

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

## Georgia Ranks 1<sup>st</sup> In World By Budget Transparency, OBS Shows

According to the 2021 Open Budget Survey (OBS), conducted by the International Budget Partnership (IBP), Georgia ranks first in the world by budget transparency. This year, Georgia got 87 points out of 100 in state budget transparency, which is an increase of six points from OBS 2019, when Georgia was ranked 5<sup>th</sup>.

It is noteworthy that when the OBS was first published in 2006, Georgia listed 30<sup>th</sup> with 34 points and was among the least transparent countries.

The 2021 survey highlighted Georgia's progress in improving its Financial Management Information System, which allowed the government to operate online when pandemic restrictions forced officials to work remotely.

The index also said that regular coordination had also "bolstered the country's budgetary system" and noted that the In-

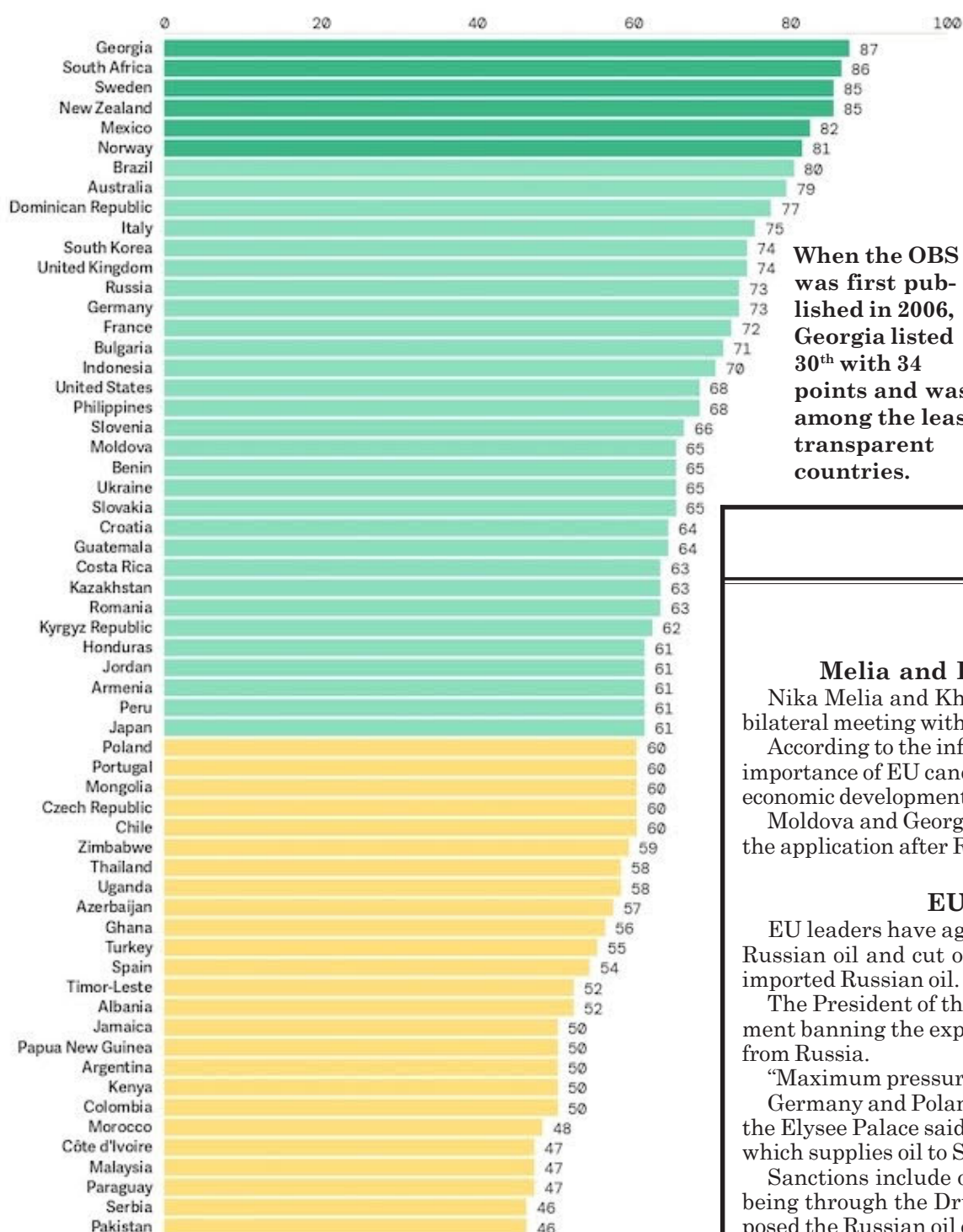
ternational Monetary Fund and European Union have helped pave the way for Georgia to produce budget documents in line with international standards.

