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WEEKLY BILINGUAL
NEWSPAPER IN GEORGIA

WHY RUSSIA QUILS GENEVA TALKS SO FREQUENTLY?

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In the framework of the Geneva talks, the essential assignment for the Georgian side is, on one hand, to conceptualize Russia as the conflict side and, on the other hand, to prevent de facto regimes from becoming delegates as sovereign bodies. The Geneva international discussions are crucially important for Georgia, as it remains the only platform for discussing security-related issues and the humanitarian needs of the conflict-affected population.



GAZPROM DEEPENS IT'S ROLE IN THE GEORGIAN ENERGY SECTOR

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According to Kaladze, Georgia should diversify its import routes and sources to ensure viable prices on the energy market. Gazprom's resources can help reduce the gap in supply, though cooperation with Iran is not to be excluded. This fact is not welcomed by Azerbaijan. In parallel to the Kaladze-Miller negotiations, Georgia needs to assert that Azerbaijan will remain its primary energy partner.



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WHY RUSSIA QUILTS GENEVA TALKS SO FREQUENTLY?

GURAM PTSKIALADZE (BULGARIA)

The 34th round of Geneva Talks took place on December 8-9 within two working groups under the supervision of the representatives of OSCE, UN and EU.

Within the first working group, core issues included the ongoing security problem in the Separatist Regions caused by the November 26 agreement between Russia and the de facto regimes on creating joint military forces. Additionally, Georgian representatives raised the issue of a growing number of military instructions and the violation of air space controlled by the Georgian government.

In this discussion format, issues such as continuing construction of wire entanglements, artificial obstacles, cases of kidnapping and imprisoning Georgian citizens were brought up. Russian military forces accused citizens of encroaching on the de facto border.

During the second working group, the Georgian delegation drew attention to the following topics: free movement of people, the right to receive education in one's mother tongue, the necessity of securing human rights on occupied territories and restrictions on in the study of Georgian language in the Gali region. In addition, the Georgian delegation called on the Russian side to make a pledge on the non-use of force. Georgia officially signed the agreement on the non-use of force on November 23, 2010, and wants Russia to do the same.

After 6 hours of discussion, the meeting was terminated by the Russian side accompanied by the de facto regime delegations while talking about displaced persons and their rights to repatriation. The next meeting will be held on 22-23 March, 2016 – according to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

In the framework of the Geneva talks, the essential assignment for the Georgian side is, on one hand, to conceptualize Russia as the conflict side and, on the other hand, to prevent de facto regimes from becoming delegates as sovereign bodies.

The Geneva international discussions are crucially important for Georgia, as it remains the only platform for discussing security-related issues and the humanitarian needs of the conflict-affected population. Moreover, it enables the Georgian side to draw the international community's attention to issues vis-à-vis the occupied regions.

At the 34th Round of Geneva, talks Georgia tried to raise primary points and restart discussions on the most important topics. There are some issues making it impossible for the parties to make any agreement, which is why Russia abandons the round table format. Discussing such problems becomes a stumbling block preventing progress. Considering that this meeting broke off during discussions over



the issue of displaced persons, it is clear that Russia and the separatist regimes do not have the will to compromise.

In a broader context, Russian refusals to be deemed the conflict side provides a further obstacle for the negotiation process. Russia continuously indicates that Georgia should start direct discussions with the separatist regimes. This kind of settlement is unacceptable for

Georgia. By agreeing with it, Tbilisi implicitly recognizes that Russia was not involved in the August 2008 war and, by holding direct discussions, would allow the occupied regions to have a degree of sovereignty that is totally unacceptable for Georgia.

The question of why Russia quit the Geneva talks is answered as follows: Russia feels uncomfortable as it is not represented as a media-

tor but as a delegate. Furthermore, during the meetings Georgia asks distressing questions to the Russian side and, when these questions are related to red line issues for Russia (for example, repatriation of displaced people), it quits discussion to avoid inconvenient situations and responsibilities. Their unfavorable status leads Russia and the separatist regimes to refuse many agreements and at the end of the

meeting, they quit and issues are postponed until the next round of talks.

It is notable that the leader of the Free Democrats Party, Irakli Alasania, made an announcement about a novel initiative to create a new Germany-Georgia-Russia negotiation arrangement. According to him, Georgia would use such format to bring its interests to light, and Germany is believed to be a country which can help reach an interim accord between Georgia and Russia. If the new initiative becomes a reality, the Geneva talks will not be the only platform for Georgia to express its concerns on the international stage. As Alasania pointed out, his initiative will not threaten the Geneva talks.

Creating such a format means that Russia is about to start negotiations with Georgia arbitrated by a mediator, with whom Russia finds it easier to concur, in contrast to distinguished organizations or countries. On the other hand, having the only arbiter enables Russia to operate more trouble-free (while at Geneva talks the country has to defend itself face-to-face with several mediators). It is in Georgia's interests that, in case of implementing this new format, Geneva talks should not lose its significance. Whereas Russia might appeal that Geneva talks are not functional anymore and it should be terminated. The best outcome for Georgia would be if the novel format co-exists in parallel to the current platform.





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GEORGIA EXPECTS EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO APPROVE VISA-FREE TRAVEL REGIME

TEIMURAZ SHA

Georgian society eagerly awaits December 15, 2015 – the day the European Commission should present its report on the achievements of Georgia in implementation of the Visa-Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP), which the Georgian government received from the EU on February 25, 2013.

Visa Liberalization between Georgia and EU means that holders of Georgian biometric passports will be able to travel visa-free to Schengen Area states (including non-EU states including Norway, Switzerland and Iceland) and Cyprus, Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria for 90 days in any six-month period. Visa Liberalization policy also covers visa-free travel to the Western Balkan countries (Serbia, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania), but does not include the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland, which have their own individual visa policies.

Though a positive report presented by the European Commission does not mean that the EU will open its borders to Georgian citizens, it is an evaluation of already-implemented VLAP measures. The EC also makes recommendations to the European Parliament, which should discuss visa



policy, additional recommendations and the preparedness of Georgia.

On April 28, 2014, the Republic of Moldova became the first state from the EU Eastern Partnership group to receive a visa-free regime with the EU. Notably, the EU proposed a Visa-Liberalization Action Plan to Moldova on June 15, 2010, and it took roughly 4 years to implement all the requests of the EU (including those of the influential Romanian lobby).

On May 21-22, 2015 during the

Eastern Partnership summit in Riga, EU officials stated that Georgia has completed 7 out of 15 requested paragraphs of the action plan. Particularly, EU officials referenced migration policy, human trafficking and counter-terrorism.

On September 28, the European Union Monitoring Mission started its visit to Georgia in order to evaluate implementation of the VLAP, and the readiness of the state to receive a visa-free arrangement with the EU. In the frame of

the EUMM visit, the Head of the European Union Delegation to Georgia, Ambassador Janos Herman, stated that Georgia has already completed the majority of the requests of the VLAP.

On November 18, during the EU-Georgia Association Council meeting in Brussels, Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini made a statement on visa liberalization:

“The European Commission will present its decision about a visa liberalization plan on December 15, but I would like to say there

is a basis for positive expectations. Georgia has successfully attained most of goals of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP) but there is much to do in the future.”

On December 9, the “Die Welt”, German national daily newspaper has published an article on the visa-liberalization policy for Georgia, Ukraine and Turkey, which will be launched by EU in mid-2016. According to the “Die Welt”, that information was provided by the anonymous diplomatic source who is a high position official in European Commission.



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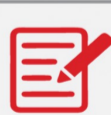
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PERSON OF THE YEAR

GEORGE MESKHI (GERMANY)

The American magazine *Time* has nominated “the persons of the year” since 1927. Rather than the best people, they are the people who appeared to be the most notable during the whole year. On December 9 this year, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Dr. Angela Merkel was nominated “the person of the year.”

Looking at the list of persons having held that title, we recognize most of the figures as politicians. Angela Merkel is the fourth German Chancellor to hold that title preceded by Willy Brandt (1970), Konrad Adenauer (1953)... and Adolf Hitler (1938). Mostly men are nominated, as well. Angela Merkel is the fourth woman to have been nominated (individually) as person of the year after Wallis Simpson (1936), Queen Elizabeth II (1952) and Corazon Aquino (1986).

As we see, the list of persons of the year is diverse. This title indicates the main events of the year and those who stood in the center of them. Nominating Angela Merkel as the person of the current year also means that the main events of 2015 took place in Europe, where Germany and its Chancellor hold the central place. The biography of Angela Merkel also shows that her life is closely connected to the recent history of Germany and Europe.

Angela Dorothea Kasner was

born in 1954 in Hamburg, in the family of Lutheran pastor Horst Kasner. In the same year, Kasner’s family moved to East Germany to the town Tempelin, 80 km north of Berlin. Thus, the future Chancellor spent her childhood and youth in East Germany, “the Democratic Republic of Germany.”

