

## Georgian Dream Denies Halt in EU Accession Process

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The ruling party, Georgian Dream, has publicly denied any halt in Georgia's EU accession process, following the European Commission's recent report stating that the process has effectively been suspended. Parliament Chairman Shalva Papuashvili stated that the country is "progressing on the path of EU integration," emphasizing the party's positive evaluation of the report.

Papuashvili asserted that Georgia's progress is comparable to that of Ukraine and Moldova, even claiming that Georgia leads among these countries in key areas. He emphasized that the disagreement between Georgia and the EU over certain laws is not new and stated that Georgian society has expressed its stance on these issues through election results. He added, "We will continue to discuss these issues with the European Union, taking into account the position of Georgian citizens."

Maka Bochorishvili, chair of the European Integration Committee, also dismissed claims.



She emphasized that discussions about terminating Georgia's EU ambitions are unfounded. However, she did not address the nine recommendations provided in 2023 that remain unimplemented, which the EU has cited as a reason for the suspension of the accession process.

"We will carefully study each recommendation, make a deep analysis of them, and incorporate them into our ongoing efforts to implement the action plan for association with the European Union," Bochorishvili stated.

Meanwhile, Dutch Ambassador to Georgia Meline Arakeliani responded critically to comments from Nikoloz Samkharadze, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who suggested that the report confirmed Georgia's progress.

"No Mr. Samkharadze, that is not the case. Georgia is NOT progressing on its EU path as long as there is backsliding in the area of democracy and fundamental rights. Georgia's EU accession process is stopped because of this," Arakeliani countered.

## Reporters Without Borders Concerned About Alexander Malkevich's Presence in Tbilisi During Elections

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has expressed concern over Alexander

Malkevich, founder of a propaganda network in occupied Ukraine, being in Tbilisi during the October 26 elections. The organization warned that Malkevich,

known as a Kremlin's propagandist, could spread Russian disinformation in Georgia.

Markian Kuzmowycz, a digital threat

analyst wrote on his X account on October 30: "Kremlin propagandist Alexander Malkevich, sanctioned for meddling in US elections and responsible for much of RU propaganda in occupied Ukraine, has been on the ground in Tbilisi for several days."

Malkevich is wanted and sanctioned by the U.S. and Ukraine for his propaganda activities and has ties to Yevgeny Prigozhin, founder of the Wagner Group. He confirmed his visit to Georgia, claiming to be interested in the election campaign and voting process.

In a Russian interview, Malkevich stated that the ruling party, Georgian Dream, is not pro-Russian but represents Georgia's national interests. He also claimed that Georgians want peaceful cooperation with Russia.

RSF's investigation revealed that Malkevich has significant resources, allowing him to channel funds and personnel from St. Petersburg to media operations in occupied Ukraine. Sources confirmed that he took control of local propaganda channels in Mariupol, Kherson, and Melitopol, intensifying the information war.

Malkevich's previous visit to the occupied Tskhinvali region in 2023, where he met with the de-facto president Alan Gagloev, raises further legal concerns under Georgian occupation laws.



The News in Brief

Prepared by Messenger Staff

Opposition Plans Rally on Rustaveli Avenue to Challenge October 26 Election Results



Opposition leaders from Unity-National Movement, Coalition for Changes, and Strong Georgia have announced plans for a rally on Rustaveli Avenue on Monday, November 4, at 19:00, aiming to contest the legitimacy of the October 26 parliamentary elections.

At the rally, the opposition will detail their planned actions, which Ana Dolidze describes as "lawful, peaceful, and organized." The opposition's core demand is for the election results to be declared illegitimate. In a statement on Facebook,

Dolidze outlined their goals, which include:

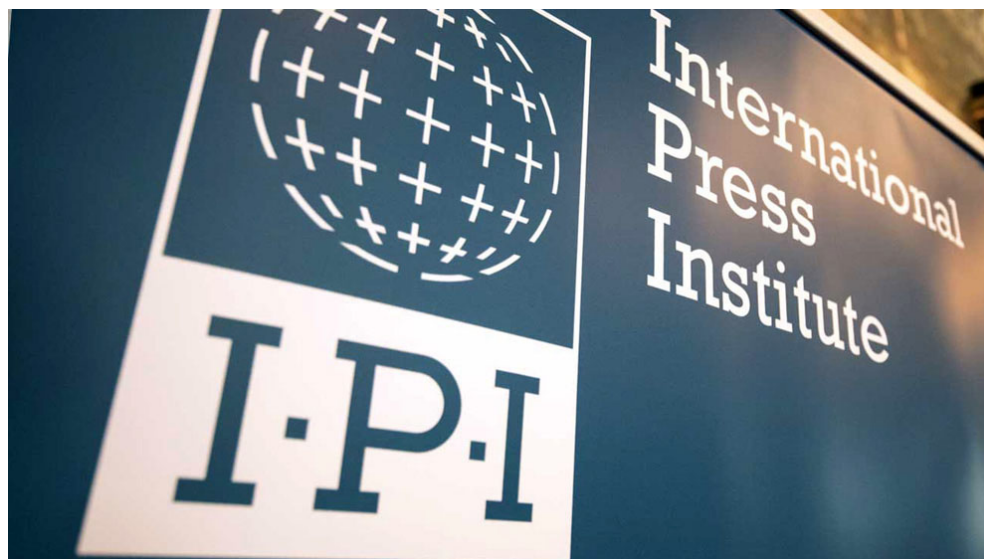
- Securing international non-recognition of the elections.
- Pushing for an international investigation, involving the EU and the

USA, to protect Georgia's long-term security.

