

Georgia to Submit Second Part of EU Accession Questionnaire Ahead of Schedule



The second part of Georgia's EU membership questionnaire is a 239-page-long document, divided into 33 chapters with about 2,300 questions.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

The EU Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzell announced yesterday that it is expected the European Commission to prepare its opinion for the EU candidate status of Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova sometime next month. He also stressed that the assessment on the candidate status would be made based on the situation on the ground, including Georgia's adherence to fundamental EU values, and key economic and other criteria.

On Monday, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili handed over the first com-

pleted part of the EU membership questionnaire to Hartzell, calling the development a 'paramount stage' in the EU integration process. Hartzell told Georgian media yesterday that he was honored to receive the first answers to the first questionnaire and was confident the Georgian Government would deliver the second completed part of the country's membership questionnaire soon.

Georgian Foreign Minister Ilya Darchiashvili announced yesterday that Georgia would submit the second part of the questionnaire before the deadline, hoping the process to be successful. Ac-

cording to him, filling out the questionnaire was a responsible and time-consuming process, involving all government agencies on the instructions of the Prime Minister.

"We continue to work on the second part of the questionnaire, which is quite voluminous and sectoral in content. We plan to submit it to the EU promptly and early," Darchiashvili said.

The second part of Georgia's EU membership questionnaire, which is a 239-page-long document, divided into 33 chapters with about 2,300 questions, focuses on the compatibility of Georgia's specific

legislative frameworks for each sector of the national economy with that of the EU. The topics covered by the questionnaire range from existing legislation on work permits and the freedom of movement of workers to anti-discriminatory laws.

The document touches upon the existing banking and non-cash payment systems in the country, and whether there are effective laws in force to prevent money laundering and the funding of illegal activities. The questions also focus on Georgia's intellectual property laws and the extent of copyright laws regarding computer applications and technology as well.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Johnson: The West Made the Mistake of Not Helping Ukraine in 2014



Volodymyr Zelenskyy and members of the Verkhovna Rada stand for Ukraine's national anthem before the address by Boris Johnson.
Photograph: Verkhovna Rada/PA

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Boris Johnson addressed the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Johnson said the West made the mistake of not helping Ukraine in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea.

"We, your friends, should be upset about what happened in 2014, because Ukraine was invaded before, then Crimea was taken from Ukraine, and now the war has started in Donbas. "We can not repeat the same mistake for Vladimir Putin," Johnson said.

Today, the British Prime Minister presented a new military aid to Ukraine worth 300 million euros.

Johnson said military assistance includes radars, heavy crane drones, and thousands of night-vision devices.

Medical Masks to Be Mandatory Only in Transport and Clinics

The use of veils will be mandatory only in transport and in clinics, in all other enclosed spaces, including schools, the obligation to wear a veil is removed.

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili said about it at the government session.

According to him, before making a decision Minister of Health Zurab Azarashvili met with specialists in the field.

"We have a very stable picture. The situation with Covid has stabilized. The situation is very calm in this direction. This allows us to ease the regulations even more," Gharibashvili said.

In order to prevent the spread of coronavirus, wearing a veil was mandatory in all enclosed spaces.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.0331; Euro - 3.1869; GBP - 3.7950; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.3595; Swiss Franc - 3.1042

Maritime Transport Agency and Georgian Railway Deny Accusations on Assisting Russian Companies to Circumvent Sanctions

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Maritime Transport Agency of the Ministry of Economy has issued a statement on the service of 'Russian sanctioned ships' in the port of Batumi, rejecting a TV Pirveli channel report that alleged a Russian tanker had been provided with services in Georgia's Black Sea port of Batumi in circumvention of sanctions imposed on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

The agency explained that the 5th package of EU sanctions, which includes a ban on Russian-flagged vessels entering EU ports, does not apply to energy (oil, petroleum products), agriculture, food, and humanitarian aid.

"Therefore, the services rendered to the tanker do not constitute a breach of sanctions or



aiding a circumvention of sanctions," the statement said.

The Maritime agency further noted that on May 2, a Russian-flagged tanker called SVL Pride entered the port of Batumi, with

a transit cargo of 5,000 tons of diesel destined for a third country, Armenia.

"At the moment, the unloading operation is being carried out in compliance with both domes-

tic and international norms," the statement said.

This is not the first time that the agency has released an explanation regarding the information spread in the media. A simi-

lar statement was issued on April 16.

Meanwhile, the Georgian Railway has also denied reports of the Mtavari Arkhi channel about Russian energy giant Gazprom attempting to use the Georgian territory to transport products sanctioned following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

TV channel reported earlier on Tuesday that a convoy of oil tanks bearing the Gazprom title was transporting 'sanctioned oil' to Georgia's Black Sea port of Batumi. Georgian Railway said the fuel in the tanks was a property of a Kazakh company and was loaded on train cars of the company itself. The railway operator also said such carriages were used often by Kazakhstan, which usually sends cargo to Europe through the Batumi Port.

Annual Inflation Reached 12.8% in April

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) has released data, according to which annual inflation in April was 12.8%.

For the most part, 29.1%, prices are higher for the operation of personal vehicles. According to statistics, the upward trend in prices in April is main-

tained in food and non-alcoholic beverages. Prices for vegetables and horticulture rose by 46.2%, bread, and bakery products by 28.8%, mineral and spring water, non-alcoholic beverages, and natural juices by 24.1%.

According to Geostat, prices for oil and fat increased by 20.8%, sugar, jam, and other sweets - by 19.3%, fish - by 18.9%; Milk, cheese, and eggs by 18.0%; Coffee, tea, and cocoa are 17.6%.

Prices for fruits and grapes

increased by 14.4%, while prices for meat and meat products increased by 10.9%.

Back in early February, the Ministry of Economy predicted that inflation in Georgia would begin to decline in the spring.

This expectation was not met, the war between Georgia's largest economic partners has been going on since February 24 as Russia is conducting large-scale military operations on the territory of Ukraine.



Weather

Wednesday, May 4

Day Rain
High: 21°C
Night Rain
Low: 14°C

Thursday, May 5

Day Rain
High: 15°C
Night Rain
Low: 10°C

published by
The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi,
0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.
Zaza Gachechiladze
Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
<http://www.messenger.com.ge>

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact. All contributions should be submitted by e-mail. **The Messenger** Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.