

## President Zourabichvili Calls on Unesco to Establish Caucasian Languages International Day

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Within the framework of a working visit in France, Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili participated in a forum dedicated to the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNESCO and called on the organization to establish an international Day of Caucasian Languages, including the Abkhaz language which faces the threat of disappearance. The event was attended by world leaders and focused on the organization's role in coping with the modern challenges of the world.

According to Zourabichvili, cultural heritage is the target of aggression that aims to erase history and identity. As she stressed, the existing conflicts in the different parts of the world destroy not only cultural monuments but also culture itself as well as the history, the clear demonstration of which are Afghanistan and Syria.

The president stated that Georgia faces the same challenge, explaining that many medieval cathedrals, churches, and monasteries are on the verge of destruction in Russian occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, "which only serves one purpose - to remove the traces of Georgia from our occupied territories." Zourabichvili stressed that education in the Georgian language is banned in the occupied territories and along with cultural rights, human rights are also repressed.

The president said that hate speech, which is a major challenge of society, attacks education and intellect and forbids understanding each other.

"This is what divides us and encourages polarization. The hate speech is ac-



Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili.

companied by false and fake information that social networks disseminate," she stressed.

According to Zourabichvili, the document that was recently adopted by UNESCO to address the spread of hate speech on social media is the first and most important step in this direction that all countries must support.

The president focused on the Caucasian language family, which is the smallest linguistic family on the Eurasian continent, although it includes dozens of languages. She stressed that every language of the Caucasian family, except for Georgian, is under the threat of disappearance. Zourabichvili called on UNESCO to establish Caucasian Languages International

Day and help these languages survive.

Within the framework of her visit, the Georgian President also participated in the Paris Peace Forum, where she spoke about the new geopolitical realities and the EU-Georgia relations. The President met with French President Emmanuel Macron and United States Vice President Kamala Harris.



The forum dedicated to the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNESCO focused on the organization's role in coping with the modern challenges of the world.

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# EU Recognizes Georgian COVID-19 Certificates

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

EU foreign ministers have decided to recognize certificates of vaccination, testing, and recovery for COVID-19 issued by several neighboring and partner countries, including Georgia. Moldova, Serbia, and New Zealand were also connected to the EU's travel pass system. A total of 49 countries' COVID-19 vaccination certificates are now recognized by the EU, of which 22 are non-EU countries.

According to the European Commission, at the request of Georgia, it conducted technical tests on 14 November, 'which showed that the COVID-19 Vaccination, Testing and Recovery Certificate issued by Georgia complies with the 'Georgia e-health App system.'

The European Commission has also confirmed that the COVID-19 Vaccination, Testing, and Recovery Certificates issued in Georgia contain all the necessary information.

According to the Commission, Georgia has informed that it is issuing compatible certificates for COVID-19 vaccination, as well as compatible certificates for testing, but not for antigen tests. Certificates of recovery are compatible as well. Fully vaccinated persons holding the pass shall be exempt from testing or quarantine 14 days after receiving the last dose.

Meanwhile, recovered persons are exempt during the first 180



For waiving free movement restrictions, EU member states are obligated to accept the vaccines European Medicines Agency has authorized – Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, and Janssen jabs. Some member states have also opted to accept vaccines on the WHO emergency list, including Sinopharm and Sinovac jabs, which Georgia administers.

days after a positive PCR test, and persons with a test certificate are exempt within 72 hours of a PCR test and 48 hours for rapid antigen tests.

The European Commission said in a statement on the technical functioning of the certificates that, as the Georgian side informed it when the certificates were verified in Georgia, 'the personal data contained therein will be processed only to check and confirm the patronage, vaccination results and recovery status.'

Georgia's COVID certificate can be obtained at Public Service Hall and its Service Centers, or digitally on covidpass.moh.gov.ge. The authorities are also testing a

smartphone application for the passes.

The European Commission concluded that certificates issued under the 'Georgia e-health App' system should be allowed in the EU to facilitate free movement in the EU should be considered equivalent to block certificates. The decision of the European Commission will enter into force on 16 November, following its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.

As Oliver Varhelyi, the European Commissioner for Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement said, "not only will it be easier for citizens of these countries to travel to the EU, but EU citizens will also be able to travel to



The positive indicator for the morning of November 15 was: Daily - 9.03%; Last 7 days - 9.52%; Last 14 days - 9.97%.

these countries."

Recall that Georgia rolled out its vaccination in mid-March 2021. NCDC Georgia has reported on November 15 that 1,075,731 persons had received at least one jab of the COVID-19 vaccine, among them 966,790 are fully vaccinated.

Against the background of the deteriorating epidemiological situation in Georgia, the rate of vaccination has sharply decreased. The daily vaccination rate in October was only twice as high as 9,000, and since the beginning of November, it has not even reached 4,000, while the Ministry of Health and the NCDC considered it necessary to get at least 30,000 vaccinations a day.

