Cohabitation is Over... What is Next?

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The Georgian Times Media Holding Celebrates 20th Anniversary!

From November 27, 1993 until today we have “Done what we know”. During these 20 years presidents and governments have changed, and so have our editors in chief, journalists and correspondents. But our main principle has remained unchanged: we have documented all the ongoing processes in Georgia, so that we can gain the love and trust of the reader.

Ukraine and Armenia Have Retreated From Brussels – Who Will Be Next????

Recent events in Ukraine, where disturbances have broken out over signing a Free Trade Agreement with and becoming an Associate Member of the EU, have demonstrated that EU enlargement is still considered by the Kremlin to be the key challenge to its national interests. Two nations, Armenia and, at least for the time being, Ukraine, have had to bow to Russia’s third party influence.
Cohabitation is Over…What is Next?

By EMMA BAIRAMOVA, GT

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The Georgian TIMES

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We have seen everything over the last 20 years: recognition, success, an army of grateful readers, exclusives, hard-hitting articles, investigations and disclosures... and we have also seen financial police in the editorial offices of the newspaper, police searches, court cases, advocates, prosecutors and finally the arrest of our president and his juvenile son on the basis of false National Movement allegations. Our family of journalists went beyond being even a family and served the country like ordinary soldiers. So did their colleagues and "companions on arms" everywhere - editors, journalists, correspondents, photographers, the whole journalistic collective.

Today everything is the same as it has always been, despite everything. The Georgian Times Media Holding, which over the years has printed a lot of journals and magazines, now once again publishes the English language newspaper The Georgian Times alongside the quadrilingual website www.geotimes.ge and runs the GT press club. But we have everything ahead of us still! We got back on our feet recently, for the umpteenth time, and most importantly we are still defending the interests of the country and are still ordinary soldiers defending their country!

The heads of The Georgian Times Media Holding, Malkhaz Gulashvili and Nana Gagua, express their deep gratitude to all our staff, regardless of their status, with whom we have worked from 1993 till today, and promise that our slogan will remain unchanged: “We Do What We Know”!
Recent events in Ukraine, where disturbances have broken out over signing a Free Trade Agreement with and becoming an Associate Member of the European Union, have stirred up the region and in particular the post-Soviet states. This derives from the Missile Defence System in the Mediterranean, and a Turkish-based radar system, had reached interim capabilities. Georgia lost the CIS due to the Russian-Georgia 2008 war but it is being processed by The Kras. The Common Air Defence System is primarily designed to deter a potential threat perceived by Russia to reside in the Euro-Atlantic community’s Anglo-American coalition shaped by NATO and the EU, to protect Europe from missile attacks. NATO’s decision-making North Atlantic Council then held consultations on missile defence, the first meeting concerning this topic at such a senior level. During its 2012 Chicago Summit NATO leaders declared that this NATO missile defence system had reached interim capability, which means that its basic command and control capability had been tested and installed at the NATO Allied Air Command Headquarters in Ramstein, Germany, while NATO Allies were still providing sensors and interceptors to connect to the system. It also meant that US ships with anti-missile interceptors in the Mediterranean Sea, and a Turkey-based radar system, had been put under NATO command at the German base. In addition to this there is the American National Missile Defense System, intended to shield the entire country against incoming missiles such as intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). On 17 September 2009 President Obama announced that the planned deployment of long-range missile defence interceptors and equipment in Poland and the Czech Republic was not to go forward, and that a defence against short- and medium-range missiles using AEGIS warships would be deployed instead of long-range distance missiles. Nevertheless, the significant American National Missile Defense System is an effective counterpart to the NATO system and is seen equally as a threat to Russia. A new wave of Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Atlantic defence confrontation has already started. This comes despite the significant military preponderance of the EU and its potential post-Soviet bloc members, which would be in effective control over the EU and the EU’s military preponderance. In addition to this the Georgian Institute for Geoscientific and Euro-Atlantic Studies, who described the event as a “Russian challenge”. One possible scenario could in fact arise in Georgia, as the country is still dependent on import- ed energy, which is produced by a new gas pipeline from Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that his country is going in the near future, to establish a joint air defence system with Armenia and Kazakhstan. Japan, however, believe that such cooperation increases the defensive potential of Russia and its allies, contributing to peace and stability in the Eurasian region. We will expand our military cooperation with our partners and allies, focusing first of all on the member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) or its successor, Collective Co-operation Organisation and the Commonwealth of Independent States, he was quoted as saying. In addition to that, the Russian president stressed the importance of regional army groupings, with Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, being made up.

