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# Georgia's EU Accession Frozen, Says Brussels' Envoy to Tbilisi

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Georgian police uses water cannon to disperse protesters as they take part in a rally to protest the so-called 'Foreign Agents Law'. **Zurab Kurtsikidze / EPA / TASS**

The European Union has halted Georgia's accession talks amid strained ties over Tbilisi's controversial "foreign influence" law, the bloc's top diplomat in the South Caucasus country said Tuesday.

"Regrettably, Georgia's EU accession process is stopped for now — this has been decided by EU leaders during the last European Council," said EU Ambassador to Tbilisi Pawel Herczynski.

"It is sad to see EU-Georgia relations at such a low point, when they could have been at an all-time high," the EU delegation's X (formerly Twitter) account quoted him as saying.

Brussels has halted 30 million euros ($32.4 million) in financial aid to Georgia and was considering "other measures," Herczynski added.

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The European Union in November recommended that Georgia be granted long-awaited candidate status provided that it meets nine conditions.

Ties have been strained by Tbilisi's passage of legislation on "foreign influence" in May despite mass street protests against what critics called a Russian-style law aimed at stifling opposition groups and civil society.

EU leaders said last month that Georgia’s law backtracks on the bloc’s recommendations, “de facto leading to a halt of the accession process.”

Georgia's ruling party has faced widespread accusations of derailing the country from its EU membership path and leading it back toward the Russian orbit.

Russian officials were reported to have welcomed Georgia’s “foreign influence” law with quiet anticipation, while Russia’s top diplomat Sergei Lavrov accused the West of plotting to overthrow the Georgian government.

The United States launched a comprehensive review of U.S.-Georgian ties and imposed visa restrictions on those “responsible for or complicit in undermining democracy.”

Last week, the U.S. said it was indefinitely postponing military drills with Georgia amid bilateral tensions.

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