Teachers and classmates characterize Angela as a diligent and talented girl, especially interested in mathematics and natural sciences. At the same time she also studied foreign languages – English and Russian – with due diligence. Her interest towards languages might have been inspired by the fact that her mother Herlind was a teacher of English and Latin languages. The profession of her father could not have had less influence on the future Chancellor. However, it is also clear that the daughter of a pastor could not express her attitude toward religion in the typical East German surrounding of that time. On the contrary – her opponents often recall her membership in the “Free German Youth (FDJ)”, although it was typical for the youth in GDR, as was the membership in Komsomol in the Soviet Union.

After graduating school Angela Kasner continued her studies at the University of Leipzig, Faculty of Physics. Here she met with her first husband – Ulrich Merkel, but their marriage lasted not longer than five years. In the year 1978 Angela

Merkel moved to Berlin, to the Central Institute for Physical Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences. In 1986 she was awarded a doctoral degree. In the 1980s the young scientist published her works systematically and did not express any interest toward politics. Her life and scientific activities were absolutely non-political as well.

The key events of the years 1989 and 1990 – the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany – were crucial point for Dr. Merkel, and the young physicist became interested in politics. In 1989 she joined the newly established party “Democratic Awakening”, which merged with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in 1990. In the same year Angela Merkel was elected to the Bundestag. As an East German female politician, Dr. Merkel was quite notable in the CDU and deserved the consideration of Helmut Kohl (afterwards “Kohl’s girl” became her nickname). At first she was appointed Minister for Women and Youth, and afterwards Minister for the Environment and Nuclear Safety. Kohl was defeated in the elections of 1998, and with the Christian-Democrats moving to opposition the party was reconstituted, as a result of which Angela Merkel was elected general secretary of the Christian Democratic Union.

In the elections of 2005 Christian-Democrats won the first place.



However, they exceeded the Socialists by one percent. There was a need to form a coalition, the delegates of which elected Angela Merkel as Chancellor – the first female Chancellor in the history of Germany. This was the beginning of anew era for not only Germany, but for the whole of Europe.

Angela Merkel has served as the Chancellor of Germany for ten years already. The dignities typical for Germans are notable in her character: diligence, decisiveness, rationalism and organizational skills. Her humble character is notable as well: German Chancellor and the prominent European politician lives not in a special residence but in a quite modest flat near the museum isle. In 2013 she

was elected for the third time as Chancellor of Germany.

It is also worth mentioning that Angela Merkel has been criticized has opponents inside the country as well. Her policy toward the Greek crisis caused controversy. She has been criticized for her immigration policy as well, especially after recent events. Therefore, quite often Angela Merkel has to take hard, and, sometimes, even unpopular decisions.

The issues mentioned above are important not only for Germany, but also for Europe and for the world. Germany and its Chancellor have been in the spotlight of the world. Her nomination as person of the year is also a sign of such attention.



GARIBASHVILI: GEORGIA IS “TRUE LEADER” IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

ANNA LOMTADZE (USA)

The 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP 21 or CMP 11 is being held in Le Bourget, France, near Paris, from November 30 to December 11. The aim of the conference is to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world, that will be signed in 2015, and implemented by 2020. The objective is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions between 40 and 70 percent by 2050 and reaching zero level in 2100, that is believed by many experts as a necessary step to avoid serious climate calamities.

Among 150 other heads of states, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili also addressed Paris Climate Change Conference with a speech reiterating the readiness of Georgian government to collaborate with the world to resolve climate change challenges. In accordance with the signed convention, the country aims to reduce emissions of CO₂ by 15-25% by 2030.

“The adverse impact that climate change can have on our ecosystem and economy drives Georgia’s commitment to sustainable, low emission development and motivates our increased efforts on adaptation,” noted Mr Gharibashvili in his speech at the conference.

In fact, climate change is particularly important for Georgia. The meteorological stations statistics shows an increase in average and extreme air temperature increase and change in rainfalls both in western and eastern Georgia. Studies in that direction have revealed particularly sensitive regions in Georgia: Black Sea coast, where there is a rise of sea level and increase in the storm rate and capacity; Lower Svaneti Region where one can observe soil erosion and increasing natural disasters such as floods, landslides, avalanches, heavy snow; as well as the Dedoplistskaro region where the desertification process has been intensified. Under these conditions, in accordance with the statistics, Georgia has become more prone to natural disasters, which are characteristic of climate change: strong and long rains, landslides, floods, avalanches, rivers dismounting banks and whirlwinds have become more common. The rise of the sea level has caused a marked intensification of storms and coast erosion, resulting in the destruction of coastlines and infrastructure.

Apparently, such a change of climate in Georgia is due to the relief of the country - the high mountains and abundant water resources, as well as proximity to the sea. All of this is negatively reflected in the areas of agricultural land and reduction of land fertility while elimination of the consequences of unforeseen natural disasters are becoming a heavy burden on the country’s economy. The latest such example being the floods which hit our capital city in June, taking 19 human lives and devastating Tbilisi zoo. The climate parameter forecasts shows that in



the future more dramatic changes are expected to come unless the action is taken today and now.

There are few steps already taken, few of them are in progress. Georgia’s massive hydropower potential allows the country to benefit from climate-friendly, renewable energy that is used for more than 80% of country’s electricity. Georgian government is currently working on creating long-term strategy that would enhance climate-friendly environment by reducing emission.

Also, National Appropriate Mitigation Actions plan is being developed that by the support of international donors aims to establish sustainable urban transport, Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings and Energy efficient wood stoves and solar collectors in rural areas- parts of which has already been implemented. The Government is also working on National Forest Policy that will encourage sustainable forest management and afforestation. Ministry of economy is currently working on creating National Energy Efficiency Action Plan that will concentrate on amalgamating renewable energy sources in country’s energy mix.

In order to take progressive action against climate change and implement sustainable development strategy, developing countries, such as Georgia need funding from its international partners- and much of the success in the process will depend on the finances that will be available.

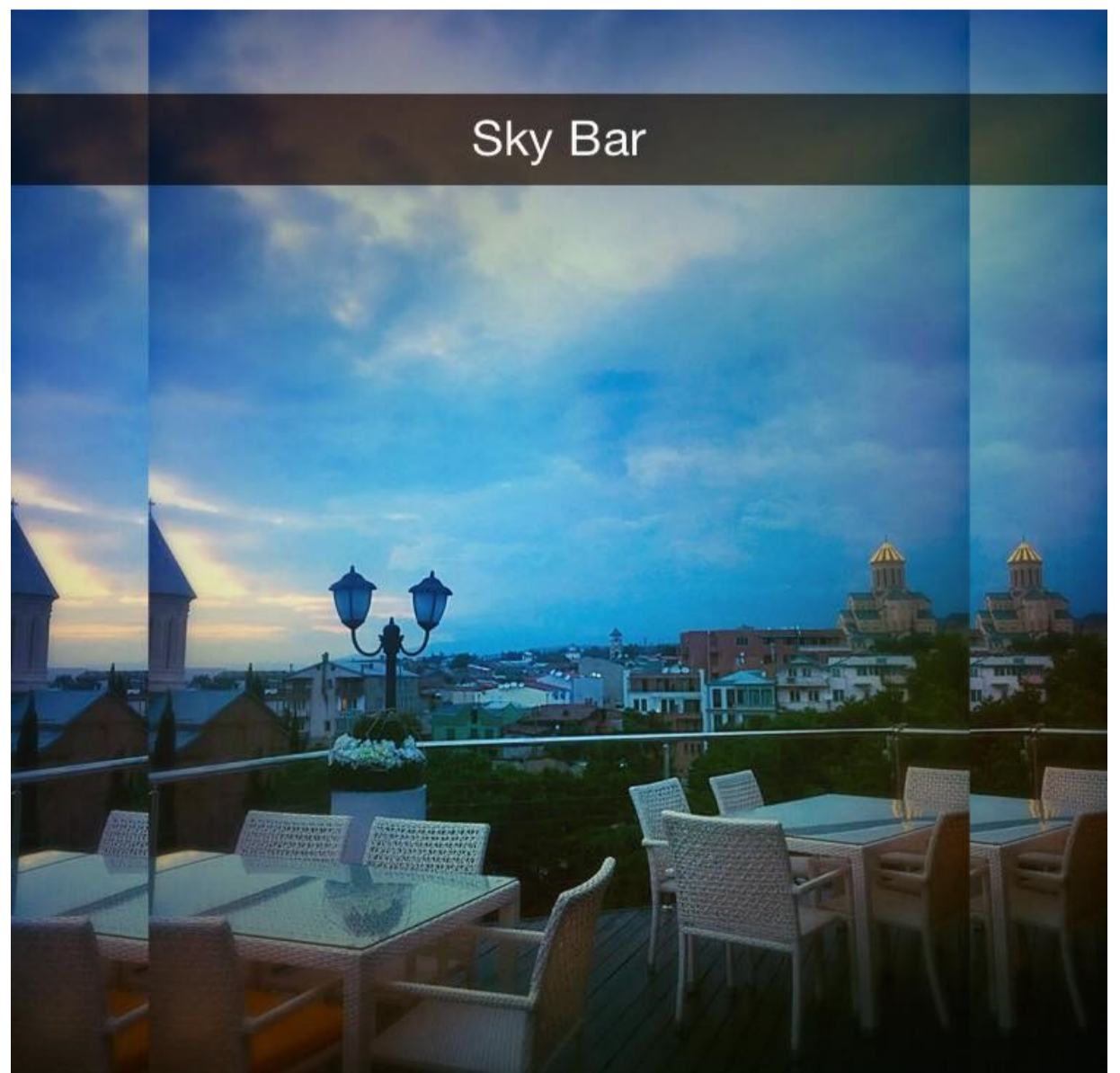
“Obviously, the effectiveness of GCF funding will greatly affect the performance of developing nations in achieving their INDC targets”

