

## European Parliament Calls for Sanctions on Ivanishvili, Georgian Officials, and New Elections Amid Political Crisis

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

In a landmark resolution adopted on February 13, 2025, the European Parliament (EP) has taken a strong stance against the current political situation in Georgia. With overwhelming support of 400 votes in favor, the EP has called for significant actions to address what it describes as a "dramatic acceleration of democratic backsliding" in the country.

The resolution, jointly tabled by major political groups including the EPP, S&D, ECR, Renew, and Verts/ALE, outlines several key demands:

- Non-recognition of the Georgian Dream (GD) government
- Imposition of sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili, his associates, top officials, judges, and pro-regime media owners
- New elections as a precondition for future EU engagement

The EP's concerns stem from the October 26, 2024 parliamentary elections, which it describes as "deeply flawed and marked by grave irregularities." The resolution argues that these elections failed to meet international democratic standards and did not reflect the will of the Georgian people.

The EP continues to recognize Salome Zourabichvili as the legitimate President of Georgia, praising her efforts to guide the country back to a democratic



path. The resolution calls for her to be invited to upcoming European Council and European Political Community summit meetings.

The proposed sanctions framework is extensive, targeting not only Ivanishvili and his family but also key political figures such as Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, Parliament Speaker Shalva Papuashvili,

and Interior Minister Vakhtang Gomelauri. The EP specifically calls for freezing Ivanishvili's assets within the EU and urges the French government to strip him of the Legion of Honour.

The resolution also addresses the crackdown on protests since November 28, 2024, condemning what it terms "brutal violence and repression" against demonstrators. It highlights specific

cases, including the arrest of journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli and the detention of opposition leaders Elene Khoshtaria, Nika Melia, and Gigi Ugulava.

In a move to support civil society, the EP directs the European Commission to reallocate Euro120 million in frozen funds towards strengthening Georgia's civil society and independent media. It also calls for a review

of Georgia's visa-free status with the EU and a comprehensive audit of EU policy towards Georgia.

The resolution expresses deep concern over Russia's rising influence in Georgia and the GD party's "policy of rapprochement" with Moscow. It also demands the release of former President Mikheil Saakashvili on humanitarian grounds for medical treatment abroad.



## GD Establishes Commission to Investigate Former UNM Government

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Thea Tsulukiani has been elected chairperson of the newly formed investigative commission tasked with examining the activities of the former United National Movement (UNM) government. Sozar Subari has been appointed secretary, representing the opposition's quota.

The commission held its first organizational session on February 13, where members discussed the principles that will guide their work over the next three months.

The commission aims to investigate multiple aspects of the UNM's governance, including the prison system, judicial affairs, criminal justice, civil and administrative matters, and the treatment of public officials. Allegations of oppression, persecution, and election-related misconduct will also be scrutinized.

"We will not be able to cover all the cases in all directions, but we will cover enough so that the commission's conclusion includes all directions," said Tsulukiani. She emphasized that elections will be a key focus, stating, "For some reason, this topic is no longer heard—what kind of elections they came with and how they conducted elections. This will also be studied to characterize the regime."

Tsulukiani also noted that individuals who consider themselves "victims of the regime" will have the right to request closed hearings to protect their personal information and prevent re-traumatization. Additionally, the commission will examine the assets of former state officials.

According to the commission's decision, individuals who claim to have suffered under the UNM government and possess relevant evidence will be able to submit their cases in writing for review.

### The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

#### Georgian Dream Dismisses European Parliament Resolution, Cites 'Deep State' Influence

ernment elected by the Georgian people," the party stated.

Citing Trump's 2023 remarks on the so-called "Deep State," Georgian Dream drew parallels between U.S. political dynamics and European institutions. "This is a decisive battle. Either the Deep State

will destroy the European Union, or the European Union will find the strength to somehow escape the influence of the Deep State."