As mentioned above, Dr. Vakhtang Maisaia, GTI Associate Professor, IB Euro-Atlantic Studies, a similar high-level meeting is expected to take place in Saint Petersburg, at which EU Summit a CIS Summit was held, at which the Ukrainian delegation, led by Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych, has refused to accept these changes, even though this goes against its own government’s decision on 18 September 2013 to “prepare for the acceptance of Ukraine as an Associate Member of the EU”, and has deferred the signing of any other agreement between Ukraine and the EU, particularly the political association agreement, offered as part of the Association Membership package. Officially, the Ukrainian government’s position is that it must take into account its membership of the CIS and further pro-Russian moves. However this is the same Ukraine which has been economically blackmailed by Russia more than once, having been a major trade blockader and even an embargo on Ukrainian cargo being imposed upon it. Russia has of suspended restructuring Ukraine’s energy debt which is acclaimed to be almost $2 billion ($500 million for consuming Russian gas and $1.2 billion for consuming Russian oil products). Judging by what happened before the EU Summit a CIS Summit was held in Saint Petersburg. Germany, who is hosting the conference, has already had a high profile meeting with the Ukrainian counterpart. A similar high-level meeting was recently held in Sochi between President Putin and Putin, at which the Ukrainian side was offered a package of special economic benefits which includes like low price energy, a privileged side was offered a package of special economic benefits which includes, for instance, like low price energy, a privileged status and the creation of an integrated air defence network. Ukraine, which has been econom- ically the Ukrainian govern- ment’s position is that it must take into account its membership of the CIS and further pro-Russian moves. However this is the same Ukraine which has been economically blackmailed by Russia more than once, having been a major trade blockader and even an embargo on Ukrainian cargo being imposed upon it. Russia has suspended restructuring Ukraine’s energy debt which is acclaimed to be almost $2 billion ($500 million for consuming Russian gas and $1.2 billion for consuming Russian oil products). Judging by what happened before the EU Summit a CIS Summit was held in Saint Petersburg. Germany, who is hosting the conference, has already had a high profile meeting with the Ukrainian counterpart. A similar high-level meeting was recently held in Sochi between President Putin and Putin, at which the Ukrainian side was offered a package of special economic benefits which includes like low price energy, a privileged status and the creation of an integrated air defence network. Ukraine, which has been econom- ically the Ukrainian govern- ment’s position is that it must take into account its membership of the CIS and further pro-Russian moves. However this is the same Ukraine which has been economically blackmailed by Russia more than once, having been a major trade blockader and even an embargo on Ukrainian cargo being imposed upon it. Russia has suspended restructuring Ukraine’s energy debt which is acclaimed to be almost $2 billion ($500 million for consuming Russian gas and $1.2 billion for consuming Russian oil products). Judging by what happened before the EU Summit a CIS Summit was held in Saint Petersburg. Germany, who is hosting the conference, has already had a high profile meeting with the Ukrainian counterpart. A similar high-level meeting was recently held in Sochi between President Putin and Putin, at which the Ukrainian side was offered a package of special economic benefits which includes like low price energy, a privileged status and the creation of an integrated air defence network.
Beka & Logic Project
Chillin’ in Batumi

Rustaveli Theatre
December 10th 08:00 PM
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The concert is presented by Silknet
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The building would be quite useless as a university too. This can only benefit presidential palace, nothing else, because it is so constructed and it has not been adjusted to suit Moscow.”

Andro Barnov from the National Movement also commented on the proposed change of use: “The [former] government built roads, schools and hospitals and maintained energy supplies. What they (the Georgian Dream) are doing is ridiculous and sad. How should we respond to this nonsense? This building was built for the administration of President and should function as such its location, architecture and interior arrangement are entirely designed so that the office’s function can do its work without hindrance. This is a manifestation of the totally unacceptable attitude by the new government to all the good work the previous government did.”

Construction of the Presidential Palace, initiated by Saakashvili, took place between 2004 and 2009. It was designed by Georgian architect George Arakamshvili, who supervised the work until 2007, until the Italian architect and designer Michele De Lucchi, who later built the “Peace Bridge” in Tbilisi, took over. The majestic building is in the classical style, topped by a large dome and decorated with Greco-Roman and Italian Renaissance features. Saakashvili’s residence could not be photographed by anyone, as all the approaches to it were guarded by police and special forces and anyone attempting to take a camera in was confronted by the president’s guards. They could only shoot it from afar, and even then only after looking around to see that the coast was clear. However, for some foreign media, such as CNN, exceptions were made. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has reported that 6,319 historic landmarks are under threat as they have no official status. Whether the Avlabari palace is regarded as one of them is debatable. The debate revolves around what the actual function of the building is determined to be - is it likely ever to have been a presidential palace as its new label in its original design, have been put to some use, perhaps as an office. Nonetheless, the building was built for the administration of President and should function as such its location, architecture and interior arrangement are entirely designed so that the office’s function can do its work without hindrance. This is a manifestation of the totally unacceptable attitude by the new government to all the good work the previous government did.”

The fate of the beautiful presidential palace on Avlabari is still unclear. The new government still to decide by who will use the luxurious palace.

President Margvelashvili has made his feelings clear. “At the Justice Ministry for “no obvious misgivings about this “mass distribution of Georgian citizenship” were given Georgian descent” were given Georgian citizenship “due to naturalization of Greco-Roman and Turkish citizens “of Georgian descent” were given Georgian citizenship.”