added Prime Minister.

Not surprisingly, there were disputes until the agreement was achieved from all participants.

Developing countries are concerned about the funding that they will be receiving in order to reduce emissions and deal with the climate

change issues at home. As for now, \$100 bn private and public finance funding is planned to be received by 2020.



2016 სასკოლო ოლიმპიადის



6 მარტი
10 საათი

პრიზები



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ბათუმი
ქუთაისი
რუსთავი
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- * ტესტირება მე-12 კლასელთათვის გაიმართება.
- * ტესტირება ჩატარდება ტექნიკურ და ჰუმანიტარულ საგნებში.
- * მონაწილეობა უფასოა.

GEORGIA'S EU VISA LIBERALIZATION ATTRACTS RESIDENTS OF ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA?!



TAMAR CHAPIDZE

The Georgian government has expressed its readiness to offer all benefits received from the EU Association Agreement to the people of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Before the Riga Summit, the government hoped that the visa-free regime with European Union member states would be attractive to inhabitants of the conflict zones, as their documents are considered illegal by the international community.

"Georgia will take a European visa-free travel regime, and we offer the Abkhaz and Ossetian people to take Georgian passports to travel in Europe. Also, we offer them a good education, better social conditions and a freedom to live with us in a better country", Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili declared in 2014 at Columbia University in the US.

It's noteworthy that the government tries to use so-called "soft power" to engage the breakaway regions. Georgian educational insti-

tutions are open to young people living in the conflict zones, where they can study for free. They receive a variety of other benefits as well.

Abkhazians and Ossetians have the opportunity to get medical treatment in Georgian hospitals. These people come for treatment for several reasons: the separatist regions do not have modern clinics, medical services in Georgia are relatively high quality, and they are able to receive treatment almost for free.

Local Ossetians face resistance from the de facto government. De facto President Leonid Tabilovis speaks about the necessity to abandon such practices. He is trying to pave the region's way into Russia. Besides, he issued a special order for South Ossetian patients to be transferred to Russian hospitals in time. Residents of the separatist regions, however, prefer to get treatment in Tbilisi and other Georgian cities.

The Georgian side offers much

more than just treatment. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs is committed to providing qualification and accommodation for doctors from the occupied zones in Georgia.

Against this background, visa liberalization with the EU is another incentive for the Abkhazian and Ossetian populations to have interest in cooperation with Georgia.

"I have close contacts with the society of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and I know that the visa-liberalization is being expected to receive more advantages from it. Every year 300-400 people are taking Georgian passports, their number will increase after the end of Georgia's visa-liberalization process", Paata Zakareishvili said.

It is clear that Georgia's European integration will be positively reflected in Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Ossetian relations. However, it is debatable whether this will move to the peaceful resolution of frozen conflicts. In this context, the

example of Moldova is often invoked.

Moldova received a visa-free regime with the European Union on April 28, 2014, which has significantly increased the interest of the inhabitants of Transdnistriain Moldovan passports. Overall, the 77,000 residents of the breakaway region of Moldova hold a biometric passport. From April 2014, approximately 27,000 Moldovan biometric documents have been requested. It should be noted that Moldova's inhabitants are actively engaged in taking Romanian passports, as they are more interested in working in the EU than in the three-month trip.

Moldovan statistics on biometric passports show that visa-free travel positively impacts the integration process of the conflict zones. The visa-free regime with the European Union is an incentive for separatist regions to reconsider their positions. The question remains unanswered, however, if the Moldovan

example fits the Georgian case. The government hopes this process will also have an influence on the Abkhaz and Ossetian peoples. The Georgian Parliamentary resolution of December 10 says that "the EU's visa-free regime will contribute to the population of the occupied territories - Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region and the well-being of the inhabitants of the integration, at the same time, it reveals the results of a fruitful partnership with the European Union and the European choice is indisputable benefits."

It is also noteworthy that the occupation line can create obstacles for the process of EU visa liberalization. But the West is well aware of the fact that one of the main reasons why Russia supports the separatists is to delay the Europeanization process of Eastern Partnership Countries. Considering the corresponding immigration scheme, the EU should not put visa liberalization on hold.

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GAZPROM DEEPENS IT'S ROLE IN THE GEORGIAN ENERGY SECTOR

GIORGI CHAPIDZE (BULGARIA)

Georgian Energy Minister Kakha Kaladze met Gazprom's chief executive officer Alexei Miller in Luxembourg on December 8. The two sides discussed the issue of the "North-South" pipeline supplying Armenia with natural gas by passing through Georgian territory. Georgia retains 10% of the total shipment as a transit fee. The meeting also included talks about the commercial delivery of Russian gas and extension of the existing transit agreement.

As stated by the minister, Gazprom's representative pointed out the possibility of supplying Armenia from the Iranian side, which would be detrimental to Georgian interests, as far as it loses its transit fee - 10% of total shipment. Georgia is able to receive a higher amount of gas for free as long as Armenian demand rises annually and it correspondingly reflects on Georgian share. For Gazprom's CEO and the Georgian minister, this is the third working meeting in the past three months. Consultations over a new agreement with Gazprom are due to conclude at the end of December.

According to data from the Ministry of Energy of Georgia, Azerbaijan provided 2.17 billion cubic meters in 2014, accounting for 87.1 percent of overall consumption and Russia shipped to Georgia 267.7 mcm (12.3 %), the remaining 0.6 % is from the other sources. The same trend continued in 2015.

According to the deputy Prime Minister, Georgian demand for natural gas has increased by 27% since 2012, creating 2.5 billion cubic meters in 2015. Kaladze argued that Georgia can't increase the shipped volume from Azerbaijan and, in order to fill the gap, cooperation with Gazprom is being discussed. Considering the Georgian market's growing demand for energy resources, import routes diversification is an absolute necessity at least until 2019 when Azerbaijan's "Shah Deniz II" pipeline will begin operating.

Georgia plans to cover the deficit by importing increased volumes of Russian gas. Deepening cooperation with Gazprom has received ambiguous responses, however. Representatives of the United National Movement (UNM) accused the Georgian Dream cabinet of high treason.

Growing dependence on Gazprom gas resources could lead to the following negative outcomes. Firstly, cooperation with Gazprom raises concerns in Azerbaijan, which is a stable energy partner for Georgia. Unlike Kaladze, Azerbaijani side argues that they can fulfil Georgian raising demand. Secondly, increasing Russia's share in



Georgia's supply is a threat to the country's energy security. Another topic is the possibility of providing Armenia with natural gas through Iran while Russia aims to fully purchase the "Iran-Armenian" gas pipeline. In this case, Georgia loses its 10% share from the "North-South" pipeline shipment and, if Azerbaijan doesn't provide the corresponding volume, Georgia would have to purchase it



from Gazprom.

According to Kaladze, Georgia should diversify its import routes and sources to ensure viable prices on the energy market. Gazprom's resources can help reduce the gap in supply, though cooperation with Iran is not to be excluded. This fact is not welcomed by Azerbaijan. It is important to mention that as Aliyev argued, Azerbaijan has more than enough resources to ensure its neighboring country's energy supply for 100 years, and, as stated by SOCAR representatives, the company can satisfy Georgia's growing need for natural gas.

In parallel to the Kaladze-Miller negotiations, Georgia needs to assert that Azerbaijan will remain its primary energy partner. During the meeting with Ilham Aliyev, President of Georgia Giorgi Margvelashvili stated that "Azerbaijan-Georgian relations would endure trials" and the two countries do not have to distinguish viewpoints about energy transit.

