

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

Finn

MUND

AS

THEA TSULUKIANI

Georgian minister
for Culture, Sports,
and Youth



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- Jean Monnet Chair -



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Context

This speech is held by Thea Tsulukiani, the Georgian minister of culture, sports, and youth in front of the other ministers and Irakli Garibashvili, the prime minister of Georgia. The reason for her speech is that the ministers were asked to put forward strategies to improve Georgia's reputation, to forge new alliances, and to polish its international standings. It takes place in June 2023, in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi.

Speech

My fellow ministers, dear prime minister, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today!

My fellow ministers, dear prime minister, let me start my speech by sharing a personal experience with you.

Last year, I was fortunate enough to attend one of the matches in the Qatar 2022 World Cup. I sat next to a German fan, who, towards the end of the game, said something that would stick in my mind: "Soccer may well be a waste of time. But it's a waste of time with great potential." I would like to add political potential to his statement.

Why am I telling you this?

My fellow ministers, dear prime minister, we have had enough!

We have had enough of people not knowing where our beloved country finds itself on a map!

We have had enough of people confusing our beloved country with other states in the region!

Yet, above all, we have had enough of people making fun of our beloved country having the same name as a state in America. A state!

We can no longer tolerate this!

However, we cannot and must not act like Russia, which tries to reclaim its position on the international stage by force. Instead, I would like to suggest a more diplomatic approach.

Therefore, today, I propose to you our bid for the 2034 World Cup!

In recent years, what we have witnessed, is that those countries hosting the World Cup were able to greatly increase international attention.

In 2018, people were impressed by free train travel and hospitality in Russia.

Last year, albeit widespread concerns about human rights, the media concluded, that Qatar provided the world with a "surprisingly pleasant" World Cup! In fact, the final between Argentina and Portugal was seen by almost 4 billion people!

My fellow ministers, dear prime minister, our country finds itself in a truly peculiar situation!

With the upcoming completion of the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline and the continuing influx of – overwhelmingly wealthy – Russians, our state expenses are secured.

Politically, however, things aren't as fortunate.

The North will continue to pose a threat to our security.

The West will continue to delay its promises of membership to organizations like the European Union.

And following the revolution in Iran, we expect the South to remain unstable for years to come.

It is therefore on us to make new friends abroad and forge alliances that truly benefit us.

Now is the time for us to shape our future!

By hosting the World Cup in our country, we will make an important step towards being an independent and internationally recognized country.

Yes, we are small in terms of physical size. But this can be our strength. Fans, businesspeople and politicians alike will have the chance to discover the whole of our country during their visit.

They shall marvel at Tbilisi, Batumi, and Kutaisi, our beautiful cities, learn about our culture, and taste our food.

Georgia shall reappear on maps.

Georgia shall reappear in people's minds.

Georgia shall live up to its great potential!

Thank you!