Avtandil Gobozov, a Russian businessman who has been working in Georgia for a long time and is going to buy the palace, said, “I am almost sure I will get it,” he told GT before checking the results, though his government did not immediately tell the operator couldn’t find his surname in the list sent to Public Service Hall by the administration. “One of the PSH staff told us that they had two lists, sent at different times. “They are working on lists of refugees coming to us gradually. We might get part of it at the beginning of this week. So, whoever can’t find himself in the list can call again at the end of November,” she explained, adding that Georgian citizenship was mainly being granted to Russian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Turkish, Tatar, Iranian, and Greek nationals with Georgian roots.

“After the inauguration of President Margvelashvili on November 17 the government decided to tighten the visa regime with Asian and African countries. The visa-free policy with 118 countries will be revised and the number of days the visa is granted for, which must be between 10 and 30 days, will not exceed 30 instead of the previous 90. Also, we have obtained a Georgian visa previously was granted for the visit on a multiple-entry visa, which will be valid for 90 days. “This immigration policy of the former government has been greatly harming Georgia’s reputation for promoting tourism, it was also responsible for an increase in the number of social migrants from Asian and African countries” and made the country “a transit point for international human and drug trafficking.”

* The names of the applicants have been changed on their request.
Georgia Attends International Tourism Fair in London

The Georgian National Tourism Administration has participated in the annual international tourism exhibition in London, World Travel Market (WTM) 2013. The Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara, the National Agency for Protected Areas, five tourism companies - Caucasus Travel, Visit Georgia, Georgia Travel, Explore Georgia and Geo Play Travel and the Holiday Inn hotel chain joined the National Tourism Administration on the Georgian stand.

New and existing promotional materials were presented, the information about Georgia being divided thematically – Culture, Wine and Culinary, Winter, Adventures and Summer. This manner of presentation helped visitors make a choice. Giorgi Sigua, head of the Georgian National Tourism Administration, said that participating in events of this kind contributes to the promotion of Georgia and will thus increase the number of people interested in the country.

“Increasing awareness of Georgia as a tourist destination in the international market is one of the most important tasks of the Georgian National Tourism Administration. Our participation in such exhibitions will help the private sector and directly contribute to fulfilling the country’s tourism potential and promoting its attractions, which will attract more tourist flow from different countries”, he said.

WTM is the largest exhibition Georgia has been involved in since 2004. World Travel Market 2014 will take place on 3-6 November 2014. “Every year we participate in 12-14 international and two local tourism exhibitions. One of the most important tourism fairs is the World Travel Market, which is always held in London, UK. This attracts visitors, tourism boards and businesses from around the world. Georgia has participated in it for several years, and the interest in our stand increases each year”, said Tamar Chikvidze, Deputy Head of the Georgian National Tourism Administration.

The WTM 2013 Events Programme included speeches from influential figures in and around the travel industry who offered insights and invaluable up-to-date knowledge. This year saw an impressive 5% increase in participation in WTM, with the event opening its doors to more than 50,000 delegates over the four days. All visitor segments experienced growth, according to unaided figures, with the WTM Buyers’ Club seeing a phenomenal 8% increase in attendance numbers. This increase in senior buyers will see the event facilitate more than £2 billion in industry deals. Other segments with increased visitor indicators included trade visitors (5%), international media (4%) and exhibitor personnel (2%).

This year the first day of WTM, 4 November, was an exhibitor invitation-only day, which enabled exhibitors to hold discussions and negotiations with the buyers they wanted to do business with. The day proved a resounding success, with the invitation-only attendance up 12% on last year’s event, reaching almost 9,000 (precisely 8,916). The first morning’s Speed Networking session was phenomenally well attended, and saw a record number of both exhibitors (760) and WTM Buyers’ Club members (211) discussing business deals before the exhibition floor opened.

5 November saw 18,292 visitors attend WTM, a massive 7% increase on the second day of last year’s event. Tuesday is the busiest day of WTM, as it is the first day the market is open to the whole industry after the invitation-only Monday. 6 November saw a 5% increase in visitors, to 14,324, compared with the same day of WTM 2012. The final day was on a par with 2012, attracting 1% more visitors than in 2011. On the Thursday a second Speed Networking event took place, for the second year running, to facilitate post-exhibition deals. This attracted 370 exhibitors and almost 90 members of the WTM Buyers’ Club.

It should also be noted that the WTM Buyers’ Club (formerly the Meridian Club) has a global membership of more than 14,000 members, consistently attracts top-quality buyers and has a reputation for generating genuine business leads. It involves senior international and regional buyers and decision makers. WTM nevertheless continues to focus on improving the quality of WTM Buyers’ Club, and all potential members undergo a thorough assessment process.

WTM 2012 generated £1,860 million of travel industry contracts, according to independent research conducted by Fusion Communications. It is owned by the world’s leading events organizer, Reed Exhibitions (RE), which organises a portfolio of other travel industry events, including the Arabian Travel Market and International Luxury Travel Market. In 2012, RE held more than 460 events in 36 countries, which brought together more than seven million people from around the world and generated billions of dollars in business.

