

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Georgian Government's Interest in 'Normalizing' Relations

By Liza Mchedlidze

According to Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, the current government of Georgia is interested in normalizing relations with Russia. Lavrov discussed this in an interview with the Russian state media outlet TASS.

Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that they decided to resume flights and cancel the visa regime between the two countries in response to the attitude of the Gharibashvili government.

"When we observed that the current authorities in Tbilisi expressed an interest in normalizing relations with Russia, particularly for the benefit of ordinary people who wish to engage in various activities such as communication, tourism, and business between our countries, and given the historical ties between our economic systems, we reached an agreement with Mr. Gharibashvili's government to resume flights and abolish the visa regime. It's worth noting that the visa-free regime for Russian citizens has been in place for a considerable period, and many of our citizens have made use of it.

Now, with the introduction of



a visa-free regime for Georgian citizens and the re-establishment of air communications, our relations have become much more comfortable. The number of flights and the geography of

direct flights are expanding, and trade turnover is increasing. Many traditional Georgian export products, such as wine and Borjomi, are highly popular here," he said.

Sergey Lavrov stated that Russia has never held a negative attitude toward the Georgian people and emphasized that Georgians 'have a special place' in Russia's history. In the same

interview, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs mentions that the decision to end diplomatic relations between the two countries was made during the 'Saakashvili regime'.

Shalva Papuashvili Addresses Ukraine War at European Conference of Presidents of Parliament

By Liza Mchedlidze



During his address at the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament of the Council of Europe Member States in Dublin, Shalva Papuashvili, the Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, pointed out that Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the most extensive military action of this century, has raised significant concerns about fundamental principles such as national sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights, and the rule of law.

"It is an honor for me to participate in this conference and share Georgia's perspective on such an important issue that has engulfed Europe and the whole world: Russia's war against Ukraine. This conflict has undermined the existing security architecture, caused enormous damage to Ukraine, and shattered hopes for a peaceful Europe.

For more than a year, we have been living in an increasingly

CONTINUED ON Page 2

Shalva Papuashvili Addresses Ukraine War at European Conference of Presidents of Parliament

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

vulnerable and turbulent world. In addition to security challenges in the traditional sense, Russia's war has dealt a serious blow to energy and food markets, affecting millions of people around the world.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has raised significant doubts about the norms of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights, and the rule of law on a scale not seen this century, putting considerable pressure on the liberal international order," stated Papuashvili.

Papuashvili emphasized that Russia's recent aggression towards Ukraine did not come as a surprise to Georgia. He reaffirmed Georgia's unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within the internationally recognized framework, driven by both respect for international law and a deep understanding of Ukraine's pain. Reflecting on Georgia's own past, Papuashvili recounted how Georgia had faced a similar full-scale military aggression by Russia in 2008.

Parliament Speaker noted that, unfortunately, the interna-

tional response to Russia's actions against Georgia in 2008 was weak, temporary, and ineffective. However, he expressed optimism about the current situation, highlighting a stronger and more united European response to Russia's aggression towards Ukraine.

Papuashvili highlighted that Georgia demonstrated its solidarity with Ukraine not only through words but also through robust political and diplomatic actions, despite the ongoing occupation of Georgian territories and the presence of Russian military forces just kilometers away

from Georgian capital Tbilisi. "We undertook these actions in the face of ongoing occupation in Georgian territories and the presence of Russian military forces, just tens of kilometers away from our capital.

Georgia has actively co-authored, joined, or supported hundreds of resolutions, joint statements, and initiatives in support of Ukraine within all major international organizations and institutions. Additionally, Georgia has become a signatory to the Reykjavik Declaration. The Parliament of Georgia is committed to supporting

the government in implementing this declaration.

Beyond our strong friendship and historical connections, we share a common vision for the future—membership in the European Union and NATO. Our stance is resolute, and we are confident that our countries will continue progressing along this path. Now is the ideal time to encourage nations that uphold European values and have historical ties to the European family," stated Shalva Papuashvili.

Papuashvili emphasized, "We must remind the aggressor that there is no alternative to peace."