It is true that growing Russian share in Georgian energy system diversifies its import sources, albeit, at the same time, energy dependence on Russia increases. The Russian energy company's enlarged portion in the Georgian energy sector may damage the latter's energy security, while these entities are tools for the Kremlin to attain its foreign policy aspirations. As is happened in winter 2006, when Russia, irritated by Georgian government policy, terminated gas supplying. After that Georgia has succeeded in diminishing Russian companies' influence on its energy market and ensured stable energy supply mainly with the support of its staunch friend - Azerbaijan. However, in case of enlarged Russian share in Georgian energy sector, the sudden termination of its energy import to Georgia on account of political motives would prompt an energy shortage.

A year earlier, Rosneft purchased a 49% share in "Petrocas Energy Group", which owns the strategically important Poti sea port oil terminal. Owning this high storage capacity terminal enables Russia to increase its influence on the South Caucasus oil market. Taking into account that under the UNM government Russian companies purchased an important portion of the Georgian energy market - a 75% share of Telasi hydro energy stations Khrami I and II - deepening of Russia's role in the Georgian energy system violates the national interests of the small Caucasian state.

Therefore, the Georgian government is obliged not to forget the Kremlin's "energy diplomacy" and be cautious when signing upcoming agreements to preserve the state's energy security.

POTI FREE INDUSTRIAL ZONE PLANNING NEW INVESTMENTS

NINO SHARASHIDZE

Poti Free Industrial Zone, the first Free Industrial Zone in the region, was founded in 2008 by a governmental agency of the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, U.A.E. According to government resolution # 72, Poti Free Industrial Zone received a 99 year management concession from the Government of Georgia. The start date of the operation was November 15, 2010. Poti FIZ is spread over 3 million sqm where the majority of land is offered for industrial usage.

Like every major project, Poti FIZ has both its supporters and opponents.

Surveys conducted by international experts indicate that in terms of benefits for production, the tax-free industrial zone is quite positive.

"The total savings can be significant, especially for those companies who has large quantities of their inputs (customs tax savings), as well as for the export-oriented countries, as potential VAT benefit", as written in a report

by George Welton and Stephanie Comsa.

On the contrary, Georgian analysts argue that Poti FIZ has failed to meet any qualitative or quantitative indicators. They claim that it significantly lags behind the development of planned phases.

FIZ Deputy Director-General David Jebashvili partly shares the view of these experts. However, he claims that delays are caused by a variety of factors, including the economic crisis and the political tensions in the region.

"The main challenge for the company is external factors. Our business depends on the situation in the partner countries: Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Middle East, some of them facing financial problems, while the remaining countries have the political or economic instability in the country", said Jebashvili.

Despite these difficulties, the company is developing and its profits are increasing every year. The number of implemented projects is also growing.

Poti FIZ has already carried out \$27 million in investments since its inception in October 2015. As regards investments made by investor companies, they consisted of approximately \$17 million as of October 2015.

As of November 5 of this year, Poti FIZ has 85 operating companies, 80 percent of which are involved in export. The total number of employees is 380.

Poti FIZ has experienced stable growth during recent years and currently more than 100 operating companies from different parts of the world continue to enjoy numerous benefits and are expanding their businesses there. Investors represent various sectors such as manufacturing of chemical products, spirits and perfume ingredients and production of building materials, warehousing, international and regional trading, and other activities.

Poti Free Industrial Zone offers a full range of tax incentives to companies who work in the zone. Companies registered there are free

from all tax liabilities according to the law, including income, property, customs and value-added tax (VAT).

David Jebashvili notes that Poti was selected as a FIZ area specifically for its strategic and logistical location. It is adjacent to one of the most important ports on the Black sea – Poti Sea Port. Poti Sea Port is one of the oldest (150 years) and most famous ports on the Black Sea, handling both dry and wet cargos. It's a profitable port which is currently expanding. This is very important for business development.

The deputy Director of the company said that the main factor that attracts foreign investors is the location, as it is a hub where Europe meets Asia and the Silk Road area. On the other hand, it is the tax exemption status. "Foreign investors are attracted by tax breaks and business management with exceptional ease of use can be achieved for the registered companies. These factors have led to the UAE-based companies interested

initially, followed by further investments by the other countries of Asia, Europe and the United States."

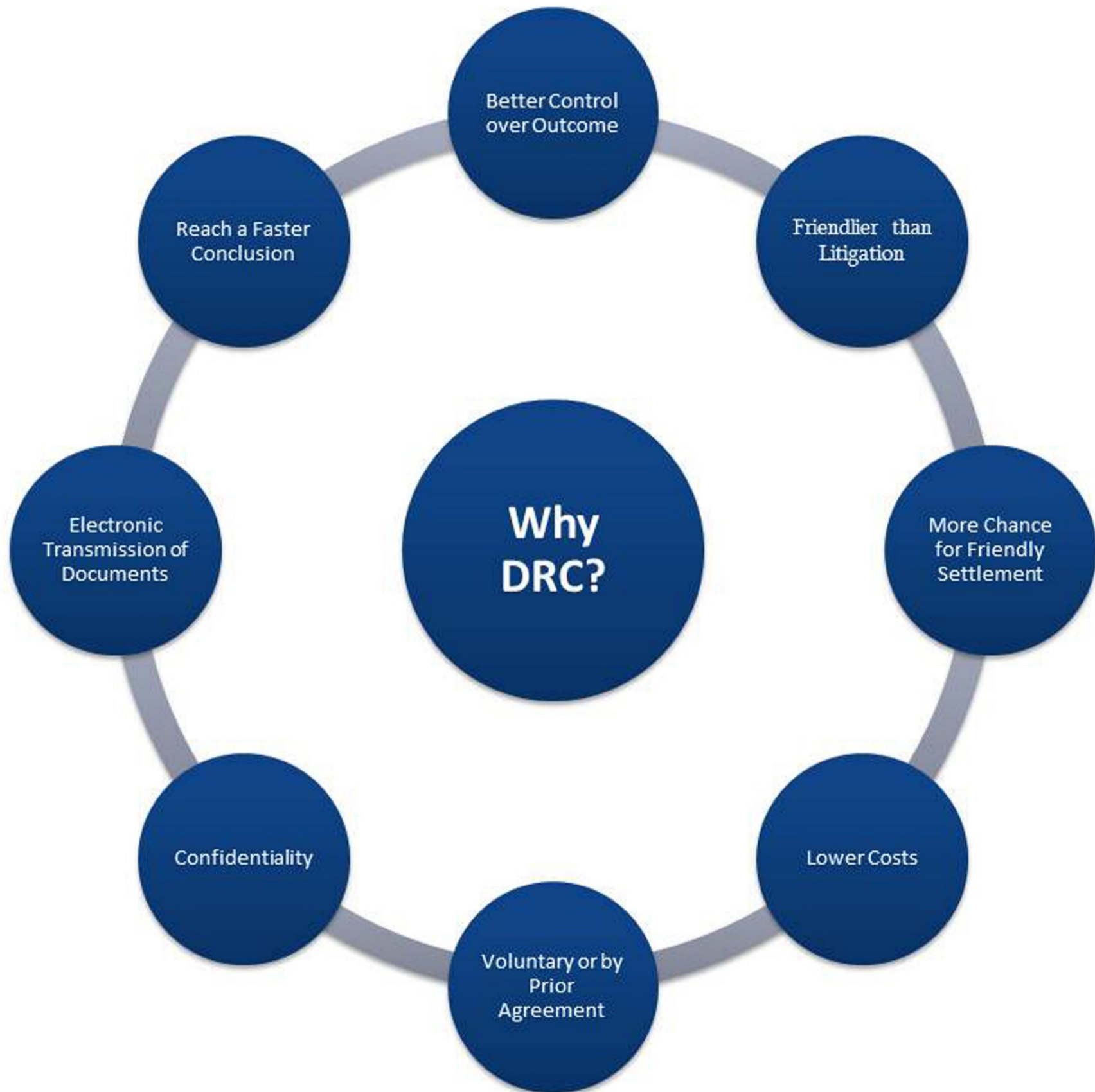
Jebashvili said the company plans new investments in infrastructure next year. In addition, registered companies in FIZ also have a number of large investment plans. For example, the British company AG Terminal System is planning one of the largest projects in Georgia. Forty thousand sqm of warehouse structure alcohol production is also expanding, and many new projects are being planned.

"We can proudly say that in case of full load of the FIZ, the region will be involved in its implementation, which will employ hundreds of people, and the benefits will be reflected in each family. It should also be noted, that Poti FIZ is consistent with the EU regulations and the position expressed by analysts that the EU will not accept Georgia as a member due to having FIZ is without any serious ground."





