

## NATO Communique Reaffirms Georgia's Prospective Membership in the Alliance

By Liza Mchedlidze

During the NATO Vilnius summit, the alliance released its customary communique, which outlines NATO's current policies across various aspects. The communique for the 2023 summit also addresses the situation in Georgia.

The communique reiterates the Allies' unwavering support for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders. It emphasizes Georgia's right to determine its own future and foreign policy without interference from external sources. Additionally, it calls upon Russia to withdraw its forces from Georgia without its consent. The communique urges Russia to reverse its recognition of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions, cease their militarization, and halt attempts to physically separate them from the rest of Georgia through the construction of border-like barriers. Furthermore, it demands an end to human rights violations, including arbitrary detentions and harassment of Georgian citizens.

The communique highly appreciates Georgia's significant contributions to NATO operations, which exemplify its dedication and ability to enhance Euro-Atlantic security. The alliance remains committed to uti-



lizing the NATO-Georgia Commission and the Annual National Programme (ANP) to deepen political dialogue and practical cooperation with Georgia. It reaffirms the decision made at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Georgia will become a member of the Alliance through the Membership Action Plan (MAP), which is an integral part of the membership process. All elements of this decision and subsequent decisions are reaffirmed. The communique welcomes the progress made in implementing the enhanced

Substantial NATO-Georgia Package, encompassing Crisis Management, Cyber Security, Military Engineering, Secure Communications, and new initiatives in Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Defense and Training Facilities. To advance its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, Georgia is encouraged to make reforms, particularly democratic reforms, and optimize the utilization of the ANP.

"We reiterate our support to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its

internationally recognised borders. We stand firm in our support for Georgia's right to decide its own future and foreign policy course free from outside interference. We call on Russia to withdraw the forces it has stationed in Georgia without its consent. We further call on Russia to reverse its recognition of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia; to end the militarisation of these regions and continued attempts to forcibly separate them from the rest of Georgia through the construction of border-like obstacles; and

to cease the human rights violations and abuses, including arbitrary detentions, and harassment of Georgian citizens. We highly appreciate Georgia's substantial contributions to NATO operations, which demonstrate its commitment and capability to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security. We remain committed to making full use of the NATO-Georgia Commission and the Annual National Programme (ANP) in deepening political dialogue and practical cooperation with Georgia. We reiterate the decision made at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Georgia will become a member of the Alliance with the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as an integral part of the process; we reaffirm all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions. We welcome the progress made in implementing the enhanced Substantial NATO-Georgia Package, including Crisis Management, Cyber Security, Military Engineering, and Secure Communications, as well as new initiatives in the areas of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence and Training Facilities. To advance its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, Georgia must make progress on reforms, including key democratic reforms, and make best use of the ANP," NATO'S communique reads.

## Parliament Approves 'Defense Code' in Second Reading, Mamuka Mdinardze Highlights its Role in Advancing Georgia's NATO Membership

By Liza Mchedlidze

In the second reading, the Parliament has approved the draft "Defence Code." During the extraordinary session, changes received support from 79 Members of Parliament, while six voted against it.

Deputy Minister of Defense, Grigol Giorgadze, highlighted that the amendments proposed by the Ministry of Defense constitute a significant reform. They aim to fundamentally transform and align the military service with defense objectives, establish crucial social protection measures for military personnel, and establish robust legal frameworks for defense organization and NATO compatibility.

"The Defense Code has been in development for several years,



and it has become a cherished project for our agency. A tremendous amount of effort has been dedicated to its development," stated Giorgadze. "Everyone who supports the enhancement of Georgia's defense capability

has been extensively involved in its creation."

The amendments will be approved by Parliament in the third reading in September.

During the plenary session, Mamuka Mdinardze, the chair-

man of the "Georgian Dream" faction, expressed that Georgia currently, more than ever before, aligns with NATO standards. He emphasized that the 'Defense Code' will play a significant role in further advancing Georgia's progress in this regard.

According to Mamuka Mdinardze, Georgia is now more democratic than ever, and the country has no intention of passing any legislation that would harm its interests.

"Regrettably, the level of appreciation may be somewhat diminished, but we will undoubtedly emerge victorious. It is not a particular political force that will triumph, but rather the country as a whole," expressed Mdinardze.

He also mentioned that Ukraine, too, is not receiving the desired appreciation, as its citizens remain uncertain about when their country will be granted NATO membership.

