

EU Calls for Transparent Investigation into Georgia's Election Irregularities

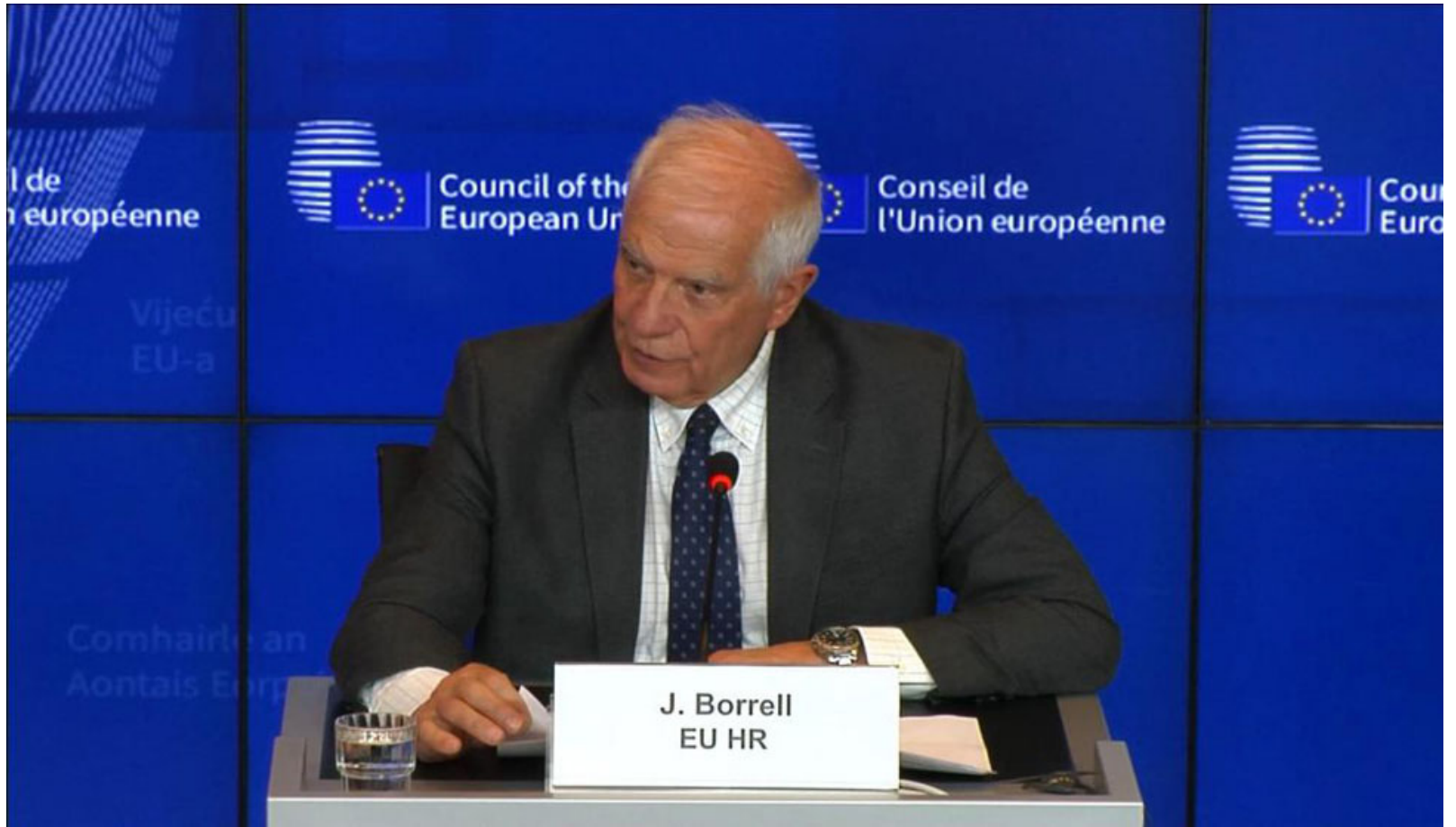
BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

On October 29, Josep Borrell, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, released a statement concerning the parliamentary elections in Georgia, calling for a transparent investigation into reported violations. He stated, "The post-election situation in Georgia is very worrying," as international observers labeled the elections "not free and fair."

Borrell emphasized the need for a transparent inquiry, urging the Central Election Commission of Georgia to address irregularities and pressure on voters. "Those irregularities must be addressed swiftly, transparently and independently," he insisted.

