

Prime Minister of Georgia Holds Meeting with Prime Minister of Armenia

By MESSENGER STAFF

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, met with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan.

According to the government administration, during the face-to-face meeting, the parties discussed the existing friendly and good-neighborly relations between Georgia and the Republic of Armenia. It was noted that the two countries are connected by active cooperation in many directions, particularly in the fields of transport and tourism.

"The Prime Minister of Georgia thanked Nikol Pashinyan for supporting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia and confirmed Georgia's support for the territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia. Attention was paid to regional processes," the statement said.

As reported by the government administration, Kobakhidze noted that Georgia firmly supports peaceful coexistence in the South Caucasus and is ready to play a positive role in ensuring peace and stability in the region in the future.

Following the meeting, at the joint press conference, the Armenian Prime Minister spoke about Georgia obtaining the status of an EU candidate country.

He emphasized the significance of this development, highlighting its impact on both the region and the relations between the two countries.



"Last year, Georgia received the status of a candidate for the European Union, and I welcome this fact. This is a very

important event because it affects not only our region but also our bilateral relations. The Republic of Armenia has always sup-

ported Georgia's European integration," Pashinyan stated.

Majority Leader Mdinardze Unveils Constitutional Changes to Prioritise 'Family Values'

By MESSENGER STAFF

The leader of the majority, Mamuka Mdinardze, held a briefing, where he spoke about 'pseudo-liberal propaganda' and said that they have decided to initiate constitutional changes, where 'guarantees of family values and protection of minors' will be written.

According to Mdinardze, right after this, in the near fu-

ture they will initiate the corresponding changes in the law, which will include several dozens of laws.

"For the guaranteed provision of this goal and due to the great importance of the issue, which the problems in this direction in the modern world have shown us, we decided to initiate, first of all, the constitutional amendments, where the guarantees of family values and the protec-

tion of minors will be clearly written. After that, in the very near future we will also initiate corresponding and more specific changes in the laws, which will cover about several dozen laws.

The changes will be in full compliance with the current Constitution of Georgia, however, in the future, in the long-term perspective, for the solid implementation of the mentioned goals, we will initiate con-

stitutional changes," stated Mdinardze.

The constitutional law presented by Mdinardze follows:

Article 1

According to the legislation, only such a relationship similar to marriage can be regulated, which provides for the union of one genetic man and one genetic woman who are at least 18 years old.

2. Adoption or foster care of a minor is allowed only by spouses or heterosexual persons who are married in accordance with the Constitution and legislation of Georgia.

3. Any medical intervention related to the change of sex is prohibited.

4. The document issued by the state or local self-government indicates only the female or male gender that corresponds to his genetic data.

5. Any decision of a public authority or a private person that directly or indirectly restricts the use of concepts defined by gender is invalid.

6. Gatherings aimed at promoting same-sex family or intimate relationships, incest, adoption or foster care of a minor by a

same-sex couple or a non-heterosexual person, medical intervention related to gender reassignment, or the non-use of gender-specific concepts are prohibited.

7. It is prohibited to distribute a work, program or other material with such content, which is aimed at promoting same-sex family or intimate relationships, incest, adoption or foster care of a minor by a same-sex couple or a non-heterosexual person, medical intervention related to sex change or the non-use of gender-specific concepts.

8. It is prohibited to provide information in the educational process of a public or private educational institution that is aimed at promoting same-sex family or intimate relationships, incest, adoption or foster care of a minor by a same-sex couple or a non-heterosexual person, medical intervention related to sex change, or the non-use of gender-specific concepts.

Article 2.

This law shall come into force upon publication.

In addition, according to Mdinardze, paragraph 3 will be added to Article 30 of the Constitution of Georgia with the following content:

"The protection of family values and minors is ensured by the constitutional law of Georgia, which is an integral part of the Constitution of Georgia."



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7055; Euro - 2.9374; GBP - 3.4249; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9195; Swiss Franc - 3.0038

How Well Will Minor Parties Do at Elections?

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

Today, in Georgian politics, it is considered that there are four opposition political unions, which have the opportunity to overcome the 5% electoral threshold. The newest such union - 'Ahali' of Nika Melia and Nika Gvaramia was created on March 11. After that, it became especially relevant to discuss what path will be taken by the remaining small opposition parties, which clearly have no chance of overcoming the 5% threshold in the next elections.

The Georgian Dream, which is in power, has already launched an active election campaign. First of all, he has created such electoral rules that are considered favourable for him. One such condition is to maintain the 5% threshold, despite earlier promises that this threshold would be reduced to 2%. It should be noted that the Parliament has adopted this constitutional amendment in the first reading.

By maintaining a high electoral threshold, the Georgian Dream made the right calculation for itself. The 5% threshold creates serious problems for the opposition, which has always had difficulty uniting before the elections. Today, except for the

5% threshold, it is forbidden to create pre-election blocs. Election participants must have a single electoral list.