The Senior Director of the World Travel Market, RE’s Simon Press, said: “I am absolutely delighted with the delegate attendance at WTM 2013. These figures demonstrate the power and importance of WTM to the industry and the role it plays in facilitating business for the sector. This resounding success can also be credited to the increased focus WTM has put on travel technology and luxury, with the Travel Tech Show and A Taste of ILTM debuting this year”. He added that WTM 2013’s business generation figure looks set to top £2 billion, making this year’s event the most successful of the 34 WTM’s. The attendance figures will be audited by Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) in the New Year.
A summit of tourism ministers has been held in London, as part of the World Tourism Market (WTM), under the aegis of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

Head of the Georgian National Tourism Administration Giorgi Sigua delivered a speech at this summit. He presented Georgia’s tourism development trends and sector reform programme to the international community. He also mentioned the role and significance of social media in popularizing the New Silk Road concept.

Sigua said that cooperation with UNWTO is of the utmost significance for Georgia, as participation in such summits is the best platform for spreading information. “I would emphasize that in the main annual publication of world tourism, the UNWTO tourism highlights, Georgia is listed as one of the fastest-growing tourism countries. This recognition is important, as this publication is a trustworthy and authoritative source of information for the international tourist industry”, he said.

Secretary General of UNWTO Taleb Rifai opened the ministerial summit. Based in Madrid, he has held this position since 1 January 2010. He was unanimously elected at the 18th session of UNWTO General Assembly (October 2009), following the recommendation of the UNWTO Executive Council made in May 2009.

Prior to this appointment, Rifai had held several ministerial portfolios in the Government of Jordan, as Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Minister of Information and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation. During his term as Jordan’s Minister of Tourism Taleb Rifai served as Chairman of the UNWTO. During his meeting with Giorgi Sigua at the summit he mentioned that the World Tourism Barometer had declared the increase of travellers Georgia had witnessed to be the highest in Europe.

In 2013, at the 20th General Assembly of the World Tourism Organisation held in Zambia and Zimbabwe, Georgia was elected to a second term as Vice-Chair of the Regional Commission for Europe. Georgia has been a member of this organisation’s Statistics and Satellite Accounts Committee since 2011.

Giorgi Sigua presented the existing tourist potential and infrastructure in Svaneti to the visitor. Yassin Al Suroor, in his turn, will popularize the product with the largest tourist companies and reporters of Arabia.

The fact should be noted that there will be held a press-tour in Georgia by Yassin Al Suroor’s promotion in December, and the charter flights will be appointed.

Giorgi Sigua hosted Arabian investor in Mestia

The Head of National Tourism Administration of Georgia Giorgi Sigua hosted the investor from Saudi Arabia in Mestia.

The visit was planned by participation of the investment group “Aamal Group” of Saudi Arabia and the member of the international trade chamber Yassin Al Suroor.

Giorgi Sigua presented the existing tourist potential and Infrastructure in Svaneti to the visitor. Yassin Al Suroor, in his turn, will popularize the product with the largest tourist companies and reporters of Arabia.

The visit is significant, as this publication is a trustworthy and authoritative source of information for the international tourist industry”, he said.

This is his second visit in Georgia. He looked around Achara and Kazbegi in the framework of the visit.

In the framework of the visit Giorgi Sigua met the governor of Mestia and the local population involved in industry. He examined the current issues and visited the tourism international center with them.

Visa Regime to Become Stricter in Georgia

The Government of Georgia has announced that visa entry regulations are to become stricter, but the Georgian National Tourism Administration says this will not reduce the number of tourists entering the country.

Under the bill recently presented to parliament entry visas will be valid for 30 days instead of 360 and must be obtained at diplomatic representations and consulates of Georgia rather than the airport, The Ministry of Justice is also the Ministry of Internal Affairs can renew visas. Short-term visas will be issued based on the number of the days the applicant indicates they will stay in Georgia, up to 30 days. Multiple-entry visas will be issued to aliens who took and used at least one Georgian visa last year and can show grounds for applying for a multiple-entry one. Long-term visas will be issued with the right of multiple entrance for 90 days and will be a precondition for receiving diplomatic accreditation or residence permission.

Khatuna Burkadze, manager of the GYLA (Georgian Young Lawyers Association) project “Promoting Well Managed Migration Between the EU and Georgia”, has told The Georgian Times that the bill will make it possible for people to get long-term visas for a maximum of 5 years. Naturally, the regulations become stricter when the alien has been granted a right to stay in Georgia.

Rifai said that cooperation with UNWTO is of the utmost significance for Georgia, as participation in such summits is the best platform for spreading information. “I would emphasize that in the main annual publication of world tourism, the UNWTO tourism highlights, Georgia is listed as one of the fastest-growing tourism countries. This recognition is important, as this publication is a trustworthy and authoritative source of information for the international tourist industry”, he said.

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Visa policy is much more liberal now, and this bill reflects this, as it adds definition to the policy,” said Burkadze.

The authors of the bill insist that it is primarily motivated by state security interests. However its opponents believe that the precise definition of visa terms will limit free movement, although such regulations are commonplace in various countries.

