

European Union Ambassador Urges Systemic Approach to De-Oligarchization in Georgia; Advocates for Professional and Independent Judicial System

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, H.E. Pawel Herczynski, stated that the Georgian side has opted for a certain approach concerning de-oligarchization. According to him, the latest recommendation of the Venice Commission clearly indicates that the approach chosen by Georgia is not considered the right one.

According to him, it is important to create an environment in which the excessive influence of oligarchs on the political system will be impossible.

"Deoligarchization is a complex issue. This is a question of the excessive influence of rich businessmen on political life. This challenge is not unique to Georgia; it also exists in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Georgian side chose a certain approach. We are really grateful that the international standard setters consulted, and in the latest recommendation of the Venice Commission, which is the internationally recognized standard setter when it comes to legal issues, it is very clear that the approach chosen by Georgia is not correct. The Commission points out that this approach actually contains many risks, and the Venice Commission offers a different approach, a systemic approach.

The European Union sincerely hopes that the Georgian political elite will quickly reconsider their attitude and come up with a vision of how to solve the issue of the excessive influence of oligarchs in Georgia with a systemic approach. What does this mean? This means that we are not talking about individuals or names, but we are talking about creating an environment in which the excessive influence of



oligarchs will be impossible or very difficult," the ambassador noted.

Additionally, Herczynski expressed the desire to initiate a discussion about the judicial system in Georgia and seek the optimal solution to establish a highly professional and independent judiciary.

"There is no golden standard when it

comes to the judicial system. There is also a discussion in the European Union about the rule of law and the reform of the judicial system. We would like this discussion to take place in Georgia and find the best solution for a very professional independent judicial system. Whatever the ideas are, they should be discussed to-

gether with the creators of international standards, the Venice Commission, and ODIHR. We sincerely hope that Georgia will find the best way to move forward when it comes to a very important, very sophisticated, and very difficult issue, which is a proper judicial system," the Ambassador noted.

Shalva Papuashvili Concludes Georgia's Road to the European Union Conference

By Liza Mchedlidze



While summarizing the conference titled Georgia's Road to the European Union, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, expressed satisfaction with its success and emphasized the importance of further building on this experience with similar events that delve into other pressing issues. According to Papuashvili, the conference facilitated substantive discussions on various topics, including judicial reform, electoral matters, and de-oligarchization.

Papuashvili extended his gratitude to the Civic Platform, acknowledging the real need for such meetings and the enthusiasm shown by participants to exchange ideas. The length of the conference demonstrated the col-

lective interest in sharing perspectives. He highlighted the constructive nature of the discussions, even on polarizing subjects, which showcased the potential for professional dialogues about substantial matters.

"I believe the conference was a resounding success, and I would like to extend my gratitude to the Civic Platform for organizing it. The conference was much needed, evident from its duration and the enthusiastic exchange of ideas among participants. We covered vital topics, including judicial reform, electoral issues, and de-oligarchization. While discussions on polarizing issues may have evoked strong emotions, it also demonstrated the possibility of conducting professional

CONTINUED ON Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6029; Euro - 2.8752; GBP - 3.3424; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8890; Swiss Franc - 2.9936

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

deliberations on substantive matters." Papuashvili said.

However, Papuashvili expressed disappointment that the opposition did not remain as engaged throughout the event. He observed a pattern wherein the opposition uses its candidate status as a tool to exert pressure on the government, resorting to blackmail and creating chaos. The Chairman lamented that when faced with a professional and calm discussion that cannot be exploited as a weapon, the opposition chose not to actively participate.

"Unfortunately, the opposition left the conference after just half

Shalva Papuashvili Concludes Georgia's Road to the European Union Conference

a day, indicating a general lack of interest in the broader issues. It's disheartening to witness the opposition using their candidate status as a tool to pressure the government, resort to blackmail, and create chaos. However, when confronted with a professional and composed discussion, they seemed reluctant to participate, revealing their hesitation to engage in constructive dialogue.

