

President Zourabichvili Hosts Iceland's President Guðni Jóhannesson on Official Visit

By Liza Mchedlidze

The President of the Republic of Iceland, Guðni Jóhannesson, paid an official visit to Georgia.

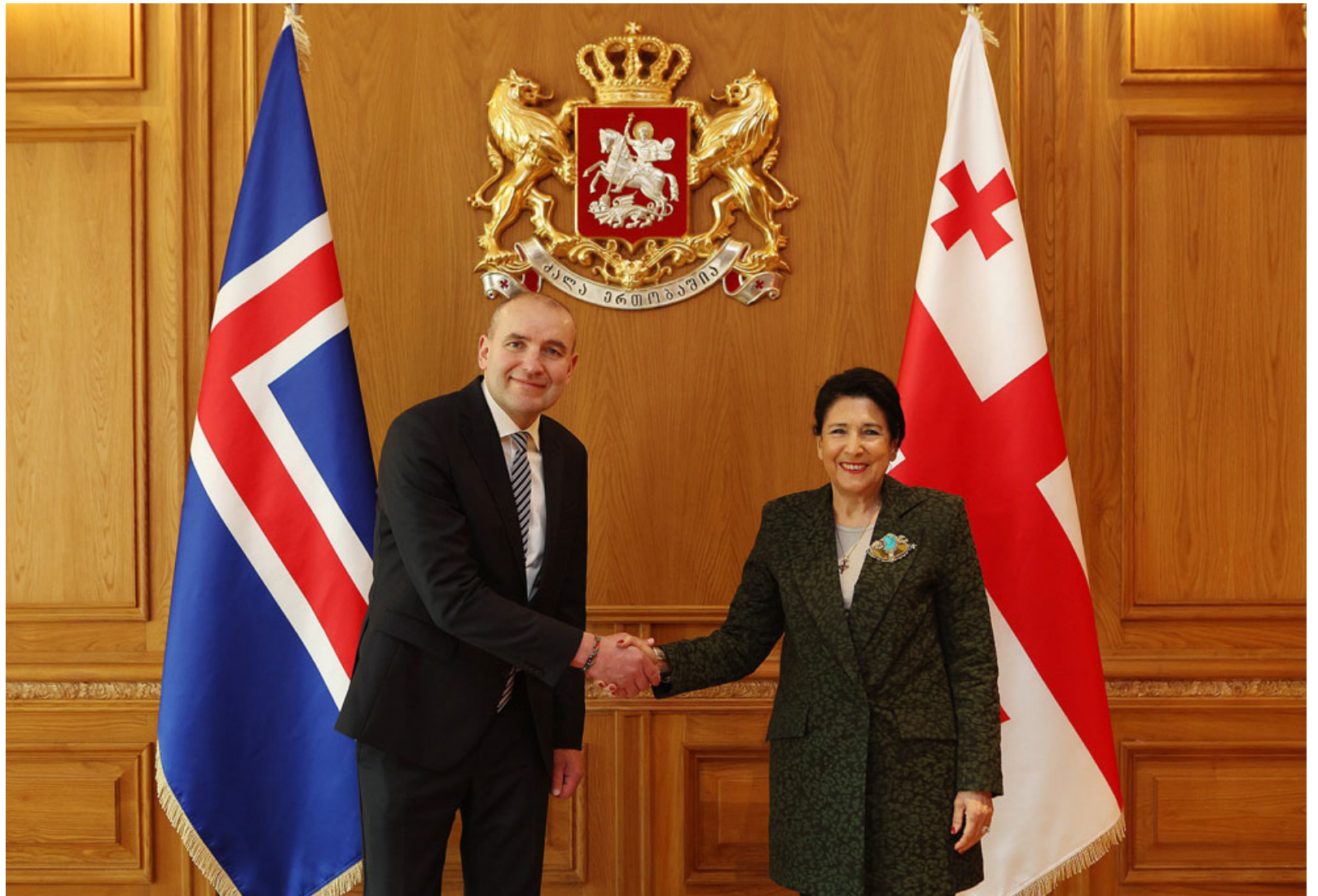
The welcoming ceremony for the President Jóhannesson was held at the administration of the President of Georgia.