"The latest improvements demonstrate that budget accountability in Georgia is not just a temporary endeavor, but an ongoing commitment to embedding good budgeting practices over time that are capable of weathering challenges and crises," reads the survey.

The ranking also focused on the remaining challenges and noted that mechanisms for public participation in the central budget process remain underutilized. In particular, out of 100 possible points, Georgia received 44 points in terms of ensuring citizen participation in



Figure 5.5 Open Budget Survey 2021: budget transparency scores (Open Budget Index)



When the OBS was first published in 2006, Georgia listed 30<sup>th</sup> with 34 points and was among the least transparent countries.

The OBS uses 109 equally weighted indicators to measure budget transparency, based on internationally accepted criteria developed by multilateral organizations.

the budgetary process, and 74 points in terms of budget oversight.

IBP proposes several recommendations for the Government of Georgia to continue improving its scores, among which the most important ones are related to better oversight of the budgetary process by the Parliament and increasing the involvement of citizens in the budgetary process.

The OBS uses 109 equally weighted indicators to measure budget transparency, based on internationally accepted criteria

developed by multilateral organizations. These indicators assess whether the central government makes eight key budget documents available to the public online promptly and whether these documents present budget information in a comprehensive and useful way.

The eight documents are the pre-budget statement, executive's budget proposal, enacted budget, citizens' budget, in-year reports, mid-year review, year-end report, and audit report.

### The News in Brief

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

#### Melia and Dekanoidze Meet Moldova President Maia Sandu

Nika Melia and Khatia Dekanoidze, members of the United National Movement, held a bilateral meeting with Moldovan President Maia Sandu.

According to the information released by the UNM, the main topic of conversation was the importance of EU candidate status for Georgia and Moldova for the security, democratic and economic development of the countries.

Moldova and Georgia applied to the EU for candidate status after Ukraine. Ukraine made the application after Russia invaded the country on February 24.

#### EU Leaders Agree on Russian Oil Embargo

EU leaders have agreed on a sixth package of sanctions against Russia, which would ban Russian oil and cut off Sberbank from the SWIFT system. The sanctions apply to 75% of imported Russian oil. By the end of the year, 90% of Russian oil will be banned in Europe.

The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, wrote on Twitter that the agreement banning the export of Russian oil to the EU covers more than two-thirds of oil imports from Russia.

"Maximum pressure on Russia to end the war," Michelle wrote.

Germany and Poland will refuse to buy pipeline oil by the end of the year. A spokesman for the Elysee Palace said there was an agreement to 'close' the southern branch of the Druzhba, which supplies oil to Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, as soon as possible.

Sanctions include oil supplied by sea. The EU has decided to leave imports for the time being through the Druzhba pipeline, on which Hungary depends. It was Hungary that opposed the Russian oil embargo, which led to the extension of the sixth package of sanctions.

# No March of Honor Planned this Year, Tbilisi Pride Says

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Pride Week Slated for June 28-July 2

Tbilisi Pride announces that the Pride Week will be held from June 28 to July 2, 2022. According to them, they will not be able to hold a 'March of Honor' this year.

Pride Week will consist of three primary events: The screening of a new Georgian queer movie. A story about homophobia, fight, and survival; Regional Conference which will bring together LGBTQ activists, from Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Belarus to discuss mutual geopolitical battles; A grand Pride Festival drawing together local and international artists.

