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## European Commission Urges Georgian Government to Reverse Course Amid EU Concerns

By Liza Mchedlidze

The European Commission has called on Georgia's government to change its course, end violence against citizens, repeal repressive laws, and engage in dialogue with political actors. The call follows European Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos' comments on the possibility of future dialogue with the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party, pending significant changes.

Speaking to RFE/RL on April 28, Kos warned the EU is considering measures in response to Georgia's democratic backsliding. These could include suspending visa liberalization, freezing Georgia's EU candidate status, and reassessing the EU-Georgia Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA).

The Commission expressed concern that Georgia's current trajectory risks halting its EU accession process. "Political contacts with Georgian authorities have been downgraded and are now limited to efforts to find a way out of the current situation," a Commission spokesperson said.

In response to the government's actions, the EU confirmed the suspension of



over EUR 120 million in direct assistance to Georgia. An additional EUR 30 million planned for 2024 is also on hold, and no further assistance is expected for 2025. However, the EU has increased its support for civil society and independent media

in Georgia, tripling funding from EUR 5 million to EUR 15 million.

The Commission reaffirmed its readiness to hold accountable those responsible for political violence, emphasizing that "further actions" could be taken if neces-

sary. It called for the Georgian authorities to "re-establish trust" through confidence-building measures, including ending violence, releasing unjustly detained individuals, and suspending repressive laws in consultation with the Venice Commis-

sion.

The EU also urged Georgia to engage in meaningful dialogue with all political actors and civil society to resolve the ongoing crisis and reaffirm its commitment to the EU path.

## Mikanadze: MEGOBARI Act Is Unfriendly and Out of Touch With Georgian Reality

By Liza Mchedlidze

Givi Mikanadze, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Youth Affairs, has criticized the MEGOBARI Act ahead of its consideration in the U.S. House of Representatives, calling it "an unfriendly act" that misrepresents the situation in Georgia.

"The title of this act absolutely does not correspond to the context. It is an unfriendly act toward Georgia and the Georgian people, completely out of touch with reality," Mikanadze told journalists. "We hope it will not ultimately become law, or if it is adopted, it will include the necessary changes."

The MEGOBARI Act, formally titled Mobilizing and Enhancing Georgia's Options for Building Accountability, Resilience, and Independence was introduced by U.S. lawmakers to express support for the Georgian people and authorize sanctions against officials involved in democratic backsliding and human rights abuses.

Mikanadze argued that the act ignores the democratic choice of Georgians in the last elections. "Our population freely expressed its will and supported Georgian Dream to lead the

country. That must be respected," he said.

He also called for constructive engagement with the U.S., including simplifying the visa regime, launching direct flights, and signing a free trade agreement. "That would help deepen bilateral relations and support dynamic development between two strategic partners."

While Mikanadze condemned the MEGOBARI Act as biased and disconnected from Georgia's internal realities, the opposition sees it very differently.

Secretary General of the United National Movement (UNM), Petre Tsiskarishvili, has welcomed the adoption of the MEGOBARI Act by the United States, calling it a strong show of support for the Georgian people and a major opportunity for deepening ties with the West.

"By adopting the MEGOBARI Act, the U.S. clearly expresses its support to the Georgian people, which provides our country with a great opportunity for both strategic partnership and close economic relations," Tsiskarishvili said.

He emphasized that the initiative opens new prospects not only for the state but also for



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7477; Euro - 3.1167; GBP - 3.6566; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.4048; Swiss Franc - 3.3382

# Mikanadze: MEGOBARI Act Is Unfriendly and Out of Touch With Georgian Reality

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every Georgian citizen. "The MEGOBARI Act clearly and dis-

tinctly expresses the U.S. attitude towards our country, including in the geopolitical re-

gional gap, because here we are talking about the democratic development of our country, the

consolidation of institutions," he said.

Tsiskarishvili warned that if the ruling Georgian Dream party continues its current path, sanctions will follow. "If the Georgian Dream continues on its path, then the key representatives of this government, as well as members of parliament, their family members, etc., will definitely be sanctioned, and these

will be comprehensive sanctions."

He concluded with a stark choice: "Ultimately, the decision is to be made by the Georgian people. Do we want strategic relations with the West, economic cooperation, the prospect of visa-free travel, or do we want the Dream regime that rules the country as a self-proclaimed government?"

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Khazaradze and Japaridze Demand Tsulukiani Be Questioned



Lelo – Strong Georgia party leaders Mamuka Khazaradze and Badri Japaridze have demanded that Thea Tsulukiani, chair of Parliament's temporary investigative commission, be questioned regarding her role in the commission's work that led to an ongoing investigation by the Prosecutor's Office.

According to a statement from the party's press service, the request was submitted to Parliament by the politicians' legal team. "Mamuka Khazaradze and Badri Japaridze are summoning Thea Tsulukiani in the case of the so-called

investigative commission, due to which the Prosecutor's Office has launched an investigation against them," the statement reads.

The lawyers argue that Tsulukiani

and commission members should provide legal explanations in court for "all statements or actions that took place during the work of the so-called investigative commission."

The coalition emphasized that Tsulukiani has three days to respond. "This is about accountability. Anyone who played a role in what we believe to be politically motivated actions must answer in court," the statement added.

### Inmate Dies After Alleged Beating in Gldani Prison

Ioseb Gorgadze, a 46-year-old inmate



who was transferred from Gldani Prison No. 8 to Vivamedi Clinic with severe injuries, has died after nearly three months of hospitalization.

"Last night, at approximately 10:00 PM, the family was informed that he had died from the injuries he had sustained, due to which he was transferred from Gldani Prison No. 8," lawyer Ghurtskaia said. "He fought for his life for approximately three months, but unfortunately, he could not be saved."

Gorgadze was reportedly admitted to the clinic on January 30 after being severely beaten. The lawyer claims the prisoner was tortured and beaten to death,

though it remains unclear whether the assailants were fellow inmates or prison staff. "The patient had about 30 fractures in the facial area and brain swelling. His facial bones were shattered," said Ghurtskaya.

An initial investigation was launched under Article 118 of the Criminal Code, relating to bodily harm. However, following Gorgadze's death, the Special Investigation Service has taken over the case.

"No one has been charged. Despite the severity of the injuries, the investigation has so far yielded no results," the lawyer stated.

## Georgia: EU deplors Russia's decision to launch flights to Sukhumi



The European Union deplors the unilateral decision by the Russian Federation to launch regular commercial passenger flights to Sukhumi in Georgia's occupied breakaway region of Abkhazia, Spokesperson for EU Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Anouar Al Anouni said in a statement on 3 May.

"This action, taken

without the consent of the Georgian authorities and in the absence of a necessary international aviation code for the Sukhumi airport, is yet another step by the Russian Federation violating Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity," the statement said.

The European Union also reiterated its firm support for Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

### Weather

Tuesday, May 6

Day Showers

High: 18°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 11°C

Wednesday, May 7

Day Clear

High: 26°C

Night Clear

Low: 12°C

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