- Annuling the election results through legal and diplomatic efforts.

The announcement follows a series of consultations, though members of Gakharia-Georgia were notably absent. Dolidze affirmed the opposition's commitment, stating, "There are many of us, we are victorious, and it will all work out for us."

Press Freedom Groups Demand Protection of Journalists in Georgia Amid Election Violence



Press freedom organizations, including the International Press Institute (IPI) and several European press rights groups, have called on Georgian authorities to address escalating attacks on journalists covering the October 26 parliamentary elections. The Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR) reported at least 30 election-related incidents of violence involving 34 media workers. Journalists faced physical and verbal assaults, equipment

damage, and intimidation, mostly at the hands of ruling Georgian Dream party supporters, according to reports.

Incidents included an assault on a CNews journalist in Kutaisi and entry

restrictions for two foreign journalists. Czech journalist Ray Baseley was detained at the airport for 34 hours, denied contact with legal representation for 20 hours, and held under surveillance. Swiss photojournalist Stephan Goss was similarly detained for 11 hours. Both journalists received no clear explanation for their detention, only a vague reference to Georgian legislation.

North Korean troops' involvement in Russia's illegal war confirmed by European Intelligence Centre, Borrell says



Recent reports on the presence of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Russian soil in support of Russia's illegal war have been confirmed by the European Intelligence Centre (INTCEN), EU High Representative Josep Borrell announced on Wednesday.

"The DPRK has been providing weapons and ammunition to Russia in support of its war of aggression against Ukraine. The presence of several thousand troops cooperating with the Russian military represents a fla-

grant violation of the UN Charter and of multiple UN Security Council resolutions," Borrell said. "It is a unilateral hostile act by the DPRK with serious consequences for European and global peace and security."

He called on the DPRK to stop providing this support, which will be met with "an appropriate response".

Borrell also said the EU was coordinating with international partners on the matter, including on responses. This week he will be traveling to Japan and the Republic of Korea to discuss, among other topics, these "worrying developments" ahead of the next EU Foreign Affairs Council on 18 November.

The EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) is a civilian intelligence function of the European Union. Structurally, it is a directorate of the External Action Service (EEAS) and reports directly to the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

ADB Says Climate Change Could Reduce GDP in Developing Asia and the Pacific by 17% by 2070

MANILA, PHILIPPINES (31 October 2024) — New Asian Development Bank (ADB) research finds the impacts of climate change could reduce gross domestic product (GDP) in developing Asia and the Pacific by 17% by 2070 under a high-end greenhouse gas emissions scenario, rising to 41% by 2100.

Rising sea levels and falling labor productivity would cause the greatest losses, with lower income and fragile economies hit hardest. The new research, presented in the inaugural issue of ADB's Asia-Pacific Climate Report, details a series of damaging impacts threatening the region. If the climate crisis continues to accelerate, up to 300 million people in the region could be threatened by coastal inundation, and trillions of dollars of coastal assets could be damaged annually by 2070.

"Climate change has supercharged the devastation from tropical storms, heat waves, and floods in the region, contribut-

ing to unprecedented economic challenges and human suffering," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa. "Urgent, well-coordinated climate action that addresses these impacts is needed before it is too late. This climate report provides insight into how to finance urgent adaptation needs and offers promising policy recommendations to governments in our developing member countries on how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at lowest cost."

The report finds that regional public sentiment supports climate action. In an ADB climate change perception study this year, 91% of respondents across 14 regional economies said they view global warming as a serious problem, with many seeking more ambitious government action.

Adaptation responses need to be accelerated to address growing climate risks, along with an imperative to greatly upscale adaptation-focused climate fi-

nance. The report values annual investment needs for regional countries to adapt to global warming at between \$102 billion and \$431 billion—far exceeding the \$34 billion of tracked adaptation finance in the region in 2021–2022. Government regulation reforms and enhanced recognition of climate risks are helping attract new sources of private climate capital, but far greater private investment flows are needed.

On the mitigation front, the report shows the region is well placed to embrace renewable energy in driving a transition to net zero, and that forging ahead with domestic and international carbon markets can help achieve climate action goals cost effectively.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 69 members—49 from the region.

Weather

Friday, November 1

Day Partly Cloudy High: 18°C

Night Clear Low: 5°C

Saturday, November 2

Day Clear High: 20°C

Night Clear Low: 7°C

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia

Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze

Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000

E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge

http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli

Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze

Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili

Layout Designer, Photographer

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