

## Georgian Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili Meets With Hungarian Counterpart Péter Szijjártó

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

During his working visit to Hungary, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Ilia Darchiashvili met with his Hungarian counterpart, Péter Szijjártó. At a joint press conference with Georgian Foreign Minister, Peter Szijjártó emphasized that the issue of Georgia's candidate status is a matter of political significance.

He urged the European Union to make a political commitment regarding this decision, which is expected to be reached in the autumn. Szijjártó highlighted that Georgia is deserving of candidate status.

"We highly value our cooperation with the Caucasus region, demonstrated by the upcoming joint summit scheduled for October 11-12 in Tbilisi, bringing together members of the Georgian and Hungarian governments.

During this summit, we will sign essential agreements, including an investment program and an extension of our scholarship program.

Additionally, our discussions also focused on Georgia's aspiration to attain EU candidate status. We believe Georgia should receive candidate status in the autumn. Georgia did everything for it. The decision on Georgia's candidate status is a political issue, and we demand this political commitment from the EU this autumn," Szijjártó said.

During a joint press conference, Georgian Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili conveyed his gratitude for Hungary's proactive support and the personal dedication of Péter Szijjártó.

Darchiashvili underscored Georgia's unwavering dedication to its European aspirations, emphasizing that the country's desire to become a part of Europe is stron-



ger than ever. He also highlighted Georgia's determination to fulfill the necessary obligations for EU membership.

"We are acutely aware that joining the European Union entails enduring obligations and responsibilities, constituting a long but results-oriented process. Georgia has demonstrated unwavering determination to fulfill these commitments

and secure EU membership.

Consequently, we firmly believe that Georgia deserves candidate status, enabling its progression to subsequent membership stages. We hold strong convictions that the leaders of EU member states will make yet another historic decision this year by granting Georgia candidate status.

Furthermore, we also hope that a decision will be made, in conjunction with Ukraine and Moldova, to commence negotiations on Georgia's accession to the European Union. These decisions determine our country's connection with the European Union, and we trust that Hungary will continue to stand by Georgia on this journey," Darchiashvili stated.

## Daniel Fried: Robust Institutions Will Strengthen Georgia and Solidify Its Position in the European Family

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Former US Assistant Secretary of State, Daniel Fried, recently addressed Georgian journalists, discussing the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the present situation in Georgia.

Fried underscored the significance of the Georgian government's efforts in advancing the nation's integration with the European community. He emphasized that the government's primary focus should be on establishing robust institutions, which will not only strengthen Georgia but also solidify its position within the European family.

Former US Assistant Secretary of State emphasized that he doesn't get involved in Georgian politics or favor any specific political party and stressed the importance of Georgia's democratic development and the establish-

ment of strong institutions as prerequisites for becoming a European country.

Daniel Fried drew a parallel to the successful experiences of Poland and the Baltic states in the 1990s, where building democracy and prosperity at home preceded their EU and NATO memberships.

In this statement, Fried addressed Russian war crimes in Ukraine and strongly disagreed with the notion that NATO's actions or inactions played a role in Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He dismissed this idea as "nonsense" and emphasized that Russia's invasion was not influenced by NATO's activities. Instead, he attributes the conflict to other factors, such as Ukraine's pursuit of independence and democracy.

"Georgian politics are none of



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6279; Euro - 2.8239; GBP - 3.3006; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.6956; Swiss Franc - 2.9583

# Daniel Fried: Robust Institutions Will Strengthen Georgia and Solidify Its Position in the European Family

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my business. I'm an American. I don't care which party wins the Georgian elections. What's important is that Georgia builds its democracy and its institutions so it actually becomes in reality a European country. And then the institutional arrangements will follow.

I know what I'm talking about. The Poles and Balts in the nineties built their democracy at home and on the strength of that

success they then said, well, we need to join the EU; we need to join NATO, and they succeeded. Georgia's position is the worst geographically, everybody knows that. We get that.

But the main thing Georgia can do is build its democracy at home, build its institutions and build prosperity based on that. And that is the way to strengthen Georgia and give Georgia the best possible future. At least that's my view.

I think that's just wrong. I

think the notion that NATO is responsible for Putin's invasion of Ukraine is nonsense. That's just nonsense. The fact is, after the Bucharest summit in 2008, nothing happened to advance Ukraine's relations with NATO. Nothing. Zero. It's completely frozen, and Putin attacked anyway.

The reason has nothing to do with Ukraine and NATO, and everything to do with the fact that Ukraine was trying to chart an independent course to build,

as I said earlier, democracy and prosperity at home, as well as its independence. That's the real cause.