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WHAT CAUSED THE INFLATION RATE TO RISE IN GEORGIA?

TAMTA ASLANISHVILI

New data published by the National Statistics Office of Georgia on December 3 shows that the current inflation rate is 6.3%.

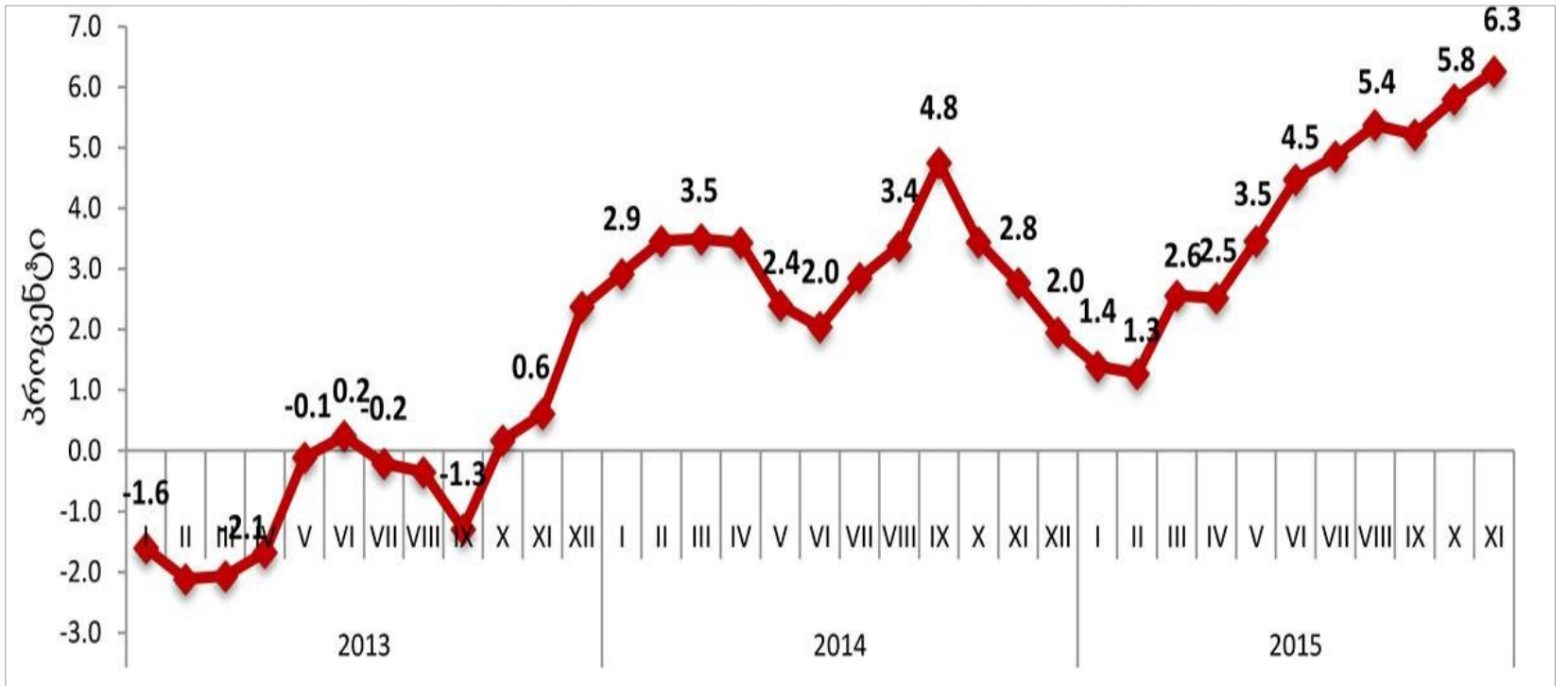
Reports say that the annual inflation rate was mainly attributable to changes in the prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages, medicines, electricity and other forms of heating.

Compared with last year, prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages increased by 5.2 percent over the 12-month period. Prices have significantly increased for fruit and grapes (22.9 percent), oils and fats (15.3 percent) and coffee, tea and cocoa (10.2 percent). Prices also increased on medical products, appliances and equipment by 28.3 percent. Electricity, natural gas and other fuels saw an 11.2 percent rise in prices.

The National Bank predicts that prices will continue to increase on products and will peak in January.

"Inflation is slightly over the target rate, it was predictable, we were mentioning it in the August report. Inflation is expected to reach its peak in the first quarter of next year and in the second half of the year it will be regulated", said president of the National Bank, Giorgi Kadagidze. He also noted that in case there will be a necessity to tighten monetary policy, the National Bank will definitely do so.

Minister of Economy Dmitry Qumsishvili agrees with the President of the National Bank, saying



that "in the first quarter of 2016, inflation rate is expected to continue upwards, but it will return to its normal figure from the second quarter of the year, he said, most of the inflation is in the grocery direction."

Irina Guruli, Project Manager at Economic Policy Research Center, says that Georgia's inflation rate is mainly due to national currency depreciation, which led to a rise in prices of imported goods and the rising cost of production of intermediate costs. At the same time, infla-

tion was affected by the single growth of electricity prices. The National Bank expects inflation to peak in the first quarter of next year and will reach the target rate (5 percent) in the second half of the year.

Price stability is the prerogative of the National Bank. To this end, it tightened the monetary policy rate to 7.5 percent and, in case of need, will increase the refinancing rate. The Bank's next meeting will be held on December 16.

Ruling party MP Tamaz Mechiauri claims that control of the

inflation rate is the direct function and responsibility of the National Bank. "Six percent is not a disaster and I would rather wait for further developments now, because we are not dependant on the economic indicators inside the country, but how outside factors will be developed. That is why, I avoid to make any predictions", - says Mechiauri. Economic expert Roman Gotsiridze said the main reasons for inflation in Georgia are the devaluation of the national currency.

"The government washes his

hands and says that the devaluation of national currency is caused by the price increase on products. Then what made currency to devalue? Both external factors and internal errors are the reason of this problem, especially in the government's economic policy, which does not contribute to economic growth. The government imposes excessive regulations, which leads businesses to be compressed, and most importantly the wrong budgetary policy, which directly affects the prices", said Gotsiridze.

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HOW ARE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTED IN GEORGIAN LAW?



KETEVAN KARBAIA

International Human Rights Day is celebrated on December 10 each year. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was issued 65 years ago, is not a legally binding document and is only advisory in nature. However, its protection by almost all countries of the international customary law of action contains binding standards. The world is once again united to achieve human rights and freedoms for further development of fundamental principles. "Our rights, our freedoms-always" –this is the main message of the year according to a decision of the UN Human Rights High Commissioner. The message is addressed to all those who have the ambition, the motivation and the means to create a healthy environment for citizens in which to defend fundamental rights, which grant everyone a quality life, not just existence. There is no doubt that fundamental human rights and freedoms have permanent and supreme value. However, the ideological essence is the only legal means available to the state government. Under the limited powers principle, the government has limited powers under the law and the citizen has the right to all actions that the law does not prohibit.

Naturally, it was difficult for post-Soviet Georgia to develop

democratic rules. Despite challenges and barriers, the country now has a full-fledged civil society.

Human rights and freedoms are outlined in the EU-Georgia Association Agreement document. It is 1,000 pages and includes 300 articles of legislation that should be in conformity with EU laws. The third chapter completely covers the area of freedom, security and justice issues. It contains norms for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The agreement deals with Georgia's European aspirations and the common

values on which the European Union sets as a prerequisite for the development of any democratic state.

The issue of human rights is underlined in the visa liberalization action plan. The document requires the government to implement laws on personal data protection issues, to ensure data protection and efficient functioning of the independent supervisory body, anti-discrimination legislation and implementation of training programs to raise awareness of data protection, and an ethics code and

guidelines to be followed by the relevant authorities and officials.

On December 10, 2015, the Public Defender of Georgia presented this year's report on human rights and freedoms to representatives of the diplomatic corps, international organizations and civil society.

Ucha Nanuashvili termed the election of Georgia as a member of the Human Rights Council at the plenary session of the UN General Assembly "a significant event."

The report states that investigation into thousands of inmates' complaints concerning torture and inhuman and degrading treatment is still pending, and except for few cases, no real results can be seen with regard to these systemic violations of human rights.

Nanuashvili also highlighted the issue of Rustavi 2 TV and noted that we witnessed the court's unjustified interference with the freedom of expression.

Achieving gender equality remains a problem in the country; in particular, women's political and economic activities are low and the scale of violence against women and domestic violence are alarming. The state of child's rights, including the high rate of child mortality and poverty, is still alarming and worrying.

Resettlement of refugees and their dangerous living conditions, as well as employment, safety and

movement of the conflict-affected population remain serious challenges for the country. The restriction of the right to receive education in one's native language in Gali district is especially alarming.