He also reminded that "Georgia is an EU candidate country" and must demonstrate its commitment to European values. He added, "Integrity of elections and upholding the rule of law are cornerstones of democracy and an integral part of the EU accession path."

Borrell announced that the Political and Security Committee of the EU would meet the same day to discuss the situa-



tion, underscoring that he has prioritized the issue for the upcoming Foreign Affairs Council meeting in November.

"The people of Georgia have

been demonstrating for months their attachment to democratic values," he stated. "They deserve clarity on the election process and certainty about the legiti-

macy of the next government."

Finally, he emphasized the importance of peaceful protests, noting, "The democratic backsliding in the country needs to

be reversed" to ensure a supportive environment for media, civil society, and opposition, essential for a pluralistic democracy.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán Visits Georgia Post-Elections

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán visited Georgia following the recent parliamentary elections, where he con-

gratulated Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze on the victory of the Georgian Dream party. Orbán faced backlash during his arrival, with protests erupting and attendees booing

him as he passed by. He emphasized Hungary's support for Georgia's EU aspirations and urged citizens to remain confident amid the criticism of the election process from the EU.

The press conference began with PM Kobakhidze expressing gratitude for Orbán's visit, highlighting the fruitful cooperation between Hungary and Georgia across various sectors. He pointed out Hungary's role as the current president of the Council of the European Union and noted the importance of Hungarian support for Georgia's EU aspirations. "Our common Christian values bind us together, and your support for Georgia's territorial integrity is invaluable," he said.

Orbán reciprocated by thanking Kobakhidze for the invitation and acknowledged his restraint in visiting during the election period to avoid any perception of foreign interference. He remarked on the "mutually beneficial" relations between Hungary and Georgia, describing both nations as "fighters for freedom and sovereignty."

The Hungarian Prime Minister underscored Hungary's support for Ukraine, acknowledging both countries' experiences with conflict. He congratulated the Georgian people for opting for peace and EU integration in their elections. "The Georgian Dream has a pro-EU policy, and it's ridiculous to doubt it," he asserted, praising Kobakhidze

for pursuing EU aspirations. Orbán expressed confidence that in ten years, Georgia would be well-positioned for EU membership, emphasizing Hungary's commitment to support this journey.

Further defending the election process, Orbán said, "I've been following the debates and critical opinions about the elections in the EU, but no one has yet declared them undemocratic." He noted that Hungarian observers had found the elections to be "free and democratic," addressing the Georgian audience directly. "You shouldn't take the debates in the EU seriously. This is what happens when conservatives win — there are always debates," he stated. Orbán criticized the EU's perceived bias, suggesting that liberal victories are automatically deemed democratic while conservative ones are questioned.

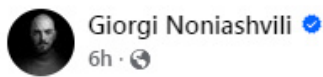
Orbán's visit, which began on October 28, was met with mixed reactions. Upon arriving at his hotel on Rustaveli Avenue, he faced a rally of protesters who believe the elections were rigged. Protesters filled the air with the sound of whistles and a chorus of boos as Orbán's motorcade passed.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgian Atlantic Council Employees Face Bank Account Restrictions Following Home Searches



ჩხრეკიდან 4 დღის შემდეგ, Sopo Gelava სოფომ მაღაზიაში პური ვერ იყიდა. ასე გავიგეთ ახალი ამბავი. მისი პირადი ანგარიშები და ბარათები გაჩერებულია. აღმოჩნდა, რომ Eto Buziashvili ეთოსაც იგივე პრობლემა აქვს.

გუშინდელი საღამოდან TBC - თიბისი სთან და საქართველოს ბანკი • Bank of Georgia ვარკვევთ თუ რატომ. პასუხი არ არის. "ვარკვევთ" "არ ვიცით, რაღაც ხარვეზი იქნება"... თითქოსდა პატარა პრობლემაა. ბანკებში წერილობით ახსნა-განმარტების გაცემაზე და საფუძვლის დასახელებაზე უარს ამბობენ. როგორც კი გადაღება დავიწყეთ, მტკიცებულებისთვის, ფილიალის მენეჯერი თავისივე ბანკის ოთახიდან გავგეჟცა. ბანკში საათები გავატარეთ. "დაგველოდეთ...დაგველოდეთ,ავალთ, ჩამოვალთ..." მერე ისევ, უსასრულო გაწევა 6 საათამდე.