In such conditions, at least four opposition forces were identified, which, according to experts, will be able to overcome the 5% barrier. These are the National Movement, Gakharia's For Georgia, Lelo and Gvaramia-Melia political party Ahali. But there are still many opposition political forces that are preparing for elections and intend to participate in the elections independently. The Labor Party, Elisashvili's Citizens, European Georgia, Girchi - more freedom and others are considered smaller forces. At the election marathon, many political forces, both Western oriented and openly pro-Russian, will appear.

If the votes received by them turn out to be less than 5%, and it can be said in advance that this will be the case, they will be 'lost', or rather, they will be distributed among the political forces in the parliament, and primarily in favour of the Georgian Dream. No one doubts that the political force in power today will take the first place by the number of votes received. Why do small parties refuse to unite with 'big' parties? In addition to

the existence of ideological and personal conflicts, there is another factor in today's Georgian legislation, which seems like a peculiarly easy-to-achieve bonus.

In particular, the party that collects 1% of the total votes in the elections will not be able to enter the parliament, but will receive funding from the state - 300 thousand GEL annually. This allows small parties to exist and creates a safe multiparty, 'pluralistic' background for the government.

It is assumed that with the creation of Melia and Gvaramia's political party, the regroupings on the opposition wing have not ended yet. Behind-the-scenes negotiations between certain political forces continue, and the final pre-election picture is expected to be formed by the end of April. A number of experts believe that some opposition political forces, if they are convinced that they cannot overcome the 5% barrier on their own, will go to pre-election unification.

The main pre-election messages of the Georgian Dream are simple:

1. The Georgian Dream will not just win, but will easily gain a constitutional majority in the next parliament.
2. The opposition (political

forces of western orientation) is very weak and acts against the interests of the country, for example they did not want Georgia to receive the status of a candidate for the European Union and they want to involve Georgia in the war.

3. In fact, the opposition is not represented by several political forces, but by one political force, the National Movement, which did not disintegrate, but spread out and thus they are trying to mislead the voters.

Whether the leaders of the Georgian Dream and the propaganda channels intensively repeat these pre-election messages, but it is another matter how effective such propaganda will turn out to be.

According to experts, the statements of the Georgian Dream about obtaining 60% support and constitutional majority are their desired reality, but unattainable. The real rating of today's ruling political force is considered to be somewhere between 30-35%, which is by no means a guarantee of victory and leads to a particularly aggressive attitude when commenting on the appearance of opposition political forces and their unions.

The main opposition force is considered to be the National

Movement, which after the loss of power in 2012, many former faces and political groups left behind. The last loss was the departure of the former leader Nika Melia and his supporters from the party and the formation of a separate political force.

Nevertheless, they believe that the National Movement will not only surpass 5% even with its current composition, but its electoral result will be much more impressive.

Melia and Gvaramia's Ahali should be considered the closest to the National Movement. Its leaders used to be associated with the National Movement and even today they follow the part of the supporters of the National Movement. It will be difficult for them to get the votes of those who are 'undecided', who neither want the National Movement nor the Georgian Dream. Lelo is considered a good option for such a voter, how successful it will be, is another matter, as for Gakharia, for 'Georgia' it will already take part of the Georgian Dream voter and will damage the current ruling party.

But there are many 1-2% parties that will take significant votes in total, leaving only the Georgian Dream to win. Will these parties be able to create a new opposition union, or will they stick to one of the existing ones? We will know the answer to this in the near future.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY LIZA MCHIDLIDZE

Chairman of Parliament Shalva Papuashvili Signs Amendments to Election Code



The Chairman of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, signed the amendments to the

election code, which changed the procedure for electing the chairman and members of the CEC and abolished the position of the CEC deputy with the opposition quota.

President Salome Zourabichvili vetoed the bill, but

created by the 'April 19 Agreement' for almost three years and to elect professional members and the chairman of the CEC.

The previously valid regulation - electing CEC members by a 2/3 majority and appointing an opposition politician as the alternate chairman—does not exist in any country. It should also be mentioned that this strange rule was not developed based on dialogue between the parties, but was a persistent idea of the mediator, which, in fact, did not work and could not work, especially in the limited time remaining before the next elections," wrote Shalva Papuashvili.

Papuashvili suggested that the opposition might leverage the deadlock situation to justify their refusal to acknowledge the election results.

EU Integration Commission of Georgia Approves 2024 EU Integration Plan

At the 71st session of the European Union Integration Commission of Georgia, the 2024 ac-

tion plan for Georgia's integration into the European Union was approved. The session was held under the leadership of Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze. The action plan

into the European single market, based on the principles of a deep and comprehensive free trade space, were discussed at the meeting.

The meeting also discussed



was developed with the involvement of all agencies and encompasses all directions outlined in the association agreement.

The session also heard the annual report on the implementation of the 2023 action plan for Georgia's integration into the European Union.

The prospects of integration

the action plan comprising nine priorities defined by the European Council, new requirements related to Georgia's membership in the Single Euro Payment Area (SEPA), and effective measures necessary for planning, implementing, and monitoring the process of legal convergence with the European Union.

Weather

Wednesday, March 27

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 13°C

Night Clear
Low: 1°C

Thursday, March 28

Day Clear
High: 17°C

Night Clear
Low: 4°C

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