On November 3, Georgian President Salome Zurbashvili

called the situation catastrophic and said that everyone was responsible for it. Among them, Zurbashvili mentioned the patriarchate, "which still refrains from giving blessings, which allows certain clergy to preach anti-Vax propaganda."

From November 10, following the parents' decision, children aged 12 to 15 are allowed to be vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine against Covid. Citizens over 18 can also receive the booster dose if it has been 6 months since the second dose of the vaccine.

Georgian authorities have confirmed 1,820 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the tally of the total confirmed cases to 785,911. The number of fatalities rose by 82 to 11,057. To date, the number of active cases stands at 52,429.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

### European Parliament Delegation for the South Caucasus Issues a Statement, Speaks of Georgian Ombudsman's Role in Georgia's Future Development

Marina Kaljurand, the Head of the European Parliament's South Caucasus Delegation, and Sven Mixer, the Rapporteur on Georgia, made a joint statement

in support of Georgia's Public Defender. According to MEPs, the role of Georgia's Public Defender in the country's European integration is critical.

MEPs note in particular that the ombudsman's actions will keep Georgia on the European road.

The declaration also emphasizes the need of safeguarding Mikheil Saakashvili, Georgia's third president, and his rights.

"We strongly support the work of the Public Defender's Office, who plays a crucial role in Georgian society. Ms. Nino Lomjaria and her office deserve praise for their work, and attacks on their independence deserve attention, no matter where they come from.

We mentioned Nino Lomjaria's statements on the

issues of respect for Mikheil Saakashvili's dignity, security and the right to a fair trial, as well as the need to protect the third president and transfer him to Gldani Prison Hospital.

Due to Mr. Saakashvili's health condition, we are monitoring the developments and expect that his rights will be protected.

Since Nino Lomjaria took office in 2017, she has spared no effort to protect human rights, contributing to the strengthening of the rule of law. These are the principles set out in the Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia.

Nevertheless, much remains to be done in these areas - especially in terms of the independence of the judiciary. Against

this background, it is all the more important to have a Public Defender who performs his duties transparently and independently.

Ms. Lomjaria and her colleagues enjoy the trust and support of EU Ambassador Carl Hartzel. There is no doubt that they do not deserve criticism for their commitment to Georgia's democratic future," read the statement.

### Melia Announces 3 Rallies to Take Place Today in Tbilisi

According to the Chairman of the National Movement Nika Melia, a large-scale protest rally will be held in Tbilisi today at 14:00.

As Melia mentioned at the

briefing held at the party office, protests will be held at 3 locations — Republic Square, near the Central Election Commission and near the central office of the National Movement.

"Another fierce protest rally will be held in Tbilisi. Tomorrow, there will be a rally in convoys. The meeting place will be three - at 14:00. "Let us protest with the flags of Georgia and the European Union, with signals - the Russian regime and its inhuman face," Nika Melia said.

Saakashvili is on his 47<sup>th</sup> day of hunger strike in protest. His condition is severe. According to the doctor, Saakashvili can no longer walk. He will end the hunger strike if he is taken to a civilian clinic, however, the government refuses to do so.

## Weather

Tuesday, November 16

Day Showers High: 12°C  
Night Showers Low: 1°C

Wednesday, November 17

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 6°C  
Night Clear Low: 0°C

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# Ambassador Carl Hartzell visits EU Projects in Kakheti



On 11-12 October, Carl Hartzell, Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia travelled to Kakheti to highlight the EU's support to the region. He visited various sites in Kvareli, Telavi and Pankisi valley, and met with diverse groups of people. The visit focused on energy efficiency, support for businesses, and outreach to Georgia's youth.

As a first stop, Ambassador Hartzell visited **Kvareli Lake Resort**, which has been renovated and refurbished according to EU standards in energy efficiency, health and safety within the EU4Business-EBRD Credit Line. The Resort spreads over 300 hectares of natural landscape in Kvareli. The support of the European Union and EBRD helped

the company gain full compliance with Georgian regulation and with the applicable EU Directives.

The visit continued with **EuroClub Kvareli**, where Ambassador Hartzell opened the Club's second anniversary event. EuroClub Kvareli was established within the EU's Young European Ambassadors initiative in November 2019. Its main goal is to promote education and development among young people in Kvareli, and to provide access to non-formal education. Over the past two years, EuroClub Kvareli reached 1200 people through 100 activities, like film clubs, English lessons and other events.

On the same day, Ambassador Hartzell visited two other companies,

which had received support through the EU4Business EBRD Credit Line. The winery and distillery **Askaneli Brothers** exports products internationally, including to EU countries like Lithuania, Estonia, Germany, and Poland, making full use of the DCFTA. Thanks to the EU's and EBRD's support, the company invested in state-of-the-art production facilities and equipment, improved food safety management, as well as energy efficiency, waste management and health safety, making both products and the workplace safer for people.

