of the largest international donors to Georgia, emphasizing its significant contribution to the country’s democratic and institutional modernization, as well as its socio-economic progress.

The conversation also addressed Georgia’s European integration path and Sweden’s support in this process, which holds particular significance considering Sweden’s presidency of the

Council of the European Union.

The meeting acknowledged the progress made by Georgia, including the positive dynamic of implementation of 12 recommendations. The Prime Minister emphasized that Georgia’s

integration into the European Union is the choice of the Georgian people, and the country awaits candidate status.

Gharibashvili expressed gratitude to Ulrik Tideström for his support of Georgia’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the EU integration process, along with his dedication to European reforms. He extended his well wishes for Tideström’s future endeavors.

The Council of the European Union decided today to increase the overall financial ceiling of the European Peace Facility (EPF) by Euro3.5 billion, building on an earlier agreement from 20 March 2023.

This will ensure the EPF’s financial sustainability and send “a clear political signal of the EU’s enduring commitment to

EU agrees to increase European Peace Facility financial ceiling by Euro3.5 billion



military support for Ukraine and other partners alike”, says a press release by the Council of the EU.

The EPF is an off-budget instrument. It started with an overall financial ceiling of Euro5.5 billion (in current prices) for the period 2021-2027, which was increased with a first top-up of Euro2 billion to almost Euro8 billion (in current prices)

on 13 March 2023. With today’s top-up, the overall financial ceiling now totals more than Euro12 billion (in current prices).

Thanks to the EPF, the EU has been supporting the Ukrainian Armed Forces through seven successive support packages so far, as well as many other countries, such as Georgia and Moldova.

Weather

Tuesday, June 27

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 29°C

Night Clear

Low: 18°C

Wednesday, June 28

Day Clear

High: 31°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 20°C

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