Marina Metreveli, an economic analyst, believes that tourism, as a field of economics, is very vulnerable to threats and any political instability negatively influences both economies and tourism.

“When the door is opened to citizens of all countries not all the people who enter are tourists, as they have different business to attend to; there is always a threat of trafficking, drug-related activity and terrorism being imported. In order to counter such threats, we have to differentiate the countries from which visitors are more acceptable,” she said, adding that visa arrangements should be more liberal with the countries from which a significant income is derived from tourism. For the others, Georgia should develop a particular strategy.

Giorgi Sigua, head of the Georgian National Tourism Administration, is not expecting any reduction in the number of tourists visiting Georgia, as the bill is merely a revision of visa and immigration policy. “I think this initiative will not affect tourism. Georgia should not be the reception and border crossing point for everybody, by no means,” he declared.

At the present time citizens of 117 states can enter Georgia without needing a visa and stay for 360 days, and those who require a visa can obtain one at the border in a simplified way. The new regulations, if passed, will come into effect in March, 2014. From that point the application fee for obtaining visas for 90 and 360 days, both single and multiple-entry, will be 50 USD, the fee for a one year multiple-entry visa will be 200 USD, a 10 year multiple-entry visa will cost 400 USD and a 15 year one 600 USD.
Opening of Winter Season in Mestia and Bakuriani

The Georgian National Tourism Administration is planning the opening ceremony of the winter season in Mestia and Bakuriani. The goal of this is to promote Mestia as a skiing resort and to support internal tourism development.

Sporting events such as skiing competitions are planned within the framework of the project. The first will be an alpine skiing competition involving 50 professionals of various age groups. They will compete on trails prepared three hours in advance. A special jury, sited in Hatsavali, will evaluate the participants and declare a winner.

The second event will be for amateurs. 30 will compete, selected in advance from applicants to the Facebook page of the Georgian National Tourism Administration. This will help promote the Facebook page as well.

At the closing ceremony the amateur winners will receive certificates and awards from the administration. On the terrace of the Zuruldi restaurant in Hatsavali a band will play, and hot drinks will be served. About 40 skiers will give a show and the day will conclude with fireworks.

A similar season opening event will also be held in Bakuriani in order to promote it as a children and families winter resort. It will be held at the Bakuriani Square, which will be decorated. A wooden fence and arch will be installed at the entrance to the square. In a dedicated space barmen will produce apples dipped in glintwein, cocoa and caramel as a treat for the event guests.

The event will start at 14:00 and finish at 20:00. During the day, various competitions will be held in parallel, such as group target shooting and a rope climbing competition. Another competition, for groups, will be the “Most beautiful Snowman.” Participants will try to produce the best snowman from materials supplied by the event organisers. A jury will evaluate the snowmen according to defined criteria and identify a winner. The winners of each competition will be awarded gift sets prepared by the Georgian National Tourism Administration.

At the end of the event a Christmas tree will be publicly decorated against a backdrop of music and another firework display will round off proceedings. The participants will be given rackets.
Country of life

Gudauri
Mestia
Bakuriani

www.Georgia.Travel * www.gnta.ge
**Legal Protection Against the Georgian Mentality**

**BY TATIA KAKHUSHVILI, GT**

People smile when someone mentions animal rights in Georgia. Let’s protect humans first, the argument goes. These were published about animals. There have been quite a few cases of animals being tortured or killed which have been covered by the media and social networks. However, there has not been an appropriate reaction to these.

In one such case a young Georgians were found dead: his pet's head off, took a photo of it with his head cut off and posted this on Facebook. He did not plead insanity, but the public and animal protectors do not believe that men are capable of such a thing. But the animal rights are not considered important in this country.

It was on 11 November in Aragvi in Zestafoni that twenty-year-old Tamaz Khainsvadze was found. The dog was found off and photographed images of himself. When he was found on Facebook on November 18, Khainsvadze had threatened to kill the animal before. Torturing and killing the dog just because it was clearly ugly and inappropriate looking is an absurdity, but this didn’t stop him.

According to the Chairman of the Georgian Society for the Protection of Animals, the perpetrator may have been induced by a fine or correctional labour for a term of up to one year. If such actions are committed by groups or in the presence of minors, a sentence of two years will be imposed.

The dog’s owner – Leila Kiknavelidze – has asked the Georgian Front, an animal protection body, to raise a motion with parliamentarians. As she told the media: “No one is afraid of Beebee, the dog. He absolutely never did anyone any harm. When our neighbour Tamaz Khainsvadze was drunk, the dog only barked at him and once or twice chased him. But the dog never harmed anyone. It never threw rocks at my dog in front of my children. When I rebuked him, he replied, keep your dog in the house. One day, when Beebee was out and that boy was again drunk, he shot and killed him, then cut his head off with an axe. I was in Tbilisi and didn’t witness this incident. To tell the truth, calling the police because of the dog, even in these circumstances, is unacceptable for the local residents.

I have heard that Tamazi is at home and very sorry about all the reaction he has received from people. He thought he had to do everything to that he is a cool guy by treating a dog so mercilessly.”

