

## Politics

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In the past over 100,000 people have taken part in large scale Europe Day celebrations

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BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The president of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky, has now officially signed a decree appointing the ex-president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili as the head of Ukraine's National Reform Council. For the last few weeks, the leaders of Ukraine were talking about appointing Saakashvili at one of the high positions in the country. From the very beginning, the government of Georgia was against it and were saying that this could hurt the relations between the two countries.

However, according to Zelensky, Ukraine is a democratic country and it is not the job of other countries to decide the political processes in the country. Zelensky has said that he hopes that Saakashvili can give 'impetus to the Council and can make important changes' in Ukraine.

Initially, Saakashvili was considered for the position of the Vice Prime Minister for reforms, however, the position was withdrawn later. Leaders of Georgia, including the PM and the President, have said that this decision can affect the re-

## #stayhome Stay home, Stay safe #staysafe

# Ex-president Saakashvili appointed as head of Ukraine's Reform Council, Georgian government reacts



Initially, Saakashvili was going to be appointed at a position of Vice PM for reforms

lations between the two countries because of the charges that are against Saakashvili in Georgia right now.

According to Georgian Foreign Minister Davit Zalkaliani, Georgia is not planning to cut off the relations between Ukraine and Georgia, but the appoint-

ment of Mikheil Saakashvili to Ukraine raises questions, which is why Georgian Ambassador to Ukraine Teimuraz Sharashenidze will be summoned for consultations in Tbilisi.

According to the Minister, the reduction of Mikheil Saakashvili's initial posi-

tion and his appointment to the post of Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Reform Council shows the skeptical attitude of the Ukrainian political spectrum, including the parliamentary majority.

According to Davit Zalkaliani, the participation of the Georgian Ambassador to Ukraine, among other issues, should determine what actions are needed to prevent the negative effect on the Georgian-Ukrainian relations, including joint Euro-Atlantic efforts.

During a visit to the Luhansk region, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky told reporters that it was a mistake to summon Georgia's Ambassador to Tbilisi for a consultation on the appointment of Mikheil Saakashvili to the National Reform Council.

Zelensky said that Ukraine has excellent relations with Georgia and the Georgian people. "Despite everything, we will not call our Ambassador to Ukraine for consultations, because the relations between the two countries are bigger than the leadership of any country," the Ukrainian president said.

Giorgi Gakharia, the Prime Minister of Georgia, said that the only reason why the government decided to summon the Ambassador is that the government is trying to find ways to save the relations between the countries.



Leaders of Georgia say that this decision can have negative effect on relations between Georgia and Ukraine

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# EU and Georgia celebrate the Europe Day



Ambassador of EU to Georgia, H.E. Carl Hartzell issued a special statement

On 9<sup>th</sup> May the European Union and its member states mark Europe Day, which commemorates the historic 1950 Schuman declaration. Today, with 27 Member States and almost 446 million people, the EU marks the 70th anniversary of this declaration. The theme of 2020 Europe Day is Stronger Together, highlighting the need for solidarity particularly in the face of the Covid-19 crisis.

To mark 9 May, Europe Day EU Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzell has issued a statement. The Ambassador talked about the idea behind EU and the his-

story of its success. "Unfortunately, this year we cannot mark Europe Day together, as in previous years, because of the pandemic. Georgia has in many respects done better than others in tackling this challenge – thanks to strong political resolve, the support of a truly professional healthcare team and a dedicated population. Still, we recognize the hardships currently experienced by so many Georgians, whether for health or economic reasons. My thoughts go out to all those who are suffering today," noted H.E. Hartzell.

Historically, cooperation and solidarity between the EU member states has resulted in over 60 years of unprecedented peace and prosperity on the European continent. In this current crisis, this solidarity is equally crucial and is what drove the EU and its Member States to quickly organize and provide each other hospital beds or announce EU wide financial support measures. This solidarity also spreads beyond the borders of the European Union and to key partners. In the past weeks, the EU has committed almost 1.5 billion GEL to help manage the crisis

in Georgia. These funds will go to medical equipment, support to vulnerable groups most impacted by the crisis, and financial assistance for economic recovery. This cooperation is another step in the very close relationship between the EU and Georgia. The EU remains Georgia's main donor, Georgia businesses have received access to the EU market, and over 500,000 Georgians have travelled without a visa free to Schengen countries. More EU programmes are active in Georgia than ever before, with over 7000 students have taken part in university exchanges, or over 40,000 Georgian business having received support from the EU. (Source: EU)



Europe Day celebrated in Georgia in 2019. Photo: European Union

## Ex-president Saakashvili appointed as head of Ukraine's Reform Council, Georgian government reacts

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According to him, summoning the Ambassador does not mean questioning the strategic partnership or diplomatic relations with Ukraine, it is an attempt not to jeopardize the relations between the two countries.

Saakashvili recently got his Ukrainian citizenship back, after Zelensky's coming into power. Mikheil Saakashvili received Ukrainian citizenship in 2015, when he was appointed as the governor of the Odessa region. In July 2017, after Saakashvili created an opposition party called the Movement of New Forces, Poroshenko issued a decree that stripped Saakashvili of his Ukrainian citizenship. In 2018, Saakashvili was deported from Ukraine.