"Unfortunately, our sacrifices and hard work are not appreciated. To be honest, Ukraine has also not received the recognition it deserves. When considering that a third of the country's

population does not live in their place of residence and the countless lives lost due to Russian occupation, it is disheartening that the citizens of Ukraine remain uncertain about their acceptance into NATO. Despite their self-sacrifice and unprecedented heroism, Ukrainian soldiers do not know when their country will be accepted into NATO and what the conditions will be at that time. While some individuals express respect and partnership, it is important to acknowledge that at the leadership level, it has been stated that Ukraine will only receive NATO membership once the war with Russia is won and the necessary standards are met. This predetermined situation requires unanimous agreement among all countries to achieve victory in the war and align with NATO standards before receiving an invitation to join the alliance. In my opinion, Ukraine is underappreciated, and I apologize if my sentiment appears subjective. Nonetheless, I hold hope that certain issues that have been relatively easily resolved will still have a positive impact on the future," expressed Mdinardze.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Highlights Positive Outcomes of NATO Summit for Georgia



According to the statement made by Ilia Darchiashvili, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, the NATO Summit in Vilnius yielded positive outcomes for Georgia across various dimensions.

Darchiashvili highlighted that the mention of Georgia in the communique will undoubtedly invigorate NATO-Georgia relations. He expressed his belief that the narrative concerning Georgia has significantly and unequivocally improved.

The joint efforts of Georgia and its international partners in promoting peace and security were once again emphasized. The communique reaffirmed strong support for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Darchiashvili concluded by stating that these developments will undoubtedly strengthen Georgia's ties with NATO.

"I believe that the narrative regarding Georgia has significantly and unambiguously improved. Once again, Georgia's endeavors to enhance peace and security in collaboration with international partners were emphasized. There was firm support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our country. Undoubtedly, this will bolster our country's relations with NATO," stated Ilia Darchiashvili, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

MEP Miriam Lexmann Calls for Georgia's Determined Efforts to Attain Candidate Status

MEP Miriam Lexmann, accompanied by Nika Gvaramia, founder of "Mtavari Channel," and other MEPs, highlighted the crucial importance of Georgia's relentless pursuit of candidate status during a

press conference in Strasbourg.

Lexmann acknowledged the deep polarization within Georgia and expressed her support for the country's aspiration to become a member of the European Union and a valued member of the European family. She raised concerns about

obligations, given that the people of Georgia envision their future connected with the European Union. She underscored the significance of Gvaramia's perspective, considering his presence outside the country.

In closing, Lexmann expressed hope for



the prevailing polarization, physical attacks on journalists, and polarizing actions by the government, emphasizing the need for a change in the situation. Lexmann stressed that it is crucial for the Georgian government to fulfill its

the release and proper treatment of Mikheil Saakashvili, wishing for his health to be taken care of and for him to overcome the challenges he faced during his time in prison.

Presentation of the EU and German Government funded municipal-led investment projects.

Tbilisi. July 11, 2023 - With the support of the EU, within the "EU4ITD - Catalysing of Economic and Social Life" project, the presentation of the selected municipal-led investment projects for financing was held by Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) with the patronage of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia (MRDI).

Mzia Giorgobiani, Deputy Minister of MRDI; Nikolas Cendrowicz, Head of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation in Tbilisi; Lidija Christmann, Head of Development Cooperation South Caucasus at the German embassy; Sandra Schenke, GIZ Country Director, and Howard Harding, CESL Team Leader delivered the welcome speech and opened the event.

The event's primary aim was

to give space to mayors from 14 municipalities to present the investments selected for financing under the CESL project. Examples include developing a southern entrance to Kolkheti National Park in Lanchkhuti, establishing a wine laboratory in Baghdati, and rehabilitating the local museum in Dedoplistskaro. In addition, goods produced by CESL private sector beneficiaries was presented.

The event brought organisations, primarily municipalities from 4 focal Georgian regions (Guria, Imereti, Kakheti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti), together with state bodies, donors, and their implementing organisations and associations, including CSOs, as well as

MRDI, the EU Delegation and the German embassy; up to 100 participants attended the event.

With EUR 6.5 million in funding from the European Union and EUR 1 million from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, GIZ implements 4 year - EU4ITD - "Catalysing Economic and Social Life" programme to identify untapped economic and social potential in its focal regions- Guria, Imereti, Kakheti and Racha-Lechkhumi/ Kvemo Svaneti and supply investment financing so that such potential is realised. The project aims to "catalyse" existing but untapped potential in the four focal regions to achieve positive economic and social outcomes.

Life opportunities for local inhabitants should therefore be improved, thus contributing to more balanced territorial development across Georgia, including a reduction in migration from the target regions and an increase in people relocating there.

The project addresses municipalities and the private sector and runs for almost 4 years (until September 2025). Initiatives financed (e.g. infrastructure, equipment) should bring together local self-government, the private sector and civil society.



Weather

Thursday, July 13

Day ☀️ Clear High: 31°C  
Night 🌙 Clear Low: 16°C

Friday, July 14

Day ☀️ Clear High: 31°C  
Night 🌙 Clear Low: 18°C

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