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili, held both one-on-one and expanded meetings with Guðni Jóhannesson. Following these meetings, joint statements were issued to the media.

"We discussed the current situation, focusing on its humanitarian aspects, and agreed that the most important thing today is solidarity with the people of this country. Iceland, as a founding member of NATO, and Georgia, which aims to integrate into NATO, share a common spirit to strengthen peace, stability, and freedom on the European continent. Together, we discussed the increased role of security and stability in the Black Sea in the strategy of the Alliance.

Together with the president, we also discussed in detail the dire situation of the occupied territories of Georgia and the current challenge, new steps, the new military base in Ochamchire, which Russia announces as a project; the transfer to Russia represents new aggressive steps towards Georgia and destabilization steps in the direction of the Black Sea.

It is appreciated that President Jóhannesson expressed his desire to visit the occupation line



and get to know the severe face and consequences of the Russian occupation on the spot," said Salome Zourabichvili.

According to the President of Georgia, they also talked about climate change, management of natural crises, and the potential of Georgia-Iceland business re-

lations.

Guðni Jóhannesson noted that Iceland welcomes Georgia's desire to join NATO.

"Georgia has great potential, and we in Iceland are ready to cooperate with Georgia and the Georgian people in various fields. All the aspects

you mentioned have actually been considered by us. When we talk about bilateral relations, in this regard, we fully support Georgia. Also, we welcome Georgia's desire to join the Euro-Atlantic Alliance. We are ready to support you in this direction as well," said

the President of Iceland.

The visit of the President of Iceland will last for 3 days. During this time, he will visit the occupation line and meet with the Chairman of the Parliament and Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze.

President's Veto on Election Code Changes is in Parliament for Consideration



By Liza Mchedlidze

The President presented motivated remarks regarding the changes in the Election Code to the Parliament.

During the March 5th Bureau session, the issue of the President's veto was referred to the Legal Affairs Committee. Following the committee's deliberation, the issue will be submitted to the plenary session for voting.

To override the veto, 76 votes are required, and the parliamentary majority has already agreed to support it.

In her motivational remarks, the President proposed to the Parliament that the authority to select and submit candidates for the CEC (Central Election Commission) chairman and membership be returned to the President of Georgia. This change was introduced in the election code last year when the authority of the president was transferred to the

chairman of the parliament.

Additionally, with motivated remarks, Zourabichvili proposed to the Parliament the appointment of the Chairman of the CEC. A three-fifths majority shall be defined for the election of professional members. If a candidate fails to receive the votes of the majority of 3/5, the candidate with the majority of 1/2 shall be elected for a term of 6 months.

To ensure a high degree of trust in the CEC, the President emphasized the importance of retaining and equipping the deputy chairman elected from among the members of the CEC appointed by the opposition parties with appropriate powers.

Regarding the exercise of the authority of the CEC chairman in their absence, the President proposed to the parliament that this authority be exercised by the non-party deputy chairman elected by the parliament. In the

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6586; Euro - 2.8851; GBP - 3.3730; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9184; Swiss Franc - 3.0000

President's Veto on Election Code Changes is in Parliament for Consideration

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absence of the non-party deputy chairman, the authority would then be exercised by the deputy appointed by the opposition quota in the CEC. Amendments to the Election

Code were adopted on February 20th. The new amendments to the Code envisage a change in the procedure for electing the CEC chairman and members and the cancellation of the post of the CEC deputy with the opposition quota.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Prime Minister Kobakhidze Highlights Government's Role in Maintaining Peace and Stability in Georgia



The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, stated that the government maintains peace and stability through effective policies. Kobakhidze expressed that despite the challenging environment Georgia finds itself in, they have successfully upheld peace, calmness,

and stability within the country. He attributed this achievement to the effective policies implemented by the government. Additionally, he offered special recognition to the law enforcement structures for their quiet yet efficient efforts in maintaining peace and safeguarding the na-

is conducting. Special thanks go to the law enforcement structures, which work quietly but efficiently to ensure peace in the country and protect the country from any such threats," said Kobakhidze.

