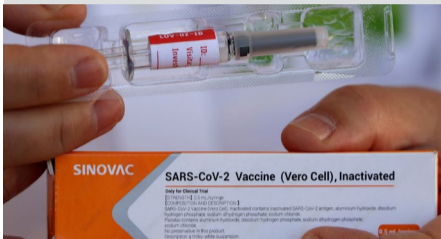


POLITICS

100,000 doses of Sinovac arrive in Georgia



FULL STORY ON Page 2

ECONOMICS / POLITICS

Venice Commission welcomes amendments to court laws, issues three recommendations



FULL STORY ON Page 3

EU announces the winning project for the promotion of European businesses and economic interests in Georgia

FULL STORY ON Page 3

BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

On April 28, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Gabrielius Landsbergis arrived in Georgia. Upon his arrival, Minister Landsbergis met with Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili, who used the opportunity to thank Lithuania for its unwavering

Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs pays visit to Georgia



support towards Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, as well its territorial integrity and humanitarian assistance that Lithuania provided to Georgia amidst the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the meeting, the politicians addressed the bilateral partnership between the countries, as well as the scarce political situation in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Lithuanian Minister also held a meeting with the President of Georgia Salome Zurbasihvili and Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs David Zalkaliani. During the meeting with Minister Zalkaliani, Gabrielius Landsbergis reinstated that

Lithuania's unwavering support and partnership with Georgia would continue undisrupted regardless of the political tensions that the country is currently experiencing.

Earlier yesterday, Gabrielius Landsbergis along with the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) visited the administrative border line by the Russian-occupied Tskhinvali region of South Ossetia. During the trip, Landsbergis visited the Odzisi controlled crossing point, which has been closed for more than 600 days now. Minister Landsbergis was also briefed on the security developments in the region, specifically the negative impacts of

borderisation, on the severe human rights violation, and other acute issues that were shared by the head of EUMM mission.

Ambassador Marek Szczygiel also made a statement:

"During the visit, the Head of Mission offered his insights on the most recent security developments on the ground. In particular, he stressed the negative impact that 'borderisation' features, such as wire fences, have on the freedom of movement and other human rights of the conflict-affected communities, as well as on their humanitarian needs," the EUMM official press release read.

Lastly, as his official visit came to an end, the Lithuanian FM held a press conference, in which he addressed the ongoing political situation. In his statement, Landsbergis stressed the necessity of complete implementation of the April 2019 agreement reached between the ruling party and some members of the country's opposition bloc and urged Nika Melia to take into account the EU guarantees that the current proposal offers:

"The signing of the agreement was a very important first step. Other steps include issues related to addressing politicized justice, ambitious electoral and judicial reforms, as well as sharing power in the Parliament. And let me state this very clearly: the April 19 agreement must be implemented, without any deviation and in its entirety."

I encourage Mr. Melia to consider taking the guarantees offered by European political interlocutors.

"It is very important that all political parties and elected parliament members join the agreement and commit to its implementation," Lithuanian FM stated.



100,000 doses of Sinovac arrive in Georgia

SINOVAC IS STILL AWAITING WHO'S EMERGENCY USE LISTING

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

Deputy Health Minister of Georgia Tamar Gabunia announced yesterday that the country was awaiting 100,000 doses of Sinovac's Covid-19 vaccine. This is the Chinese government's donation to Georgia, which the country received yesterday, April 29. According to her, the country will start using Sinovac once it gets the go-ahead from World Health Organisation (WHO).

Gabunia stated that the World Health Organisation is planning to discuss the authorization of the Sinovac vaccine at the beginning of May. "We will wait for this authorization, however, if the decision does not come soon, we will act according to the epidemiological situation in the country," added Gabunia.

According to Gabunia, Sinovac is being used by several countries around the world and the results are very promising. "In terms of effectiveness, the results are very good, and what's important, it significantly lowers the numbers of death and severe conditions," noted Tamar Gabunia.

As of today, Georgia is vaccinating the Georgian population with two vaccines - Pfizer and AstraZeneca. Recently, registration was opened for Sinopharm for anyone above 18. The Georgian population will start receiving the Sinopharm vaccine starting on May 4. As



► Georgia is also awaiting other vaccines, including additional doses of AstraZeneca



► People over 18 are already able to register for the Sinopharm vaccine

of yesterday, the country has administered a total of 43,568 Covid-19 vaccines. 5,218 people have already received both doses of the vaccine.

Georgia started vaccination on March 15. At first, only medical personnel and people over 65 had the chance to receive the vaccine. Starting from April 5, Covid-19 vaccines became available for everyone above 55.

As the daily reported cases in the country continue to increase, the health experts are talking about the possible third wave of the Covid-19, which is once again showing the importance of vaccination.

