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#stayhome Stay home, Stay safe #staysafe

EU issues statement on epidemic consequences to vulnerable groups

BY MESSENGER STAFF

The Delegation of the European Union to Georgia published statements about gender equality and protecting vulnerable groups in Georgia. The EU welcomes the crisis communication action plan adopted by the government of Georgia which intends to raise awareness about the available assistance and state services in order to ease the hardship that families, individuals, and communities are experiencing.

The EU notes that gender equality remains one of the fundamental principles and core values of the EU and stresses that quarantine, isolation and enclosed financial stress imply a clear risk for continued and increased gender-based and domestic violence in all parts of society.

Special attention also needs to be paid to all children, ensuring their safety and equal access to health and educational opportunities. At the same time, no efforts should be spared to ensure that, in this challenging time, people with disabilities are granted proper medical care and education, economic support, and protection from any possible discrimination.

"It is positive that support services, such as the 112 line and shelters remain available to victims of gender based and



The European Union.

domestic violence with adjustments made to the crisis situation. Further measures, such as the awareness-raising of citizens of their fundamental human rights and obligations, as well as the building of trust in state support and effective responses to cases of violence, are also welcomed," reads the statement.

The statement also stresses the importance of the response of the Human Rights Council and Inter-agency Commission on

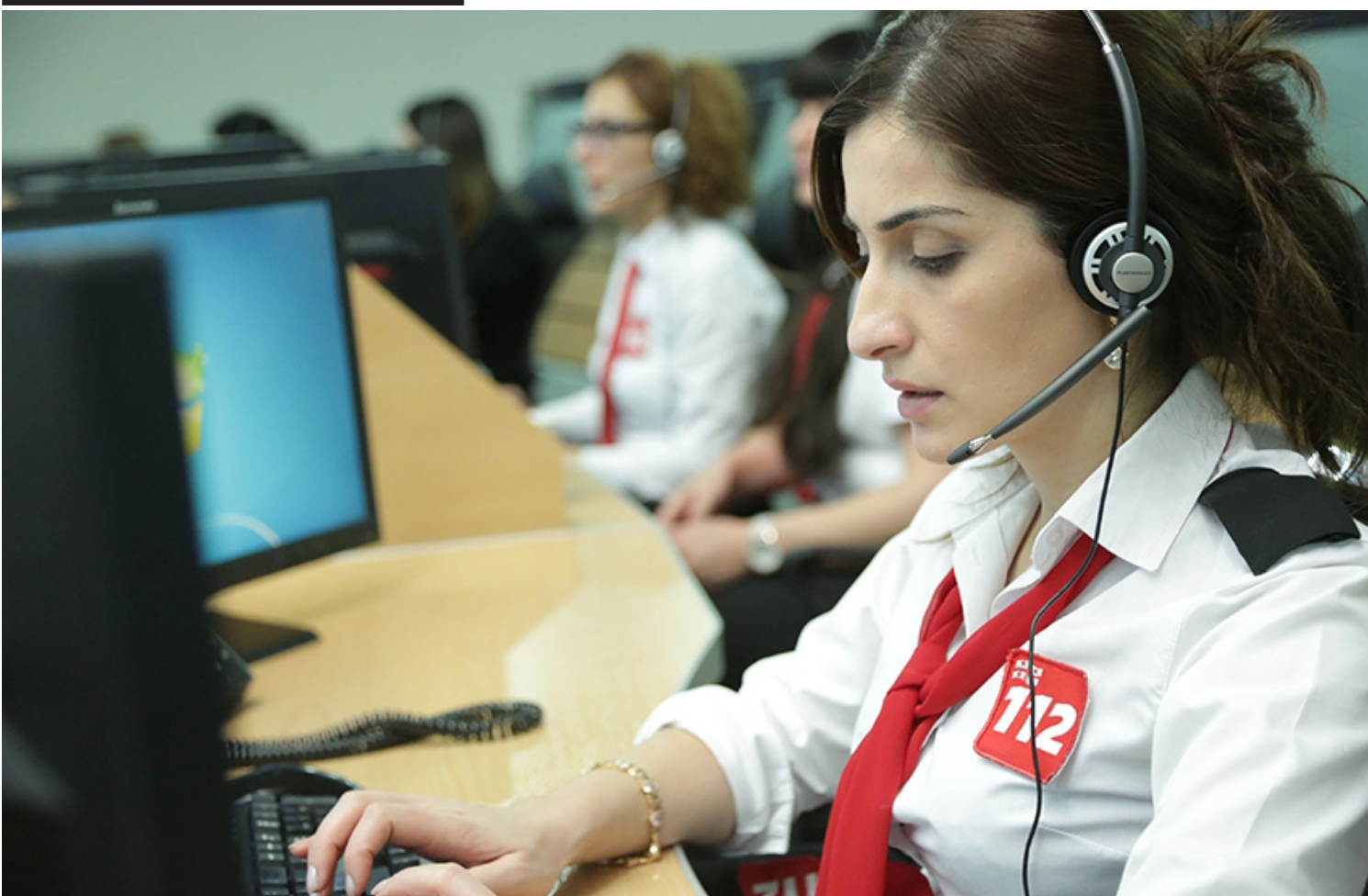
Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in terms of fighting against the crisis.