According to the organization, they are determined to continue the fight for freedom, equality, love, visibility, dignity, and the return of seized voices, which is the fight against homophobia,



**"This is our country and we do not want to be forced to run away."**

hatred, Russian propaganda, and holders of immeasurable power, oppression, discrimination, and persecution.

"The tragic experience we en-

countered last year on July 5 uncovered a stagnant, violent and uncompassionate system that refuses to protect the rights of its citizens and excludes

LGBTQ people from public space and public life. Lekso Lashkarava's life was taken as a result of an unprecedented attack on media on the basis of homophobia. We are still facing a government which encourages violent groups chasing people in the streets, does not punish those responsible for organizing violence, and does not acknowledge the equality of all citizens."

The organization writes in the statement that this year they do not have any space and opportunity to hold a march of honor, in fact, they remain the only group deprived of the right to assemble and demonstrate. They remind us that their agenda still includes serious problems such as education, employment, access to health care, homelessness, legal non-recognition of gender, domestic violence, and discrimination. Tbilisi Pride believes

that with vigorous fight and unconditional solidarity toward each other they will achieve the change this reality. One of the reasons for this hope is that acceptance of LGBTQ people is significantly increasing, though some try to convince us that the vast majority of the Georgian population is unsupportive.

"2022 will be the year of healing, recovery, solidarity, unity, support, acknowledgment of results achieved, and diversification and expansion of our strategies. At the same time, Pride Week will be loud, political, emotional, colorful, and will bring together everyone who believes in equality!"

Following the Tbilisi Pride announcement, members of the violent, homophobic and pro-Russian party Alt-Info said they would mobilize against this 'provocation' and that the organizers would not be able to hold any grand festival'.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

# Italian Design Days in Georgia – 2022

The Italian Embassy in Georgia and the Desk of the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) held the traditional, annual event related to the promotion of Italian design and Architecture in Tbilisi on May 30-31.

H.E. the Ambassador of Italy in Georgia, Mr. Enrico Valvo, and H.E. the Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, Mr. Irakli Karseladze, co-inaugurated 3 exhibitions, which will remain available for the visitors of the Museum of Modern Art Zurab Tsereteli - MOMA of Tbilisi until 3 June.

Ambassador thanked the large team of public and private partners, both from the Italian and Georgian sides for their efforts and spoke of the significance of the initiative:

"Through exhibitions and the strong engagement of the respective scientific, academic, and business communities, the main goal of this initiative is to provide the Georgian public with an immersive experience in the beauty of Italian design and shed light on cooperation between

Italy and Georgia in such field."

Re@Generation: Design and new technologies for a sustainable future. The iconic magazine 'Domus', through its Georgian edition – the first to be activated and the only one active across Eastern Europe and Eurasia – will build on such a key theme with an exhibition structured around an evocative question: 'Can History and The Future Cohabit?'

To complete the exhibitions program, the original projects by Georgian young designers awarded by the Italian Embassy and the Istituto Europeo di Design – IED, within the creativity contest (titled 'When Italian Design meets Georgian Creativity') were announced and included in the exhibition spaces. Istituto Europeo di Design – IED awarded the winner with a scholarship in one of its Italian facilities, plus a free of charge 'Smart Creativity' online course for the second place, while the Embassy delivered a surprise prize to the winner of a 'Jury Prize'.

Many renowned actors in the field of architecture and design, including representatives of companies, scholars, experts and professional associations participated in the main workshop on May 31. Among them: the University of Florence, Architecture and Poli.design Specializing Master (founded by Politecnico



di Milano), the Municipal Development Fund (MDF) of Georgia, the Academy of Fine Arts and Tbilisi's Centre of Architecture, Design and Creative Industries, in addition to IED and the editorial team of Domus – Georgia.

Architectural firms presented studies related to cutting-edge techniques in the field of conservation of cultural heritage, and the progress registered by the 'Vision' for the renowned spa town of Tskaltubo, aimed at enhancing its potential for tourism development.

See photo coverage on pages 3-4



## Weather

Wednesday, June 1

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 32°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 18°C

Thursday, June 2

Day Clear

High: 33°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 19°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.



H.E. the Ambassador of Italy in Georgia, Mr. Enrico Valvo



H.E. the Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, Mr. Irakli Karseladze



