

## Georgian Defense Minister Juansher Burchuladze Meets with US Ambassador to Georgia Robin Dunnigan

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Minister of Defense of Georgia, Juansher Burchuladze, welcomed the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USA to Georgia, Robin Dunnigan, at the Department of Defense.

Defense Minister Burchuladze extended his congratulations to the ambassador for commencing her diplomatic mission in Georgia and conveyed his best wishes for success. At the meeting, they highlighted the enduring 30-year strategic partnership between Georgia and the USA, with particular emphasis on the invaluable experience gained through the joint efforts of Georgian and American soldiers in various international operations.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the progress of the initiative aimed at enhancing Georgia's defense and deterrence capabilities, which received a positive evaluation from the American side. They also highlighted the encouraging developments in the US-Georgia multinational exercises, which contribute to the increased professionalism and interoperability of the defense forces. The conversation also delved into various facets of the bilateral cooperation between the United States and Georgia.

The Minister of Defense conveyed his gratitude to the United States government and the American people for their invaluable



assistance in supporting the defense forces. He expressed his hope that the defense partnership between the two countries would continue to strengthen in the future.

Robin Dunnigan stated that during her meeting with the Defense Minister, they discussed ways to further strengthen their strategic cooperation in the field

of defense and security. She conveyed that the United States reaffirmed its unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

"I just had an excellent meeting with Minister Burchuladze. In the meeting, I reiterated the United States' absolute commitment to our very strong military cooperation. And he and I dis-

cussed ways we can even further strengthen our strategic partnership when it comes to defense and security cooperation.

I also reiterated the United States' absolute support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have long been the strongest supporter of Georgia when it comes to sovereignty and territorial integrity,

and I gave the minister my commitment that I will continue to work on this with the Georgian government and with our international partners.

So, once again, we have a strong strategic partnership with Georgia in the defense and security area, and we will continue to deepen that even further," Ambassador Dunnigan said.

## Transparency International Director Affirms President Zourabichvili's Commitment to Advancing Georgia's European Aspirations

By Liza Mchedlidze

Eka Gigauri, the Executive Director of Transparency International - Georgia, following the meeting with the President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili, stated that the President is determined to leverage her connections and will persist in pursuing Georgia's European aspirations.

Gigauri emphasized the significance of President Zourabichvili meeting with influential figures who can impact Georgia's EU candidacy status during each of her visits. She also noted that Zourabichvili wields more influence than the ruling party of Georgia.

"You're aware that we often have to make various visits, in-

cluding to different European capitals. She also stressed the importance of using this opportunity to meet those specific individuals who can make decisions about our status during each visit. I can't say for sure whether she'll be there in person or not, but it's a fact that she'll leverage all her connections. She truly possesses more connections than the ruling party; she has more, let's say, significant influence over European leaders than the ruling party. Therefore, she'll make use of all this; she won't back down," remarked Gigauri.

Additionally, Nino Lomjaria, the leader of The European Orbit of Georgia, who was also in attendance at the meeting, mentioned that Salome Zourabichvili

had not disclosed her specific plans during their meeting.

"Certain directions can be worked on together, while others may require separate efforts but with some level of coordination. A decisive moment is approaching, and we will have an answer regarding our status within a maximum of two months. After that, once we obtain the status, there is significant work to be done. We discussed that as well, of course, but today's focus was more on our collective stance, how we align, and whether we share a common vision for the future period and our role in it. Specific plans were not disclosed during the meeting, but they will be made public and known in the near future," Lomjaria stated.



## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Minister of Economy Levan Davitashvili says China is considering Abolishing Visa Regime for Georgian Citizens



After the government meeting, Minister of Economy Levan Davitashvili informed journalists that China is considering the possibility of abolishing the visa regime for Georgian citizens. He mentioned that this matter was discussed during the Joint Com-

mission for Trade and Economic Cooperation between Georgia and China, which took place in Beijing last week.

"The decision made by the government to abolish visas for Chinese citizens has been very positively received in China. There have also been discussions

regarding the possibility of abolishing visas for Georgian citizens, which I hope will be considered by the Chinese government. This would further strengthen the trade and economic ties between our countries," said Davitashvili.

According to the decision of the Government of Georgia, the visa requirement for Chinese citizens in Georgia has been canceled since September 11, allowing them to travel without a visa.

### Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze Is Confident Georgia will attain EU Candidacy Status

Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze informed journalists that, according to their most recent assessments, Georgia is expected to achieve a 100% candidacy status for the EU.

"Despite the fact that the entire radical opposition is trying to prevent the country from attaining this status, I want to assure you that Georgia will undoubtedly achieve it. We state with 100% certainty that our country will receive this status. Everything has been completed; there is simply no valid argument left to deny us this status. If an unfair decision is made, we will address it and explain it to the public," said Kaladze.

To the journalist's question

regarding the United National Movement's statement that the candidate status will be attributed to the merit of the Georgian people rather than the Georgian

Dream, Kaladze responded by asserting that the Georgian Dream has embodied the collective will of the majority of the Georgian people since 2012.



# EBRD hits Euro 3 billion target in support for Ukraine

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has met its target of deploying Euro 3 billion of financing in Ukraine's real economy in 2022-23, to limit the impact of Russia's war on the country since February 2022.

The Bank, Ukraine's biggest institutional investor, was swift to pledge increased support following the Russian invasion, focusing on energy security, vital infrastructure, food security, trade and the private sector.

"We are proud to have reached the target we set ourselves. But it does not mean the work stops here. The needs in Ukraine are huge, and we will continue to support the economy for as long as it takes during the conflict, in line with our current investment levels, which may increase further once there is peace," said Matteo Patrone, EBRD Managing Director for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.



The EBRD's Governors have agreed to work on a capital increase in the range of Euro 3 to 5 billion by year-end to extend maximum support for Ukraine, which, if approved, could give the EBRD additional resources to invest.

Supporting the private sector

and supporting trade are two of the EBRD's five investment themes in wartime Ukraine. Through its Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP), the Bank has since the start of the war supported close to Euro 800 million of trade, in addition to more than Euro 700 million of new lending

to municipalities and private companies operating in agribusiness and other critical sectors of the Ukrainian economy.

Another theme is reinforcing the country's energy security. With the support of donors, the Bank has provided Euro 520 million for the electricity trans-

mission company Ukrrenerg's liquidity, linked to market reforms, and Euro 300 million to the energy company Naftogaz, as part of a package of Euro 500 million with donor support. In addition, at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in June, the Bank signed Memoranda of Understanding on providing Euro 600 million of new financing for Ukrrenerg, Naftogaz and Ukrhydroenergo, the country's hydropower entity.

On vital infrastructure, the EBRD has signed loans totalling Euro 250 million to Ukrainian Railways to support its operations and upgrade the country's railway links with the European Union to its west. The EBRD is also improving road and rail supply routes in and out of Ukraine, to counter uncertainty over the main shipping routes through Black Sea ports such as Odesa, which have been affected by the war.

On food security, EBRD work has focussed on improving Ukraine's grain export facilities, as well as making finance available throughout the food chain and maintaining livelihoods.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

## Weather

Tuesday, October 24

Day Mostly Cloudy  
High: 25°C

Night Mostly Cloudy  
Low: 14°C

Wednesday, October 25

Day Mostly Cloudy  
High: 22°C

Night Mostly Cloudy  
Low: 13°C

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