"The response by the Human Rights Council, including its Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, has been - and continues to be - of great importance for Georgia's handling of this crisis. As the authorities and the private sector continue to adopt measures and strategies to fight against COVID-19, a clear gender analysis will be crucial to Georgia's successful handling of one of the negative key side effects of this pandemic."

According to the statement, the negative impact of the pandemic is especially tough for vulnerable people. The immediate and necessary measures adopted to address the health and economic challenges should not leave anyone behind, including those already living below the poverty line, internally displaced persons and persons with disabilities, victims of gender-based and domestic violence, and people and children living on the streets.

The EU and its Member States are supporting the government and a number of state and civil society organisations in their actions to help those most affected by the pandemic. Grants provided to civil society organisations, including through the so-called Rapid Reaction Mechanism, allow them to provide immediate support to vulnerable groups.

The EU highlights the heavy burden many women are taking on during this crisis, working at the frontline in the sectors mostly challenged by the virus, such as healthcare and social services. At the same time, they are also expected to take care of their families when childcare facilities, schools and sufficient care services for the elderly and disabled are not available.



"It is positive that support services, such as the 112 line and shelters remain available to victims of gender-based and domestic violence with adjustments made to the crisis situation," reads the statement

Prolonged state of emergency in Georgia

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The main event of the past week is the Parliament's April 22nd sitting, which extended the state of emergency until May 22nd. At the same time, however, it became clear that the anti-epidemic unity of government and opposition no longer existed. However, by demonstrating this unity, the parliament declared a state of emergency. In parallel to this, the difficulties caused by the state of emergency are causing growing dissatisfaction among the population, which was followed by a mass protest rally in Marneuli.

On April 22nd, the Georgian Parliament approved by 97 votes to 10 a resolution on the government's request to extend the state of emergency for one month. Georgian Dream has enough votes for this, but the nature of the relationship between the government and the opposition is worrying. Opposition groups called for an end to the state of emergency only if the government presented a specific anti-crisis plan and a budget for the crisis. He received a response from the authorities that the

government's anti-crisis plan would be approved two days later, on April 24th. The opposition was also outraged that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health did not attend the April 22nd meeting.

The opposition demanded that the situation be resolved, questioning the need for a number of emergency restrictions, as well as its vision of what anti-crisis measures should look like. Authorities avoided this, generally calling the opposition's statements populist and not taking them seriously. The United National Movement and European Georgia have again been declared enemies of the country by the government. The main argument for continuing the state of emergency is that the restrictions have worked well, and that the epidemic has not been widespread for two or three weeks now, when we are entering the 'most active peak phase' of the epidemic.

Most citizens are frightened by the impending famine more than the virus. The majority of Georgia's population depends on daily income. The one-month cessation of activities has exhausted all available resources,

and the government has not received any tangible material assistance, nor do they promise to do so in the future. On April 22nd, when the state of emergency was extended for one month in Parliament, residents of several villages in Marneuli municipality held a mass protest and demanded the lifting of existing restrictions. Without being able to sell fruits and vegetables, they are left without income. Interestingly, the protesters were chanting the name of the third president, Mikheil Saakashvili. Authorities immediately announced the rally to be organized by the United National Movement. Even if the rally were to be organized by the UNM, the problem is solved by identifying this. Other regions are also affected by the drawbacks of the state of emergency and such dissatisfaction could erupt in different parts of the country. Another reason for the escalation of the conflict between the opposition and the government was the fire that broke out on April 19th in Mikheil Saakashvili's presidential library while going live on Facebook. It turned out that the person, named Badri

Katamadze, is a well-known dissident of the opposition rallies, who physically abused Nika Gvaramia and destroyed Malkhaz Machalishvili's tent. The opposition accused the government of protecting Katamadze and of deliberately using him. For example, MP Tina Bokuchava said that "Badri Katamadze is an agent of the SSS (State Security Service) and that 'he enjoys complete inviolability.'" On April 19th, when the Saakashvili Library caught fire, Georgia's third president in Ukraine came up with another initiative - offering the Georgian government the status of a 'temporary official' and promising to mobilize several billion dollars in aid to the country. Authorities opposed the protest with all available police forces, special services and the army. It became known for the second time that Mikheil Saakashvili would become Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister, and one of the tasks he would be assigned was to mobilise funds from international organisations for Ukraine. In addition, and most importantly, they expect reforms from him. Saakashvili's returning to active politics will be an addi-

tional headache for the Georgian government, and not only that, it will be an uncomfortable surprise for Putin as well.

The prolongation of the state of emergency until May 22nd was followed by concerns from the opposition that the government had prevented the adoption of previously agreed constitutional amendments under the pretext of an epidemic. Authorities are trying to dispel such suspicions.

According to President Salome Zurbashvili, everything is being done to ensure that the extension of the state of emergency does not affect the timely adoption of constitutional amendments and the election calendar. Gia Volski, the vice-speaker of the parliament, also gave specific dates for the constitutional changes to the journalists: "We are not going to postpone the discussion of the constitutional amendments. We hope that we will return to this issue in June, we will finish the discussion in the first half of July and the elections will be held in October." Georgia is entering the peak of the epidemic and the future regarding the restrictions is still uncertain.

(Translated by Mariam Mchedlidze)

Georgia may start sending patients home for treatment



First case of home treatment in Georgia.

Centers for Disease Control, explained a few days ago, the patient lives with his son, who has already been infected with the virus and has recovered. Other details of how the patient is treated at home, by whom and

by what criteria, however, are unknown.

"So far, the country has the resources and, accordingly, we are treating mild forms of the virus in the hospital," stated Imnadze.

All patients are treated at the hospital. The average wait infected people have to endure is as long as 16-18 days, but some patients take over 31 days to recover fully.

Infectious diseases specialist, Maia Butsashvili, thinks that treatment at clinics for mild forms of the virus is, on one hand, a waste of large resources and, on the other hand, overwhelming for the patients themselves.

Tamta Bliadze, a family doctor at Evex Clinics, believes that if the patient's condition allows it, home treatment can be much more comfortable.



Maia Butsashvili advises the Ministry of Health to try and alleviate the stress caused by the issue of treatment.

Weather

Tuesday, April 28

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 18°C

Night Clear

Low: 6°C

Wednesday, April 29

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 17°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 9°C

BY ANASTASIA SOKHADZE

As for today, there is only one patient in the country who is treated at home. As Paata Imnadze, Deputy Head of the

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Liberty bank continues paying pensions from bank's own resources



Vasil Khodeli, Chief executive officer of Liberty bank stresses the necessity of young people's involvement in the programme to help inform the elderly.



Liberty bank.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Chief executive officer of Liberty bank, Vasil Khodeli announced about the project, which started in March, and intends transferring ₾100 million of bank's own recourse to be used for giving out pensions in advance to the 70+ age citizens, who are considered to be in the highest risk group.

As the press release, published on the official web page of Liberty bank, informs, pensions will be transferred in advance on April 27th to the social cards of recipients of age 70 and over. Using the card will be able instantly.

Pensioners from age 60 to 70 will also receive their pensions ahead of time with the support of the government of Georgia. The exact date of transferring will be determined in a few days.

The press release states that pensioners prefer using cash over cards, which according to the recommendations of the National Center of Disease Control, constitutes a danger of spreading the virus. Therefore, to avoid this, pensioners of all ages will be able to withdraw cash gradually, according to the schedule elaborated by the bank, which is visible on especially developed platform myliberty.ge.

The Minister of Economy thanks Georgian Post



GEORGIAN POST

“Georgian Post”

By MESSENGER STAFF

The Minister of the Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Natia Turnava thanked the employees of Georgian Post for standing by the sides of citizens of Georgia during the harsh epidemic situation. In consequence of the existing situation, Georgian Post actively provides senior citizens with masks and medicines.

