

Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Kobakhidze Meets with Chinese Ambassador Xie Feng

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Kobakhidze met with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Georgia, Xie Feng.

According to the government press office, during the meeting held at the administration, the conversation touched upon the close and friendly relations between the two countries, as well as the future prospects of cooperation.

The administration noted the appreciation for the intensified cooperation between the countries in various fields, expressing hope that the strategic relations will further enhance sectoral economic and trade relations, as well as people-to-people ties.

Additionally, the meeting emphasized the cooperation between the Parliament of Georgia and the National People's Congress of China. It was noted that parliamentary friendship groups have been established in both legislatures, which serves to expand relations between the countries.

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The meeting addressed economic cooperation issues, em-



phasizing that China ranks among the top five trade partners of Georgia. Furthermore, it was noted that the trade turnover between Georgia and China exceeded 1.5 billion US

dollars from January to November 2023.

Successful cooperation between the two countries was emphasized in terms of the development of Georgia's special

geopolitical location, which increases Georgia's potential as a West-East connecting corridor.

Kobakhidze expressed the strong support of the Georgian

government for the One China principle, while the parties reaffirmed mutual support for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Shalva Papuashvili Presents Parliament's 2023 Report and Calls on Opposition to Cooperate

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, noted during the presentation of the 2023 report to the Parliament that 65 plenary sessions were held and 622 laws were adopted in 2023.

"Despite the challenges, Parliament did not cease its efforts to protect the interests of our people and homeland through legislative, supervisory, or other activities," Papuashvili said.

Papuashvili mentioned notable laws adopted by the Parliament, including those related to various sectors such as water resources, tourism, and defense. He expressed concern that the opposition has rarely participated in discussing these crucial laws, despite their significance for the well-being of the population and Georgia's alignment

with the European Union.

"Among the adopted laws, notable ones include: laws on the management of water resources, industrial emissions, tourism, public procurement, electronic commerce, personal data protection, Defense Code, Penal Code, and amendments to the Law on Broadcasting. Unfortunately, with rare exceptions, the opposition has hardly participated in the discussion of such laws. However, it is issues like these that are crucial for improving the well-being of our population and for our essential alignment with the European Union," Papuashvili stated.

The Chairman highlighted that during the reporting period, the Parliament processed a significant number of legislative initiatives, international



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6505; Euro - 2.8774; GBP - 3.3608; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8419; Swiss Franc - 3.0205

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treaties, agreements, conventions, and reports, along with candidates submitted for confidence. Additionally, 142 legislative proposals and 8 petitions

were submitted for consideration, and 139 members of Parliament exercised their right of legislative initiative.

Papuashvili addressed the opposition and called for cooperation.

"I would like to address you with a proposal for cooperation. Georgia is our shared homeland. Although people support the Georgian Dream, it does not mean that our victory will belong to the Georgian Dream

alone. Therefore, we appeal to you to join us. Let us make this year not a year of radicalization and confrontation, but a year of democratic parliamentary elections, overcoming geopolitical challenges, uniting the country,

and moving closer to the European Union and NATO. This is the main interest of the population, the primary interest of our united and common motherland - Georgia," Papuashvili said.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Parliament Chairman Shalva Papuashvili Urges NATO to Define Clear Criteria for Georgia's Accession



Parliament Chairman Shalva Papuashvili, while presenting the one-year work report to the Parliament, stated that the North Atlantic Alliance should follow the European Union's example and provide clear criteria for Georgia's accession, as the European Union has done.

"Georgia is not competing with anyone on the way to the

to show, but without achieving any outcome. According to the majority of objective parameters, Georgia still maintains a lead over many EU candidate countries. However, achieving superiority over others is not our primary goal. Our main objective is EU membership.

It would be desirable for NATO to follow the example of the European Union and offer Georgia clear criteria for membership. Fulfillment of these criteria would bring our country closer to the North Atlantic Alliance, as it happened in the case of the European Union," Papuashvili said.

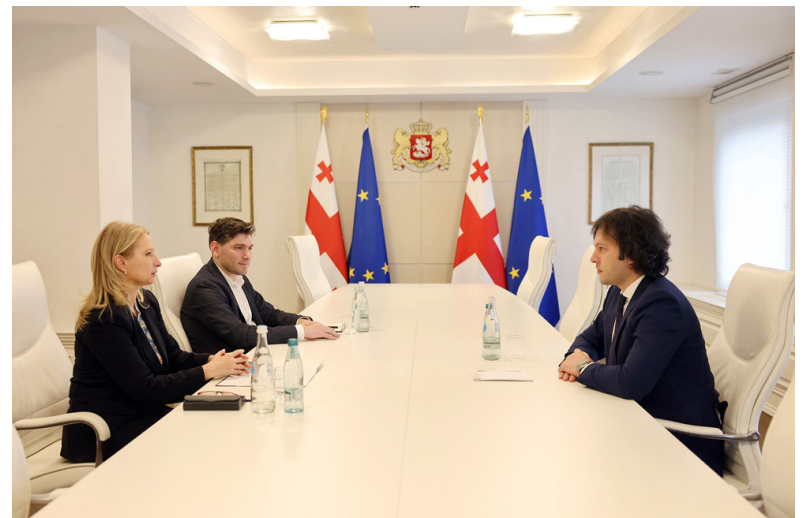
Government to Lower Loan Interest for 150,000+ Pensioners

The government administration's press service announced a decision to reduce loan interest for over 150,000 pensioners.

"The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, met with

Natia Turnava, the Acting President of the National Bank, and Beka Gogichaishvili, the General Director of Liberty Bank. According to the decision

made at the meeting, the loan interest rate for over 150,000 pensioners who obtained loans before 2023 will be reduced to match the interest rate established from 2023 onwards," the statement reads.



part and specific details. While discussing the issue, Irakli Kobakhidze emphasized the importance of starting the next phase on time and ensuring that pensioners can benefit from the updated conditions.

EU launches project to improve justice system in Georgia

On 20 February 2024, the EU Delegation to Georgia together with four Georgian organisations launched a new project to support and strengthen Georgia's civil society.

The 'Promoting greater civic awareness and engagement in judicial reforms and facilitating increased access to justice through holistic multi agency action' project will be implemented by Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, Social Justice Centre, Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, and Studio Monitor.

The project mainly aims to enhance accessibility, independence, transparency, impartial-



ity, and accountability within the justice system, with a particular emphasis on advancing judicial reforms. It will operate through capacity building, advocacy, evaluation and strategic litigation.

"Civil society is an important actor in a mature democracy to hold the government to account and bring grassroots proposals to that government. In Georgia, this includes monitoring implementation of the nine steps, but also taking a role in deepening citizens' understanding of the reforms and ensuring genuine civic participation in EU integration," Nicholas Cendrowicz, Head of Cooperation at EU Delegation said at the launch event.

The project started on 1 January 2024 and it will last until December 2026.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Friday, February 23

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 10°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 3°C

Saturday, February 24

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 6°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 2°C

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze
Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

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