Zelensky said that Ukraine has excellent relations with Georgia.

### Weather

Monday, May 11

Day ☀️ Clear  
High: 20°C

Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 8°C

Tuesday, May 12

Day ☀️ Clear  
High: 23°C

Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 11°C

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## Economy Minister Natia Turnava presents anti-crisis plan to relaunch tourism

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The administration of the Government of Georgia held a presentation of the anti-crisis plan for the implementation of tourism at the meeting of the Economic Group within the framework of the Inter-Agency Coordination Council headed by the Prime Minister.

The plan includes targeted assistance to the tourism sector in the third phase and phases of the sector's implementation. Natia Turnava, the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, spoke in detail about the new stage of the sector's assistance within the framework of the anti-crisis plan to launch tourism.

According to the plan, a new phase of assistance to the tourism sector will be launched in May 2020, according to which the accommodation facilities will be exempted from the 2020 prop-

erty tax, and by the end of 2020 the income tax will be deferred.

At the same time, the loan will be subsidized for 6 months if their turnover does not exceed 20 million GEL, the state will subsidize 80% of the interest expense of the first 5 million GEL on such facilities.

In addition, the amount of co-payment for the accommodation of tourist facilities will be subsidized, as well as the introduction and implementation of UNWTO recommendations. As for food outlets, they will be exempt from the 2020 property tax, the income tax will be deferred until the end of the year, they will be able to use the credit-guarantee scheme and the government will help them implement and implement UNWTO recommendations.

The anti-crisis plans to relaunch tourism also provide benefits for travel companies and guides. In particular, they will



The presentation of the plan was held by the government's administration

be exempt from property tax in 2020, income tax will be deferred until the end of 2020, the bank

guarantee interest will be subsidized for 6 months, as well as the amount of co-participation in tourism exhibitions will be subsidized, in addition, other types of assistances will also be applied.

The budget for the third phase of the anti-crisis plan to launch tourism will total ₾200 million. In addition to the tax benefits, ₾60 million will be spent from the state budget to subsidize hotel loans and about 3,000 hotels will benefit from this support, and it is also planned to allocate ₾5 million to support travel companies and guides.

According to the Minister, due to the effective management of the epidemiological situation, Georgia is considering opening a new tourist season with a new competitive advantage as a safe destination.

According to the plan, the activation of tourism will be carried out in three stages.

In the first stage of preparation, security standards will be introduced in the industry, private sector promotion in their implementation, creation of safe corridors between countries, conducting an international marketing campaign with the slogan "Georgia - a safe destination" and others.

The second phase, which will begin on June 15<sup>th</sup>, aims to activate domestic tourism and create safe tourist zones.

In the third stage - from July 1<sup>st</sup>, international tourism will be launched. In particular, the opening of land and air borders in accordance with safe corridors and the gradual restoration of flights.



Turnava said that opening the borders is planned for July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Covid-19 updates in Georgia: 10 dead, 309 recovered



There are more than 630 reported cases in Georgia.

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

Over the last few days, the number of new cases of the Coronavirus has reduced in Georgia. As of now, the number of people cases reported in Georgia is 635, out of which, 309 have already recovered.

However, around the world, the number of confirmed cases of the Coronavirus is growing

every day. As of now, there are already more than 4 million confirmed cases of the Coronavirus, out of which more than 280,000 have died.

Europe and the US are actively participating to help Georgia overcome the challenges that came with the new Coronavirus. On May 7<sup>th</sup>, the EU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a

grant program amounting to over €2.5 million. The aim of the initiative is to boost rural entrepreneurship, create sustainable jobs, improve the management of natural resources and promote climate action.

This assistance will help Georgia's rural regions respond to the economic and social challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program will be implemented in cooperation with the Agriculture and Rural Development Agency of the Georgian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

The grants will be delivered in eight municipalities (Akhalkalaki, Borjomi, Dedoplistskaro, Kazbegi, Keda, Khulo, Lagodekhi and Tetrtskaro) where the UNDP and the EU are working together to promote livelihoods outside agriculture. Applicants can be based elsewhere in Georgia, but they will need to show a connection with the targeted municipi-

palities.

According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Davit Zalkaliani, the number of citizens who returned to Georgia with the support of the state in the conditions of the spread of the Covid-19 has exceeded 10,000 according to today's data. According to the minister, the return of citizens in an organized manner takes place by air, land and sea. 2828 people with special needs are among the citizens who have returned to their homeland.

Zalkaniani stated at the brief-

ing that according to the plan set by the Coordinating Council, the total of 61 special flights were operated in cooperation with the Georgian Airlines.

According to Davit Zalkaliani, the gradual return of citizens will continue in the future, but if the regular flights are resumed, they may return to their homeland on regular flights.

At the moment, according to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the schedule of special flights is working until May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The first special operation was carried out on March 10<sup>th</sup> in Rome.



Around the world, the number of people infected by the Coronavirus is more than 4 million.

