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Kobakhidze Defends Party Ban Plans and Criticises EU Approach at Brussels Summit

By Messenger Staff



Georgian Dream Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze defended his government's position on European integration and criticised the European Commission during the EU Enlargement Summit, organised by Euronews in Brussels. In an interview with journalist Maria Tadeo, he also discussed the possibility of banning opposition parties, Georgia's stalled EU accession process and relations with European institutions.

Asked about plans to ban political parties in Georgia, Kobakhidze pointed to Ukraine and Moldova as examples, arguing that both countries had already taken similar steps.

"We have two clear examples: Ukraine and Moldova. Both have banned political parties, and they are much further ahead of us. We intend to catch up with them. The European approach can sometimes seem absurd, especially when Ukraine has banned 18 political parties," he said.

Tadeo then asked whether banning opposition parties could create difficulties for Georgia if it wanted to resume EU accession negotiations.

Kobakhidze responded by referring to a case currently before Georgia's Constitutional Court. He said the government had challenged the constitutionality of several political parties, around five in total, and described the matter as a legal proceeding.

He said he had invited European officials to provide legal assessments of the case but claimed they had responded with political criticism rather than legal arguments. According to Kobakhidze, such comments amount to interference in Georgia's independent judicial system and are incompatible with European standards.

On the question of EU accession negotiations, Kobakhidze said his earlier statement that opening negotiations would not be on the agenda was a personal position. He maintained that Georgia would immediately join the process if the European Commission decided to open accession negotiations.

He also argued that it was the European Commission, rather than the Georgian government, that had first suspended political dialogue.

"The European Commission decided to suspend political dialogue with Georgia in June 2024, before we made our statement. We responded to the Commission's broader policy, which we consider unfair. We believed that the Commission was using the issue of candidate status first, and then the opening of accession negotiations, as tools to put pressure on Georgia and Georgian society," Kobakhidze said.

He added that European officials who wanted Georgia to change its policies should be prepared to engage in dialogue with the government.

"If someone wants to influence Georgia's decisions or change its course, they need to talk to us. But they are not willing to do that," he said.

Kobakhidze argued that Georgia's national interests and values were compatible with those of the European Union, citing sovereignty, democracy, the rule of law and judicial independence.

He said the government was ready to discuss any concerns raised by European partners, provided those concerns were supported by arguments.

"We are ready to discuss every issue. Let's sit down and talk. If they have concerns about our laws or other decisions, they should explain their position. For example, was it right to support the throwing of Molotov cocktails? Is that acceptable in France, where similar incidents have also been criticised?" he said.

Kobakhidze said his government remained optimistic that relations with the EU would improve, but argued that European institutions needed to change their approach towards Georgia.

Reflecting on Georgia's experience as part of the Soviet Union, Kobakhidze rejected what he described as an expectation that the country should simply follow instructions from abroad.

"For 70 years, Georgia was part of the Soviet Union. I was young at the time, but I remember how things worked: whatever Moscow said, Georgia had to do. That is not how a democratic society should function. Europe needs a different approach, and we are optimistic that this will change. We are not puppets," he said.

Kobakhidze described EU enlargement as one of Georgia's main priorities, pointing to the country's constitutional commitment to becoming a member of the bloc. He said the government had included the goal of EU membership in the Constitution and maintained that Georgian society remained committed to European integration.

He also referred to the Georgian Dream party's campaign slogan in the 2024 parliamentary elections, "To Europe with Dignity", saying it reflected the government's position on the country's European future.

Discussing public attitudes towards the EU and the European Commission, Kobakhidze claimed that trust in the EU remained high in Georgia, while confidence in the Commission was considerably lower. He said the Georgian public continued to support the ruling Georgian Dream party, adding that 51% of Georgian voters had turned out to vote and given the party their support. He also cited the figure of 54% of votes received by the party in the latest elections.

Kobakhidze presented these figures as evidence that Georgian society remained committed to EU integration while supporting his government's approach to relations with Brussels.

Tadeo also asked Kobakhidze about European leaders who, she suggested, were unwilling to be photographed with him. He dismissed the suggestion, replying: "I have pictures with everyone."

Kirtskhalia Accuses RSF of Acting Under 'Deep State' Influence After Ivanishvili Named Press Freedom Predator Again



By Messenger Staff

Georgian Dream parliamentary majority leader Irakli Kirtskhalia held a briefing to accuse Reporters Without Borders (RSF) of operating under the influence of the "Deep State" and "Global War Party." The Paris-based media watchdog included party founder and honorary chairman Bidzina Ivanishvili on its Press Freedom Predators list for the second year in a row.

At the November 3 briefing, Kirtskhalia used the "Deep State" and "Global War Party" terms interchangeably. Georgian Dream uses them to claim the West is under the influence of informal oligarchic forces. He also claimed Georgia is "one of the world's leading countries in terms of both media freedom and democracy."

"Our political team believes it is important to use the absurdity published by one of the instruments controlled by the Global War Party to illustrate how their mechanisms operate against leaders and national forces that do not act in the interests of informal oligarchic powers, but instead choose peace over war, freedom over obedience, and sovereignty over acting under the dictates of foreign influence," Kirtskhalia said, claiming Ivanishvili was "deliberately included" in the list.

The remarks followed RSF's November 2 publication of its 2026 Press Freedom Predators list, on which Ivanishvili retained his place after also appearing on

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