

Kobakhidze Meets European Leaders, Discusses Georgia-EU Relations at EPC Summit

By Liza Mchedlidze

At the 5th European Political Community (EPC) Summit, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze participated in a panel on Economic Security and Connectivity. During the summit, he met with European Council President Charles Michel to discuss Georgia-EU relations, as reported by the government administration.

According to the government administration, Kobakhidze shared insights from the meeting, stating, "I had the opportunity to meet several European leaders, including Charles Michel, where we talked about Georgia-EU relations and used this platform to communicate our messages effectively."

He also addressed the current political landscape in Georgia, mentioning that the opposition struggles to mobilize support due to limited resources and popular backing. "The opposition has fewer resources than four years ago, making it easier to manage the situation today," he explained.

Kobakhidze reaffirmed Georgia's commitment to European dialogue.

"We are absolutely open to any discussion, we are flexible, and we have expressed our readiness for discussions to Charles Michel. This is our open position," Kobakhidze said.

In addition to his meeting with Michel, Kobakhidze also



met with Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, who, according to the government administration, congratulated him on the ruling party's recent election vic-

tory. The two discussed strengthening bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation in areas like trade, tourism, and European integration.

Kobakhidze further met with Alain Berset, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, to discuss Georgia's productive cooperation with the Council, its role

in European integration, and challenges related to European security and Georgia's occupied territories, as per the government administration.



ISFED Flags Possible Manipulation in Georgia's Election Data

By Liza Mchedlidze

The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) recently raised concerns over irregularities in voter turnout data reported by Georgia's Central Election Commission (CEC) from the October 26 election. Based on ISFED's analysis, several trends suggest possible data manipulation, especially when looking at voter activity by gender.

ISFED's findings include:

1. Unusual Gender Gaps in Turnout: In many precincts, the difference between male and female voter turnout is striking. For instance, in 62 precincts, turnout for registered male voters reached 80-100%, while female turnout averaged just 57%. Even more concerning, in some precincts, male turnout reportedly exceeded 100% of registered male voters.

2. Inconsistent Revised Data:

ISFED noted significant changes between the CEC's initial and revised reports on turnout by gender. Initially, the CEC reported that 961,751 women and 1,098,661 men had voted. However, in later data, the female voter count increased by about 91,000, while the male voter count dropped by nearly 89,000.

3. Changes in Specific District Totals: ISFED highlighted a noticeable data shift in Marneuli's District No. 22, where the initial turnout count was 41,766. This figure was later revised to 43,858 voters. After ISFED requested detailed data from individual precincts, the CEC updated its website, removing access to the initial voter activity numbers.

4. Mismatches in Voter Totals: ISFED found that in some precincts, the total voter counts didn't match the figures reported in the CEC's summary

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7328; Euro - 2.9389; GBP - 3.5259; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.7873; Swiss Franc - 3.1175

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documents, adding to concerns about data reliability.

ISFED has also requested further information on special voter lists, which include groups such as military personnel and hospital patients, and plans to analyze this data for similar irregularities. The watchdog is concerned that these discrepancies could indicate intentional manipulation of voting results,

undermining the election's integrity.

In response to these findings, the CEC called ISFED's claims "manipulative" and "misinformation." The Commission acknowledged that minor discrepancies might exist in a few precincts but stressed that such errors affect only a small number of voters. The CEC argued that the generalization of these irregularities was either due to a lack of understanding of the electoral process or deliberate attempts to undermine the election.

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"The generalization of these cases can only be explained by the fact that we are dealing with a lack of electoral knowledge or a deliberate action to damage the electoral process," the CEC stated.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Tbilisi Court of Appeals Upholds Disputed Election Results Amid Alleged Ballot Secrecy Violations



After nearly 24 hours of deliberation, the Tbilisi Court of Appeals rejected appeals by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) and local observer mission My Vote, dismissing their claims of ballot secrecy violations in the October 26 elections. Despite the watchdogs' concerns, the court upheld the official results, which have been subject to dispute. The GYLA had sought to annul results

from all polling stations using electronic voting devices, arguing that thin ballot paper compromised voter anonymity, re-

vealing party choices through the paper. Nona Kurdovanidze, head of GYLA, noted that the decision was not unexpected, but she firmly maintained that the secrecy of ballots had been violated.

The Tbilisi Court consolidated all complaints from polling stations in eastern Georgia into a single case and dismissed all 26 filed by GYLA and My Vote. Similarly, the Kutaisi Court of Appeals rejected complaints from polling stations in western Georgia, siding with the official stance late last night.

U.K. Sanctions De-Facto Ex-President of Occupied Tskhinvali



On November 7, the United Kingdom imposed sanctions on Anatoly Bibilov, the former de-facto president of the occupied Tskhinvali region, as part of a new sanctions package targeting Russian interests. The sanctions, totaling 56 new mea-

asures, target entities and individuals supporting Russia's military operations. Among the targets are suppliers aiding Russia's military production, Russian-backed mercenary groups active in sub-Saharan Africa, and three private mercenary groups connected to the Kremlin. Additionally, 11 individuals linked to Russian proxy groups are also sanctioned.

Bibilov faces sanctions for his association with Kremlin-linked private mercenary groups. The penalties include an asset freeze, a travel ban, and restrictions on trust services.

The U.K. Government stated "Anatoly Ilyich Bibilov is or has been involved in destabilizing Ukraine or undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sov-

ereignty or independence of Ukraine because he engages in, provides support for, or promotes any policy or action which destabilizes Ukraine or undermines or threatens the territorial integrity, sovereignty or independence of Ukraine."

EU deplores death of seventh political prisoner in Belarus

Weather

Friday, November 8

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 14°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 2°C

Saturday, November 9

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 14°C

Night 🌧️ Mostly Cloudy
Low: 6°C



The EU Lead Spokesperson for External Affairs Peter Stano has called for the immediate release of political prisoners in Belarus, following the death of Dzmitry Shlethauer.

The 22-year-old political prisoner Dzmitry Shlethauer died in a Belarusian prison on 11 October.

"After less than a month in prison, Dzmitry

Shlethauer became the 7th political prisoner to die. He had just become a father, it's deplorable and shows the inhumane nature of Lukashenka's repression," Peter Stano wrote on X.

He added that around 1,300 political prisoners remain detained by the regime in the "appalling conditions".

"They must be immediately released!" Stano said.

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