The social conditions of the elderly are poor and the inclusiveness of the education system is problematic. Homophobic attitude towards LGBT persons, as well as timely and effective investigation of hate crimes, also remain problems.

The Ombudsman notes that, despite several recommendations, the state has not taken effective steps toward labor inspection for the monitoring of the protection of labor rights.

EU Ambassador to Georgia Janos Herman reviewed the steps taken in the country in terms of protection of human rights. He particularly highlighted the ongoing process of elimination of legislative shortcomings, including the liberal amendments made to the Juvenile Justice Code.

The issues discussed above illustrate the essence of the fundamental importance of human rights and independence. The steps taken by a number of reforms that are being implemented in order to protect our citizens' constitutional rights should be appreciated, but there is still a long way to go toward guaranteeing equal rights to all citizens to live in a free country.



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THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE SEEKING MEDICAL TREATMENT ABROAD

MARIAM TARIELASHVILI (TURKEY)

Medical tourism is growing more popular. People often travel to other countries to receive better medical treatment. Sometimes, however, they end up with negative results. International medical tourism expert Paata Ratiani says that before departure, one should have a consultation with a specialist.

What does the term “Medical Tourism” mean?

Medical tourism has a long history. Humans have travelled all over the world to get various types of medical services since ancient times. There were known places where various illnesses were cured, whether it was a famous healer or a natural health source. Modern medical tourism is different, however. It can best be defined as the process of travelling outside one's country of residence for the purpose of receiving medical care. There are local, regional, and global types of medical tourism. In some cases, patients receive services remotely through telemedicine, which is also a variety of medical tourism. There is educational medical tourism too, where medical staff travel for qualification, practice and other purposes.

The development of modern medical tourism is driven by three major factors: health care quality, availability and price.

Which procedures are required for treatment abroad?

First, consultation is free of charge. This requires pre-recording. It is not necessary to come in person for the consultation, but it is desirable to have the patient's medical history (Form 100), and other existing medical documentation, including CD analysis. A patient receives comprehensive information about the characteristics of modern medical tourism, the current situation, opportunities for Georgian patients, specifics and other nuances necessary for making a conscious decision based on professional advice. Proper planning is a necessary part of the process. It's also important to properly manage the post-treatment period and get medical and financial reports after returning home.

How much does treatment cost abroad?

Each case is individual and it is impossible to determine the exact price with only a diagnosis and brief description of the problem. Determining the intended treatment program and its cost is possible after the application of the patient. However, one should know that this is a preliminary calculation and changes to the program can cause price volatility. Approximate prices are as follows: Turkey: \$100-200 consulting experts; \$1000-4000 diagnostic packages; \$500-800 computed tomography; and \$1000 MR Research.

In Turkey, special sales are possible for our partners. Patients who come to our clinics are more protected from a financial point of view, as well as in other ways - in terms of monitoring, for example.



For Germany and Israel, health care costs are about 30-40% more expensive, and that is added to the non-medical costs (which in Turkey are free). These include transfers, translators, patients and accompanying persons during the full patronage. Turkish prices are roughly similar to alternative European areas (Spain, Italy and Poland, for example). India can provide cheaper service than Turkey.

Why would you recommend treatment in Turkey to patients?

Treatment in Turkey is the most affordable alternative for those who are unable to receive proper medical care in Georgia or are dissatisfied with the quality. Turkey combines low prices for medical diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of the best quality. Many clinics own JCI (Joint Commission International) accreditation. All of these services are free in Turkish clinics: free transfer from the airport (and back), free interpreter services and patronage during the visit. It should be noted that at present a large Turkish medical

center made an unprecedented breakthrough in modern medical technologies. Doctors have Western education and have practiced in European or US medical schools and hospitals. They are constantly upgrading their qualifications in Western centers.

Is it possible to get financial funding from public or private sectors?

Nowadays, financial support is only possible if the patient cannot be required for medical care in Georgia. The proper medical report confirming the necessity of manipulation from specialists / experts is required, as well as the fact that the procedure will go through a foreign clinic. However, even in this case, funds are limited. Unfortunately, patients who want financial support for a better quality of treatment abroad cannot receive funding from the state or private funds.

What risks are related to these processes?

Difficulties and problems of course can arise. This follows from the fact that the pre-planned program can be changed because of the

need for additional procedures, and such changes could require additional time, which is connected with costs. So I think it is necessary to take these risks into account for patients. I would advise them to connect with official organizations in order to avoid unexpected problems.

Why should patients make a decision on treatment abroad? With Georgia moving forward in this area, why should we make the choice in favor of a foreign country?

Nowadays, the world is globally increasing the international flow of patients. This is caused by different reasons. Specifically in the case of Georgia, the main reason is a desire for high quality medical care or other services which are not held in Georgia at this time or are insufficiently developed. That is the driving factor which is increasing the flow of patients from Georgia abroad. However, the picture is very different in different countries; to some countries, people travel because of the lower cost of service. Their main priority is to save

money. Another example can be that the waiting period in their countries is too long and they want faster service (E.g. the Nordic countries). In conclusion, these are the results of globalization. There are imbalances between different countries – particularly between health care settings, prices, availability and quality. This gives rise to different markets for medical services in other countries. We cannot change this. So it depends on the patient's decision where they want to receive health services, and why.

For patients from the occupied territories, can their medical needs be one reason to pay more attention to medicine in Georgia?

This is really welcome. The state is interested in this issue. For patients from the occupied territories (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), medical services are free of charge, and their low quality of medical services naturally leads to greater demand for treatment abroad, specifically in Georgia. Free services, of course, contribute to the recovery of relations. For the future perspective of medicine in Georgia, the chance of European patients coming to Georgia for treatment is unthinkable. However, we have the opportunity to be a regional center, the so-called “hub”, where in the first place, patients from less-developed regions can be treated: around the neighbourhood and even from the North Caucasus, which has a serious lack of a medical quality. We can be their center, contributing to the development of local medicine and economic growth.

Do you have any plans for young doctors and students to receive an internship or master's degree?

We have internship programs periodically, but because of the lack of knowledge of foreign languages as well as financial problems, this project is practically not functioning.





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TBILISI HOSTS THE EXHIBITION OF ARTIFACTS OF ANCIENT GEORGIAN MONASTERY IN CYPRUS

NINI MACHAVARIANI

Artifacts discovered in Galia at a X-XVI century Georgian monastery in Cyprus exhibited at TBC Gallery. The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, earlier this year extended funding for archeological works in Galia Monastery from the State's reserve fund. From September 29 to October 10, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage carried out restoration and conservation works on the site. At the same time, they held a topo-geodetic survey of the temples, as well as architectural and 3D scanning.

Galia monastery is located in the western part of Cyprus near the city of Polis in the Paphos region. Information about the monastery is protected by Georgian historical sources. In 2006-2010, archaeologists found that the monastery existed there from 10th century until the 16th century. The artifacts presented at the exhibition include fragments of wall paintings, ceramics, glass, metal and bone material and coins – all of which are kept in the Museum of Archaeology of the city Polis.

George Gagoshidze (the head of the documenting and recording department at Cultural Heritage Protection Agency) in an exclusive interview with Observer notes that Galia complex was discovered in 1981 by Georgian scientist Vakh-tang Jobadze, who was exploring the monuments of different regions.



He identified the statue and found that the placement of the Georgian monastery.

In 2001, Patriarch Ilia II was visiting the monastery complex in Cyprus when he decided to study the archeological ruins. A Georgian clergyman in Cyprus- Father Zakaria Pheradze –has been appointed head of the project.

In 2006, the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sports allocated money for archaeological study of the monastery. The head was Iulon Gagoshidze, who in 2006 brought a fairly large group of Georgians to Cyprus, including archaeologists, restorers, artists and others. Also among them were students who were members of the youth organization examining such issues.

A large-scale archaeological excavation was carried out lasting until 2010. Six archaeological campaigns were conducted in a few years, working without rest. The complex is now fully excavated, revealing the temple of Mother of God as well as St. George's temple in the north. Identifying these structures was the easy part, as a fresco was discovered depicting St. George. A small chapel with Georgian inscriptions was also found.

"It was determined that with this architectural style this was the only monastery in Cyprus, but in Georgia and Tao Klarjeti this type of temples prevailed"- said George

Gagoshidze.

Archaeological excavations have also revealed that Galia monastery was built in the 10th century by King David III Kurapalati.

The monastery complex existed for six centuries. It seems that there was a literary center near the monastery, and it indicates XII-

XIII century monastery name – Ioane Mtsignobari. It is also known that two kilometers from the monastery there was a place for priests to remain alone. Here the nuns wrote and translated Psalms in the XI - XII centuries. This place was a two-storey building, with the first floor being the monks' burial chamber. "We found the bones of a hundred individuals" - recalls Gagoshidze.

