

President Salome Zourabichvili Concludes 'Our Voice for Europe' Campaign

By Liza Mchedlidze

The President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, hosted a concluding event for the diplomatic corps and politicians as part of the 'Our Voice for Europe' campaign. During the event, President Zourabichvili presented the signatures collected within the campaign to Paweł Herczyński, the EU ambassador to Georgia.

Ambassadors accredited to Georgia, as well as representatives of the opposition and the former government, attended the event.

"Today we complete the campaign that started on November 8 and aimed to involve the public in this last mobilization that will lead us to December 15. It was important to once again send Georgia's voice to Europe. It was not the voice of the president, nor of any single group, so I thought that I would start, but we would all continue together. We have passed many important stages. It started when we joined the OSCE and it started with Zurab Zhvania's famous speech at the OSCE Council. Our meaningful European path is connected to Zurab Zhvania.

I hope that in two days, we will celebrate again as we did on



November 8. We know that this does not end on December 15. After December 15, we will double the commitment to continuing the journey together. There will be many tasks for us to accomplish. If we are inter-

nally divided and opposed, we will not achieve anything. I don't like to only talk about depolarization when we have our principles, and one of them is that unity is the strongest. We will not be united in everything; I am

sure that now when the election year is starting, there will be many political disputes, sometimes heated discussions. However, there should be unity on this road, which I hope will begin on December 15,"

Zourabichvili stated.

Zourabichvili conveyed her gratitude to all who have contributed to the campaign and to Georgia's journey towards EU integration.

საქართველოს
პრეზიდენტ-მინისტრის წერილი:

ევროკავშირის საბჭოს პრეზიდენტ
შარლ მიხელს

ევროკომისიის პრეზიდენტ
ურსულა ფონ დერ ლაიენს

ევროკავშირის წევრი
27 სახელმწიფოს ლიდერს

Prime Minister Gharibashvili Addresses Letters to Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, has addressed letters to the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the President of the European Council, Charles Michel.

In the letter addressed to Ursula von der Leyen, Gharibashvili expressed gratitude for the recent recommendation to grant Georgia candidate status by the European Commission and highlighted the strong partnership between the EU and Georgia, attributing the recommendation to this partnership and the overwhelming support of the Georgian population.

The Prime Minister emphasized Georgia's progress on the EU accession path, citing achievements such as the Association Agreement, DCFTA,

visa-free travel, security partnership, enhanced trade relations, and cooperation in various sectors.

Irakli Gharibashvili affirmed the Georgian government's commitment to continuing and accelerating necessary reforms in preparation for EU membership, expressing determination to deepen cooperation with the European Commission.

"We were delighted that the Georgia2023 Report published by the European Commission within the Enlargement Package recognizes the tireless efforts of the Georgian government to honor its commitments and progressively align with the EU rules and standards. There is no doubt that EU membership comes with long-term commitments and responsibilities. My government remains resolute in

CONTINUED ON Page 2



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6745; Euro - 2.8815; GBP - 3.3458; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9726; Swiss Franc - 3.0503

Prime Minister Gharibashvili Addresses Letters to Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel

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continuing and further accelerating necessary reforms. We reaffirm our determination to deepen the cooperation with the

European Commission and take steps to advance on the EU accession path," the letter reads.

In the letter addressed to Charles Michel, Gharibashvili expressed gratitude for the EU's

unwavering support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and acknowledged the EU's valuable contribution to the peaceful resolution of the Russia-Georgia conflict.

The Prime Minister wrote that granting candidate status would be an impetus for lasting peace in Georgia. According to the letter, he expects strong engagement from the EU and its member states to ensure the peaceful reintegration of occupied regions and the reconciliation of divided communities.

"Granting candidate status also will serve as an additional

impetus for establishing lasting peace in Georgia. Let me express appreciation to the EU for its unwavering support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, as well as its valuable contribution and support to the peaceful resolution of the Russia-Georgia conflict. We believe that strong engagement of the EU and its member states will be critical to ensure that Georgia's occupied regions will be peacefully re-integrated and divided communities will be reconciled," the letter reads.

