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PM phones with Secretary Pompeo



US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo and the Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Gakharia.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Gakharia and the United States Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo talked over the phone and as the press service of the government's administration informs, they discussed the basic matters of a strategic partnership between two countries. The conversation was held with regard to postponement of a plenary session of Georgia-US strategic partnership charter, which would be held under the guidance of PM Gakharia and Secretary Pompeo, in Washington. The

reason for the postponement was COVID-19 pandemic and the sides expressed hopes the plenary session would be held till the end of the year.

Press service of the government's administration shared an official statement, which read that the sides discussed common challenges of the global pandemic as well as the dynamic of two countries' strategic partnership development.

The statement notes that the PM once again thanked the US for strengthening the Georgian Healthcare system for years, including the creation of the Lugar

Research Center and for the support during the pandemic. Gakharia also stressed the US's multilateral assistance, which is a basis of the two countries' firm strategic partnership.

According to the statement, the PM highlighted Pompeo's personal support in the direction of Georgia's safety and democratic development and noted that he would gladly host Secretary Pompeo on an official visit to Georgia.

The statement reads that the PM discussed the biggest challenge of the country with Secretary Pompeo, which is the occupation of Georgian land

and severe conditions on the occupied territories. The PM provided the State Secretary with detailed information on Russia's continuous aggressive actions, despite the COVID infection, in particular, the facts of kidnapping and arresting ethnic Georgians.

The US State Secretary once again confirmed the US's firm support towards Georgia's sovereignty and territorial unity. He stated on his official Twitter page that "We will always support Georgia's sovereignty in the face of Russian occupation."

The statement of the press service states the process of Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration to have been discussed during the telephone conversation. PM highlighted that Georgia is a reliable partner of the USA, NATO and EU in the region of the Black Sea. Intensification of the partnership between the US and Georgia in economic direction was also talked about.

During the telephone conversation, the State Secretary of the US stressed the participation of Georgian soldiers in NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan and highlighted their exceptional professionalism.

As Secretary Pompeo mentioned in his official twitter statement, the sides also spoke on the importance of holding free, fair and transparent elections in Georgia this October.

The PM mentioned during that the government has taken into consideration the important parts of OSCE's electoral recommendations. Gakharia highlighted the role of Ambassador Kelly Degnan's involvement in the improvement of the electoral process and noted that the diplomat has been making a very significant contribution in strengthening strategic partnerships and bilateral relationships between the US and Georgia.



According to the press service of the government's administration, Secretary Pompeo provided a highly positive assessment of the effective steps made by the government of Georgia during the pandemic.

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National Democratic Institute.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

NDI released results of the poll which reflects data collected between June 26-30 of 2020, through telephone interviews with Georgia's adult population, excluding occupied territories. According to NDI, participants were selected by using a random-digit-dial method. The survey is funded by UK aid from the British people and the poll was carried out for NDI by CRRC Georgia.

According to NDI, the main goals of the research are to help key stakeholders fight disinformation campaigns; To help respond to the public's con-

cerns; To understand the communication ecosystem and main myths around the coronavirus; understand people's favored channels and most trusted sources; To understand attitudes towards EU and NATO in light of the Covid-19.

According to the poll, 60% of the surveyed people find it easy to distinguish truth from fake information, whilst 33% are unable to determine what is true and what is not. NDI encloses quotes from the focus groups, where one of the participants said:

"I don't trust news on Facebook. I read it because I'm curious, but I don't trust most

of it. I can usually tell by the comments and reactions to the news whether it's fake or not." Another participant said that he only trusts the information published by the official pages of broadcasters.

30% of the community who participated in the survey believe that Coronavirus was made in a lab and spread intentionally, while 22% consider that the virus was made in a lab and

spread accidentally and 13% think that the virus came about naturally. A significant majority with 73% think that a relatively low level of spread and mortality rate in Georgia is due to the correct steps taken by the government and doctors. Only 17% think that the situation in Georgia is mostly due to our genetics and religion.

According to the data, 66% believe that the Lugar Lab pre-

vents the spread of COVID-19, while 4% think the opposite and believe that the Lab is contributing to the spread of the virus. 6% even said that they have never heard of the Lugar Lab. As the enclosed quotes from the participant state, the community does not believe that biological weapons are being developed in the Lugar Lab and assume

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NDI thinks that despite the majority of the community's ability to distinguish truth from fake information, the threat still exists that some of the people will be led into deception.