I would like to express my appreciation to the representatives

of the opposition who were initially involved, although, regrettably, most did not actively participate throughout the conference." The Chairman of Parliament stated.

Additionally, Shalva Papuashvili stressed the need to continue such conferences, exploring other topics in greater depth. He highlighted specific areas, such as environmental protection and the economy, related to the association agree-

ment and considered essential to the European Union. Papuashvili concluded that discussing these issues is crucial as they directly impact the lives of Georgian citizens.

"Regarding our cooperation with the civil platform, I extend my thanks for their representation of a diverse civil society. Everyone had the opportunity to express their opinions on all issues. I consider this first conference a success, and I believe it

is vital to build on this experience by organizing similar events where we can delve more deeply into various topics. We are yet to discuss issues arising from the association agreement, particularly those concerning environmental protection and the economy—fundamental values at the heart of the European Union. It is crucial that we address these issues as they directly impact the lives of our citizens," stated Papuashvili.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Surge in Company Registrations: Russian Citizens Found Three Times More Companies in Georgia After

2022 to June 2023, this number tripled.

As a result, the average monthly registration of companies by Russian citizens in Georgia reached 1,300 after the onset of the war in Ukraine, based on the information provided by the organization.

Maritime Agency Confirms Arrival of Cruise Ship from Russia in Batumi

The Maritime Transport Agency has announced that on July 27, the cruise ship ASTORIA GRANDE, sailing under the flag of Palau, is scheduled to enter the Batumi seaport. The ship commences its cruise from the city of Sochi, Russia, and is operated by the Turkish company Miray Cruises International.

The agency clarifies that the entry of the ASTORIA GRANDE is of a

commercial nature and that it is registered in Seychelles under the name of the company "Goodwin Shipping Limited." Furthermore, the ship is not subject to international sanctions.

"The Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia, in coordination with the Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance, continuously inspects both ships and shipowners in relation to international sanctions. Therefore, if the ship or the owner of the ship is on the list of sanctions, it is not allowed to enter the ports of Georgia and carry out the relevant proce-

dures," the agency says.

At the beginning of the year, the information about the sea shipments between Sochi and Batumi was spread by the Russian media, but Georgian authorities did not confirm this information.



Ukraine War, TI Georgia Reports

After the start of the war in Ukraine, Russian citizens have founded 21,326 companies in Georgia, which is three times more than the total number founded in the previous 27 years, according to a report by Transparency International - Georgia.

Specifically, the data reveals that from January 1995 to February 2022, a total of 7,788 companies were established by Russian citizens in Georgia. However, in the period from March

EU support for improving food safety standards in Georgia

With EU support under the ENPARD programme in Georgia, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has launched the first support opportunity for Georgian Food Business Operators (FBOs), which have benefitted from previous phases of ENPARD. The support package will include technical assistance and a matching grant opportunity to improve food safety standards in compliance with relevant legislation.

The FAO has already reached out to the eligible beneficiaries with an offer of participation in the Programme. In total, 85 can-



didate FBOs have expressed interest, and the FAO team is currently defining an action plan for each participant with them.

The first phase of the EU-funded support cycle will ensure that the benefiting FBO representatives are trained on food safety. After this training, FAO will assess the equipment needs of each beneficiary to reach food safety standards. Based on the assessments, EU-funded matching grants of up to US\$50,000 will be offered for purchasing the identified equipment.

Under the EU-funded ENPARD IV, FAO will gradually launch various support packages consisting of technical assistance and matching grants to address some of Georgian agriculture's most pressing food safety challenges.

The European Union has supported rural development in Georgia through its ENPARD Programme since 2013.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, July 26

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 31°C

Night Clear

Low: 21°C

Thursday, July 27

Day Clear

High: 34°C

Night Clear

Low: 23°C

published by

The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia

Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze

Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000

E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge

http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli

Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze

Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili

Layout Designer, Photographer

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.