

President Salome Zourabichvili Addresses Irakli Kobakhidze in Annual Parliamentary Speech

By Liza Mchedlidze

President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili, during her annual speech in the Parliament, stated that for European integration, it is necessary to get rid of the "ugly formations of the vicious Soviet past." She addressed the Prime Minister candidate Irakli Kobakhidze in her speech.

Zourabichvili pointed out that Kobakhidze, having been involved in numerous controversial actions, such as allowing Russian MP Gavrillov into Parliament, annulling the Charles Michel document, promoting anti-European rhetoric, and attempting the President's impeachment, questioned how Kobakhidze intends to uphold European standards, especially in implementing recommendations during the pre-election period.

"It is evident that fulfilling these priorities cannot be achieved by any individual alone; rather, it is everyone's responsibility to the country and its future. Nevertheless, it is also apparent that the primary duty and responsibility lie with those who hold the levers of power, namely the government, the parliamentary majority, and currently, their leader, Bidzina Ivanishvili.

They, collectively and personally, are tasked with the immediate implementation of the 9 recommendations of the European Union. As the president of this country, I cannot and will not evaluate in advance the new or future prime minister, nor what the arrival of one, the departure of another, and the encourage-



ment of a third mean. Still, I am obliged to voice from this platform what concerns the public and to which they have the right to receive an answer. Such accountability to society is the main principle of democracy.

I appeal to the new or future Prime Minister - you, who are associated with the admission of Gavrillov to the Parliament, the annulment of the Charles Michel document, anti-European rhetoric, and impeachment. How do you intend to fulfill the European order of society, and in particular, implement the recommendations before the elections?" Zourabichvili stated.

Zourabichvili then stated that although she asked questions to the prime ministerial candidate, the real person in charge of governing the country is who the questions should be directed to.

"Will you present a plan that clearly explains, with specific timelines, how you will change the composition of the Supreme Council of Justice and the Supreme Court; how you will ensure agreement on staffing for the election administration; how you will give investigative rights and independence to the anti-corruption service; how you will guarantee the independence of the National Bank; and how you will align with the EU's foreign and security policy.

However, the main recipient of the public's questions today is neither the prime minister, nor the chairman of the parliament, nor the ruling party, but the one who actually runs the country," President Zourabichvili said.

Lelo Leader Urges President Zourabichvili to Combat Nihilism Among the Georgian People

By Liza Mchedlidze



Lelo leader Davit Usupashvili stated that his party welcomes the initiative of the President of Georgia regarding the creation of the Charter of the Future - "Platform of Unity for Europe". As Usupashvili noted, Lelo has been and continues to be one of the most active political entities and participants in the European integration process.

"I would like to respond to the President's initiative to create a platform of a certain format to accelerate the European integration of Georgia. I would like to remind everyone that Lelo has been and continues to be one of the most active political entities and participants in the European integration process, from the development of Charles Michel's document to the entire subsequent saga. Lelo was actively involved wherever European affairs were addressed. Lelo did not participate in instances of merely imitating European matters, and it will not do so in the future, as it concerns the state's affairs. We welcome the President's proposal," Usupashvili said.

According to him, Lelo has developed and already introduced to the public a

nine-point plan, which is necessary for the country to move to the next stage.

"We are ready to present our plan within this platform and listen to others as well. This is necessary because we share the President's opinion that the upcoming elections will not be simply elections for a change of government. Lelo presents the upcoming elections as elections for fundamental changes. Lelo and I appeal to you, personally, to ensure the holding of free and fair elections in Georgia with the very levers that you yourself talked about.

To ensure fair and free elections where citizens are motivated to exercise their right to vote, confident that their votes will be safeguarded, and acknowledging the presence of diverse voices in the country. Let there be political opposition in parliament without it devolving into a combative spectacle. Rather than a battle between adversaries, let it be a celebration of freedom," Usupashvili stated.

Lelo's leader urged President Zourabichvili to combat nihilism within the Georgian people, which according to Usupashvili is 'ignited' by the government.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

President Zourabichvili Urges Ivanishvili to Clarify Recent Statements

The President of Georgia, Salome



Zourabichvili, addressed Bidzina Ivanishvili, the Honorary Chairman of Georgian Dream, from the parliamentary tribune. Zourabichvili stated that the public has the full right to know the meaning behind Bidzina Ivanishvili's words on corruption and the country's foreign policy. She called on Ivanishvili to explain how he intends to transition from one-party rule to a European model.