Despite the legal sanctions in place, the Popular Front reports that such cases are quite frequent. However, no one can confirm with photos or video evidence.

“Copies of EU laws are screenshots by the Animal \Committee. We can take a lot of copies of these and adjust them for application in our country. It’s important that the state supports this. Legislation alone cannot achieve a goal. It is unfortunate that we have to go to the state to ask it to control citizens until they control their own brains. Some citizens cannot think in depth about important issues, for instance, the fact that you cannot oppress a helpless creature just because it isn’t human,” says the Popular Front. An investigation has now been launched into the dog torturing case under Article 259 of the Criminal Code. If a criminal offence has been committed the person responsible should be held accountable. Nothing further is being said about the case at present. By popular demand, the Popular Front or the Prosecutor’s Office is being asked to launch an investigation.

It is clear from the way the victim speaks, however, that the Georgian mentality has not changed. Mrs. Kiknavelidze is not going to lose her neighbour. Opinion polls suggest that the majority of Georgians feel that if a person7ever severely tortures an animal and then kills it, it’s justifiable at worst gross and immoral. Therefore, they should undertake some community service, not be imprisoned.

Several NGOs, amongst them animal rights groups, protested in front of the Prosecutor’s Office on 19 November. Their main demand was that law enforcement be regulated, so that citizens do not disregard the law.

“Civil society must speak out and condemn this brutality. Such inhumane treatment of animals is harmful and dangerous to the country’s image, as well as public safety,” says a statement signed by Vakhtang Mamaladze, Chairman of the Animal protection organization, Tamar Achkashvila from the Animal Rights Advocacy Centre and the injured party.
Cohabitation is Over...What is Next?

Continued from p. 2...

 Mamuka Areshidze believes that the Prime Minister should understand all the issues related to government. He believes Ghariabashvili did the right thing in involving the entire cabinet in the debate, asking them for answers to specific questions, but in future the head of government must be competent in all matters.

United National Movement members maintained that Gharibashvili may not have a future as Prime Minister and accused him of incompetence. They maintain that Ivanishvili will still influence the conduct of politics in the country. Gior-
gy Vashadze, the former Deputy Minister of Justice, said that he did not see asymptolism for improving the economy and providing jobs in his government’s programme. “I did not see a po-
itical leader or manager. I saw only incompetence and evasion of questions,” said Vashadze. He maintained that it is a big problem that Ivanishvili is still standing behind the new government but avoiding taking any political responsibility by refus-
ing to be an official member of it himself. Another member of the UNM, Director General of Rustavi 2 TV, Nika Girarmania, wrote on his Facebook page that very hard years await the Geor-
gian Dream. “the National Movement conducted a master-
class in parliament. It is obvi-
ous that the Georgian Dream will have to work with the most qualified and effective opposi-
tion in Georgian history. Very hard years are ahead for the GD,” Girarmania wrote.

On November 21 former Prime Minister Ivanishvili de-
cided to respond to accusations that he will be dictating to the government from behind the scenes by publishing an open letter entitled “Post Scriptum”. In this message to the people of Georgia the former PM said that he was not leaving politics be-
cause he is running away from responsibility or afraid of some-
thing. “The biggest nonsense as-
crited to me is that I am suppos-
edly afraid, and want to run away from responsibility. I could per-
haps be afraid of losing my po-
osition, but as I am voluntarily renouncing it what kind of fear can be guided by good intentions alone.

The resignation of the former Prime Minister has aroused more comment than the appointment of the new one. Kakha Gogolashvili claims that such a rich man giving political advice creates an awkward situ-
ation. Bidzina Ivanishvili could become a George Soros for Geor-
gia, but he needs to conduct an unbiased policy and take an un-
baised attitude towards the civil sector to do this. However Vaja Beridze believes Ivanishvili will keep his promise and really leave the new government to work independently. “The dic-
tatorship of a person with no position from behind the scenes has nothing in common with de-
ocracy. Till now Ivanishvili has been an absolute leader, who had gained the absolute trust of the population, and there was no lack democracy in this, but from now on he will lose this right to rule. However I believe he will do as he said and let the government run the country,” Beridze said.

On November 24 Ivanishvili did indeed announce his retire-
ment from politics, as he had repeatedly promised. During a congress of the Georgian Dream, he summarised the results of his tenure and gave instructions to his successor Irakli Gharibashvili. He assured his audience that the era of Saakashvili was over and that the “Nationals” would never have the opportunity to return to power as he had done every-
time to ensure this. He said he had created a coalition which should never relax its efforts as it is obliged to prove to the people every day that it deserves to govern the country. Ivanishvili said that the country now stood on three pillars: the young and talented Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili, an outstanding politician of the modern era, David Usupashvili as parliament speaker and Giorgi Margvelash-
vili, who, Ivanishvili stated, will be the president of all the peo-
ple, not just a small group who are close to the centre of power. He said that the main thing is that his successors should not feel dizzy with power - they must remember that their status does not give them advantages over other members of the ruling co-
alition.

