

French Ambassador: 'Russian Law' Different from French Legislation



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The French ambassador to Georgia, H.E. Sheraz Gasri, clarified that the controversial 'Russian Law' reintroduced by Georgian Dream and currently under consideration by the Georgian Parliament does not resemble any French law.

"We also consider various laws

in France. I can tell you that the Georgian bill is not a French law. What happens in France or other parts of the world cannot be used to justify what Georgia decides for its future," the ambassador said.

Gasri reiterated that while Georgia has every right to legislate as it sees fit, France, as a member state of the European

Union, observes that the proposed law does not embody the values upheld by the EU.

"Georgia is a sovereign, independent country. We, of course, recognize its sovereignty and independence. Georgia can adopt the legislation it wants. As a representative of the government of France, a member state of the European Union, I can say that

we welcome Georgia to the European Union family. You know this well. As friends of Georgia, a country that wants to join the European Union, we tell Georgia that the draft law being discussed in the parliament does not align with the values of the European Union. Whether it accepts this or not is up to Georgia," Gasri said.

Additionally, when queried by a journalist about her potential participation in a televised debate concerning the "Russian law" proposed by the Prime Minister of Georgia, Ambassador Sheraz Ghasri emphasized that the decision rests with the Georgian government and its citizens. "It is not our place to judge the laws," Gasri responded.

MIA Confirms Rally Arrests; Public Defender Urges Ministry to Protect Georgians' Right to Assembly

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has confirmed the use of pepper spray as a means to 'prevent physical confrontation', with 11 individuals administratively detained according to their information.

According to the ministry's statement, Despite numerous calls, participants of the rally engaged in physical confrontation with the police, throwing various blunt objects, resulting in injuries to an internal affairs officer and damage to a ministry vehicle. The Ministry reiterated its call for organizers and participants to express their protest within the framework provided by law.

"Once again, we call on the organizers and members of the action to express their protest within the framework provided by law. Each illegal action will be met with an appropriate le-

gal response," reads the Ministry's statement.

Special forces used a special tool against rally participants at one building entrance, as shown in circulating footage of injured individuals rinsing their eyes with saline solution and special forces equipment sprayed with colored liquid.

Later, Public Defender of Georgia Levan Ioseliani responded to the ongoing demonstration against the 'Law of Agents'. The statement of the ombudsman notes that by 22:00 on April 16, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia began using force against rally participants.

The Public Defender urged the Ministry of Internal Affairs to ensure the protection of freedom of expression and assembly in a safe environment and, in case of force, to adhere to relevant international standards.



MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS



112

Unified Emergency Number

126

General Inspection

Home → News → Statement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

16-04-2024

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

During the manifestation in the area of Rustaveli Avenue and the Parliament Building, despite numerous calls from the side of Ministry of Internal Affairs directed to the organizers and participants of the rally to express their protest within the frames defined by the acting legislation, and to abstain from violent actions, participants of the manifestation physically confronted the police and threw various blunt objects in their direction, including stones and bottles.

As a result of the mentioned illegal actions, an employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was injured and transferred to the Caucasus Medical Center. Herewith, the vehicle belonging to the ministry was

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Charles Michel Condemns Georgian Dream's 'Russian Law' Proposal, Warns of Detriment to EU Accession Path



The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, has addressed the 'Russian law' reintroduced by the Georgian Dream. Michel stressed that Georgia, having committed to the European path, was awarded candidate status by the European Council. He further high-

