

POLITICS

Newly-appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan visits Georgia



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World Maritime Day: modified Georgian maritime sector with EU support

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The EU Ambassador to Georgia, Carl Hartzel released a video address on the occasion of World Maritime Day, which is celebrated on September 24th. Hartzel focused on the cooperation between Georgia and the EU in the Black Sea and spoke about the growing potential of the Georgian side.

"Today, Georgia already has more than 12 thousand sailors and their annual contribution to the state budget of Georgia is about €500 million. Container traffic in Georgian ports increased by 40% last year, which is an indicator of further growth potential. This joint work has already enabled Georgian sailors to have their education and certificates recognized by 20 European countries, giving Georgian sailors not only work on European ships, but also captaincy," Hartzel said in a video posted on Twitter.

According to the Ambassador, as a result of cooperation between the EU and Georgia in the field of maritime, the standards of environmental protection and safety have been increased. "Maritime cooperation between the EU and Georgia is a success that still has a long way to go," he noted.

The fact that out of 22 EU directives and regulations, Georgia has already implemented 16 was also mentioned. As Hartzel noted, the work on Georgia's first naval strategy is also underway.

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Amiran Gamkrelidze speaks about recent COVID-19 news and updates

AMIRAN GAMKRELIDZE, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, CAME FORWARD WITH A STATEMENT AT THE BRIEFING AFTER THE END OF THE COORDINATION COUNCIL ON SEPTEMBER 24TH, TO SPEAK ABOUT COVID-19 RELATED ISSUES.



Amiran Gamkrelidze notes that the dynamics of testing has not decreased. Caption 2: The number of people infected has increased, 5 people die in the last 48 hours.

By ANASTASIA SOKHADZE

According to Amiran Gamkrelidze, Director of the National Center for Disease Control, a total of 587,259 tests have been taken in Georgia so far, and the dynamics of testing has been increasing since the end of August.

According to Gamkrelidze, for those who get tested, it is necessary to be in self-isolation before receiving the answer to avoid the risk of spreading in case of a positive answer.

"587 259 tests have been passed in the country so far. In the period from August 25th to September 3rd, an average of 5,568 tests was conducted in the country. From September 4th to 13th, the daily average for testing was 8,466 tests. From September 14th to September 23rd we have an average

of 10,232 samples. Those who take the test are warned that before receiving the answer, it is recommended to be in self-isolation so that if they get a positive answer, we will avoid the risk of spreading," stated Gamkrelidze.

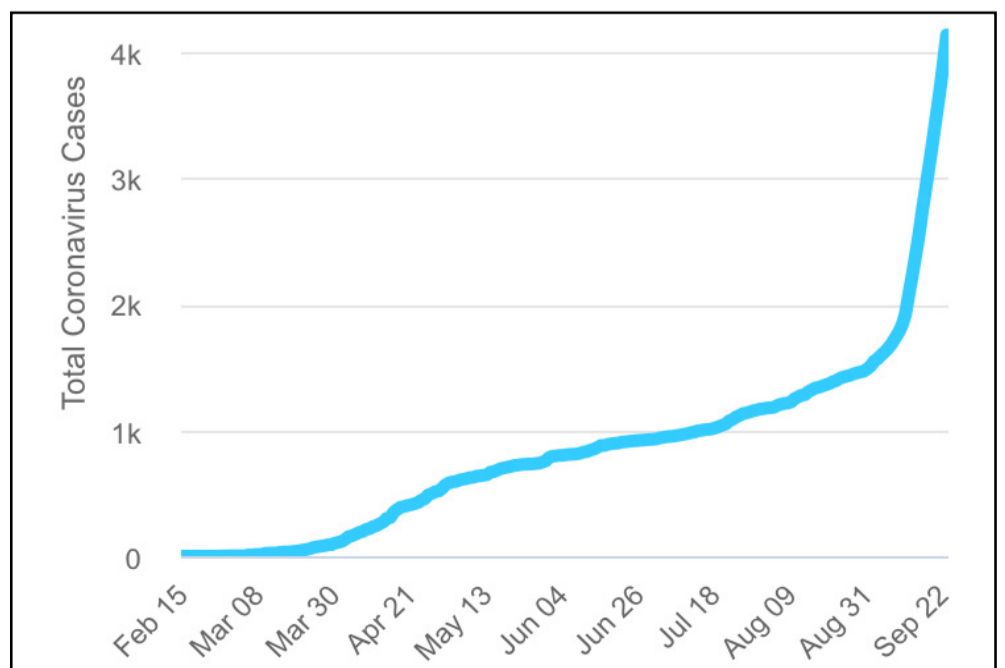
According to Gamkrelidze, 4 of the citizens who came to the House of Justice were diagnosed with coronavirus. As he noted, the citizens who arrived at the House of Justice will take a coronavirus test, the answers to which will be announced tomorrow.

Gamkrelidze noted that the testing for those who went near the House of Justice continues. The tables are specially set up, two brigades are working and tests are being taken intensively. Samples of 754 people were fully taken in 3 days, the study of 538 ended this morning and 4 of them were positive.

