

Georgia, U.S. Discuss Economic Cooperation and Innovation Partnerships

By LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

According to the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgia's First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Levan Davitashvili, met with U.S. Ambassador Robin Dunnigan to discuss strengthening economic ties and exploring new opportunities under the new U.S. administration.

The meeting, held at the Ministry of Economy, was attended by Deputy Minister Genadi Arveladze and Deputy Head of the Economic Section at the U.S. Embassy, Diana Costa.

According to the ministry, discussions focused on Georgia's economic priorities and potential areas of cooperation with the United States, including innovation, technology, trade, transport and logistics, the Middle Corridor, and investment in the energy sector.

The statement noted that Georgia's first international technology hub is planned to be established this year in San Francisco. The project aims to support the internationalization of Georgian startups, provide them with access to global markets, and attract interest from global technology companies, venture capital funds, and angel investor networks. The ministry highlighted that the initiative will be implemented by



Georgia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Innovation and Technology Agency, with active support from the U.S. Embassy.

The statement also mentioned

the facilitation of trade missions between the two countries, with Georgian businesses traveling to the U.S. and American companies visiting Georgia in the com-

ing months. The Ministry of Economy and the U.S. Embassy will actively support these efforts.

According to the ministry,

both sides emphasized the importance of deepening economic cooperation and enhancing bilateral trade and investment relations.

Zourabichvili: Russian Propaganda Has Gained Influence in Georgia

By LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Georgia's fifth president, Salome Zourabichvili, stated during a hearing at the UK Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee that Russian propaganda has gained significant influence in Georgia, with the Kremlin regularly praising the country's leadership in recent years.

When asked how the ruling Georgian Dream party has changed over the past 13 years, Zourabichvili noted that its stance was initially pro-European but began to shift around 2021.

"In 2012, when they came to power, they followed their program, which was to continue Georgia's Euro-Atlantic course. In 2018, they even adopted an article requiring all institutions in Georgia to support European integration. This was the article I referenced during my impeachment process," she said.

However, she argued that over time, the party started consolidating power and restricting the media and judiciary. According to Zourabichvili, the shift intensified with the war in Ukraine, as the government's rhetoric turned anti-European and anti-Western.

"Around 2021, changes became more apparent. The government began concentrating power, restricting the media, and interfering with the judiciary. This process accelerated after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with statements that Georgia would not join sanctions and claims that Western partners were trying to open a 'second front' in the country," she said.

When asked why this shift happened, Zourabichvili suggested that Georgian Dream's pro-European stance may not have been genuine.

"Perhaps their commitment to European integration was only superficial, easy to maintain when no major challenges existed. But when pressure mounted, Russia likely exerted influence over individuals it has leverage on—and Bidzina Ivanishvili is one of them," she stated.

Zourabichvili concluded that Russian propaganda has played a growing role in shaping Georgia's policies, both domestically and internationally.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Badri Japaridze Summoned to Prosecutor’s Office, Calls Investigation ‘Groundless’



Badri Japaridze, one of the leaders of Lelo – Strong Georgia, has been summoned to the Prosecutor’s Office as part of an investigation launched at the request of the Parliamentary Temporary Investigative Commission. Japaridze dismissed the probe as “groundless” and

stated that he would only testify before a magistrate judge.

“An investigator from the Tbilisi Prosecutor’s Office, Marta Kikinashvili, contacted me. They want to question me as a witness,” Japaridze wrote on

Facebook.

He criticized the process, noting that the initial letter from the Prosecutor’s Office did not specify which case he was being summoned for, and this information was only clarified after his lawyer made an inquiry.

“Of course, this interrogation is related to the baseless investigation initiated by the so-called Parliamentary Temporary Investigative Commission,” he stated.

Japaridze invoked his rights under Article 113 of the Criminal Procedure Code, opting to testify before a magistrate judge rather than appearing at the Prosecutor’s Office.

Mamuka Khazaradze Charged for Failing to Comply with Parliamentary Commission’s Request



The Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia has charged Mamuka Khazaradze, leader of Strong Georgia, for failing to comply with the lawful request of the Temporary Investigative Commission of Parliament. According to the Prosecutor’s Office, a preventive measure will be requested from the court within the legally established timeframe.