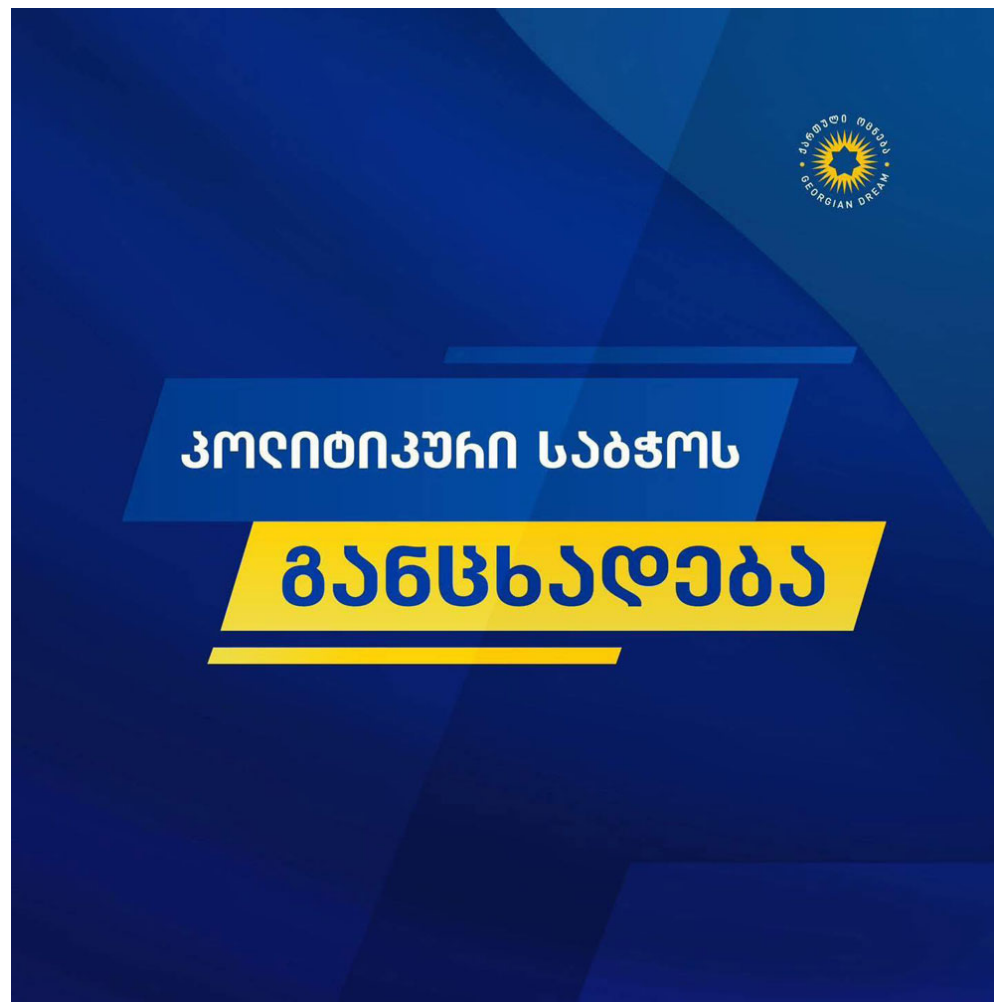
Georgian Dream also echoed recent remarks by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who said, "European institutions cannot be taken seriously." The party reinforced this sentiment, concluding, "In our opinion, unfortunately, it is absolutely impossible to take the European Parliament seriously today."

the Tbilisi City Court sentenced them to seven years in prison for embezzlement.

In January 2017, the Tbilisi Court of Appeal reclassified their charges as abuse of office, reducing their sentences to one year and six months. However, the defendants were not given a chance to defend themselves against the revised charges. Their appeal to the Supreme Court was dismissed, and they were ultimately pardoned by then-President Giorgi Margvelashvili later that year.

Despite their release, the applicants pursued the case at the ECtHR, arguing that their trial had been unfair due to the sudden reclassification of charges and

#### ECtHR Rules Against Georgia in 'Cable Case' Citing Unfair Trial



In a response to the European Parliament's resolution calling for sanctions on Georgian officials and new elections, the ruling Georgian Dream party has dismissed the EU body's credibility and invoked controversial "Deep State" rhetoric.

"We would like to respond to the resolution adopted today by the European Parliament against Georgia and the gov-

will destroy America, or we must destroy the Deep State," Trump said at the time. The party added, "After being elected President, Donald Trump has actively engaged in this decisive battle, and we wish him success in destroying the Deep State."

The statement went on to claim that the European Union faces a similar existential struggle. "Either the Deep State

On February 11, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled against Georgia in the so-called "cable case" (Glonti and others v. Georgia), finding violations of the European Convention on Human Rights related to the right to a fair trial.

The case involved five former officials from the Defense Ministry and General Staff, who were charged in 2013 with misspending GEL 4.1 million in an alleged sham tender for fiber-optic cable installation. They denied the charges, but

the withholding of key prosecution evidence. The ECtHR ruled that Georgia violated their right to a fair trial under Article 6 § 1 and 3 (a) and (b) of the European Convention on Human Rights, citing procedural unfairness and lack of transparency.

The applicants were represented by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), which had previously deemed the case politically motivated, arguing that the charges lacked evidence.

### EU Ambassador to Georgia meets creative community to confirm EU support

European Union Ambassador Pawel Herczynski met representatives of Georgia's creative community in Tbilisi today.

"Cultural freedom is a crucial element of any democracy," he said at the meeting. "Against a

backdrop of increasing human rights violations and legislation that restricts the Georgian people's freedom of expression, the EU continues to support the creative community and all the people of Georgia, affirming their desire to return to the EU path."

The meeting was hosted by Goethe-Institut in Georgia, which is implementing several EU-funded projects in Georgia, including EU4Culture and EU4Dialogue.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



#### Weather

Friday, February 14

Day Cloudy High: 9°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 0°C

Saturday, February 15

Day Partly Cloudy High: 11°C

Night Clear Low: -2°C

published by

The Messenger

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