European Union and WHO deliver critical supplies for COVID-19 frontline health workers in Georgia

A shipment of medical respirators, masks, goggles, face shields and gowns to enable health-care workers in Georgia to continue to respond effectively and safely to the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in the country this week.

The delivery of up to 1.5 million pieces of personal protective equipment, funded by the European Union and procured by WHO, includes 5,000 faceshields, 13,200 protective goggles, 30,000 isolation gowns, 1,000,000 medical masks and 328,000 respirator masks.

This is one of the largest cargos of protective equipment to arrive in Georgia with donor support. These supplies will safe-

guard those in the frontlines of the COVID-19 response, and ensure that the health system is well prepared in case of additional needs in the near future.

All items of equipment delivered have been checked to ensure they meet quality and safety standards for health-care workers on the frontline. Lugar Center for Public Health Research, 9 regional labs of National Center for Disease Control, Emergency Situations Coordination and Urgent Medical Assistance Center with 4,200 crew members of ambulances and village doctors across Georgia will receive personal protective equipment.

Vincent Rey, Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia, and Silviu Domete, WHO Representative in Georgia, handed over the equipment to the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Af-

fairs of Georgia.

"The EU, as part of Team Europe, continues to stand by Georgia in combatting the COVID-19 crisis. This medical equipment delivery is one of the largest provided by any donor and will further strengthen Georgia's medical capacities and protect front line workers throughout the country, both today and for possible developments in the future. It's a part of our wider package supporting vulnerable groups and economic recovery and a further indication of our strong partnership with Georgia," Mr. Rey noted.

"In the fight against the pandemic, the support of both the European Union and WHO is crucial. This 15 tons of cargo is one of the largest contributions that Georgia has received during this difficult period. This assistance is of strategic importance and is intended to protect health of doctors and medical staff who make a vital contribu-

tion to the fight against coronavirus. It is for their commitment that Georgia stands where it does today and is one of the most successful examples of fighting the virus. Of course, this would have not been so easy without the help from our strategic partners," – says Ekaterine Tikaradze, Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.

Silviu Domete, said: "Health-care workers are at the frontline of our response to COVID-19, which is placing them at higher risk of exposure to the virus. They are our heroes, but they are not superhuman. This protective equipment delivered, thanks to the generous contribution of the European Union, will reduce the risks they face in their daily work and will help protect them and their patients alike" he added.

The donation of the personal

protective equipment with WHO is part of the European Union's response to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Georgia. Further medical based support, implemented with WHO, will include training for health-care workers and frontline responders and a strengthening the health sector's overall preparedness and response capacities.

This assistance is part of a wider package of EU support for Georgia of over €400 million (almost GEL 1.5 billion) which includes support to vulnerable groups and economic recovery. In total, the EU has committed over €15 billion globally to support partner countries combat COVID-19.



Weather

Wednesday, July 29

Day Showers
High: 31°C
Night Clear
Low: 21°C

Thursday, July 30

Day Clear
High: 31°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 21°C

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ADB to Invest up to \$40 Million in GGU Green Bonds to Upgrade Water, Sanitation in Georgia

TBILISI, GEORGIA (27 July 2020) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced an investment of up to \$20 million in green bonds to be issued by Georgia Global Utilities JSC (GGU), with proceeds to upgrade water supply and sanitation in Tbilisi and nearby municipalities, and to refinance debt of renewable energy and water operations. ADB will also administer a further investment of up to \$20 million in the bonds by Leading Asia's Private Infrastructure Fund (LEAP).

The investments form part of a \$250 million issue by GGU of 5-year green bonds—Georgia's first green bond issuance—that will be listed on the Global Exchange Market of the Irish Stock Exchange. GGU is a holding company with two major business lines involving renewable energy and water supply and sanitation, the latter operated primarily through its subsidiary Georgian Water and Power LLC—the largest privately-owned utility company in Georgia, serving around 1.4 million customers.