The art historian notes that in 2011 the church was conserved and in 2013 was roofed. In 2015 it was conserved for the second time.

"As for the artefacts, this time only a very small part were delivered in Georgia, total of 131 exhibits (restoration made Cyprus side), this amount is quantitatively equal to one percent of the whole artifacts" - Gagoshidze said. As it turns out all these materials are owned by the museum in Polis. It has been declared that museum space will increase so that it can display artifacts discovered in the monastery. It is noteworthy that there is no other Georgian monument abroad that has been studied so well.

Those willing to visit the exhibition have a unique opportunity to view artifacts in Tbilisi by December 25.

From 2016, a new phase of archaeological excavations is planned, and, as a group of scientists claim, there is still much more to discover.



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IRAKLI CHARKVIANI HOLOGRAM – A CONCERT THAT WILL REMAIN TO HISTORY

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გელა ჩარკვიანი

NINI MACHAVARIANI

A concert dedicated to the memory of Irakli Charkviani will be held on December 15 at Tbilisi Concert Hall. The name of the concert, "it will stay in history", is as ambitious as the singer himself. Participants include famous local musicians: Niaz Diasamidze, Pecho, Utsnobi, Vake Park, Nika Kacharovi, David Evgenidze, Eko Deisadze, Sophie Villy, LOUDspeakers, The Window, The Mins, Kung Fu Junkie, MAO, Jetbird, Kakadu, Geronimo, Robbie Khukhianidze, Ketato and Gela Charkviani.

For this concert, the first time in Georgian history organizers produced Irakli Charkviani's virtual image (hologram). Hence, one of the hits will be performed by the singer himself.

The event organizer and the author of the idea is the foundation "autograph." Founder Giga Kobaladze said that it took about 6 months to produce the hologram. The song to be performed is still kept confidential and will be a surprise for the audience. He added that, unfortunately, there will be no live broadcast.

"The title of the concert 'It will stay in history', we took from Irakli's song, because it is the historical event as this the first attempt to revitalize the Georgian musician holograms" Kobaladze said.

Kobaladze also explained that making the hologram requires a huge amount of money; therefore, only one track will be presented this way. "The hologram of a musician, as I have already mentioned, is the first one not only for us, but for the Georgian reality."

Irakli Charkviani was born on November 19, 1961 to the family of well-known political and public

figure Gela Charkviani and his wife Nana Toidze. Irakli had a sister, Helen, who recalls that in childhood Irakli wrote poetry and listened to music that their father created and mother played.

"Irakli was very virtuous and kind. He loved people and animals. Animals have always been something special for him. He preferred to sit at home and think a lot. He drew very well. Shortly before his death he said: I have so many melodies in my head, I do not know what to do", recalled Teona Charkviani.

Irakli was only 18 years old when he married for first time – to Katie Qobulia. His second wife was a ballet dancer a friend of his sister. He met his future wife in Gagra and three days was enough to marry her. Lena and Irakli had a boy named Maxime.

His third wife Ketato is a singer, and, despite the 17-year age difference, they deeply loved each other. The love came two years after they met each other. But before, Ketato went at stage and kissed his favorite singer. Irakli joked that "Ketato became my wife so, that I could not realize." They complemented each other, learning and helping others to learn. Irakli described this love in the character Fatima of his book "Seven swimming". Irakli and Ketato have a daughter named Nana.

Irakli wanted to write words that all of us could understand. He wanted to share a house where all of us could live. He blazed the light that made us warm. He brought the water that we wanted to drink, and we were drinking it without understanding the taste. He knew that people were fed by words and listened to such songs that even the "King" could not deny. He was asked to sing old songs. Neverthe-

less, he insisted on singing a new one.

Interestingly, in almost in all songs he used a Chinese tea pot full of rice. Irakli sang about the problems that concern all of us. He spoke and sang about Georgia, society, people and love with irony, cynicism and sometimes even with extra seriousness, and sometimes with aggression and indifference. He knew that people might not understand, but he believed that future generations would.

Irakli Charkviani is known as a "King", the name he gave himself at the age of 43. He was a musician, poet and an author of a book. His musical career started in 1976 with the group "Arish". Since then he has

changed a lot of groups and took part in many grand concerts. Even after his death, the King is still with us; his songs have immortalized his name.

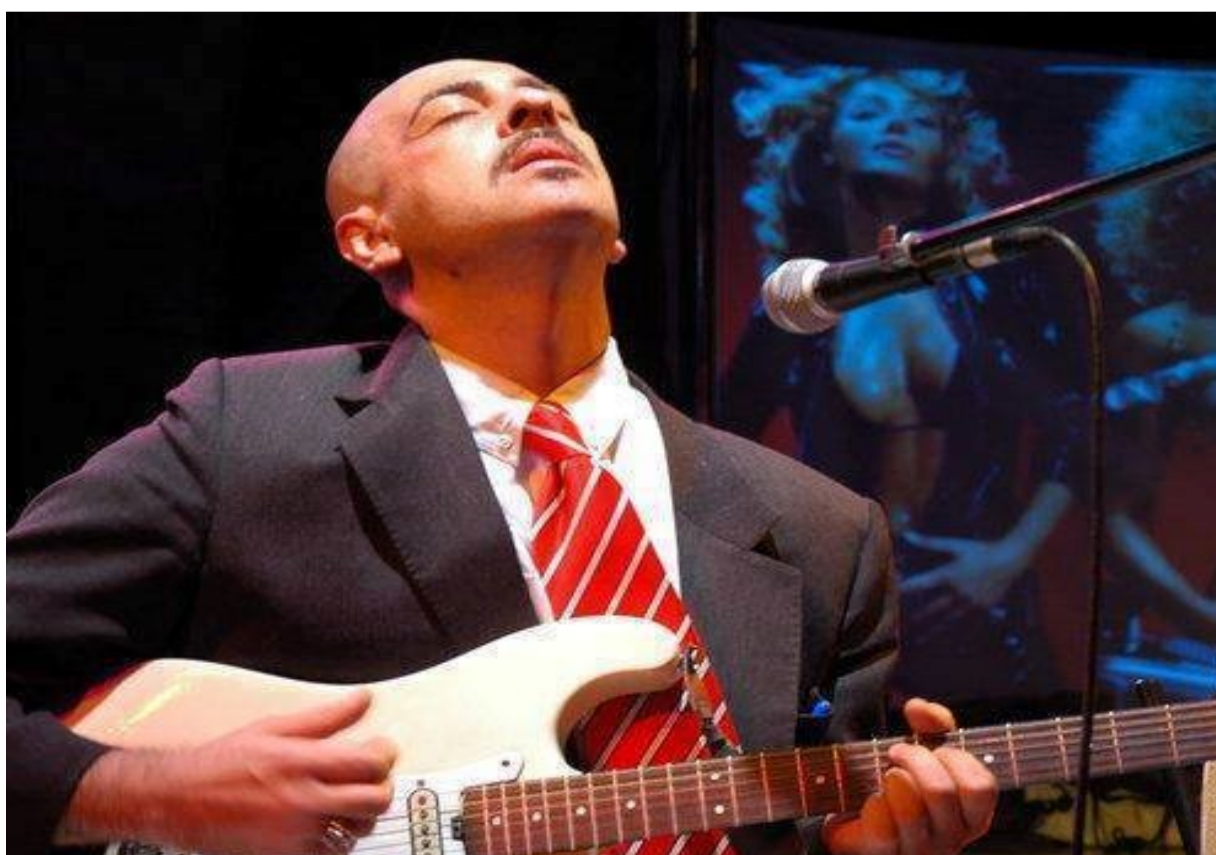
His first solo performance was a song "War is Over", his first solo album "Svan Songs" was published in 1993, and the second studio album - "You are Crazy" in 1999. "Amo" appeared in 2001. Interestingly, he worked on a lot of new songs at his home studio and at the same time made a lot of interesting videos. During this period he chose his pseudonym "King."

On 24 February 2006 the musician died at his home. A year later, a special album dedicated to his memory was released by well-

known musicians: the group "33A", "green room", "Outsider", "Vake Park", "The Young Georgian lollitaz", "Zumba" and other performers. His tribute album was called a "Paper boat".

Irakli Charkviani is more appreciated by the youth now. Tbilisi State University student Giorgi Areshidze notes that for him, Irakli Charkviani is the greatest King in all history.

"A lot of resistance he showed to the public, especially during the period of the Jeans Generation", says Ia Sartania. According to Nini Khuskia, Irakli was a boundless optimist which was demonstrated by his creativity and his great song: "I will swim out the sea".