"I am addressing Bidzina Ivanishvili; the public has every right to hear from you. What do the words you said upon your return mean regarding corruption and the country's foreign policy? Society does not know why you let go of certain

individuals or why you bring in others. Are you letting them go because of crimes against the country, differences in opinion, or for other reasons unknown to us?"

As society awaits a new European model of governance, it is crucial to inform them of your plans and timelines for transitioning from a one-party, one-person, and vertical model to a democratic, European model.

The society is awaiting your response:

when will you remove Murusidze and Chinchaladze from the court? On one hand, you claim to be fighting the United National Movement, yet on the other hand, its remnants face no apparent threat," Zourabichvili stated.

Kobakhidze Accuses Ukrainian Government of Attempting to Make Georgia a Target of Russia



Irakli Kobakhidze, the Prime Minister candidate, responded to the State Security Service's statement announcing they successfully prevented the transfer of explosive devices from Ukraine through Georgia to Russia.

Kobakhidze stated that he finds it concerning that Ukrainian politicians are attempting to manipulate the situation in such a way that Georgia becomes a target of Russia.

"When this is supported by a specific expert from Transparency International Georgia, who is also an activist of the 'Shame' movement, namely the United National Movement, it becomes even more worrying. These individuals cannot conceal their evil intentions, which extend

even to the state.

They wanted a second front; they aimed to foster complex scenarios in Georgia. All of this is yet another manifestation of their intentions," said Irakli Kobakhidze.

Ukraine Facility: Council and Parliament agree on new support mechanism for Ukraine

The Council of the European Union and the European Parliament have reached provisional agreement on setting up a new single dedicated instrument to support Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction and modernisation, while supporting its efforts to carry out reforms as part of its accession path to the EU. The Ukraine Facility will have a total budget of Euro50 billion.

The Ukraine Facility will pool the EU's budget support to Ukraine into one single instrument, providing coherent, predictable and flexible support to Ukraine for the period 2024-2027.

"The EU is prepared to support Ukraine as long as needed. The Ukraine Facility will allow us to channel consistent and pre-



dictable support to Ukraine to help its people rebuild their country in the midst of the unprecedented challenges brought by Russia's war of aggression," said Vincent van Peteghem, Belgian Minister of Finance. "At the same time the support will help Ukraine take forward the reforms and modernisation efforts

needed for it to advance on its path towards future EU membership."

The Ukraine Facility will be structured in three pillars:

pillar I: The government of Ukraine will prepare a 'Ukraine Plan', setting out its intentions for the recovery, reconstruction and modernisation of the coun-

try and the reforms it plans to undertake as part of its EU accession process. Financial support in the form of grants and loans to the state of Ukraine would be provided based on the implementation of the Ukraine Plan, which will be underpinned by a set of conditions and a timeline for

disbursements;

pillar II: Under the Ukraine investment Framework, the EU will provide support in the form of budgetary guarantees and a blend of grants and loans from public and private institutions. A Ukraine Guarantee would cover the risks of loans, guarantees, capital market instruments

and other forms of funding supporting the objectives of the Facility;

pillar III: Union accession assistance and other supporting measures helping Ukraine align with EU laws and carrying out structural reforms on its path to future EU membership.

The total budget of Euro50 billion for the Ukraine Facility will be split between Euro33 billion in loans and Euro17 billion in grants.

Building on this provisional agreement, negotiators will now continue working on the broader revision of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027, which the Ukraine Facility is part of, in view of reaching an agreement as swiftly as possible.

The provisional agreement is subject to approval by the Council and Parliament before the text can go through the formal adoption procedure. Once adopted it will be published in the EU's Official Journal and enter into force on the next day. (euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, February 7

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 12°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 2°C

Thursday, February 8

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 14°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 4°C

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On February 1st, Cinema Amirani welcomed a young audience to enjoy a screening of Alain Ughetto's animated film "No Dogs or Italians Allowed".

This event was orchestrated by the French Institute of Georgia as part of the 14th edition of the "My French Film Festival (MyFFF)," the first online festival exclusively dedicated to

French-speaking cinema.

Great news for film enthusiasts: Cavea+, the festival's local partner, is offering the opportunity to watch and re-watch all festival films online and for free until February 19. Don't miss out! Follow this link to start your cinematic journey:

<https://cavea.plus/ka/browse/MyFFF>