Twelve NGOs Appeal to European Commissioner for Mid-term Evaluation of Georgia's Reform Implementation

Twelve NGOs appealed to Olivér Várhelyi, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, to consider the possibility of preparing a mid-term evaluation of Georgia's implementation of the recommendations.

According to the organizations, this will significantly help increase the quality of government accountability, transparency, and inclusiveness of reforms.

"We are aware that, according to established practice, the European Commission annually evaluates the process of reform implementation by the enlargement countries. However, we believe that a publicly available mid-term evaluation would significantly contribute to the rapid

and efficient conduct of the reform process.

A positive experience in this regard was the interim oral report of the European Commission on June 23, 2023, which played a positive role and gave impetus to the authorities to take certain steps. The interim report proved to be an important supporting tool for civil society in the process of monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

Based on the above, in order to promote and accelerate the

reform process, the signatory organizations request you to consider the possibility of preparing an interim assessment of the implementation of the recommendations by Georgia. We believe that this will significantly help increase the level of government accountability, transparency, and inclusiveness of the reform process, and facilitate effective supervision. Your support in this matter will make a significant contribution to the realization of our common goals," the joint statement reads.



ევროკომისიის სამეზობლო პოლიტიკისა და გადართობის საკითხებში ბატონ ოლივერ ვარჰელი, ასლი: ევროკავშირის წარმომადგენლობის საქართველოში, საქართველოში აკრედიტებული ევროკავშირის წვრი ქვეყნების დიპლომატიურ წარმომადგენლობებს

ბატონო ვარჰელი,

2023 წლის დეკემბერში ევროკავშირმა საქართველოსთვის კანდიდატის სტატუსის მინიჭების შესახებ გადაწყვეტილება მიიღო. ეს უმნიშვნელოვანესი წინადადებული ნაბიჯია ჩვენი ქვეყნის ევროკავშირში გაწევრების გზაზე, რომელსაც საქართველოს მხრიდან უნდა მოჰყვებოდა სწრაფი რეფორმები ევროკომისიის მიერ განსაზღვრული 9 პრიორიტეტული მიმართულებით.

სამოქალაქო საზოგადოების ჩართულობა საკანონმდებლო და პოლიტიკის განხორციელების პროცესში, კვლავ ევროკომისიის მიერ განსაზღვრული 9 ნაბიჯის ერთ-ერთ მნიშვნელოვან კომპონენტად რჩება. ხელმოწერი ორგანიზაციები გამოეთქვამთ მზადყოფნას აქტიური როლი შევასრულოთ და წვლილი შევიტანოთ საქართველოს ევროინტეგრაციისა და დემოკრატიული ტრანსფორმაციის გზაზე და ვიმუშაოთ იმისთვის, რომ საქართველოს მოსახლეობის უმრავლესობის წება სრულად აისახოს სახელმწიფო პოლიტიკაში.

Young European Ambassadors in Georgia hold networking event to meet new members

Over 130 Young European Ambassadors (YEAs) gathered in Tbilisi on March 1 for a Bi-Annual Networking Event in Georgia, joined by EU Ambassador to Georgia Pawel Herczynski.

The networking event aims to build up team spirit, connections between new and more experienced YEAs, and to engage them in activities to improve their soft skills while working on their action plan for 2024.

During the event, young



people outlined concrete plans for their work in the coming year, in line with the priorities set by the EU-funded EU NEIGHBOURS East regional communication programme and the EU Delegation to Georgia.

In December 2023, the EU NEIGHBOURS east programme welcomed 657 new YEAs, including 98 in Georgia, bringing its network to a

total of 1,162 active YEAs.

The Young European Ambassadors (YEAs) initiative is a vibrant, voluntary, non-political communication network connecting and building bridges of friendship among young people from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and the EU Member States and the United Kingdom. The aim of the network is to raise awareness about the EU's cooperation with its Eastern partner countries, showcase the tangible results of this cooperation, contribute to policy dialogue on various topics, help increase civic activism and work together for a better future.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, March 6

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 15°C

Night Showers Low: 6°C

Thursday, March 7

Day Few Showers High: 10°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 5°C

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