"ADB's assistance will help

ensure that communities in and around Tbilisi are supplied with water 24 hours per day, and that water supply and sanitation systems in those urban centers function properly," said Director of Infrastructure Finance, South Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia at ADB's Private Sector Operations Department Shantanu Chakraborty. "ADB's anchor investment will demonstrate to potential investors the compelling investment opportunities in financing water and clean energy initiatives in Georgia's private sector."

Georgia Capital Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Irakli Gilauri said: "I am delighted to announce that GGU has issued the first-ever green notes from Georgia. The transaction was met with considerable interest from investors, being able to access capital even during the current unprecedented times. We are thankful to ADB for playing a key role by acting as one of the anchor investors for the notes."

GGU is a wholly owned subsidiary of JSC Georgia Capital, which is 100%-owned by Geor-

gia Capital PLC, a London Stock Exchange listed entity.

A substantial part of ADB's subscription will be earmarked for capital expenditure in connection with GGU's water supply and sanitation business in Georgia, providing the company with short and medium-term capital to upgrade the water and sanitation network and supply sustainable and affordable water to consumers.

LEAP was established in 2016 with a \$1.5 billion capital commitment from the Japan International Cooperation Agency. It is focused on delivering high quality and sustainable private sector infrastructure projects that reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, and offer accessible and affordable health care, education, and communication services to ADB's developing member countries.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

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the information to be fake.

The majority (78%) of the respondents have not used natural remedies (such as drinking hot water, vodka, eating garlic, etc.) against COVID-19. Only 19% answered to have used such remedies for preventive purposes.

According to the survey, 46% would not vaccinate themselves and their kids if a vaccine existed, whilst 38% would like to be vaccinated against the novel Coronavirus. As one of the participants said, it all depends on the quality and the origin of the vaccine.

53% agrees with the following statement:

"Faith protects believers of my religion from getting infected with COVID-19." 38% disagreed with the statement and 9% did not have an answer at all. TDI noted that only 10% of Orthodox Christians reported that they attended Easter service in the church.

On the question of whether a certain foreign country is intentionally spreading false information about COVID-19 in Georgia, 29% answered 'Yes', 35% answered 'No' and 36% did not know the answer. Out of 29% that agreed with the statement, 36% did not know exactly which

country spreads disinformation, 33% named Russia, 27% named Armenia, and 11% named China. Also, the USA was named by 6% of the participants, EU countries by 4%, Azerbaijan by 3%, and Turkey by 2%.

"when presented with some prevalent disinformation narratives, significant numbers of Georgians disagreed with the statements, such as that the EU has abandoned its members (54 percent disagree), the Richard Lugar Public Center for Public Health Research (Lugar Lab) develops biological weapons against Russia (60 percent disagree), and 5G is linked to the spread of COVID-19 (45 percent disagree)," states the official website of NDI and adds that while few Georgians believe in these statements, roughly a third do not know whether they are true or false and thus, according to NDI, this data points to disinformation's ability to confuse.

76% favors the Georgian government's stated goal to become a member of the UN and 69% supports the idea of joining NATO.

59% believe that Georgia will benefit if the country joins NATO and EU, whilst only 11% think that Georgia will succeed more if European and Euro-Atlantic integration will be refused to establish a better relationship with Russia.

CLASSIFIED

Newly renovated building for sale or rent in the heart of Tbilisi

It is a fully equipped boutique hotel, which also can be transferred into a representation office

- Location – in the heart of Tbilisi, Next to the Ministry of Defense
- Newly reconstructed and newly renovated with high standards
- Exclusive design of both interior and exterior
- 26 rooms, fully equipped with high standard furniture and equipment
- Common spaces (two terraces, one large area for lunches, one conference room)
- Fully equipped restaurant with the EU standard equipment
- The EU quality of ventilation and air conditioning (each room has a source of fresh air)
- High standard of electricity and fire safety in all rooms
- Autonomous supply of water (reservoir) and electricity (generator)

Total area: 1500 m²

Suggested rent: 9000 USD (excl VAT) - Substantially lower to market price, due to the pandemic

Suggested selling price: USD 2.5 million, including all equipment and furniture
Please contact: +995 599554355 or +995 591110100 (We speak Georgian, English and Russian)

E-mail: vmaisuradze@gmail.com