# Nikoloz Eristavi - Country of Liquid Sun



Портрет Николоза Эристави работы Тамары Лемпицки | Portrait of Nikoloz Eristavi by Tamara Lampicksa

The Italian vodka, Eristoff which is made by the Martini and Rossi company in Passione near Turin, is connected by its history to the name of a Georgian Prince, Nikoloz Eristavi, and is not just the first Georgian vodka so registered but one of the first classic vodkas is a first amongst classic Georgian vodkas as well as amongst an spirit beverages officially, in general registered in Europe.

Eristavi is a noble family name in all regions of Georgia which originated from the time of local governors. This title was granted by King Parnavaz in 320 to the rulers of the regions of Georgia who were the descendants of nobles.

The Enstavi family had been settled in Kartli. From 1800, after the annexation of Kartli by Russia they were oppressed and

moved to Imereti in 1803. The head of the family, Ivane Eristavl, as a noble with a hostile attitude towards Empire, was exiled to St-Petersburg in 1804, being forced to leave his home together with his family members who were distinguished to the Empire in a loyal way remained in Imereti.

In 1810, Imereti became Russia's dependent and joined the Empire in 1857, Eristavi's son, the young officer, Konstantine Eristavi, was awarded the title of Prince. In 1875, Konstantine had a son, Aleksandre, who was born in Kutaisi and who finished the Kutaisi Classic Gymnasium and continued studies at the Cadets' School of Kazaks of Stavropol Cavalry. In 1893-1914, the younger Eristavi served in the Kazak's Army and was seriously

wounded during World War I. For his devotion to the Tsar as well as for his bravery, Prince Aleksandre was awarded the Kazak's sword which became a family treasure. He was awarded a number of medals and prizes including the St-Vladimir Gold Cross and Sword, the St-Anna Gold Cross, the Black Star Cross of the French Cavalry, the Turkish prize "Megidie," the Gold Star of His Excellence the Emissary of Bukhara, the Medal dedicated to the 300-Year Anniversary of the House of Romanov was twice awarded the St-Stanislaw Gold Cross, the gift of a gold watch from His Majesty and gold buttons with diamonds as a gift from His Excellence.

Aleksandre Eristavi served within various positions on the railway system. During his last years of military service, he was

the head of the first category zone of the Lasi District Railway and of the first category station of the South Railway zone of Znamenka.

Aleksandre's son, Nikoloz, was born in 1906 in St-Petersburg. His daughter Olga followed in 1912. In 1920, due to the well-known events, Aleksandre Eristavi moved to Italy with his family. Both Aleksandre and his son participated in the Crimean War, escaping for their survival alongside the English and Frenchmen. In 1929, the persecuted father and son joined the family in Milan, Italy. After the official recognition of the Soviet Russia the persecution against Aleksandre and Nikoloz was seized.

During World War II, Prince Nikoloz Eristavi fought against Russia and hid in Trieste, together with allies, after the fighting was over. He returned to Milan only in 1956 to attend his father's funeral and obtained Italian citizenship in 1958.

The Eristavi name was popular in Italy as, at that time, Nikoloz's vodka, Eristoff, was produced in Turin. In 1956, Nikoloz officially certified the brand -authorizing the Martini and Rossi factory and its subsidiaries to exclusively use the brand name-Prince Nikolay (or Nicholas) Alexandrovich Eristoff - in any country where the company was established.

Nikoloz Eristavi, therefore, allowed Martini and Rossi to produce vodka only according to his family recipe whilst, at the same time, he himself had to provide technical assistance in the process of the production of the Eristoff brand.

The following is a letter from Prince Nikoloz Eristavi, dated 25 June 1959, addressed to Mr Rossi, as one of the owners of Martini and Rossi, which is preserved in the Turin Archives:

To Mr Rossi, Duke of Montesella, Turin

Dear Duke,  
Last evening I had the possibility to provide to you the recipe for the vodka which has been a tradition in our family and which was first made by my ancestor Ivane Eristavi, in 1806. My grandfather, who had very good taste, wanted to create a vodka based upon a special recipe, only for personal use and for of the delight of friends. This recipe has survived to our days and I am pleased that Martini and Rossi will produce it in the form which still bears the name of my family. Please accept my sincere greetings.

It has been officially considered that the production of alcoholic beverages in Georgia began in the second half of the eighteenth century but the history of the Eristoff brand documentarily proves that the first officially registered vodka was Eristoff itself with a recipe created by the exiled Ivane Eristavi in 1806. At the same time, Eristoff is perhaps the oldest of all vodkas registered in the world with its official origin dating to 1806.

Over the past years, the Eristoff brand has earned a popularity in Italy and in other European countries. Its bottling, based upon the permit of Martini and Rossi, has also begun in Argentina, Spain and France and later in Portugal, Austria, Mexico and Poland. It is well known that Italy is famous for the production of its national drink, grappa, but does not have, in fact, a white classic vodka of its own. Two vodkas are made in Italy which bear the names of the Russian entrepreneur, Keglevich, and the Georgian, Eristavi, and are sold in significant amounts over one million crates per year.

