

DEBATES
ON EUROPE

THE TBILISI DEBATE ON EUROPE

12-13 JUNE 2026

განათლებისთვის
for education



მეცნიერებისთვის
for science

თავისუფლებისთვის
for freedom

THE TBILISI DEBATE ON EUROPE

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In June 2026, the Tbilisi Debate on Europe brings leading voices to Georgia to confront urgent questions of freedom, history and democracy. What is Georgia's place in Europe's past, present and future? **Join the discussion!**

FRIDAY 12 JUNE

PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS AT ILIA STATE UNIVERSITY

🕒 **15.30–17:00**

Welcome Addresses by:

Nino Doborjginidze (Rector, Ilia State University; GE)

Zane Rungule (Chargée d'Affaires, EU Delegation to Georgia)

Carl Henrik Fredriksson (Programme Director, Debates on Europe; SE/AT)

THINKING, SPEAKING AND WRITING UNDER PRESSURE – ACADEMIC FREEDOM

A panel discussion on free speech. Across Europe fundamental democratic freedoms are being undermined. Academic freedom is no exception. Be it economic or political pressure, structural reforms or the primacy of “useable knowledge” over “critical thinking” schools and universities are under attack. Georgian and international scholars will identify the current threats and their historical background. Are there strategies to defend the academic and educational system?

Moderator:

Volker Weichsel (Editor at Osteuropa; DE)

Speakers:

Giga Zedania (Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies, Ilia State University; GE);

Dubravka Stojanović (Professor of History, University of Belgrade, RS);

Zsófia Bán (Writer and Associate Professor of Visual Culture Studies at Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, HU)

🕒 **18:30**

KEYNOTE SPEECH BY KARL SCHLÖGEL "THE RE-CONCEPTUALIZATION OF EUROPEAN HISTORY AND THE PRESENT MOMENT"

German historian and recent recipient of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, Karl Schlögel, on how the fall of the Soviet empire but also the Russian wars on Ukraine and Georgia call for a radical re-evaluation and re-conceptualization of European history and the present moment. Not mainly as a reckoning, but to come closer to the truth.

Ilia State University Confers an Honorary Doctorate on Karl Schlögel

🕒 19:30-20:30

DE-CENTERING THE STORY, RE-WRITING HISTORY

Panel discussion

What does de-colonization and re-centering mean for Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space? In recent years, there is increasing recognition that Russia's colonial history and its continuing imperial practices must be addressed. A prominent international panel of historians tries to find out how this political and cultural imperialism should be understood and what histories it has erased or pushed to the margins. What happens when the cultures of Eastern Europe are no longer treated as secondary to those of Russia or Western Europe but are instead recognized as essential parts of Europe's story?

Moderator:

Zaal Andronikashvili (literary scholar and author, Leibniz Center for Literary and Cultural Research and Ilia State University; DE/GE)

Speakers:

Karl Schlögel (historian, writer and Professor Emeritus of East European History at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt, Oder; DE);

Peter Englund (historian and writer, member of the Swedish Academy; SE);

Nutsa Batiashvili (Professor of Anthropology and Dean of the Graduate School)

SATURDAY 13 JUNE

PUBLIC SPEECH BY MICHAL HVORECKÝ AT ILIA STATE UNIVERSITY

🕒 19:00–20:30

THE TBILISI SPEECH TO EUROPE

From a rostrum in the capital of Georgia, leading Slovak intellectual **Michal Hvorecký** addresses a Europe-wide audience. Europe is for many – especially viewed from the supposed periphery – not merely a geopolitical actor, but a symbol of freedom, justice and dignity. At the same time, in light of the increasing distance to such an old and crucial partner as the U.S., the threat from Russia and the rise of a new and loud nationalism, Europe is faced with the task of redefining itself. Perhaps Georgia, which has been exposed to imperial threats for centuries and yet has always managed to start afresh, is a place from which Europe can reflect anew on its own path.

One of Central Europe's most perceptive literary voices reflects on what Europe stands for – and on what will be required to defend it.



Ilia State University, Hall B201, 32 Ilia Chavchavadze Avenue

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 2012, DEBATES ON EUROPE HAS BEEN HOSTED IN PLACES WHERE THE IDEA OF EUROPE IS AT STAKE. IN INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION FORUMS IT ADDRESSES THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES ON THE EUROPEAN AGENDA, FURTHERING FREE AND OPEN DEBATE ON CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES. IN 2026, DEBATES ON EUROPE IS HOSTED IN TBILISI.

S . F I S C H E R
S T I F T U N G

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