The first day concluded in the **Holiday Inn** in Telavi, which has been made more energy efficient through the EU4Business-EBRD Credit Line. Besides a substantial loan, the company also received technical support from a team of international experts, helping the hotel upgrade its business practices as well as energy use.

In the morning of the second day, Ambassador Carl Hartzell visited Ikalto village in Telavi municipality and officially opened a local **Kindergarten**, which has been renovated and thermorehabilitated within an EU-funded project, implemented by Energy Efficiency Centre Georgia. Thanks to biomass energy technology created from vineyard waste products, the kindergarten will now be fully heated in winter, while also saving 60% of electricity costs. The opening event took place within the EU's ongoing campaign on energy efficiency "Doing More with Less".

Ambassador Hartzell then visited the **Learning and Employment Support Center** in Telavi, observed entrepreneurial skills training and met with local

youth. The Center is part of the EU's Skills4Jobs programme and run by the Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSRDG) in partnership with the Young Pedagogues' Union and Georgian Civil Development Association. Through the project, young people in Kakheti, Guria and Kvemo Kartli can increase their potential through formal and informal education. Up until now, 6 Learning and Employment Support Centres have been established in Georgia, including the one in Telavi. To date, over 1,000 job seekers have received support.

The visit continued in Pankisi valley, where the Ambassador opened a **workshop for teachers on media literacy**, organised and conducted by the Communications Commission with support from the European Union. Part of the audience were teachers from Pankisi, who had travelled to Brussels on a study trip a few years ago. The workshop is part of a longer training programme, designed to help teachers fight disinformation and teach students how to read and evaluate media.

Finally, Ambassador Hartzell met with the **Women's Council** of Pankisi and the **Local Action Group Akhmeta** (LAG), which has been established within the EU's ENPARD programme. The Women's Council includes 15 local women of Pankisi Gorge and assists local women in resolving disputes, provides them with access to legal and social aid, and works on women's rights. Over the past three years, the Akhmeta LAG has helped the Pankisi community through a variety of local development initiatives, including direct support to the Women's Council.

## UN Women and Georgian Farmers' Association Launch Economic Empowerment Project for Women in Agritourism



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

The UN Women and the Georgian Farmers' Association are launching a new, 2-year project to empower women entrepreneurs. The project is designed for women who have been running an agro-tourism facility in any part of Georgia, except the capital, for at least 1 year and are looking for additional resources for business development.

The initiative is supported and funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its participants will be selected on the basis of a competition. Project participants will receive training to develop their activities, and the winners of the relevant competition will also receive grant funding. Interested candidates should fill out an application by November 30 at the following link: <https://forms.gle/iKLeLr87YENtcjh6>

The United Nations Women, in cooperation with the Georgian Farmers' Association, has been working to strengthen women's entrepreneurship since 2018 with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project "Joint Efforts for Women's Economic Empowerment in Georgia", which was implemented in 2018-2020 in western Georgia, served this purpose. Within it, women who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities in different directions, underwent training, acquired new knowledge and skills. Some of them have successfully developed their business with the funding received in the project. "Women's Economic Empowerment" is a continuation of this initiative.

**DJANSUG KAKHIDZE**  
VI INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL  
THE FESTIVAL IS SUPPORTED BY MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORT AND YOUTH OF GEORGIA

**24.11.2021 - 19:00**

**DINI VIRSALADZE & FRIENDS**

Dini Virsaladze (keyboards)  
Mariko Ebralidze (vocal)  
Levan Deisadze (bass guitar)  
Nikoloz Gabadze (electric guitar)  
Zaza Tsertsvadze (drums)  
David Japaridze (percussion)

On 24<sup>th</sup> of November, in the frames of Djansug Kakhidze 6<sup>th</sup> International Music Festival, famous Georgian jazz pianist and composer, Dini Virsaladze will perform with her band – Mariko Ebralidze (vocal), Zaza Tsertsvadze (drums), David Japaridze (percussion), Levan Deisadze (bass guitar), Nikoloz Gabadze (guitar). They will perform the original compositions of Dini Virsaladze and popular jazz standards. Since 1993 Dini has given concerts at jazz clubs and concert arenas Georgia and abroad, she participated in many international jazz festivals, collaborated with numerous well-known jazz musicians from all over the world. From 2003 till present she is a piano player in Tbilisi Big Band. Also, she is active as jazz piano professor at Tbilisi State Conservatory.

Tickets on: [www/biletebi.ge](http://www/biletebi.ge)

\*The concert will be held in full compliance with epidemiological regulations;

\*Please note, that the procedures provided by the Covid regulations require some time, therefore please be at the door from 18:00;

\*During the concert, it is necessary for the listener to wear a medical mask;