To add to that, according to current data, about 200 people infected with the coronavirus are being treated at home in Batumi.

These are mild and asymptomatic patients. Also, 690 people are in so-called COVID hotels where they mostly manage asymptomatic and mild cases. Those who can not isolate themselves in the apartment, the state gives them an alternative to be quarantined under the supervision of doctors.

497 patients are in the hospital in Adjara at the moment, about 70 of them are in heavy condition. In total, there are 11 critical patients in the country. 5 patients have died in the last 48 hours.



Newly-appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan visits Georgia

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bairamov paid his first official visit. During the visit, the Minister held an official meeting with Foreign Minister Davit Zalkaliani.

At the meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, current issues of the bilateral agenda, prospects of cooperation in political, trade, economic, energy, education, and cultural-humanitarian spheres, as well as the challenges facing the region were emphasized.

Minister Zalkaliani expressed gratitude for the unwavering position of the Republic of Azerbaijan in respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. The 2 countries reaffirmed their interest in the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the region and stressed the need to return displaced persons to a safe and dignified environment as a result of the conflict.

Delimitation-demarkation of the state border and the Davit Gareji monastery complex were one of the issues discussed at the meeting in Tbilisi. At the briefing after the meeting, Zalkaliani said that new cartographic materials, documents, and expert conclusions have been found and handed over to the Azerbaijani side. The Georgian minister does not rule out that the new materials obtained by the Georgian side will give a different direction to the process and may lead to the need to revise the agreement reached in 2006-2007.

Zalkaliani is confident that there will be progress in the ongoing negotiations on the demarcation-delimitation of the border. As he said, both sides have a constructive approach to the issue.

According to Bairamov, the relevant agencies and commissions between the two countries are working on the delimitation of the Georgian-Azerbaijani border.

He noted that another meeting on border delimitation issues was to be held in March 2020 but

could not take place due to the pandemic.

Bairamov expressed hope that, in general, border delimitation issues will be decided by the relevant commission. Minister noted that appropriate conditions should be created for specialists to work in a free environment during the discussion of such issues.

“After some time, we were convinced that such issues were used by those who want to harm Azerbaijan-Georgia relations, e.i. third countries, so I advise the citizens and civil society of both countries to be more careful,” he added.

The situation with David Garej has repeatedly escalated since April 2019, when Azerbaijani border guards restricted movement on the road to the Desert Monastery. Georgian clerics and civilians held several protests.

Georgia and Azerbaijan have agreed on about 2/3 of the state border. One of the disputed sections is near the Davit Gareji monastery complex.

From May 2019, the work of the government commissions for delimitation-demarkation of the state border of Georgia and Azerbaijan was resumed, which had been suspended for years.

The conversation also touched upon the importance of deepening cooperation between Georgia and Azerbaijan in various formats. Special attention was paid to the success-



► “There are no unresolved issues between Georgia and Azerbaijan, I am sure the issue of delimitation will be resolved soon,” announced Bairamov.

ful cooperation between the two countries in the fields of trade, economy, transport, and energy.

The parties welcomed the format of trilateral Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey cooperation in the region, which has development prospects. The parties agreed to facilitate the format in terms of promoting regional cooperation.

“Our countries supported each other in the process of gaining independence during the Soviet era, and this support

continues today successfully on bilateral and multilateral platforms,” Azerbaijani Foreign Minister announced at the media briefing.

Bairamov said that Azerbaijan is Georgia’s main trading partner and investor. At the international level, countries make a great contribution to the world in terms of energy resource diversification and security. Specifically, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Supsa pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum

gas pipeline, and even the completion of the large transnational, southern gas corridor project planned by the end of the year. These projects are important not only for the energy supply of the two countries but also for Europe.

According to him most importantly, people are seeing practical results with these projects. In 2019, trade turnover between the countries was over \$ 650 million. Compared to the previous year, an increase of more than 11 % was observed.

At the end of the meeting, the parties expressed readiness to further strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries and take it to a higher level.

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Gakharia also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

According to the press service of the government administration, the sides discussed the relations between the two countries and the prospects of cooperation. The conversation focused on cooperation in the political, trade, economic, energy, education, and cultural fields.

Within the framework of the visit, the minister will hold official meetings with the President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili and the Vice-Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia Kakhaber Kuchava.



► PM Giorgi Gakharia met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan.

FRIDAY		SEPTEMBER 25	
Day		Partly Cloudy	High: 27°C
Night		Partly Cloudy	Low: 15°C
SATURDAY		SEPTEMBER 26	
Day		Mostly Cloudy	High: 25°C
Night		partly cloudy	Low: 17°C

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In addition, the EU supports the development of the Georgian maritime sector through various projects and programs, which address a number of issues, including improving infrastructure, strengthening navigation security, protecting the marine environment, as well as the introduction of modern standards of education and training.

According to the European delegation, all these reforms are aimed at supporting the country in the implementation of plans for the establishment of the necessary institutional and legal framework for a sustainable maritime transport system in line with international standards, the introduction of new technologies and innovations, energy efficiency, digitalization, maritime/port services and other.