Ivanishvili’s farewell cere-
mony was surprisingly modest, last-
ing only half an hour, though several hundred party members gathered from the various regions of Georgia to attend it. The event was devoid of pomp and was conducted according to a pre-
written script.

Irakli Gharibashvili is now the most powerful man in Georgia, according to the Constitution, as powers have been taken away from the President and given to the Prime Minister, who unlike his predecessors will be the Head of Government. His office is on the 12th floor of the State Chan-
cellery. President Margvelash-
vili’s office is on the tenth floor of the same building.

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By TAKOAGARASHVILI, GT

Writing this article is a tough call. Considering who the Georgian Times’ readers are, this topic is the most difficult one to write about. It’s hard for me to write about the darkest years in Georgia for people who witnessed not lived through them. The nineties were dark, hungry, cold, dangerous and scary in Georgia. Yet life went on. There was no generation this era didn’t touch to the core. It was tough for the entire nation. The older generation saw their long peacefully lived and built lives breaking down, adults were scared for their children who they had to raise in chaos, and teenagers had to form and shape their personality in a constant riot, overcome the perspective of a hopeless future and pave a way through it. Georgians of any age who lived through those years are damaged in a deep and thorough way. Time may have passed, dark times may have gone, but the damage is still there, somewhere in the background yet deep and stable.

“In Bloom” had me jumping right back to those times. I was one of those teenage kids. My schoolmates were boys with guns, my friends got kidnapped and married at a bizarrely early age, we were a survivor generation. I must say it has a beautifully written script by Nana Ekvtimishvili, precisely picked words, dialogues and more importantly attitudes. This film is the distinctly painted picture of the Georgian nineties: raw, harsh, dark and sad. It is a brilliant piece by directors Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Gross, with exquisite cinematography by Oleg Mutu.

Everything in this movie screams the authentic spirit of the time: the institution of friendship, relationships, school and parenthood; most importantly, the cautiously picked colours make this spirit touch you from within and inject the damage of the nineties right into your essence. “The introverted Eka (Lika Bablani) lives in a book-filled apartment with her demanding boy-crazy elder sister and her preoccupied single parent mother; precocious Natia (Mariam Bokeria) lives in the chaotic atmosphere of a cramped apartment with her extended working-class family dominated by her alcoholic father. But like most schoolgirls, Eka and Natia are far more concerned with life outside – classroom gossip, music, exercising their budding sexual power over the local boys” (Palace Films). The film has travelled the world. It has been a winner at some of the A list festivals: the AFI Fest, the ART Film Festival, the Berlin International Film Festival, the Hong Kong International Film Festival, the Montreal Festival of New Cinema, the Paris Cinema, the Prix Europa, the Sarajevo Film Festival, Wushan Go East and others. The film is also the Georgian entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 86th Academy Awards.

I have managed to get hold of Mariam Bokeria, its star, and interview her. I must say that meeting her was quite surprising, as I didn’t think you could find teenage girls like her nowadays: polite and humble, tactful and appropriate, cheerful and alive, easy and absolutely beautiful. She is a sweet and talented little sunshine child, full of dreams yet determination.

When did you get into the entertainment industry?

I started singing when I was 4. I participated in different shows and concerts. Later on I was in the music video by the Georgian boy band “Kachi’s Bichebi”, and then came the film by Nika Machaidze, “The Game” and finally “In Bloom”.

How tough was the casting?

It was tough. The competition was huge. Almost the entire school was there, but I won. I did my best and I got the part. I was extremely happy. Tell me about the shooting.

It was hard and long. It took a lot of time and energy to make the movie. We had the longest shooting days. The time “In Bloom” is set in was long before you were born. How did it make you feel to embody the story of a girl living in the darkest years? I have heard a lot about those times. Yet doing this part somehow turned these stories into my everyday reality and drifted me closer to them. I could feel all the heaviness people went through. This film made me a part of it, now I understand much more clearly all the impact of the scary nineties.

How big is the difference between the institutions of friendship now and then?

It is very different indeed now. Today people are very accessible through several portals. It is not difficult for us to reach out to each other, moreover reaching out has turned into a habit rather than a gesture towards somebody. But I think like the way it was then: when there was no cyberspace or cell phones. That made human relationships deeper and more valuable. It seems people appreciated attention more because it required quite a lot of effort.

How about boys and girls?

How different are the love gestures now?

I can’t say much about this, I’m not very experienced, but I do have a friend who keeps a knife at home which was given to her by her boyfriend for the same purpose as in the movie. He wants her to be protected. Is she using it as protection?

My mother has always been very supportive about it. She has always embraced my passion. My dad has no problem with it either, since he knows this is temporary.

How is this temporary?

It is very different.

The entertainment industry is very harsh. Did you come across ‘friends’ on the set?

Luckily, no. Lika and I are friends; we have spent so much time together. It was great having her around all day long on the set and while travelling the festivals with the film. Usually Georgian parents are not thrilled to give their kids to the entertainment industry. Was this so in your case?

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Can’t you combine your passion with full time business?

I am going to major in Business Management. Can’t you combine your passion with full time business?

