

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

European Parliament Draft Resolution Raises Concerns Over Georgian Draft Law

Members of the European Parliament have voiced strong opposition to a draft law proposed by Georgia's ruling party Georgian Dream. The draft resolution, initiated by MEPs including Miriam Lexmann, Michael Gahler, Rasa Juknevičienė, David McAllister, Andrius Kubilius, among others, highlights serious concerns regarding the proposed legislation.

The resolution notes that the draft law bears similarities to legislation adopted in the Russian Federation in 2012, sparking fears among MEPs about its potential impact on Georgia's democratic trajectory. According to the authors of the resolution, the adoption of this law could not only thwart Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations but also undermine the activities of independent civil society organizations and media outlets.

Key points raised in the draft resolution include:

Incompatibility with EU Values: MEPs express grave concerns about the reintroduction of the draft law, stating that it is incompatible with fundamental EU values and democratic principles. They highlight that the legislation violates specific steps outlined in the Commission's recommendation on Georgia's candidate status.

Damage to Georgia's Pro-European Path: MEPs express alarm over the adoption of a law resembling Russian-style legislation, fearing that it could significantly damage Georgia's pro-European path. They believe that the reintroduction of the draft law contradicts previous commitments made by Georgian authorities, thereby jeopardizing Georgia's reputation and Euro-



Atlantic aspirations.

Undermining Independent NGOs and Media: The proposed law is feared to undermine the vital work of independent NGOs and media outlets, which play a crucial role in scrutinizing and monitoring governmental activities. MEPs warn that its adoption could weaken the system of checks and balances in Georgia.

Contradiction to Georgian Aspirations: MEPs assert that the proposed legislation goes against the aspirations of the Georgian people, who strive for

a prosperous and corruption-free society that respects political freedom, free media, and human rights. They stand in solidarity with the people of Georgia who are protesting against the draft law.

Calls for Sanctions and Conditional Aid: MEPs propose sanctions against members of the Georgian Parliament who support the law, along with the leader of the Georgian Dream party, Bidzina Ivanishvili. They also call for financial assistance to Georgia to be contingent on the removal of the law from the

legal order.

Monitoring and Reporting: MEPs suggest preparing reports on the implementation of steps related to Georgia's candidacy status more frequently to mitigate potential negative effects.

Appeal to Withdraw the Law: MEPs appeal to the Georgian Dream party to refrain from further pursuing the adoption of the law and to withdraw it to safeguard Georgia's European future.

Resolution Forwarding: The President of the European

Parliament is instructed to communicate the resolution to various EU bodies, Member States, and international organizations, as well as to the government and parliament of Georgia, to ensure widespread awareness and consideration of the Parliament's stance on the issue.

The draft resolution underscores the European Parliament's commitment to upholding democratic values and principles and its vigilance in safeguarding the interests and aspirations of the Georgian people.



Mamuka Mdinardze Condemns Potential EU Sanctions Against Georgian Lawmakers

BY MESSENGER STAFF

The leader of the parliamentary majority Mamuka Mdinardze expressed his frustration regarding the EU's potential sanctioning of those Georgian officials drafting the law.

"Did anyone imagine years ago that the person who brought two laws - on transparency and family values - to the parliamentary discussion, would become the object of special, coordinated

attacks by someone?"

They are trying to influence me with 'fakes', distorting the context, disinformation and all immoral ways, which is impossible, but the whole system of disinformation is working, isn't this a fact?!

Or if someone dared to threaten the deputies elected by the people with sanctions for initiating such laws, was it possible to imagine it?

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6802; Euro - 2.8555; GBP - 3.3092; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8670; Swiss Franc - 2.9388

Mamuka Mdinardze Condemns Potential EU Sanctions Against Georgian Lawmakers

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What sanction, our ancestors sacrificed themselves for the country's independence...

It seems that we have come this far and it becomes even clearer how important it is to protect our national honour, in-

dependence, true European path and democracy, family values, Georgian identity and traditions, human rights and continue to move forward proudly, strengthening sovereignty, de-occupation, and development of the country. And on the path to full membership of the European

family.

Nothing is easy for us, but we will always emerge as winners, the main thing is to be honest before our homeland and its worthy future!

We are waiting for you all on April 29!," wrote Mdinardze in a Facebook post.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

MEP Petras Auštrevičius Calls for Sanctions Against Georgian Officials for Detaining Protesters

undermining democratic processes by detaining peaceful demonstrators. Specifically, he proposed sanctions against Vazha Siradze, Director of the Patrol Police Department, and Zviad Kharazishvili, Director of the Special Tasks Department, for acting against the



MEP Petras Auštrevičius has called for targeted sanctions against individuals

will of the Georgian people. "Georgia's status as a candidate for EU membership obliges it to carry out politi-

cal reforms. Trying to justify a repressive law with Western practices is just pathetic. This law is close to Russian authoritarianism. At the same time, I applaud the people of Georgia for their oppositional sentiments, actions, and civil activism to protect a Western future.

Colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to urge the EU institutions to impose targeted sanctions against those who undermine democratic processes and orchestrate the arrest of peaceful demonstrators, specifically Zviad Kharazishvili and Vazha Siradze. These individuals act against the will of the Georgian people," Auštrevičius said.

Chairman Papuashvili Accuses European Democracy Fund of Concealing Funds in Georgia

The Chairman of the Parliament

Shalva Papuashvili reiterated his concerns about the lack of transparency in Western financing. He specifically accused the European Democracy Fund of "hiding" their money in Georgia.

"This may not be in the interests of others, especially those whose finances enter Georgia non-transparently. Unfortunately, EU funding is also non-transparent in Georgia. We also know of examples, such as the European Democracy Fund, which hides its funding in Georgia, contradicting European values.

Unfortunately, for a year, I personally tried to communicate with various structures of the European Union to convince the representatives of the European Union themselves that secretly funding radical groups and political parties, deviating from European values, is wrong behavior," said Papuashvili.



Borrell: some EU members willing to provide Ukraine with ammunition and air defence and interceptor systems

The EU's Foreign Affairs Council in Luxembourg yesterday discussed the Russian aggression against Ukraine in a joint session gathering both EU



Foreign and Defence Ministers. According to EU High Representative Josep Borrell, some Member States indicated their will to make specific contributions in the areas of air defence, interceptor systems or to sup-

port an expanded existing initiative, such as the Czech one on ammunition and the German one on air defence.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, and Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem

Umerov joined the beginning of the meeting online and provided updates on the latest developments on the ground and on Ukraine's current priorities.

"In addition to missiles and drones, Ukrainians have reported 7,000 guided bombs fired by Russia in four months of this year, which is about 60 guided bombs a day, and there is constant shelling in the East. This is part of Putin's strategy," said Borrell after the meeting.

He added that it was "clear that Ukraine lacks weapons for self-defence and to reject Russia's aggression".

"There is a clear sense of urgency for the European Union and

all Ukrainian allies to act. The most important way of acting is providing air defence batteries and ammunition for these batteries," said Borrell. He proposed to coordinate the urgent delivery of these items at EU level.

Borrell added that many countries have joined the Czech initiative in order to look for ammunition – "everywhere in the world" – and that the first delivery will come at the end of May, beginning of June. "Others have shown their readiness to participate in the German initiative to concentrate, coordinate and push for the [reinforcement of] anti-aerial capacities," Borrell said.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, April 24

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 26°C

Night 🌤️ Partly Cloudy
Low: 13°C

Thursday, April 25

Day 🌤️ Partly Cloudy
High: 28°C

Night 🌤️ Partly Cloudy
Low: 14°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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Italian Innovation and Research Day 2024

On April 22, the Day of Italian Innovation and Research was celebrated, which is dedicated to deepening the cooperation between Italy and Georgia in the scientific and technological fields, and also to celebrating the anniversary of the birth of the Italian scientist, winner of the Nobel Prize in medicine and physiology, Rita Levi-Montalcini.

The event was organized by the Embassy of Italy in Georgia and the Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA), and took place in the Agency's

Technopark, attended by representatives of various institutions, academic and entrepreneurial circles.

The event, which aims to further strengthen the close ties between Italy and Georgia in the fields of technology and innovation, was opened by Italian Ambassador H.E. Massimiliano D'Antuono, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia Irakli Nadareishvili and Chairman of Innovation and Technology Agency Avtandil Kasradze. Luigi Nicolais, presi-

dent of the Italian Technological Innovation Foundation (COTEC), and Antonio Giacomini, director of Innovaway, an Italian company working in the field of digital transformation and IT service management, participated remotely.

Presentations were held by CERN representative, Tiziano Camporesi, honorary professor of Boston University and Georgia Technical University, and Irina Tsagareishvili, director of Axel - Georgian Business Angel Network. The event ended with the award-

ing of two Georgian innovators who won this year's "STEM Study Visits to Italy" competition. The competition, which has already become a tradition, is held within the framework of the agreement between the Italian Technological Innovation Foundation (COTEC) and the Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) in the fields of artificial intelligence, information technology, green economy, the so-called 'Blue Growth' as well as creative industries.