Turnava highlighted the Georgian Post's high civic responsibility, managing to implement safety measures to prevent spreading the virus.

“The company delivers mails without direct contact with the addressee, which is very reasonable and significant in the pro-

cess of preventing the virus from spreading further. I would like to thank the workers of the Georgian Post, for the loyalty they express during this critical time,” said Turnava

Couriers also deliver Glucometer strips and masks to 41,000 underaged individuals with sugar diabetes.

Georgian Post successfully executed disinfection of the brunches and service centers and equipped the workers with protective face shields, masks, disposable gloves, and disinfectants.

As Turnava noted, up to 1,500 employees of Georgian Post work with doubled effort to provide the citizens with the services.



The Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Natia Turnava

Tado Cholokashvili - Country of Liquid Sun



Tado Cholokashvili

Karabulakhi means “Black Spring”... According to the legend, the enemy had invaded Kakheti. The Prince, together with his retinue, was fortified in one of the castles. There was a spring near the castle. Infuriated, the Prince cursed the enemy - may this spring turn into the plague for you! A miracle happened! The curse came true and the spring spread plague. Finally, the overtaken enemy retreated and the village was saved from devastation. Later, the place was called Karabulakhi in memory of this incident. Now, it is called Khashmi.

“Karabulakhi - this wealthy estate was granted to one of the descendants of Saint Bidzina Cholokashvili in the seventeenth century by the King of Kakheti, David Imam Khuli-Khan. The Cholokashvili family comes from Kakheti and are referred to as not merely princes, but rulers, according to the ancient documents,” writes Platon Ioseliani. Georgia remembers a great deal of enemies as well as a great deal of friends. The Cholokashvilis had accompanied the Georgian

Kings in days of sorrow and during their feasts. They had defended Kakheti numerous times and the dignity of the whole Georgia has come at the expense of their own blood. Time passed, century after century came and went and then the era of great revolutions-the twentieth century-arrived. Once again, the enemy came to Kharabulakhi and this time they ravaged the village “for the good of the people.” The Prince might have cursed the enemy again. A miracle might have happened once more and the Prince’s curse might have come true. He was merciful to the enemy because they were neither Persians nor Mongols but his compatriots, born on his land and raised at his court. Tado Cholokashvili is said to have come out on the balcony and blessed the intruders instead of cursing them.

Tado Cholokashvili’s large yard was shadowed by huge walnut and linden trees and the house was decorated with a large balcony. Peasants from Khashmi used to take their rest under the balcony as the shade



Tado’s wife Mako Jorjadze

it gave made it the coolest place in the village. There is a court church in the yard, St-Nicholas church. Only family members were baptised and wedded there. For the Cholokashvilis, this also included their serfs.

Melita Cholokashvili had her wedding there. The beautiful Melita was the goddaughter of the great Ilia Chavchavadze and the muse of Titsian Tabidze. Giorgi Amilakhvari was the groomsman at this wedding. The river was flooded that very day but the guests were not fearful of the rising waters with everyone attending their wedding party. Melita was especially beautiful on that day.

A huge feast was held in the Cholokashvili’s wine cellar which was quite famous throughout Kakheti and where wine was chilled naturally by underground springs. Tado Cholokashvili had a unique collection of wines. His father, Nikoloz, had even been awarded with a diploma from the Tsar for making the best wines.

The roads were blocked but Tado somehow managed to get to Tbilisi where he had already sent his wife and children. The Cholokashvilis returned to Kharabulakhi only in 1924. Their house and estate had been looted and devastated but they did not give up and began to reconstruct their residence. Soon after, collectivisation began. Every morning the village was awakened by flares. The vineyards were being unified, as well as cornfields, and everything was to be common, with nothing individual. The Cholokashvili’s cattle was seized and taken to the village but a rather strange had happened when the next day, the cattle

was horrific. The hand-copied evangel was burned and icons and crosses were broken. Tado’s daughter Elene showed agility and managed to hide the broken cross under her dress which saved it from destruction.

The Cholokashvili’s estate was confiscated and they were evicted from their own house. Their well-groomed estate was ravaged, the walnut and linden trees were cut, the wall was destroyed, the library was burned and even the roof of the house was destroyed.

Tado Cholokashvili’s family, all eleven members, deprived of all rights, settled in Tbilisi in one room at the home of his aunt.



Tado’s daughter, Melita Cholokashvili with Titsian Tabidze