The statement from the Prosecutor’s Office outlines that Khazaradze was summoned to appear before the Temporary Investigative Commission on March 25. The commission was set up to examine the activities of Georgia’s previous government from 2003 to 2012. He was officially notified of this obligation on March 22, with a document signed by the commission’s chairman. Despite being informed of the legal consequences of non-compliance, Khazaradze did not attend the session without providing a valid reason.

As a result, he has been charged under Article 349 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, which pertains to the failure to comply with a Temporary Investigative Commission’s request. The charge carries penalties including a fine or imprisonment for up to one year, as well as the possibility of being barred from holding office or engaging in certain activities for up to three years.

EU4Youth in Georgia: empowering youth for climate action

With support from the ‘EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment’ project, the Georgian non-governmental organisation ‘Helping Hand’ has completed the first phase of its initiative, ‘Empowering Young Leaders for Climate Change’.

This phase, which ran from December 2024 to March 2025, focused on equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to address climate challenges.

The first phase involved mobilising youth, enhancing their capacity through hands-on climate education, and promoting innovation through a community initiative competition.



A competitive selection process identified 20 young leaders, aged 16–24, from Kvemo Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, and Shida Kartli. In late February 2025, these participants took part in an intensive thematic school on climate change, where they delved into topics such as climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, sustainability and renewable energy, climate policies in

Georgia, as well as the importance of volunteering and civic engagement.

With the first phase completed, ‘Helping Hand’ is moving forward by gathering youth-led community initiative proposals. The most promising projects will receive both financial and expert support to bring their climate solutions to life in their local communities.

The NGO ‘Helping Hand’ is a beneficiary of the grant programme under the ‘EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment’ initiative, co-financed by the European Union and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, April 2

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 18°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 11°C

Thursday, April 3

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 19°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 10°C

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ESU-Georgia Public Speaking Competition 2025

The English-Speaking Union of Georgia held the final of 27th Public Speaking Competition on 25th of March, at the British Corner. ESU-Georgia Public Speaking Competition is sponsored by the Bank of Georgia.

The winner of the competition is Nino Gagrindashvili, 19, a student of the Free University. She will be sent to London to take part in the final of the ESU International Public Speaking Competition together with participants from over 50 countries.

The Runner-up was Nia Norakidze, 19, from GIPA

The Third Prize went to Nikoloz Pavliashvili, a school pupil from Kaspi.

Marina Tsitsishvili, MBE,

ESU-Georgia President said in her speech:

“It is my honour to welcome you to an event that celebrates a British institution that is over 100 years old. The institution is the English Speaking Union – the ESU. It was set up in London in 1918. Initially, it was the union between the UK and the United States. Today it unites more than 50 countries, starting from Iceland to Nigeria. The Patron of the ESU for 70 years had been Queen Elizabeth II, the President - Prince Philip, the current President is the Princess Ann. At some point the ESU Chairman was- Sir Winston Churchill.

The main goal of the ESU is

promoting friendship and understanding through the English language. ESU is involved in many cultural and educational programmes.

The most popular is the International Public Speaking Competition. It is the largest public speaking competition in the world. It involves 1 000 000 students. The best speakers gather in London for the final.

For 27 years running ESU-Georgia has been organizing the ESU Public Speaking Competition and sending the winner to the finals in London. Over the course of the week the winner will have a unique opportunity to engage in a cultural exchange with fellow participants , while

exploring the sights and sounds of London. ESU-Georgia has already sent 39 speakers to this competition.

The Competition was held in 3 rounds. 119 participants from Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Kaspi and Gori took part in the first round, 24 of them got to the second round and only 11 got to the final.

ESU-Georgia gets the title of the themes from the ESU Headquarters in London.

The title of the first tour was: “We know what we are, but not what we may be” (William Shakespeare)

The title of the final speech was: “Unity, to be real, must stand the severest strain without

breaking” (Mahatma Gandhi)

The Competition was judged by: Charmian Leaver, Deputy British Ambassador, Lauren Williamson, USA-Embassy representative, Elene Okromchedlishvili, Bank of Georgia representative, Sophia Gorgodze, the winner of the International Public Speaking Competition and Marina Tsitsishvili, the ESU-Georgia President.

Charmian Leaver, Deputy British Ambassador said in her final speech:

“Incredibly good presentations, incredibly good standard of English. I can’t believe it isn’t your first language. I am very impressed, indeed.”





