

Chair of European Integration Committee Holds Meetings in European Parliament

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Chairman of the European Integration Committee, Maka Bochorishvili, and the First Deputy Chairman of the European Integration Committee, Levan Karumidze, held meetings in Strasbourg within the framework of the European Parliament plenary session.

According to the Parliament's press office, Georgian legislators from various political groups met with members of the European Parliament, including the co-chairman of the Georgia-EU Parliamentary Committee, the rapporteur of the European Parliament on the issue of Georgia, and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

"The current issues of Georgia-EU cooperation, the agenda of Georgia's integration within the EU enlargement policy, the significance of Georgia in Europe's geopolitical perspective, the role of the European Parliament, and the expected outcomes of the elections scheduled for this year in Georgia were among the topics to be discussed.

It should be noted that two reports on the common foreign security policy and defense of the European Union were prepared in the European Parliament. These reports outline support for Georgia's European integration and strongly condemn Russia's current occupation of the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia.

During the visit to Strasbourg, more than 17 meetings were held in the European Parliament, with the participation of Vakhtang Makharoblishvili, the head of the Georgian representation to the European Union and the ambassador of Georgia to the Kingdom of Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg," the statement reads.



Georgian Dream Criticizes President Zourabichvili's Call for Appointment of 'Pro-Georgia' Patriarch

By Liza Mchedlidze

At an event organized by Chatham House in London, President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili expressed her hope that the Georgian Church would select a patriarch who is supportive of Georgia and Europe, rather than one with pro-Russian inclinations.

While asking the question to the President, the journalist expressed concerns about the Georgian Church's perceived alignment with Russia's inter-

ests, particularly regarding the potential for increased Russian influence upon the appointment of a new patriarch. In response, the President of Georgia acknowledged that the situation concerning the church is indeed very complex:

"One of the main reasons for this is the weakness of the patriarch, who firmly guarded the path of the church. In my opinion, the Orthodox Church, like in any other Orthodox country, is very close to the government

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6596; Euro - 2.8745; GBP - 3.3596; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9106; Swiss Franc - 3.0025

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and tends to follow the change of accents and nuances. That is why I hope that the church will also follow the pro-Western

rhetoric. Since I am an optimist and believe in the future of Georgia, I hope that the Georgian Church will be able to choose a pro-Georgian and pro-European patriarch, not a pro-Russian

one," said Zourabichvili.

Members of the Georgian Dream government have criticized President Zourabichvili's statements on the Georgian Church. Irakli Gharibashvili, chairman of the Georgian Dream party, accused Zourabichvili of being 'anti-Georgian'.

"How is it possible that a person would make such a blasphemous statement about our dear patriarch, especially someone holding the office of the president? Here we are dealing with a significant anti-Georgian event; it is an attack on the patriarch and the church, reflecting Salome Zourabichvili's own

character. The mask she has worn all this time has been removed," Gharibashvili said.

Mayor of Tbilisi, Kakha Kaladze, also criticized the President's remarks, stating, "Targeted attacks on the Patriarch and our Church are not the first case; however, such statements from the president are really shocking."

According to Kaladze, the statements made by the leaders of the Patriarchate of Georgia and the Georgian Dream in response to the president are not an attack, but the statements made by Zourabichvili herself are alarming.

"Do you perceive the assess-

ment of the president's shocking statement as an attack from the side of the Patriarchate?" It's alarming. The pathos of the president's statement, the attack on the patriarch, was truly surprising. A patriarch is a person who enjoys the greatest love and authority in the country. He has done a lot for the Georgian Church over the years. Targeted attacks on him, on the church, on our faith are not the first case. We have been hearing this for years from various specific political parties, non-governmental organizations. However, such statements by the president are really shocking," Kaladze said.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze Denies Allegations Regarding Georgian Railway Tenders



Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, emphasized the country's unequivocal stance on sanctions. He stated that their policy extends not only to state structures but also to organiza-

tions affiliated with the government, such as the Georgian Railways.

When asked about Georgian Railway signing tenders with sanctioned individuals, Irakli Kobakhidze refuted the claim, stating that the information is incorrect.

"You can search further and make sure that this information is incorrect. As for the sanctions, we have a very clear policy on sanctions. This continues both in the literal sense, on state

structures, as well as on those organizations that are connected to the state, such as the Georgian Railways. We have a clear policy. Although we do not impose sanctions, we do our best to ensure that our territory is not used to circumvent sanctions. Among them, cooperation with a sanctioned company is not allowed. This has been our policy. Everyone can say anything, but you can search for additional information and you will be sure that it is all a lie," said Kobakhidze.

Georgian Defense Minister Meets with German Ambassador and Defense Attaché

The Minister of Defense of Georgia, Irakli Chikovani, met with the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Peter Fischer, and the Defense Attaché, Lt. Col. Andreas Sebald.

At the introductory meeting, discussions centered around the priority areas of cooperation between the defense agencies of Georgia and Germany. Empha-

sis was placed on Germany's active involvement in both bilateral and multilateral cooperation formats. Additionally, the meeting highlighted the robust support provided by Germany in developing the capabilities of the defense forces, enhancing military education, and conducting joint exercises. Special attention was given to Germany's significant contribution to the successful implementation of the NATO-

Georgia Substantial Package (SNGP).

The parties also discussed the importance of expert and high-level visits in various directions. The minister thanked the German side for its significant contribution to the development of the Georgian Defense Forces and expressed hope that the fruitful cooperation will continue successfully in the future.



EU and World Bank create new facility to strengthen capacity of civil protection in Europe, including Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

Weather

Monday, March 4

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 11°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 2°C

Tuesday, March 5

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 4°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 4°C



On 29 February, the European Commission launched a new financial support instrument to enhance disaster prevention and preparedness in the EU and beyond, including in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

The Technical Assistance Financing Facility for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness (TAFF) is part of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).

It supports projects, studies and training in disaster and climate resilience and promotes the sharing of knowledge among countries on disaster risk management.

The World Bank will imple-

ment the activities with financing from the European Commission. TAFF has an initial financial envelope of Euro 6 million in 2024.

As a result of this financing tool, civil protection authorities will increase their technical capacity to prevent disasters and will be better equipped when a disaster strikes.

Eligible countries include EU Member States, participating states of the UCPM (including Moldova and Ukraine), and Georgia and Kosovo in view of their ongoing efforts to join the UCPM.

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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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“Fragments to Harmony: Mosaic Ensemble”

On the occasion of International Women’s Day, the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Tbilisi organized the mosaic art exhibition, “Fragments to

Harmony: Mosaic Ensemble” presented by talented women from Türkiye, Dilek Türk and her Atelier. The exhibition featured a diverse selection of glass and stone

mosaic works.

Two days exhibition took place in Writers’ House followed by a reception hosted by Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye

to Georgia, H.E. Ali Kaan Orbay with participation of government officials, diplomatic corps, NGOs and cultural figures.