The EU is proud to be Georgia's key partner in this process and is launching an information campaign on World Maritime Day, highlighting both the significant progress Georgia has made and its future prospects: International maritime education opportunities in Georgia and, as a result, quality employment; Economic opportunities arising from the introduction of EU standards and the adoption of a state strategy for maritime transport; Continuous work to ensure the protection of the Black Sea environment.

As a result of ongoing education and certification reforms, 54 countries around the world recognize Georgian seafarers' certificates, including up to 20 EU member states.

Thanks to recent education and certification reforms, most Georgian seafarers are currently employed on EU-flagged vessels or European-owned vessels, ensuring their safety, social security guarantees and modern naval standards. Georgia's maritime sector is approaching European

World Maritime Day: modified Georgian maritime sector with EU support



► "The EU and Georgia are working together to turn the Black Sea into a bridge that will help bring us closer together," said Hartzel.



► According to 2019 data, Georgia ranked 13th in terms of the supply of officers on EU ships.

standards: Institutional and legislative reforms Safe, secure and efficient international shipping industry is an important com-

ponent of the country's future sustainable economic growth, the vast majority of goods are imported by sea. The maritime

industry in the country is developing rapidly. In 2019, container cargo turnover in Georgian ports increased by 43%. Georgian

ports, even in the conditions of a pandemic, continuously supply the country with the necessary products, goods and medical equipment as a result of a 24-hour working regime.

With the support of the EU, for the first time in the history of Georgia in 2021 the country will have a maritime transport strategy, which defines the key components of the maritime industry, strategic development goals and ways of their implementation.

According to the statement, Georgia has received state-of-the-art laboratory equipment as part of the EU project, which allows for regular studies of the Black Sea coastal environment.

According to the EU Embassy, EU technical assistance and capacity development assistance will enable Georgian experts to determine what further action is needed to improve the Black Sea coast.

"Georgia was one of the 14 maritime countries that responded to the call of the International Maritime Organization and expressed support for the seafarers as representatives of the key profession and the main driving force of international navigation," said Natia Turnava, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development.

According to the minister, during the pandemic, the world once again saw the great importance of shipping and the people working in this field for the creation of a sustainable future.

According to Turnava, thanks to the already implemented and ongoing reforms and modern infrastructure, the Georgian maritime sector is approaching European standards. Out of 53 countries in the world that recognize Georgian certificates, 19 are members of the European Union.

Georgian media fall short on analysis in election coverage

EU AND UNDP RELEASE FIRST FINDINGS FROM MONITORING MEDIA ON UPCOMING ELECTIONS

TBILISI. 24 September 2020 – Election coverage has become more diverse in recent years, but analytical depth is lacking and some outlets resort to gender stereotypes. These are some of the findings released today by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) from the first 11 weeks of monitoring of mass media coverage of the upcoming parliamentary elections.

The monitoring is implemented by UNDP in partnership with three Georgian civil society organizations: the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, Internews Georgia and CRRC-Georgia. It covers 43 different media outlets, including 12 television stations,

10 radio stations, 8 print newspapers and 13 online editions. It also looks into the ways that Georgian media organizations connect with their readers on Facebook, analysing what kind of electoral news gets most of the social media outreach, including through the Facebook pages associated with political parties, officials and politicians. A separate report prepared by CRRC-Georgia examines how Georgian television stations are covering foreign influence on Georgian electoral processes.

Media coverage of the Georgian political landscape has expanded to cover a wider range of political parties and actors than in past elections. However,

the monitoring also showed that media coverage is largely shaped by the political agendas of the contending forces, focusing on only a few issues and failing to provide in-depth information on topics of potential public interest.

The interim reports released today cover 11 weeks of the pre-election period, from 15 June through 31 August.

"As Georgia moves forward in reforming its electoral system, professional and diverse media reporting is critical to help voters make informed choices" said EU Ambassador Carl Hartzel. "EU support for media monitoring reflects our commitment to strengthening democracy in Georgia."

"UNDP has been closely observing the media landscape in Georgia for a decade now," said UNDP Head Louisa Vinton. "We are pleased to see that media professionalism and diversity have improved in recent years. We hope in the future to see more analytical coverage of electoral programmes and issues that matter to voters."

Unverified information sources and discriminatory language remain an issue in print press, whereas abusive and discriminatory language is used rarely in online media. Gender stereotypes are noted in all types of media, except for radio. Online editions still fail to differentiate clearly between paid and editorial con-

tent and rarely offer their readers critical analysis of the electoral process. TV stations lead in sharing their news through social networks, reaching much wider audiences than other sectors.

All TV stations are covering foreign actors in the context of Georgian elections, often providing controversial assessments of their influence. Most of the air time is devoted to the Russian Federation and the United States.

Election media monitoring will continue through the end of the current electoral cycle. Final reports will be available at year-end. Interim reports will be published on the website <http://www.mediamonitor.ge/>