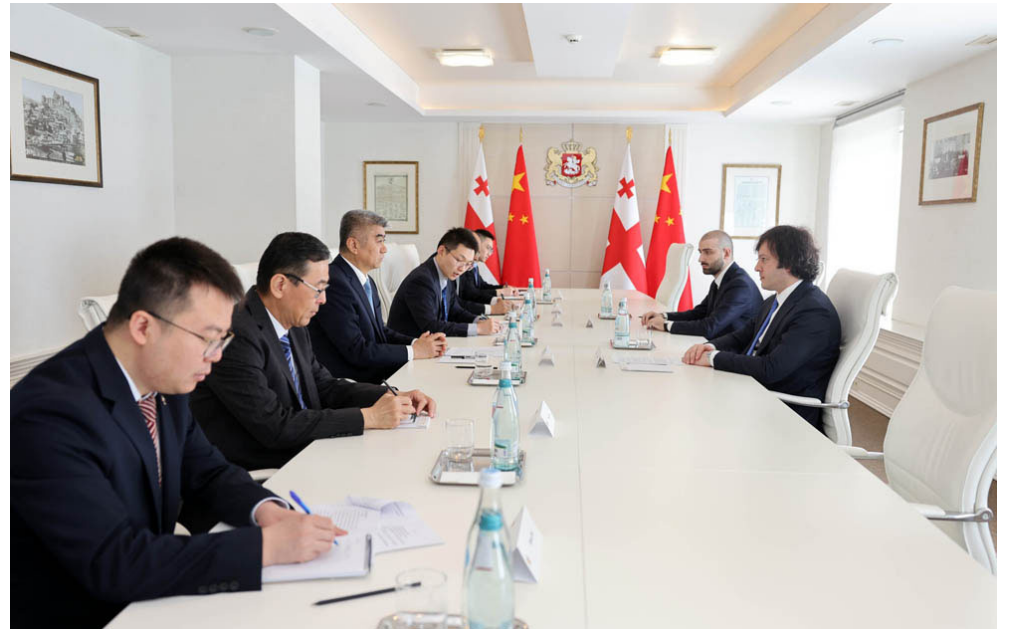
lighted that the draft Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence contradicts Georgia's EU aspirations and would push the country away from, rather than towards, EU membership.

"The Georgian people have chosen the European path and in response, the European Council granted #Georgia the can-

didate status last December.

Let me be clear: the draft Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence is not consistent with Georgia's EU aspiration and its accession trajectory and will bring Georgia further away from the EU and not closer," Charles Michel wrote on X.

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze Meets with Communist Party of China Members



On April 15, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze met with members of the Communist Party of China.

According to the government administration, the meeting underscored the fruitful political and economic cooperation between Georgia and the People's Republic of China. It was highlighted that the strategic partnership agreement signed between the two countries last year will significantly bolster the ongoing develop-

ment of bilateral relations.

"Attention was focused on various directions, including the prospects of further deepening partnership in the trade and economic sphere. According to the

Prime Minister, great importance is attached to the recently signed visa-free travel agreement with China for Georgian citizens.

Irakli Kobakhidze thanked the delegation of the People's Republic of China for supporting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia and once again expressed his support for the principle of one China," the statement reads.

Georgia: PACE President asks the Venice Commission for an opinion on the draft law on Transparency of Foreign Influence



Strasbourg, 16.04.2024 – The President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), Theodoros Rousopoulos, yesterday requested the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) for an urgent opinion on the compliance with Council of



Europe standards of the Georgian draft law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, as being discussed by the Georgian Parliament.

Earlier this month, on 4 April, the PACE monitoring rapporteurs for Georgia, Claude Kern (France, ALDE) and Edite Estrela (Portugal, SOC), expressed their deep concern at the reintroduction of the draft law. "The reintroduction of this so-called Foreign Agents Law, whose withdrawal last year we warmly welcomed, is of deep concern. What we said the first time this law was introduced remains

valid for this proposal: there are serious questions about the draft law's compatibility with European democratic and human rights standards and norms. We therefore urge the authorities to withdraw this draft from the parliamentary agenda," the rapporteurs said.

At the end of its meeting today, the PACE Monitoring Committee, concerned about the possible human rights implications, also decided to ask for Venice Commission opinions on the draft constitutional laws on the Protection of family values and minors, as well as on the recent amendments to the Electoral Code of Georgia abolishing gender quotas.

(Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe)



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Location: Biltmore Hotel Tbilisi

Corporate tables as well as individual tickets available:

Lena@afgeorgia.org
Kate@afgeorgia.org

Weather

Wednesday, April 17

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 26°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 12°C

Thursday, April 18

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 27°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 14°C

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therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

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Made in Italy Day

Made in Italy Day was celebrated in Tbilisi, organized by the Italian Embassy in Georgia and dedicated to the theme "Enhancement and promotion of excellent productions, cultural heritage and Italian know-how" on April 15. The

event dedicated to creativity and Italian excellence, inaugurated by the Italian Ambassador to Georgia H.E. Massimiliano D'Antuono, offered the public a kaleidoscope of beauty, ingenuity and quality: from the presentations of Italian

professionals in Georgia on the various sectors of Made in Italy to tastings of Italian delicacies, from the display of Alfa Romeo cars and to the clothing and footwear collections of historic Italian brands.

