

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Prime Minister of Georgia Criticizes US Visa Restrictions

Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, criticized the United States for imposing visa restrictions without naming the individuals affected, calling the action insulting and unbecoming a partner nation. He stated that no Georgian MPs have been notified of any restrictions, deeming the opposition's reaction exaggerated.

Kobakhidze emphasized that such decisions harm Georgian-American relations but have no practical impact. He praised the current US ambassador's efforts to improve relations and expressed hope for future cooperation. Kobakhidze also mentioned previous visa restrictions on judges, asserting they were imposed without evidence and only damaged America's reputation.

"The United States of America has imposed so-called visa restrictions; they don't call them sanctions, they are visa restrictions. In reality, these visa restrictions were imposed without the names being made public, and what's more, we've checked — to date, not a single MP has been notified of the visa restrictions. Therefore, the hype created by the opposition is completely exaggerated. The very decision that was voiced is insulting to the Georgian state and Georgian society because that's not how you talk to a partner country. As far as the practical



burden of this decision is concerned, the practical burden is actually zero. When imposing

visa restrictions without naming names, the only effect it can have is to insult another state.

This does not correspond to the spirit of partnership, although everything must be done on our

side to strengthen partnership relations in the future. This is our wish.

I would like to once again express my respect for the current ambassador, whose activities are qualitatively different from those of the previous ambassador. Accordingly, we have a reason for optimism, and I hope that these relations will move from the current wrong tracks to the right tracks. During his time, the former ambassador spoiled Georgian-American relations so much that it was theoretically impossible to spoil them more than that. The previous ambassador caused maximum damage to Georgian-American relations.

It has no practical significance. You remember that at one time such visa restrictions were imposed on judges, although this did not affect the work of the court in any way. It did not limit the independence of the court. America's reputation was affected. When you impose visa restrictions without any facts and evidence, it certainly affects the reputation of your country. The American side imposed visa restrictions on judges without any facts or evidence," said the Prime Minister.

DG NEAR Publishes Information on EU Support to Georgia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The General Directorate of the European Commission for Neighborhood Policy and En-

largement Negotiations (DG NEAR) published information on EU support to Georgia.

"We respond to the misinterpretation of the EU's support to

Georgia. It is important to clarify it in the context of the law on foreign agents. Compared to the civil society, the ministries of Georgia were allocated 10 times

more money," the General Directorate of the European Commission wrote.

According to the General Directorate of the European Com-

mission, the following agencies received EU assistance in 2019-2024:

111.55 million euros - Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure/Local Authorities;

101.40 million euros - Ministry of Finance;

62.75 million euros - Ministry of Defense;

57 million euros - Ministry of Environment and Agriculture;

30.5 million euros - Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development;

25.07 million euros - Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Protection of IDPs from Occupied Territories;

19 million euros - Government Commission on Migration Issues;

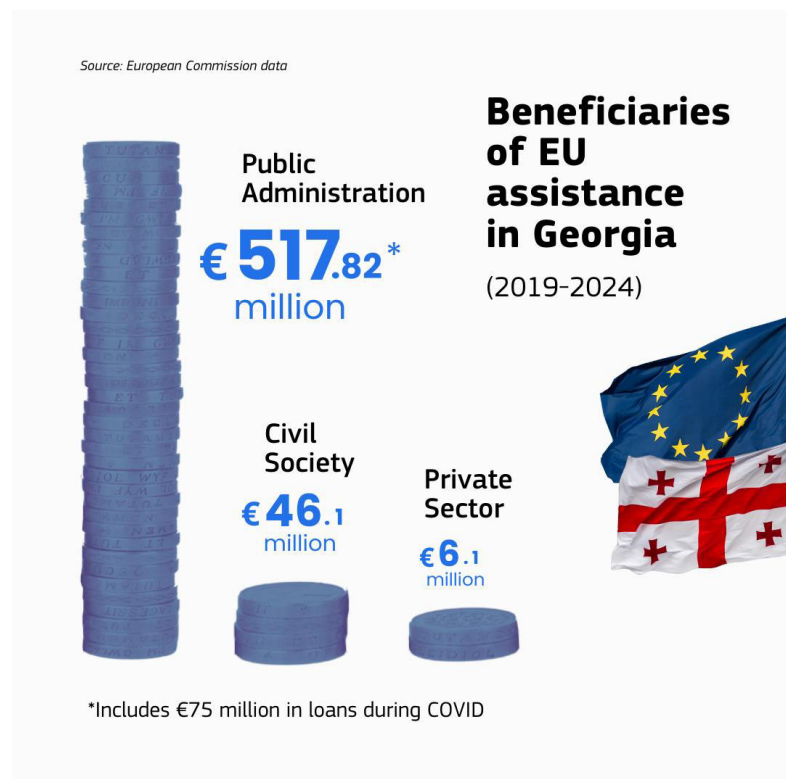
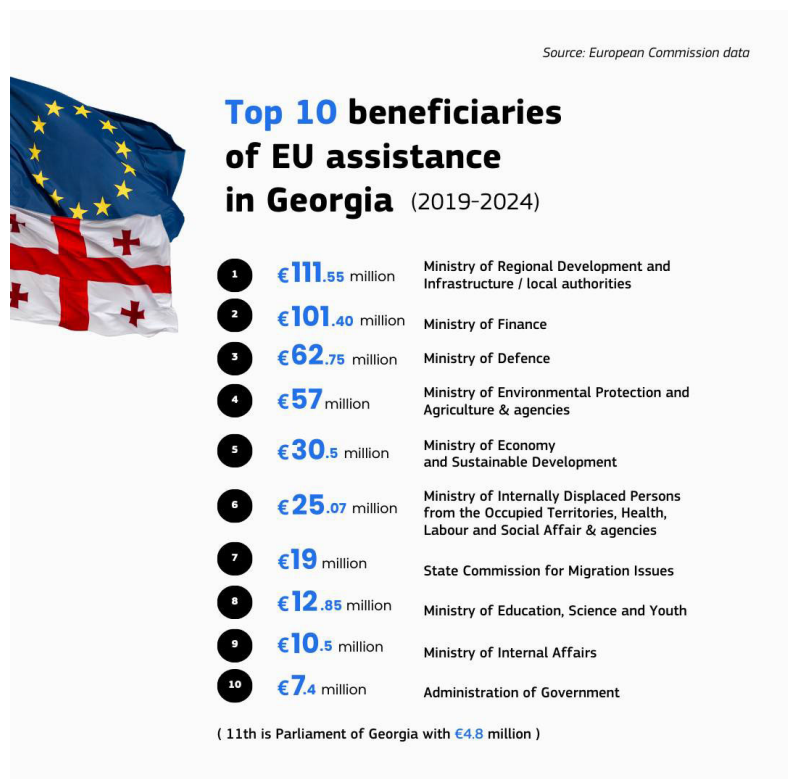
12.85 million euros - Ministry of Education, Science and Youth;

