

President Zourabichvili of Georgia: We want to reunite with our European family



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On Wednesday afternoon, Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili addressed the European Parliament in Brussels.

The first Georgian head of state to give a speech in the hemicycle for 13 years, President Zourabichvili called for her country's 'reunification with its European family' and for Georgia to be granted EU candidate status by the end of 2023. She stressed that Georgia's European future starts with its European past, and recalled the price Georgia's people have paid in the face of Russian aggression.

President Zourabichvili said the granting of EU candidate status to Georgia would give recognition to the Georgian people's relentless fight for their European identity, provide

protection and security for a Georgia that experienced multiple Russian occupations, help safeguard democracy, and cement the country's role as a pro-European force in the Caucasus.

She said [the recommendations set out by the EU](#) for Georgia to secure candidate status "are already part of our culture, values and heritage."

"Your recommendations are not some foreign ideas imposed on us - as was Soviet ideology. These are in essence Georgian. What you are recommending is that Georgia eliminates the remnants of the totalitarian past and reunite with itself and its European roots," she said.

President Zourabichvili also emphasised the fact that EU candidate status will cement progress in a country marked by recent political polarisation and democratic backsliding.

"While we are the first to understand our current shortcomings, we do not want those to overshadow our achievements. That for the past 30 years - that is one generation! - we have made extraordinary progress through substantial reforms", she said.

You can watch the debate again [here](#) (31.05.2023)

Further information

[The European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with South Caucasus \(DSCA\)](#)

[Press release: "Parliament urges Georgia to pardon and release ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili" \(15.02.2023\)](#)


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Contacts

Viktor ALMQVIST

Press Officer

 (+32) 2 28 31834 (BXL)

 (+33) 3 881 72420 (STR)

 (+32) 470 88 29 42

 viktor.almqvist@europarl.europa.eu

 foreign-press@ep.europa.eu

 [@EP_ForeignAff](https://twitter.com/EP_ForeignAff)