ოფიციალურად ყადაღა არ ადევს ანგარიშებს, რაც ნიშნავს რომ უსაფუძვლოდ და უკანონოდ შეზღუდულია წვდომა და საფუძვლიან ეჭვს აჩენს, რომ სახელმწიფოს არაფორმალური ინსტრუქტაჟით.

გვუბნებიან რომ ანგარიშები გააჩერეს, თუმცა რა საფუძვლით ამაზე პასუხს ვერ გავცემენ.)) ვერც იმას, ვინ გადაწყვიტა ეს და ვისი პასუხისმგებლობაა. დალოდების საათები კი არ სრულდება.

თუ თიბისი და საქართველოს ბანკი ვერ ხვდებიან, რომ მნიშვნელოვანი რეპუტაციული ზიანი შეიძლება მიიღონ ამ "ზეზპრედელის" გამოქვეყნის გარეთაც) -- აუცილებლად გავაგებინებთ.

პ.ს. სოფო და ეთო Atlantic Council-ის თანამშრომლები არიან. რუსულ დეზინფორმაციას და რუსულ გავლენებს იკვლევენ. მათი ადვოკატები Shota Tutberidze Ana Gakhokidze

Access to Bank Accounts Restricted for Georgian Atlantic Council Employees Two Georgian employees of the Atlantic Council, Sofo Gelava and Eto

Buziashvili, are facing difficulties accessing their bank accounts, raising concerns over potential state interference. Gelava's husband, Giorgi Noniashvili, revealed on Facebook that both employees' accounts have been frozen without clear explanations from the banks.

Noniashvili stated. He described their attempts to get answers from TBC Bank and the Bank of Georgia as frustrating, saying, "They refuse to give a written explanation and to name the reason."

Noniashvili believes that the restriction is illegal since there is no official seizure in place. "Officially, the seizure is not reported, which means that access is unjustifiably and illegally restricted, raising reasonable suspicion of an informal instruction from the state," he added.

Eto Buziashvili's lawyer, Ana Gakhokidze, echoed this sentiment, noting, "The banks say they don't know why access to the accounts is restricted. There is no seizure, so there is no legal basis for this." She criticized the state for potentially instructing banks to restrict accounts informally, further questioning the legality of the situation.

On October 24, the Ministry of Finance's investigative service reportedly searched the homes of Gelava and Buziashvili, an action Gelava's lawyer claimed was illegal. Both employees are actively involved in exposing Russian disinformation.

Central Election Commission Requests Investigation into Election Fraud Claims

The Central Election Commission (CEC) has asked the Prosecutor's Office to investigate allegations of election fraud made by Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili and other political figures following the 2024 parliamentary elections.

The CEC stated that claims against its integrity are unfounded, citing positive assessments from the OSCE/ODIHR mission and an audit by a U.S. firm that found no significant flaws in the electoral process. The commission emphasized that determining the truth behind these allegations requires a complex investigation outside its jurisdiction.

In their statement, the CEC said, "After the announcement of the results, the Central Election Commission became the target of unwarranted attacks and baseless criticism... It is vital to investigate whether the statements made by the President or any other political figures regarding alleged election fraud are substantiated."



საქართველოს ცენტრალური საარჩევნო კომისია / CEC of Georgia 116K followers • 9 following

Poland boosts EIB's Ukraine reconstruction fund with Euro25 million

The Polish government has contributed Euro25 million to a European Investment Bank (EIB) fund dedicated to the reconstruction of Ukraine following Russia's full-scale military invasion in 2022, the EIB announced on 25 October. The agreement between the EIB and Poland increases the size of the EU for Ukraine Fund to Euro398.35 million.

Created by the EIB in 2023, the fund aims to help rebuild infrastructure, restore essential services and stimulate economic growth in Ukraine. Part of the EU for Ukraine (EU4U) initiative, it supports vital public and



private reconstruction projects and improves access to finance for entrepreneurs in the country. To date, the fund has received contributions from 14 EU countries. "This money will help drive public sector investment to rebuild critical infrastructure, as well as propping up Ukrainian entrepreneurs and businesses to keep the economy going," said EIB vice-President responsible for operations in Ukraine, Teresa Czerwinska. "On top of that, the EIB finances from its own resources advisory support to prepare infrastructure investment projects despite the ongoing war."

The fund has already supported several projects, including by providing Euro25 million for an initiative to strengthen small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ukraine and Moldova, and Euro50 million for a new metro fleet in the capital Kyiv.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, October 30

Day Clear High: 17°C

Night Clear Low: 6°C

Thursday, October 31

Day Clear High: 16°C

Night Clear Low: 7°C

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