

## Parliament Overrides President's Veto on Election Code



and members of the CEC be elected by at least 90 votes in Parliament.

Ultimately, the Parliament overcame the veto and voted in favor of the original version of the law, with 78 deputies supporting the decision.

"The Parliament, unfortunately, did not share the President's motivated remarks regarding the election of the Chairman of the Central Election Commission and its non-professional members," said Giorgi Mskhiladze, the Parliamentary Secretary of the President.

According to him, a compromise option was proposed with the mentioned changes, where the number of votes decreased to three-fifths instead of two-thirds, which had already been a precedent in the Parliament of Georgia.

"We did not hear any argument or convincing explanation as to how a compromise decision could be worse than a one-party decision and the appointment of the Chairman of the Central Election Commission. Both the conclusion of the Venice Commission and the interim report of the European Commission indicated that this change should not have been accepted. It could have hindered the implementation of the 12 recommendations that bring Georgia closer to the European Union," Mskhiladze said.

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Parliament reviewed Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili's motivated remarks on the Election Code and successfully overrode the veto.

The President had vetoed the amendments to the election code, which proposed changes to the procedure for electing the chair-

man and members of the CEC (Central Election Commission).

President Zourabichvili expressed concerns that the requirement of 76 votes for electing the chairman and members would eliminate the need for consensus-based decisions and increase the risk of polarization.

Under the new rule, the responsibility of appointing the

CEC chairman and selecting candidates for professional membership was transferred from the President to the Chairman of the Parliament. The required number of votes to support the candidates was also changed, with a majority of the full membership (76 votes) being sufficient for their election. The appointed members would hold their posi-

tions for a term of 5 years.

Previously, the election required 100 votes. If a candidate did not receive 100 votes, they would be elected by a majority and serve a term of 6 months. This change was a requirement specified in the April 19 agreement.

As a compromise, the President proposed that the Chairman

## Vice Prime Minister Accuses Ukraine of 'Politically Motivated' Sanctions on 'Georgian Airways'

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Minister of Economy and Vice Prime Minister of Georgia, Levan Davitashvili, has labeled the Ukrainian decision to impose sanctions on 'Georgian Airways' and its founder as politically motivated. He accused the opposition of providing inaccurate information to Ukraine, which formed the basis of the decision.

Davitashvili expressed his disappointment with the Ukrainian authorities, stating that while many airlines from various countries fly to Russia without facing similar reactions, Georgia has been subjected to an unfriendly decision. He also highlighted the close connections between certain opposition groups and the Ukrainian authorities, suggesting that this decision may have been influenced by misinformation, further damag-

ing the relations between the two countries.

Regarding the response, Davitashvili stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia has previously reacted to similar cases, and he expects an appropriate reaction from them now.

"It must be clearly said that this was a politically motivated decision because we see that there are too many airlines from various countries flying to Russia, and there has been no similar reaction or decision from the Ukrainian authorities. Therefore, it is sad to say that we have witnessed yet another very unfriendly decision by the Ukrainian authorities. We have had similar cases in the past where Ukrainian authorities imposed sanctions on several Georgian citizens.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6092; Euro - 2.8422; GBP - 3.3066; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9183; Swiss Franc - 2.9014

# Vice Prime Minister Accuses Ukraine of 'Politically Motivated' Sanctions on 'Georgian Airways'

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We are aware of the close connections between certain opposition groups and the Ukrainian authorities, and

perhaps this decision is based on such connections, where incorrect information is provided, leading to decisions that only harm the relations between the two countries

without any improvement. As for the reaction, just like in previous cases, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia has responded, and I am sure that there will now be an ap-

propriate reaction from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," said the Vice Prime Minister.

On July 1, Ukraine imposed 10-year sanctions on 'Georgian Airways', including

personal sanctions on its founder, Tamaz Gaiashvili. Gaiashvili strongly criticized the decision, deeming it both absurd and unfair.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### President Zelensky Reiterates Call for Georgian Government to Hand Over Saakashvili to Ukraine

Saakashvili for proper medical treatment and care, while urging international partners to take action and safeguard Saakashvili's life, emphasizing the value Europe places on human life.