YOUNG ANALYSTS DISCUSS NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES



On November 29 the analytical prediction center Oxygen of Democracy, together with Caucasus University, organized a seminar for young analysts titled “Challenges of National Security”.

Because of the topic’s relevance, almost 100 students expressed interest in participating in the seminar. After the evaluation, 20 students were selected. In the frame of this project, they’ll have the chance to spread their opinions through analytical articles and predictions. A system will present their skills/possibilities, which will spark interest in the young leaders from the side of government, the private sector and different institutions.

Oxygen of Democracy also provides support by recommending them to their partner organizations abroad: Morgan Academy and Spenser Fund.

Participants had the possibility to get information regarding the challenges of national security of Georgia from highly-qualified researchers and professionals in the field. The experts include Mr. George Gvalia – dean at Ilia State University, Mr. Zurab Agladze – researcher, representative of Georgian Analytical Council and former rector of the National Defense Academy, Mr. Shalva Dzebisashvili – an expert at national security and researcher at Brussels Free University and Mr. Lasha Darsalia - Di-

rector at Security and Analytical Department at Council of Security. Each shared their experience and knowledge with the young generation.

Participants in the seminar discussed the Georgia-Russian relationship, the main challenges for national security and strategies for Georgia’s integration into NATO. The workshop lasted the whole day. During the workshop, participants were able to involve themselves in discussions and simulations regarding the planning of national security policy, measuring existing and expected risks and creating a scheme to avoid threats. The seminar concerning the environment of national security was attended by

students and graduates of Georgian and foreign universities.

“This seminar is the part of the cycle and it’s for the young generation to become experts in different fields and to learn the necessary skills how to make prediction, forecasts on the base of analysis. The first workshop was initially held on the topic of national security, it is the most important for our country and for the world (especially now, on the light of recent events)” - said Levan Jashi, the founder of the organization, to Observer. He believes that this young generation will make suggestions to the government in different fields in the future.

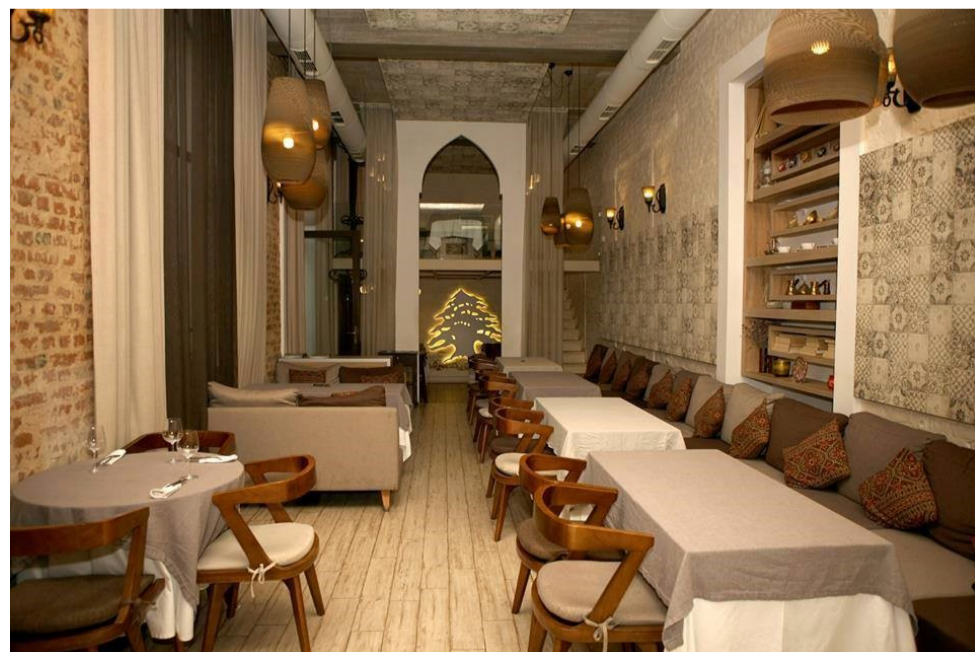
Oxygen of Democracy is an analytical prediction agency set up

on the model of leading international agencies (ex: www.politifact.com and www.stratfor.com). The agency also includes social research in different directions and intends to create a group of experts on the basis of the Stratfor model.

The goal of the organization is to support the new generation and development of state institutions in Georgia, which will make it a worthy partner of the US. The organization aims to form a young, pro-American mainstream in the region. Therefore, he is planning to bring young leaders closer to the Western circles, which will help them to realize their resources on the wider arena.

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GREAT AND HISTORIC VICTORY REPEATS AT JIGORO KANO AFTER 33 YEARS

VAKO KIPIANI

33 years have passed since Georgian David Bodaveli defeated a Tokyo judo school foun-der at the Jigoro Kano tournament. In 1981-1982, Bodaveli passed this prestigious tournament, but managed to win only once.

In 2014, Levan Matiashvili (+100) reached the final, but was defeated as well.

Fortunately, we had to wait only a year after the defeat of Matiashvili. In 2015 the winner of Jigoro Kano was Avtandil Chrikishvili (81).

Chrikishvili, in the first meeting, defeated host Keita Nagashima. Georgian wrestled with the Japanese for five minutes and defeated rival waza-ari.

In 8th final, Chrikishvili defeated Dutch judoka Frank De Vits. He defeated his opponent 31 seconds before the end.

In the quarterfinal, Avto's opponent was a Greek, Roman Mastopulos. It took one minute and 58 seconds for the Georgian judo-ist to defeat Mastopulos. The Greek attempted to trick Avto, but Chrikishvili did not allow his



opponent to do so and rather made him fall down.

He won the last two meetings with warnings, defeating the Koreans in both the final and semi-final.

However, this does not diminish his victory. Chrikishvili showed top-class wrestling. He defeated Korean Chun Wang in the semi-final and Lee Seunguin the final.

The final was tense. Chrikishvili, with clever wrestling and great defense, made opponent receive two warnings and, after a 33-year pause, Georgian judoka won the

Jigoro Kano again.

It should be noted that in the remaining weight categories only hosts won. Chrikishvili was the only foreigner to win a gold medal in the 2015 at Jigoro Kano. Unfortunately, only the bronze medal of Nugzar Tatalashvili added Chrikashvili's gold medal. Other judokas could not stand on the pedestal.

To win the third place in 73 kg category Nugzar Tatalashvili met with Lasha Shavdatuashvili. As mentioned above, Tatalashvili won a bronze medal by defeating Lasha waza-ari.

Lukhum Chkvimiani and Amiran Papinashvili (60) won only one tournament.

Ushangi Margiani, a rival of Avto, was defeated by Lee Seunguin the quarterfinals.

The very first meetings saw the losses of Varlam Liparteliani and Adam Okruashvili.

Beka Gviniashvili took fifth place in a new weight category (100). Levan Matiashvili (+100) also took fifth place.

The Georgian team took second place, with Japan being the winner.

WEEKLY SPORT NEWS

VAKO KIPIANI



Football: Saba Kvirkvelia's Rubin Kazan has tapped in his group at Europa League. Kazan held its last match in France against Bordeaux and made a draw 2:2. The player's team took third place in the group. First place was taken by British Liverpool and coming second was FC Sion of Switzerland.

Football: Apoel, trained by Temur Ketsbaia and relegated to Europa League, was defeated by

Sparta of Prague 1:3. The score was opened by Apoel team member Fernando Cavenaghi, but with the last double of David Lafata, the Prague team turned the game around and won. Ketsbaia's team has won only one match out of six and is in last place with 3 points.



Football: Tbilisi Dinamo is winter Champion. Giga Geguchadze's team in the 15th tour defeated Shukura in Kobuleti Chele Arena 3:1 and finished the first part of the championship with 40 points.

Basketball: Zaza Pachulia continues his successful play in the NBA. In Atlanta versus Dallas, the Mavericks' center scored 11 points and grabbed 17 rebounds. Dallas lost the game 95:98.

Basketball: Beka Burjanadze helped Leyma Basquet win another match. In the Spain Division tour, Galician hosted Caceres and defeated its opponent by 12, 87:75. Beka provided a great performance in 27 minutes, scoring 26 points and 10 rebounds for the double-double.

Basketball: Manuchar Markoishvili's Darussafaka was defeated by 28 points against CSKA (66:94). Darussafaka needs to win its last match in order to stay in the group. Markoishvili was in the



lineup and played 14 minutes. His two-pointer missed the basket. The Georgian guard finished with 1 rebound, 1 assist, 1 steal and 1 turnover.

Rugby: For the Presidency of Georgian Rugby Union, the two

candidates were Giorgi Nizharadze and Irakli Abuseridze. The deadline for registration was December 11. Registration passed with current president of Georgian Rugby Union and former Captain of Lelo Irakli Abuseridze keeping the job.



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