10.5 million euros - Ministry of Internal Affairs;

7.4 million euros - government administration;

4.8 million euros - Parliament of Georgia;

In 2019-2024, public administrations received 517.8 million euros in aid from the European Union, including 75 million euros in the form of loans during the Covid-pandemic. Civil society received 46.1 million euros, and the private sector received 6.1 million euros.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Public Defender Levan Ioseliani Meets with EU Ambassador Pawel Herczyński



Public Defender of Georgia Levan Ioseliani and the First Deputy Public Defender Tamar Gvaramadze met the Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia Pawel Herczyński. According to the Public Defender office, the meeting covered the state of fulfillment of the measures and obligations to be implemented for Georgia's accession to the European Union, and discussed the role of the public defender in this direction. "The parties also talked about the expected results of the implementation of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, the condition of those arrested and injured during the protests against the law, including those still in pretrial detention, and the progress of the study of their cases by the Special Investigation Service.

fillment of the measures and obligations to be implemented for Georgia's accession to the European Union, and discussed the role of the public defender in this direction. "The parties also talked about the expected results of the implementation of

the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, the condition of those arrested and injured during the protests against the law, including those still in pretrial detention, and the progress of the study of their cases by the Special Investigation Service.

The ambassador of the European Union was also interested in the observation mandate of the Office of the Public Defender at the parliamentary elections and the prevention of the harmful practice of using hate speech during the pre-election campaign," the information reads.

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze Discusses Economic Growth During Government Meeting



Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Kobakhidze stated at the government meeting that the economic growth rate of 9% was recorded during the first four

months of 2024. "As for the state budget, as you know, we have high economic growth. A 9% growth rate was recorded in the first four months. All this gives us the opportunity to increase the budget. In the future, appropriate changes will be included in the budget and this year we will have 360 million GEL. This growth will be distributed essentially in such areas as health care, education, culture, defense as well as regional development. It is very important to maintain the existing economic growth rate, to accelerate the growth even more, which directly affects the budget, and these data are a very good example of this," said the Prime Minister.

Top EU officials praise Georgian President Zourabichvili's commitment to Georgia's European future

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and EU High Representative Josep Borrell met Georgian

president Salome Zourabichvili on the sidelines of the Summit on Peace in Ukraine, held last weekend in Switzerland. "Thank you, Salome Zourabichvili, for your leadership. I deeply respect your commitment to Georgia's European future," von der Leyen wrote on X (formerly Twitter) after the meeting. "The Georgian people



overwhelmingly support this path." She also urged the Georgian government "to act in accordance with Georgia's EU aspirations".

"Good exchange about Georgia's European future with President Zourabichvili, ahead of the next Foreign Affairs Council," Josep Borrell said on X. "The

EU stands by the Georgian people's choice of a democratic country on the EU path."

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Tuesday, June 18

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 30°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 18°C

Wednesday, June 19

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 19°C

Thursday, June 20

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 27°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 17°C

Friday, June 21

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 18°C



published by

The Messenger

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