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**GIORGI KVIRIKASHVILI: "GEORGIA IS BECOMING A PART OF EUROPEAN ORDER"**

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During the 53rd Munich Conference Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili held several high-level meetings, including meetings with US Vice President Mike Pence and Afghan President Mohamed Ashraf Ghani. Speaking during the round table "Hidden Problems of Eurasia" at the Munich Security Conference, Kvirikashvili focused on the challenges that the European Union faces: "We gathered here to discuss Eurasian security issues and challenges, which have many dimensions. On the background of active and frozen conflicts, the stability of small countries is very important. Georgia is a country that tries to become a member of the European family and Euro-Atlantic community. It's a country that tries to build a stable future in spite of all serious challenges... We try to be persistent, especially in foreign policy matters, and try to find solutions to all problems."

Kvirikashvili recalled that Georgia has signed an association agreement with the EU and as part of the agreement - free trade agreement: "Our integration into NATO structures is increasing. We participate in peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan, peacekeeping operations in Central Africa together with the EU. Gradually, step by step, we become part of the European order, by building our state in accordance with European standards."

According to Georgian Prime Minister, regional cooperation remains one of the cornerstones of stability in the South Caucasus: "We have great regional projects, linking Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey through the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. We have new opportunities thanks to the Silk Road economic belt, 'One Belt, One Road' initiative, linking Europe and Asia. Georgia is an important country, eastern flank of the EU. We are European country historically, we are the country that has a free trade agreement with the EU, and recently we completed negotiations on free trade with China."

Speaking about the economic development of Georgia, he said: "Our country has a population of 3.8 million people, we have an open economy. Several days ago Heritage Foundation published new rating, and Georgia is 13th free economy in the world... We have liberalized tax system, starting from January 1 we no longer have income tax. We invest in infrastructure, modernization. At the same time, regional cooperation and regional stability remain the cornerstones of stability in our region, especially on the background of serious challenges. We are trying to use all resources to create stability in our country, so that countries of the region would be able to develop.

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Kaynak/Source: