

## Parliament Chairman Shalva Papuashvili Highlights Inseparable Connection Between the European Union and Georgia

By Liza Mchedlidze

In the annual meeting of the Advisory Council under the Culture Committee of the Parliament, Chairman Shalva Papuashvili emphasized the inseparable connection between the European Union and Georgia. He asserted that the European Union remains incomplete without Georgia, just as Georgia cannot be considered whole without the European Union. Identifying this shared historical and cultural space, he expressed confidence in the pivotal role that cultural diplomacy will play in ultimately restoring and solidifying this connection.

Papuashvili acknowledged Georgia's active participation in all stages of European development, expressing a desire for continued involvement. He proposed the addition of the Georgian language as a fourth official script to the three existing scripts in the European Union, making it the twenty-fifth language. The goal, as stated by Papuashvili, is to contribute not only linguistically, culturally, and legally but also to the overall development of the European Union.

"Historically, Georgia has not only considered itself a part of the European space but has also believed, and still believes, that we are co-creators of European culture. This cultural influence stems from the Hellenistic world and our connection and contributions to the formation of Europe span throughout our entire history. From the cultivation of wine, honey, and wheat to various products, Georgia played a role. Furthermore, Georgia holds



the distinction of being one of the first countries where women were elected to the representative body – the parliament – and were granted the right to vote.

So, at all stages of European development, Georgia has been a participant in this process. Our expectations for the decision that is still ahead, seen from this perspective, are that we want to continue being a participant in the development of Europe. We would like to add a fourth official script in the form of the Georgian language to the three offi-

cial scripts of the European Union, making it the twenty-fifth language among the 24 languages of the European Union. We aim to contribute not only linguistically, culturally, and legally but also to the overall development of the European Union," Papuashvili stated.

The Parliament Chairman particularly commended the work of the Culture Committee and the Advisory Council, viewing them as examples of cooperation between the Parliament and civil society. He thanked the

Culture Committee for consistently prompting reflections on values that are timeless and universal, transcending time and geography. According to Papuashvili, the language of culture is understandable to everyone.

"I am glad that amid the busy political agenda, there is always a moment when we discuss culture and such issues. These discussions are, ultimately, the basis of the development of the country, the nation, and society. Therefore, I especially appreci-

ate the work of the Culture Committee and the Advisory Council, which serves as an example of cooperation between the Parliament and civil society, with the councils under the committee actively involved in policy development. I thank the Culture Committee for consistently prompting us to contemplate values that transcend time and geography. These values are permanent and universal, as the language of culture is understandable to everyone," said Papuashvili.



## Economy Minister Levan Davitashvili: Georgia Holds a Leading Position in Regional Economic Growth

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Levan Davitashvili, addressed current economic trends in the country during a briefing held at the government administration. According to his information, the preliminary estimates for economic growth in October stand at 6.2%, while the average economic growth for the first 10 months of the year is 6.9%.

Davitashvili stated that considering the activities and growth of other countries' econo-

mies, Georgia maintains an advanced position in the region. He attributes the economic growth mainly to high investment activity, as well as economic engagement in the fields of foreign trade and tourism.

"I think this data is the result of a prudent macroeconomic policy. It is important to note that we also have the results of the third quarter for the business sector, whose turnover increased by 12.6%, and, according to the data of the first three quarters, amounted to 143.8 billion GEL. Also, the output of the

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6943; Euro - 2.9279; GBP - 3.4126; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9642; Swiss Franc - 3.0852

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business sector increased by 9.3%, amounting to 54 billion GEL,” the Vice Prime Minister

noted.

According to Davitashvili, the number of jobs in the business sector increased by 4.8% in the third quarter of 2023. As he

points out, these are the highest-paying jobs. Consequently, the number of jobs in the business sector increased by 34.6 thousand, reaching a record figure of 757.9 thousand, according to the Minister of Economy.

The Economy Minister stated that the monthly salary increased by 17.1%, amounting to 293 GEL. Consequently, the average income of employees in the primary business sector exceeded 2000 GEL. The inflation

level in November was 0.1%, representing a 0.2 percentage point decrease compared to the previous month.”

“Since April, inflation has fallen below the target rate, and Georgia has one of the lowest inflation rates in the wider region. It is particularly noteworthy that all these dry numbers have translated into real-life impact; a decrease in food prices was recorded compared to the previous month, as well as in

annual terms. Accordingly, this trend persists for both food and medicine throughout the year. I believe the most crucial aspect is for society to feel the concrete results of economic progress and normal, successful economic policies. We observe that inflation maintains a level below the target; therefore, there are many opportunities to make bolder macroeconomic decisions and further promote economic growth,” said Davitashvili.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### President Salome Zourabichvili Hosts Medical Representatives for Our Voice for Europe Campaign at Orbeliani Palace



In the Orbeliani Palace, the President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, hosted representa-

tives from the medical field who joined the ‘Our Voice for Europe’ signature campaign. According to Salome Zourabichvili, the medical field is a part of society that is well aware of how much Georgia needs Europe.

As stated by the president, Georgia is in need of adopting European standards in the field

alternative. We have no other perspective, and I probably need to explain this to you the least. Representatives of the medical field are a part of our society who are well aware of how much our country needs Europe, the best informed about how much our country needs European standards.” said Zourabichvili.

In addition, the President emphasized that the stronger this field is in the country, the stronger Georgia will become.

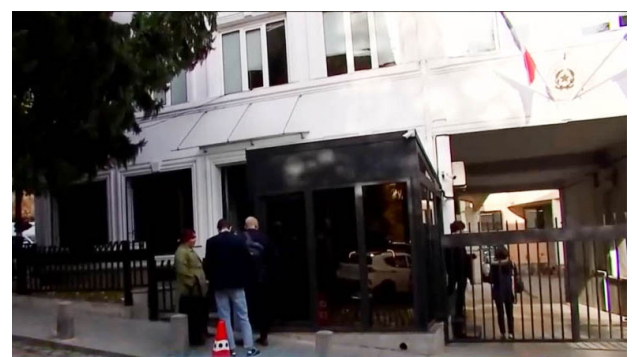
“In healthcare, it is impossible for Georgia, Medea’s country after all, to lag behind in any field and, on the contrary, not be a leader. We observe that wherever our doctors receive support, whether it’s in America or Europe, they achieve great success. You are already successful here, but I am confident that you can achieve even more success, become stronger. The stronger this field is in our country, the stronger our country will be,” Zourabichvili stated.

### Joint Letter from 80 NGOs Delivered to the Italian Embassy Affirms People’s Choice for Europe

Representatives of the civil sec-

tor met with the Italian ambassador and handed over a joint letter signed by 80 non-governmental organizations. In the letter, the organizations request that EU member states support the granting of candidate status to Georgia. The civil sector believes it is crucial for decision-makers

to clearly recognize the unwavering position of civil society. “It is important for Georgia to receive candidate status. That is why the statements of civil society and the meetings are crucial; they enable us to deliver messages



and seek support for Georgia when decisions are made. The status is significant for us in many directions, and the most important thing is that it allows us to initiate judicial reform at the national level in Georgia and implement reforms in different directions,” the statement reads.

Non-governmental organizations had a similar visit to the Greek embassy; they also met with the ambassadors of France, Germany, Lithuania, and Estonia.

### Strengthening the Rule of Law and Access to Justice Across the Region

UNDP and Germany Gather Rule of Law Professionals from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine to Exchange Insights, Share Best Practices, and Set New Regional Standards on Access to Justice

TBILISI. 4 December 2023 – Representatives of National Human Rights Institutions and state legal aid providers from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine convened in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 1-2 December for the Tbilisi Regional Conference on Improving the Rule of Law and

of healthcare. “Your voice for Europe —this is our joint path, which has no

Access to Justice for All. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Germany worked in partnership with the national governments and civil societies to organize this important regional forum. Douglas Webb, UNDP Resident Representative a.i. to Georgia, and Lidija Christmann, Head of Development Cooperation in South Caucasus at the Embassy of Germany to Georgia inaugurated the conference with welcome remarks underscoring the fundamental role of rule of law institutions in building a strong democracy.

“UNDP is working with governments, civil societies, and international partners to bolster transparent and independent rule of law institutions throughout the region. Our commitment extends to advancing equitable access to justice, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of disadvantaged communities,” noted Douglas Webb, UNDP Resident Representative a.i. to

Georgia.

“The Tbilisi Regional Conference brings together decision-makers and rule of law practitioners from four countries, marking a significant step towards strengthening the rule of law networks across the region and building a crucial foundation for the development of robust democratic institutions,” said Lidija Christmann, the Head of Development Cooperation in South Caucasus at the Embassy of Germany to Georgia.

Nino Kadagidze, President of the Supreme Court of Georgia and the Head of the High Council of Justice of Georgia, and Levan Ioseliani, Public Defender of Georgia, emphasized that the conference fosters regional partnerships and promotes cooperation in the crucial domains of the rule of law and access to justice.

Katy Thompson, Head of Rule of Law, Security, and Human Rights at the UNDP’s Crisis Bureau, and Agata Nieboj, Human Rights, Justice, and

Home Affairs Team Leader at the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia, delivered keynote speeches shedding light on accomplishments in upholding justice and the rule of law. They also addressed the challenges faced by the participant countries in establishing transparent and independent institutions, stressing the need to undertake further measures, especially considering Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia’s EU aspirations.

The conference critically examined the rule of law trends in the four countries. Government officials and civil society representatives discussed lessons learned and best practices in strengthening institutions, ensuring access to justice for all, and supporting the resilience of the most disadvantaged communities.

The conference highlight was the adoption of the Tbilisi Declaration on Access to State-Guaranteed Legal Aid for Forcibly Displaced Populations. This document sets regional stan-

dards to promote people-centred approaches to access to justice, enhancing knowledge-building and coordination among state legal aid providers across Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

On the sidelines of the conference, participants visited the conflict-affected Khurvaleti community near the administrative boundary line with the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and the Ukrainian House in Tbilisi.

These visits aimed to demonstrate the effectiveness of Georgia’s state-funded Legal Aid Service in offering free legal assistance to vulnerable and remote communities nationwide. They also provided firsthand insights into the practical assistance extended to Ukrainian nationals who sought support in Georgia during the war. Both UNDP and Germany play an active role in supporting these initiatives through funding, technical assistance, and strategic backing.

## Weather

Tuesday, December 5

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 16°C

Night Mostly Cloudy  
Low: 7°C

Wednesday, December 6

Day Light Rain  
High: 9°C

Night Rain  
Low: 7°C

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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.

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The French Institute of Georgia held the panel discussion: OPPORTUNITIES OF CO-PRODUCTION WITH FRANCE on December 2.

The session brings together experienced panelists to discuss the myriad opportunities available in Franco-centric co-production. Attendees gained valuable insights into the collaborative processes, cultural nuances, and economic aspects of

# PANEL DISCUSSION: OPPORTUNITIES OF CO-PRODUCTION WITH FRANCE

partnering with French production entities. The panelists shared their personal experiences, highlighting both the challenges and successes they've encountered in this unique sector of the film industry.

This discussion is an excellent

opportunity for filmmakers, producers, and industry executives to learn about the practicalities, potential pitfalls, and strategies for successful co-production with one of the world's most renowned film-producing countries. Participants left with a clearer un-

derstanding of how to navigate the landscape of French co-production and how to leverage these opportunities for their projects.

Participants: Florent Signifredi (Regional audiovisual attaché, The French Institute),

Giacomo Abbruzzese (Director, DISCO BOY), Louis Beaudemont (producer), Keti Danelia (producer, moderator of the discussion), Elene Margvelashvili (Producer, PARACHUTE FILMS)