Gharibashvili stated that the future of Georgia lies in the EU

and emphasized that there is no alternative. He expressed the hope that EU member states would make a strategic and forward-looking decision to firmly anchor Georgia as a future EU member state.

"The future of Georgia lies in the EU, and there is no alternative to it. Our nation and my government expect that EU member states will take strategic and a forward-looking decision this week that will firmly anchor Georgia - a future EU member state - with the family of European democracies," wrote the Prime Minister.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

European Parliament Approves Resolution Urging EU Council to Grant Candidate Status to Georgia



The European Parliament approved a resolution calling on the Council of the European Union to grant candidate status to Georgia. Additionally, the European Parliament is urging the Council

of the European Union to initiate accession negotiations with Ukraine, Moldova, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The resolution received support from 468 MEPs, while 99 opposed it, and 58 abstained.

"MEPs urge the European Council to decide at its meeting

Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Georgia should be granted candidate status.

MEPs welcome the new Growth Plan for the Western Balkans and call on EU leaders to also adopt the negotiating framework without delay, once the relevant requirements related to each of the candidate countries are fulfilled in order to start the accession negotiations swiftly," the resolution reads.

Mayor Kakha Kaladze Reveals Tbilisi's Budget Increase for 2024

According to Kakha Kaladze, the budget of Tbilisi for 2024 will increase to 1,763,354,000 GEL. Kaladze mentioned that this includes a special transfer from the state budget.

Kaladze discussed the 2024 budget at the City Hall government meeting, stating that 31% of the total budget will be allocated to infrastructure.

"The year 2023 has ended, and everyone is wondering about the projects that will be implemented and how the capital's budget for 2024 will be distributed. We will

talk about this in detail later and present all the planned projects to the public. First of all, I would like to inform you that the Tbilisi budget is increasing. Compared to the 2023 budget, it will be 130 million more. The volume of the 2024 budget project is 1 billion

500 million GEL. It is planned to allocate 547 million 486 thousand GEL in the direction of infrastructure, which is 31% of the total budget," said Kaladze.

According to Kaladze, programs worth 507 million and 632 thousand GEL are planned



763 million 354 thousand GEL. Among them is a special capital transfer from the state budget -

to be implemented in the social and healthcare sectors in 2024.

EU Enlargement for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia: special page highlights key information and resources

As EU leaders gather in Brussels for the European Council on 14-15 December, where they will discuss EU enlargement policy, including the next steps for Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, EU NEIGHBOURS east has pre-



pared a special enlargement page explaining the enlargement process and the story so far.

The page – EU Enlargement for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia – takes you through the latest 2023 Enlargement Package – which recommended opening accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova, and to grant candidate status to Georgia, on the understanding that Georgia meets certain steps – as well as the enlargement process and each country's progress so

far. Content is also available in Armenian, Azerbaijani, Belarusian, Georgian, Romanian, Ukrainian and Russian.

The Enlargement page includes background information, key facts and explanations, as well as comprehensive links to original European Commission reports and resources providing further detail about the enlargement process and the EU's relations with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, December 14

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 12°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 4°C

Friday, December 15

Day Cloudy
High: 11°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 5°C

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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.

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The opening event of the newly established solidarity fund "Nuntius" was held at the Caucasus University on December 8. The founder of "Nuntius" is the nun Sidonia, an international supporter of tolerance and a guardian of history.

At the presentation a new conceptual work, Bracelet - Bridge! was introduced, the concept of which is related to the European integration process of Georgia.

Kakha Shengelia, president of Caucasus University, opened the event and welcomed the audience with a speech, and the moderator was professor; the founder of "Mediakhma" and the manager of "Transparency International - Georgia" me-

dia programs Marika Gersamia.

The event was dedicated to the importance of returning to Western civilization for our country and Georgian ancient culture. The presentation was attended by representatives of the Embassy of the European Union and Ukraine, as well as other guests of honor.









