

Parliament Chairman Shalva Papuashvili Views Irakli Kobakhidze's Potential Premiership as 'Historic' for Georgian Democracy

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, stated that if Irakli Kobakhidze becomes the Prime Minister, it will be a 'historic' moment for Georgian democracy.

"The candidacy of Irakli Kobakhidze will be discussed at the political council tomorrow. If he becomes the prime minister, it will mark a historic moment for Georgian democracy. For the first time since Georgia switched to a parliamentary republic, the prime minister will emerge from the parliamentary body. In principle, this aligns with the goal and idea of parliamentary democracies, where government representatives are typically individuals with parliamentary experience," Papuashvili said.

Papuashvili considers the potential appointment of Irakli Kobakhidze as Prime Minister to be a positive development for the opposition. He noted that this positivity is especially noticeable in specific reactions or responses from the opposition. Emphasizing the significance of having a former colleague—someone with whom they have shared years of political discussions in the same meeting hall—now being part of the government, Papuashvili suggested that this could foster a positive atmosphere or collaboration despite political differences.

"Therefore, I believe this will introduce a different dynamic to



the relationship between the parliament and the government. It is also a highly positive development for the opposition, especially evident in certain responses. When a former colleague, with whom you have spent years in the same meeting hall engaging in political discussions, is now part of the gov-

ernment, there is a distinct change in interaction," Parliament Chairman stated.

Papuashvili noted that in certain instances, the arrangement where members of the government hold positions in the parliament aligns with the European model of parliamentary democracy, with Irakli

Kobakhidze's role as prime minister serving as a notable example.

"This event, where the members of the government, including the prime minister, come from within the parliament, also brings a new dynamic to our democracy. It once again emphasizes that the parliamentary

majority and the government are a unified political team. In some cases, as you may be aware, members of the government are also members of the parliament. Therefore, we are witnessing the European model of parliamentary democracy in the form of Irakli Kobakhidze's prime ministership," Papuashvili said.



UK Strongly Supports Georgia's NATO Membership, Affirms Ambassador Mark Clayton

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

At an event discussing Georgia's relations with NATO, where a document outlining the steps for Georgia's progress towards NATO membership was presented, the British Ambassador to Georgia, Mark Clayton, stated that they warmly welcome Georgia's EU candidate status. He emphasized Georgia's focus on joining NATO and mentioned that the UK strongly supports this intention.

The Ambassador stressed the importance of respecting democracy, emphasizing its significance within the organization.

He emphasized the need for Georgia to work on both military and democratic aspects to progress in NATO.

"I am really pleased to be here on behalf of the United Kingdom where we are looking at Georgia's relations with NATO. There has been a huge amount of focus recently on Georgia's EU candidate status and we warmly welcome that but Georgia equally focuses on its intention to join NATO and the UK is a strong supporter of that. We are NATO's contact point alongside allies from Romania involved in public work to promote the benefits of NATO membership to Georgia.

The paper that has been presented today covers two areas very well. And I think these are the areas Georgia has to look at to continue its progress on NATO membership: The first is to continue progress on democracy and reforms, just like the EU. This is very important for NATO. NATO is a political military alliance, a lot of attention goes on tanks but respect for democracy is the core of the organization. That is where Georgia needs to continue to work similarly with the military line. The paper that we will hear today focuses more on what Georgia can do to contribute to collective security," Clayton said.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Seventh Round of FIPA Negotiations Between Georgia and Canada Held in Tbilisi

served as the primary negotiator on behalf of Georgia. Representatives from the Ministries of Economy, Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Finance also participated in the government negotiators' group. "Canada is an important economic



The seventh round of negotiations on the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA) between Georgia and Canada took place in Tbilisi from January 29 to 31.