Well, you know, better than I do. Georgia has had fits and starts. Georgia has had fits and starts in its internal transformation. Sometimes it moves ahead very rapidly and with success, sometimes it slows down. The fact is that Georgia's future with the European Union is more in George's hands than many people realize. Europe will re-

spond to Georgia's success in its reforms at home.

Again, it doesn't matter which party is in control. Any party, Georgian Dream, United National Movement, For Georgia. It doesn't matter. What matters is what the government does. The government should do everything it can to build a state of law at home, to build a country of strong institutions that will strengthen Georgia and secure its place in the European family of nations," Daniel Fried said.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Irakli Kobakhidze Sees Impeachment as a Chance to 'Expose' President Zourabichvili's Ties to the 'Radical' Opposition



Irakli Kobakhidze, the chair of the ruling Georgian Dream party, has stated that the primary objective of initiating the impeachment procedure is to have the Constitutional Court verify a clear violation of the Constitution by the President. Kobakhidze views the impeachment process as an opportunity to unveil the connection between President Zourabichvili and the 'radical' opposition.

"The goal is simple: the Con-

stitutional Court to affirm, through its conclusion, the blatant violation of the Constitution by the President.

We've stated from the outset that there aren't 100 votes in parliament. The radical opposition, which acts in line with Salome Zourabichvili and shares a common agenda, will not support the impeachment of some-

one they've branded a traitor. They share a common agenda and a common patron. So, the objective isn't to secure 100 votes. The objective is for the Constitutional Court to officially determine the violation of Georgia's Constitution within the impeachment procedure.

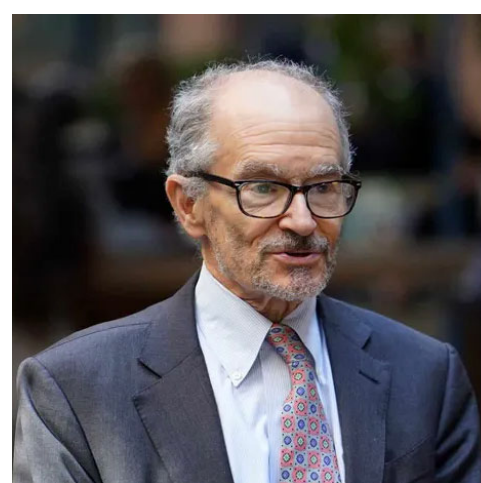
Once that happens, everything will become clear. The alliance between Salome Zourabichvili and the radical opposition will be exposed. Once again, the radical opposition will demonstrate that it's a political force that disregards the Constitution. Remember how they violated the Constitution before 2012, and now they're doing it from the opposition," Kobakhidze said.

### Daniel Fried: Georgia Should Present a Pro-European Image Regardless of Which Political Party Is in Power

Former US Assistant Secretary of State, Daniel Fried, stated that he does not comprehend the reasons behind the impeachment of President Salome Zourabichvili.

Fried expressed his belief that Georgia should present a pro-European image to the world, regardless of which political party is in power. He specifically mentioned President Zourabichvili as someone he has known for a long time and noted her consistent support for Georgia's European future.

Daniel Fried stated that he



doesn't understand the basis for the impeachment but he emphasized that his primary concern is Georgia's efforts to establish itself as a European country.

He concluded by stating that the more Georgia does to make

its case for European integration, the better it will be for everyone.

"The face that Georgia presents to the world should be, at least in my view, a pro-European face, no matter which party is in control. Now President Zourabichvili is someone I've known for many years and she has been a strong, consistent advocate of Georgia's European future. She's pushing that. And, I don't understand the basis for the impeachment, but that's not my business. The fact is the more Georgia does to build a case for itself as a European country, the better life we all will have," Fried stated.

## Weather

Wednesday, September 6

Day Clear  
High: 31°C

Night Clear  
Low: 18°C

Thursday, September 7

Day Clear  
High: 28°C

Night T-storm  
Low: 17°C

**XV საერთაშორისო ფესტივალი**  
XV INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

**აქტივიზმი**  
NIGHT SERENADES

**AUGUST 22, BORJOMI**  
Hotel BORJOMI LIKANI 19:00

**AUGUST 24-25, BATUMI**  
Iliia Chavchavadze Professional State DRAMA THEATER

**SEPTEMBER 22-23-24, TBILISI**  
Tbilisi State CONSERVATOIRE, GRAND HALL 20:00

Festival Base Orchestra  
**GEORGIAN VIRTUOSI**  
**GEORGIAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

ART  
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ფესტივალი  
საერთაშორისო ფესტივალი  
საერთაშორისო ფესტივალი  
საერთაშორისო ფესტივალი

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