

By Liza Mchedlidze

On a two-day working visit to Georgia from April 10-11, members of the European Union's Political and Security Committee met with President Salome Zourabichvili, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili, and members of both the ruling majority and opposition in Parliament.

According to a statement from the EU representation in Georgia, delegates expressed concern during their meeting with Georgian government officials regarding the draft law on transparency of foreign influence. They also referenced the statement issued by the EU High Representative on April 4.

Additionally, the delegation emphasized the importance of Georgia using this moment on its path towards European integration. They highlighted the December decision by the European Council, which opened the door for Georgia's eventual EU membership.

They emphasized that the accession process is merit-based, urging the Georgian authorities to take the necessary steps to achieve this goal. These steps include addressing the nine priorities established by the European Commission.

The statement stressed the need for immediate reforms and progress. It urged the government, all political parties, and civil society to work together:

"Necessary reforms and progress must be made without any delay, and this must be done in a unity approach, involving both the government and all political

EU Delegation Raises Concerns Over Georgia's Foreign Influence Law



Delegation of the European Union to Georgia

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Press release on the occasion of the visit of the Members of the EU Political and Security Committee to Georgia

10.04.2024 Tbilisi Press and information team of the Delegation to GEORGIA

The Members of the European Union's Political and Security Committee (PSC) are paying a working visit to Georgia on 10-11 April. The delegation, led by the PSC Chair, Ambassador Delphine Pronk, met with President Salome Zourabichvili, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili, Defence Minister Irakli Chikovani, Representatives of the Parliamentary majority and opposition, as well as Representatives of civil society. The Members will equally visit the EU's civilian monitoring mission (EUMM Georgia) and the Administrative Boundary Line.

parties and civil society. Time is short, and now is the time to implement the nine steps and avoid such a decision that would hinder the path to the European Union," the statement said.

US Ambassador to Georgia Expresses Concerns About 'Russian Law' and Its Impact on Georgia's European Integration Path

By Liza Mchedlidze

US Ambassador to Georgia, Robin Dunnigan, expressed concerns regarding the re-initiated 'Russian Law' by the Georgian Dream. She emphasized that there is worry that this bill will steer Georgia away from its path towards European integration. Additionally, the Ambassador raised concerns about the potential negative impact on the functioning of local civil societies and their ability to effectively assist the Georgian people in their daily lives.

According to Dunnigan, the concerns about the law presented by the ruling team are not limited to the United States and are also shared by the European Union, the European Council, NATO, the European Parliament, and individual European countries. They believe that the adoption of the law will have a detrimental impact on Georgia's path towards European integration.

"It is not only the USA that has this concern; the European Union, NATO, the European Council, the European Parliament, many European countries and parliaments, and the United Nations have also expressed serious concerns about this draft law. They have expressed concern that this draft law will have a negative impact on Georgia's path to EU membership.

If you have a bill that your Western partners and friends tell you they have serious concerns about, but the occupier welcomes, you have to ask yourself, is it good for your country?

I want to state once again that this bill is not similar to American legislation. The US welcomes the role of our civil society organizations and how they help our country. Our country specifically requires that organizations and individuals paid to lobby foreign governments and their interests be registered. This is a very different law. With this, I would like to state once again that the USA stands by Georgia, its people, and government and supports Georgia's European path," Dunnigan said.

The ambassador also spoke about the aid that the US provides to Georgia. She said that over the years, the US has spent 6 billion dollars because "friends want their friends to be stronger".

According to Dunnigan, the aid was used to improve Georgia's defense capabilities, border protection, repair hospitals and schools, train doctors and teachers, create centers for people with special abilities, help small businesses, open vocational schools, and send thousands of Georgians to the USA with an exchange program.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6729; Euro - 2.9038; GBP - 3.3943; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8667; Swiss Franc - 2.9574

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“With our help, hospitals and schools were built, we trained doctors, teachers, and emergency workers. With our help, independent living centers have been built across the country to help people with disabilities live indepen-

dently. Our assistance provided loans to small farmers and small entrepreneurs. We gave young people professional education.

We have opened American

centers where the English language is studied for free, and we provide books. We have given thousands of Georgians the opportunity to study in US educa-

tional programs. That’s what friends do. Friends help to strengthen the country and increase its economic prosperity and defense. I am very proud of

the assistance provided by the US to Georgia, as well as the non-governmental organizations that provided this assistance,” stated the US Ambassador.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

President Zourabichvili Meets with European Union’s Political and Security Committee Delegation



The President of Georgia met with the delegation of the Political and Security Committee of the European Union.

According to the President’s administration, the discussions at the meeting included Georgia-

EU relations, the consequences of the ‘Russian Law’ and security issues in the Black Sea region.

“The President of Georgia referred to the Russian law, which has been initiated for the second time in parliament, as a challenge for our country. She em-

phasized that the adoption of this law would have a significant impact on civil society. Russia’s goal is to undermine the civil sector, which upholds the values of the European Union.

“When it comes to choosing

between Europe and Russia, the president cannot remain neutral!” stated the president.

Furthermore, the president addressed the issue of abolishing women’s quotas, highlighting that the current rhetoric surrounding this matter in the country is unacceptable,” as stated by the administration.

The administration also reported that Delphine Pronk, the head of the delegation, expressed gratitude to the President of Georgia for her significant personal contribution to upholding the values of the European Union. Pronk also congratulated Georgia on attaining the status of a candidate country for the European Union.

USAID Administrator Samantha Power Criticizes ‘Russian Law’ At the Senate Foreign Relations Committee session,

Samantha Power, the Administrator of USAID, conveyed that “Russian law” has no place in Europe. She mentioned that previous experiences indicate that such laws negatively impact accountability for corruption and freedom of speech. The discussions during the session primarily focused on the newly proposed law by the Georgian Dream party.

Power emphasized that it is crucial to not only recognize but also protect human rights and democratic principles.

“We’ve seen copies of Russia’s foreign agent law appear in many places, and the results are less accountability for corruption and restrictions on free speech. Of course, Georgia is now standing, or seems to be standing, on the road to Europe, and has recently received some recognition of these ambitions. Fundamentally, a similar foreign agent law has no place in Europe. Human rights and democratic principles should not only be recognized but also protected,” Power stated.



On 10 April, the launch event of the “Connect Georgia” project, funded by the German government through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), took place in Tbilisi.

The project provides for cooperation between Georgia and Germany over the next three years to support sustainable reforms in the transport and mobility sector.

The project aims to improve public transport and active mobility (cycling and walking) in the municipalities of the Adjara region and in the cities of Tbilisi and Batumi. Among other things, it will help the population to improve local transport between the various municipalities in Adjara.

Launch of the new German-Georgian project “Connect Georgia” on sustainable mobility



One of the main components of the project will be the improvement of the national legal and political framework in Georgia towards sustainable transport, which will be implemented with the involvement of relevant ministries, other national authorities and regional municipalities.

The event was opened by the representative of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany responsible for Georgia, Verena Zell, the Head of the Development Cooperation Department at the German Embassy, Lidija Christmann, the Country Direc-



tor of GIZ, Sandra Schenke, and Jan Rickmeyer, the head of the “Connect Georgia” project.

“The project contributes to further harmonising Georgia’s transport legislation with the EU and to achieving the goals of Georgia’s 2030 Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan,” emphasised Verena Zell in her

opening speech.

The event was also attended by representatives of the project’s partner organisations, the Ministry of Finance and Economy of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, the city administrations of Batumi and Tbilisi and non-governmental organisations.

Weather

Thursday, April 11

Day Showers
High: 20°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 11°C

Friday, April 12

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 25°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 10°C

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