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Edison Research Reveals Strong Support for Georgia's EU and NATO Membership



According to a public opinion survey conducted by Edison Research and commissioned by 'Formula,' 50% of the population thinks that Georgia will receive the status of a candidate for EU membership. Additionally, 90% of the population supports join-

ing the EU, and 83% support joining NATO.

According to the research, responses to the question "What are your expectations regarding Georgia receiving candidate status for EU membership in the fall of 2023?" are distributed as follows:

- Will receive: 50%
- Will not receive: 50%

According to the same research, 10% oppose Georgia's membership in the European Union, while 90% support it.

The responses to the question 'Do you support or oppose Georgia joining NATO?' were as follows:

Support: 83%

- Support: 83%
- Oppose: 17%

Irakli Gharibashvili: Family Funded the Charter Flight to Highlight Political Differences with UNM

The Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili stated that he did not use any government funds for his son's charter flight to the USA; instead, his family covered the expenses. According to the Prime Minister, he intentionally paid the amount himself to highlight the distinctions between the Georgian Dream and the United National Movement Party of Georgia.

"I deliberately did this, making my family pay the charter fee, to once again highlight the

contrast and difference between our approach and the extremism that existed 10 years ago," Prime Minister said.

In response to the journalist's observation that Irakli Gharibashvili's father, Tariel Gharibashvili, who paid the charter fee, is a pensioner, the

Prime Minister said:

"Thank God, I have a wealthy family. I was never poor. After I graduated from the university, even before politics, I worked with the richest man in this country and managed the largest fund."



EU-supported computer science programme for schools launched in Ukraine

An EU-supported project that redefines Computer Science as a school subject was presented in Kyiv on 26 September.

The project – 'Updated Informatics – IT-studios' – is being rolled out on the initiative of the Ministry of Digital Trans-

formation and the Ministry of Education and Science, as part of the EU-funded programme EU4DigitalUA.

"Over four million Ukrainian students can now study with the updated Computer Science materials," said Mykhailo Fedorov,

Minister of Digital Transformation. "IT-studios represent a fundamentally new approach to education, a practical embodiment of the best modern experience. We have updated the platform so that educational institutions can easily adapt to the digital future, which we are already creating together."

The pilot project was completed last academic year as part of the EU4DigitalUkraine programme, with 50 schools and 3,000 students participating under the guidance of 70 teachers across Ukraine.

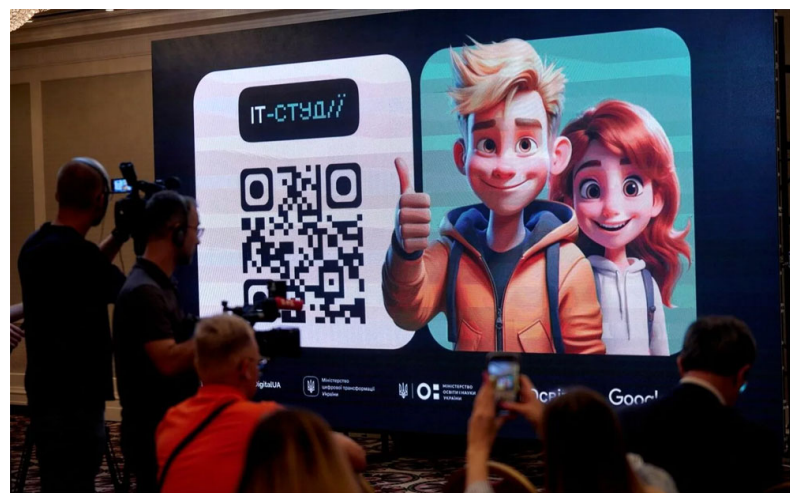
Starting from 26 September, the materials for 'Updated Informatics – IT-studios' are ready for use throughout the

system of general secondary education, in primary, secondary and high school.

"The scaling of innovative resources to all Ukrainian schools is evidence of the cooperation between Ukraine and the EU as well as unwavering support for digital education and digital transformation of Ukraine by the European Union," said Rémy Dufлот, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine.

Updated materials are posted on a separate module of the Diia.Education platform. The module is designed to meet the needs of people with visual or cognitive impairments.

(eunighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Friday, September 29

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 24°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 15°C

Saturday, September 30

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 23°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 15°C

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