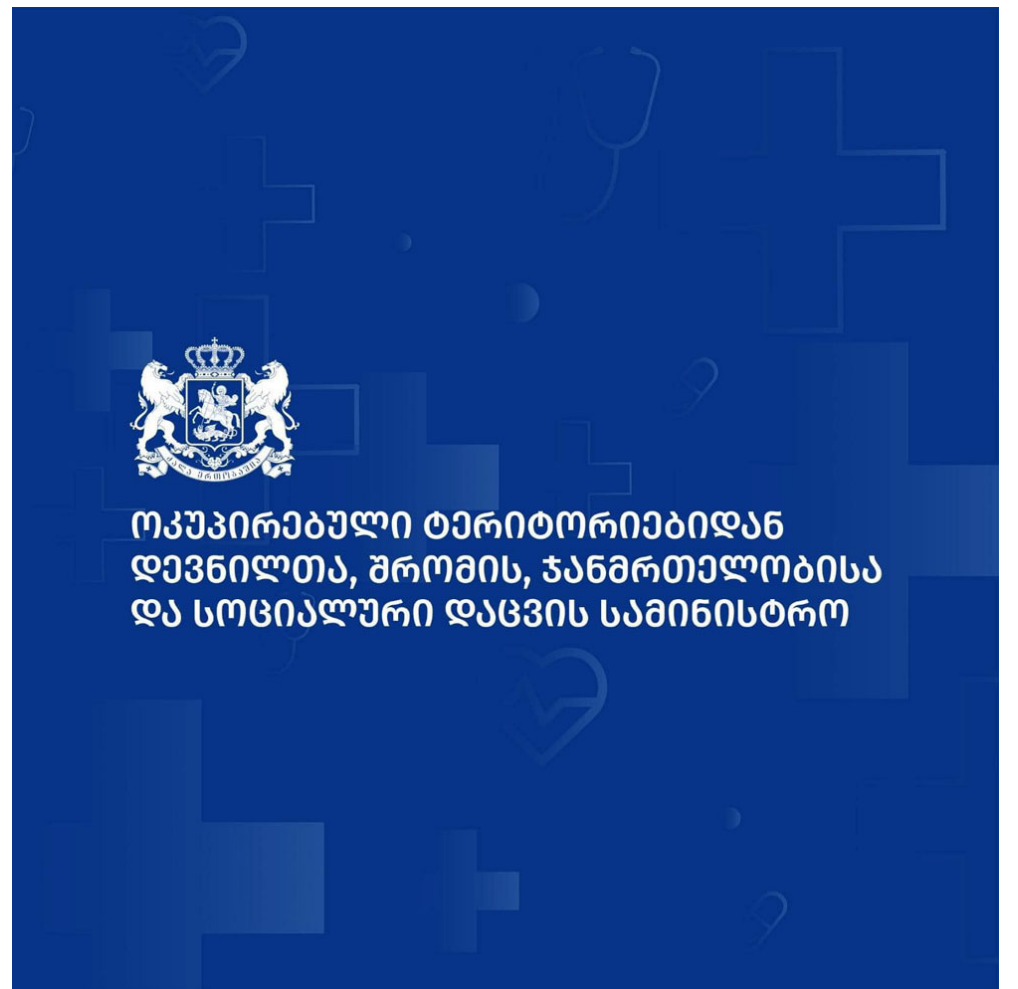
The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia stated that the draft agreement encompasses mechanisms for investment and investor protection, along with methods to resolve disputes between the parties. This is considered an important prerequisite for the development of investment activities between the parties.

Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Genadi Arveladze,

partner and investor in Georgia. The signing of the aforementioned agreement will contribute to the influx of quality investments in Georgia, ensuring the transfer of knowledge and technologies," Arveladze stated.

Central Republican Hospital Reorganization Deadline Extended to March 15

In accordance with the Ministry of Health's decision, the deadline for submitting offers for the compensation package for employees of the Central Republican Hospital will be extended by one



month. The reorganization, originally scheduled to conclude on February 15, will now end on March 15.

"Instead of February 5, the time for the staff of the clinic to state their position and make a choice was set until March 5. Therefore, in the medical institution, the reorganization will end on March 15, instead of February 15," the statement reads.

In the information provided by the Ministry of Health, it is stated that the

decision is based on the consideration of "the wishes of the clinic employees." According to the agency, meetings with the clinic staff will be ongoing until March 5.

On January 22, the Health Minister and the Prime Minister informed doctors at the Republic Hospital that they would be provided with 'decent offers', alternative employment opportunities, and compensation following the demolition of the clinic.

Ukraine: EUAM helps to improve quality of driving tests and increase access to driving for people with disabilities

Last week the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine facilitated the visit of a delegation from the Dutch Central Bureau for Certification of Driving Skills (CBR) to the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Main Service Centre (MSC).

The visit aimed to support Ukrainian authorities in enhancing the training of driving examiners, ensuring the quality of driving tests, and expanding



driving access for people with disabilities.

Mykola Rudyk, Head of the MSC, who hosted the delegation, said improvements had already been made to the transparency of the driving test process, such as the introduction of video cameras in exam rooms and vehicles, as well as the renewal of the vehicle fleet. "Last year, we purchased about

150 new category B cars and five cars for people with disabilities," said Rudyk.

A key highlight of the visit was the presentation to the MSC of a specialised examination vehicle for people with disabilities and a vehicle adapted for everyday use by people with special needs.

EUAM's Deputy Head of Operations, Mikko Groenberg confirmed that EUAM supports this initiative to make driving easier for people with disabilities, especially in the context of the current challenges caused by both the ongoing war and the need for reforms due to Ukraine's status as an EU candidate.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, February 1

Day Partly Cloudy High: 7°C

Night Clear Low: -3°C

Friday, February 2

Day Partly Cloudy High: 7°C

Night Clear Low: -3°C

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