

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili Meets with OSCE PA President Pia Kauma

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili met with Pia Kauma, President of the Parliamentary Assembly (PA) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Head of the Georgian Government congratulated the visiting dignitary on her appointment as the President of OSCE PA and reiterated Georgia's keen interest in continuing fruitful cooperation with OSCE PA.

The discussion revolved around the general elections scheduled for 2024 in Georgia. The Prime Minister emphasized that the authorities place special importance on conducting transparent, free, and fair parliamentary elections in line with international standards and the best democratic practices of Europe.

According to the Head of the Georgian Government, the country is prepared to facilitate the monitoring of elections by representatives of various international organizations and institutions, including the OSCE PA.

The dignitaries discussed the recommendation from the European Commission regarding the grant of EU Candidate Country status to Georgia by the European Council. The Prime Minister of Georgia emphasized the historic importance of this recommendation.

The meeting also addressed the current situation in the region. As the Prime Minister noted, Georgia has already taken



steps to enhance communication between neighbors and promote stability within the region. The country remains committed to solidifying peace and stability in

the South Caucasus.

The meeting also covered the situation in the territories of Georgia under Russian occupation. The Head of the Georgian

Government expressed gratitude to the President of OSCE PA for the attention paid to topics related to peaceful conflict resolution in the region.

Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ilia Darchiashvili Meets with Danish Counterpart Lars Løkke Rasmussen



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilia Darchiashvili, held a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark, Lars Løkke Rasmussen. According to the reports, the foreign ministers engaged in discussions regarding Georgia's European integration.

The parties engaged in discussions about the European Commission's recommendation to grant candidate status to Georgia, recognizing the substantial work and efforts made by the Georgian side.

Darchiashvili noted that, in accordance with the recommendation of the European Commission, the country is now awaiting the decision of the European Council on granting candidate status in December.

"The Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed hope that Georgia will continue to receive the unwavering support of the Kingdom of Denmark in the upcoming stages of the country's European integration, as it has in the past.

During the meeting, discussions covered various aspects of cooperation between the two countries. Ilia Darchiashvili highlighted the increased dynamics of high-level visits be-

tween Georgia and the Kingdom of Denmark in recent times.

The visit of Lars Løkke Rasmussen to Tbilisi and the opening of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark were celebrated with satisfaction, serving as further evidence of the increasing cooperation between the two countries and the heightened role of the Kingdom of Denmark in the region.

On one hand, the meeting emphasized the significance of the Kingdom of Denmark's support for Georgia's foreign priorities, while, on the other hand, it underscored Georgia's role as a strong regional partner for the Kingdom of Denmark.

The parties emphasized the importance of regular political dialogue between the foreign ministries of the two countries. They also welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark and Georgia on "enhanced cooperation in the political and development spheres." This signing took place within the framework of Ilia Darchiashvili's visit to Denmark.

The conversation at the meeting addressed cooperation within the framework of the Nordic format, which serves as a new arena for regional and multilateral collaboration," read the report.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

The Civil Funeral and Military Burial for 20 Soldiers Missing from Abkhazia in the 1990s



The civil funeral for 20 soldiers, who went missing during the armed conflicts of the 1990s and were transferred from the occupied region of Abkhazia, took place in the Trinity Cathedral over two days.

The soldiers, transferred to Georgia as a result of the joint efforts of the Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality and the International Com-

mittee of the Red Cross, were honored with a military burial. Five of them were interred with military honors at the Dighomi brothers' cemetery, while the remainders found their resting places at various locations.

Within the framework of the search mechanisms for those missing in the Abkhazia war of the 1990s and the war of August 2008, the first identification and repatriation occurred in 2013. So far, 604 human remains have been found, with 265 of them identified.

Insights from International Republican Institute Survey



Advancing Democracy Worldwide

The International Republican Institute (IRI) published the results of a survey in which respondents were asked about the biggest political threat to Georgia. Seventy-seven percent (77%) identified Russia, 12% chose Tur-

key, and 9% selected the USA.

In total, 86% express support for joining the European Union, compared to 89% in March. Of the respondents, 74% indicate support for EU membership even if it entails cutting trade ties with Russia, with 17% opposing. Changes from the March survey fall within the margin of error.

According to the (IRI) research, if parliamentary elections were held tomorrow, 25% of respondents would support the Georgian Dream, while 13% would support the 'United National Movement.'

The survey results indicate that 77% of respondents gave a positive evaluation of the Georgian army (with 16% responding negatively), 71% positively assessed the Georgian Patriarchate (with 21% responding negatively), and 67% expressed a positive view of the police (with 28% responding negatively).

The research, conducted by IPM during the period of September 14 to October 14, 2023, involved fieldwork and face-to-face interviews for data collection.

The sample, which consisted of 1,200 respondents with voting rights and diverse age groups, was weighted based on age, gender, region, and settlement size.

The research, made possible with the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development, had a response rate of 73%. The margin of error for the study is +/- 2.5%.

Successful German-Georgian cooperation - Ambassador Fischer visited projects in western Georgia



Ambassador Peter Fischer visited various German development cooperation projects in western Georgia from 14 to 15 November 2023 together with a group of Georgian media representatives. He was accompanied by the embassy's development cooperation team and representatives of the two implementing organisations, the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and KfW Development Bank.

The first stop on the way to

Batumi was the substation in Zestaponi, which was renovated as part of financial cooperation and plays an important role in energy transmission. It is just one example of the German support, as in the last 10 years around 135 million euros have been realised as part of the support for electricity transmission. As a result, 470 kilometres have been newly constructed or rehabilitated via KfW, enabling small hydropower plants with a total capacity of more than 400 MW to be connected to the Georgian power grid.

In Batumi, the focus was on sustainable urban development including improving urban mobility. The delegation learnt about the bicycle master plan, the bicycle sharing system and

the pedestrian concept in Batumi.

In addition, bus drivers in Batumi and Tbilisi were trained as trainers on energy-efficient, safe driving and communication with passengers. In 2022 alone, almost 2,000 bus drivers from the transport companies were trained by these trainers.

Urban development also includes the project to improve Batumi's water infrastructure. Thanks to the construction of a wastewater treatment plant and the renovation of other water supply facilities, the city's residents now have clean drinking water and a functioning wastewater disposal system. This has ensured the water supply for over 200,000 people in Georgia's second-largest city since 2011.

The resulting enormous increase in tourist numbers in Batumi has helped to secure 60,000 local jobs.

At the end of the trip, the city administration of Batumi signed a memorandum of understand-

ing with GIZ to set up an urban lab in Batumi. In the "Urban Lab", various project solutions for a more attractive and greener Batumi will be developed and tested together with the citizens of Batumi.

Weather

Friday, November 17

Day Partly Cloudy High: 14°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 3°C

Saturday, November 18

Day Partly Cloudy High: 14°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 6°C

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Week of the Italian Cuisine in the World

Ambasciata d'Italia Tbilisi

ITCA ITALIAN TRADE AGENCY

THE EXTRAORDINARY ITALIAN TASTE

Cooking show with products from Cilento, Southern Italy

17 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6:30 P.M., FABRIKA TBILISI (8, EGNATE NINOSHVILI STR.)

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