Hopefully I will be able to. If I receive interesting offers I will be more than willing to go after them while my main occupation is business.

I wish Mariam all the best with her goals and dreams. Considering the unreadiness of human nature she may change as time goes by, but one thing I know is that this little, talented, smart, glowing, bright, teenage ‘mermaid’ contains enough drive and determination to achieve whatever she wants.

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My mother has always been very supportive about it. She has always embraced my passion. My dad has no problem with it either, since he knows this is temporary. Why is this temporary?

No, of course not! She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection. She's using it as protection.
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**David Gvinianidze: Melody Of The Heart**

By: DANARA KURMANOVA, KAZAKHSTAN

"If the heart sings, there is no need for words!" - David Gvinianidze finishes every concert of his "Three Baritones" world tour with these words from "Smile", by Muslim Magomaev. In principle, we could end this article with this phrase too. Because during Gvinianidze's performances the hearts of the audience sing - it is just impossible to describe the atmosphere in the hall any differently!

TIMELESS MASTERPIECE

David Gvinianidze has dedicated performances in the USA, the UK, Italy, Germany, the Baltic States, Israel, Cyprus, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine to the memory of outstanding artiste Muslim Magomaev. Even the name of the tour was taken from the singer's autobiograph "My Love is Melody". You can find fans of Magomaev in every corner of the world, so it is small wonder that there are no empty seats at Gvinianidze's concerts. 

"But there is always one very interesting detail about the performances in honour of Muslim," says Anna Panisheva, a cultural observer and journalist. "At the beginning the public is skeptical and wary, because performing Magomaev's songs is a hard task, as people will compare what they hear with the original.

"But for David Gvinianidze and his colleagues Sergey Plyusnin and Yuri Zaltsman this tour is a tribute to the memory of great singer. Therefore, each of them performs the repertoire of Magomaev in his own way, how to feel and perceive the songs. All the soloists of the Bolshoi Theatre, and Zaltsman particularly, sing Russian folk songs very well, and Plyusnin, also from the Bolshoi, is a master of impersonation. At every concert he wins over the audience by performing Di Laila as Magomaev himself did. To enhance the effect he dim the lights, and this implople to think: the King of Baritones is back! It is his amazing similari- ty with the artiste which helped Plyusnin win 1st place at the International Muslim Magomaev Contest last year.

"Then, after all this, the organizer of the tour himself, David Gvinianidze, appears," Anna Panisheva tells us. "This is the principal adornment of the concert, because he presents the creations of Magomaev from an absolutely different angle. This is a distinctive feature of Gvinianidze - his terrific ability to perform Magomaev in his own individual way, but his approach does not spoil it. Conversely, it even beautifies it. Most classical singers adopt a traditional style, but Gvinianidze is not afraid of wearing bright costumes or joking with the audience. He not only danc- es during the pop songs but maintains contact with the au- dience whilst performing clas- sic arias. "I understand that not all people can understand opera," he explains, "and that is why I play 3,000 dollars to see tickets cost less than tickets cost. While in provincial Kazakstan tickets cost less than 30 dollars, in Italy you have to pay 5,000 dollars to see such concerts. In the most fa- mous theatres in the world, ticket prices start from 10,000.

"I think this is the wrong approach to culture", Gvin- anidze explains. "Art must serve the people, but in the reality only well-heeled peo- ple can attend such events. So my team and I counter this.

"Art is not for everyone, our fund has existed for 10 years and has made its name. The world knows us, as we give pop concert pro- grammes. The most popular ones are duels between sing- ers, and shows like How Op- era Stars Joke, A Big Date with Opera. The stars are duels between sing- ers, and shows like How Opera Stars Joke, A Big Date with Opera, etcetera. Today, in antici- pation of the New Year, the producers have asked us to put our fund has existed for 10 years and has made its name. The world knows us, as we give about 80 concert pro- grammes. The most popular ones are duels between sing- ers, and shows like How Op- era Stars Joke, A Big Date with Opera, etcetera. Today, in antici- pation of the New Year, the producers have asked us to put

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INSTEAD OF P.S. OR ALL OR NOTHING

Gvinianidze does not plan to dwell on his achievements.

"When I decided to go to Moscow my friend told me: "You should conquer all your doubts, otherwise they will eat you up." He smiles, "Fortunately Moscow did not eat me up - I took a risk and changed my life successfully. Now this is my credo: everyone must try and progress and strive for glory. Missakes are setbacks only steel us. I understood that, and this knowledge helped me a lot. This is why our fund has existed for 10 years and has made its name. The world knows us, as we give about 80 concert pro- grammes. The most popular ones are duels between sing- ers, and shows like How Op- era Stars Joke, A Big Date with Opera, etcetera. Today, in antici- pation of the New Year, the producers have asked us to put our Christmas Cocktail, or Drunk Concert. Furthermore, this coming summer Gvinianidze, with the help of the Adjara government, will host the Batumi Interna- tional Opera Festival. "I have dreamt of doing something like this in Georgia," he says. "I am very glad of all. Only art is able to rec- oncile us and to show us that, firstly, we are all human.

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