"Right now, Russia is killing Ukrainian citizen Mykhailo Saakashvili at the hands of the

Tbilisi to stop this abuse and agree on Saakashvili's return to Ukraine. Our partners, in coordination with Ukraine, have also offered various rescue options.

Today, I have instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to summon the Georgian Ambassador to Ukraine, to express our strong protest and to ask him to

capital.

Once again, I call on the Georgian authorities to hand over Ukrainian citizen Mykhailo Saakashvili to Ukraine for the necessary treatment and care. And I urge our partners to address this situation and not ignore it and save this man. No government in Europe has the right to execute people, life is a basic European value," Zelensky wrote.

Georgia with a representative from the Embassy of Ukraine in Georgia.

The objective of the meeting, as conveyed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, was to discuss the inclusion of the airline 'Georgian Airways' in the list of sanctions imposed by the Ukrainian authorities.

During the meeting, concerns were raised regarding the aforementioned decision, which the Georgian side deemed unfounded. The Ukrainian side was requested to provide further clarification on the matter.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia also highlighted the Ambassador of Georgia to Ukraine's apprehension regarding the sanctioning of the Georgian airline.

### Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Raises Concerns with Ukrainian Embassy Regarding Sanctioning of 'Georgian Airways'

A meeting took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of



On Twitter, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky posted a photo of the former President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, expressing his concern over the alleged harm inflicted on a Ukrainian citizen by the Georgian government, supposedly with the involvement of Russia.

Zelensky has instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to summon the Georgian Ambassador to Ukraine, urging the official to leave within 48 hours for consultations. Zelensky reiterated his plea to the Georgian government to hand over

Georgian authorities. We have repeatedly called on the official

leave Ukraine within 48 hours to hold consultations with his



## EU guidelines for educators on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy now available in Georgian

The Georgian translation of the European Commission's Guidelines on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training is now available online.

These EU Guidelines, published first in English in October 2022, provide pedagogical expertise on how to strengthen the critical thinking skills of young people to foster their resilience in the digital world.

The guidelines also aim to



generate a broader understanding of digital literacy achieved through education and training, to promote responsible and safe use of digital technologies, and to foster a better public awareness and knowledge regarding disinformation.

The document is intended for primary and school teachers/educators in different subjects and with different levels of experience and knowledge in the field.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

## Weather

Tuesday, July 4

Day ☀️ Clear  
High: 32°C

Night 🌧️ Mostly Cloudy  
Low: 21°C

Wednesday, July 5

Day 🌧️ Mostly Cloudy  
High: 33°C

Night 🌑 Clear  
Low: 20°C

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# Celebration of the 247<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the US Declaration of Independence

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the American Chamber of Commerce in Georgia (AmCham Georgia), jointly with the US Embassy in Georgia, hosted a family picnic to celebrate the 247<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the US Declaration of Independence. American, Georgian, and international families enjoyed a barbeque, live music, and family fun at a traditional American style picnic. The children delighted in bouncy castles, face painting, balloon and chemical shows, workshops and clowns. Famous caricaturist Zaliko and Kemo

Painted portraits for guests to take home as mementos. A brilliant display of fireworks capped off the fun-filled event.

The U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Kelly C. Degnan and AmCham Georgia President Irakli Baidashvili welcomed around 2200 guests. At the end of the event Mariam Bigvava, Junior Eurovision 2022 participant from Georgia sang the American national anthem and the Georgian national Anthem was sung by Nikoloz Kharati, participant of famous Georgian show "Ranina".

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of independence in order to form new nation. As true today as it was then, the Declaration states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

AmCham Georgia and the U.S. Embassy community celebrate not only American Independence Day, but also the

partnership with our friends and colleagues in Georgia. It is symbolic that in 2023 the American Chamber of Commerce in Georgia Celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Founded in 1998, AmCham Georgia is the largest business association in the country, representing more than 230 Georgian, American and international companies and works to strengthen U.S.-Georgia business and economic relations and to give valuable input towards the improvement of the business climate in Georgia.