Georgian Health Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze previously addressed the Parliament of Georgia in the framework of the Minister Hour and discussed the vaccination process among other issues.

As the minister noted, the country is working hard to administer as many vaccines as possible. She also said that Georgia is waiting for additional doses of the Covid-19 vaccines. Additional doses of AstraZeneca are expected to arrive in Georgia today, on March 30.

Tikaradze also noted that the talks are ongoing about additional Pfizer doses, and it is expected for the country to receive as much as one million doses of the Pfizer vaccine.

EU announces the winning project for the promotion of European businesses and economic interests in Georgia

The EU4Youth social entrepreneurship project SEAG last week held a business training for ethnic minority youth from the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe Javakheti regions.

Around 30 young people took part in an initial meeting to introduce the project and its benefits for the region. Of these, 12 then submitted the outline of a business idea and budget, out of which the project's evaluation commission chose five social enterprise ideas and invited them



to a four-day training on 19-22 April.

The topics covered during the training included business plan-

ning, entrepreneurship, business management, marketing and customer relationships, and financial planning.

- The aim of the training was to raise the awareness of beneficiaries on the importance of a business plan and effective business model;
- train them on the importance of customer profile, market research, competitor analysis, competitive advantage, product pricing and selection, distribution channel selection, and customer communication strategy;
- highlight budget issues including variable costs, fixed costs, total costs and profits, creating a profit and loss statement, a cash flow statement and a balance sheet statement.

The next step is for the participants to apply for a grant competition, submitting business plans by 17 May. They will then need to pitch their ideas to the project panel and have a face-to-face Q&A session. If the applicants successfully pass all the competition stages, they will receive a grant of around €10,000 to implement their business idea.

The training was organised by the EU4Youth – Social Entrepreneurship in Armenia and Georgia (SEAG) project, which fosters youth employment and societal change through Social Entrepreneurship in the border regions of Armenia and Georgia.

FRIDAY		APRIL 30	
Day	Partly cloudy	High: 22°C	
Night	Rain	Low: 14°C	
SATURDAY		MAY 1	
Day	Cloudy	High: 22°C	
Night	Rain	Low: 13°C	

published by **The Messenger**

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia

Founded by Prof. **Zaza Gachechiladze**

Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Phone: +995 99 56 56 21; +995 77 76 00 00
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Natalia Kochiashvili
Executive Editor

Nino Kavelashvili
Design and Layout

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact. All contributions should be submitted by e-mail. The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper,

and, therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements. The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.

EXCHANGE RATES:

US DOLLAR – 3.4529 | EURO – 4.1666 | GBP – 4.7912 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE – 4.6217 | SWISS FRANC – 3.7737 |

Venice Commission welcomes amendments to court laws, issues three recommendations



► The package of bills related to the selection of candidates for the Supreme Court judges was considered by the Parliament of Georgia in an expedited manner and adopted unanimously on April 1.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Venice Commission welcomed the amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on Common Courts, although the urgent report published on April 29 mentions several recommendations.

The Venice Commission suggests considering changing members of the High Council of Justice (it is the council that selects and appoints judges); to suspend the procedure of appointing judges until the Supreme Court Qualification Commission makes a decision on the appealed cases (the candidate can appeal his/her result to the

Supreme Court). The commission reported it may be necessary to restart the procedures to ensure equal treatment of candidates.

The Parliament sent the Organic Law on Common Courts to the Venice Commission for final revision on April 8. Earlier, then-Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia Archil Talakvadze expressed his readiness for this in response to the criticism of the EU for hasty changes. Talakvadze assured that the legislative change reflected three recommendations of the Venice Commission. He said that while it was easy to find that the new regulations were in line with the

recommendations of the Venice Commission, the parliament was ready to take into account the call of the partners and send the law to the Venice Commission for final revision.

Note that the parliament of Georgia elected Archil Talakvadze who until recently held the position of Parliament Speaker as the Deputy Speaker with 86 votes against none.

“Mr. Archil, congratulations, and good luck,” said the new Deputy Speaker of Parliament Kakha Kuchava who replaced Archil Talakvadze as Speaker on April 27. Prior to that, Kuchava himself held the post of Deputy Chairman.

Talakvadze decided to resign on April 24:

“Now that opposition mem-

bers entered the parliament, I think, my place is with my colleagues, and not in the Speaker's role.”

He led the Georgian Dream on the initiative of the European Union to reach an agreement with the opposition and said that it was better to have a chairperson in parliament who was not a party to the talks. Talakvadze's resignation was assessed by the opposition as recognition of defeat by the Georgian Dream.

Talakvadze has been the Speaker of the Tenth Convocation of Parliament since December 11, 2020. He also chaired the ninth convocation of parliament.



► The April 7 statement, issued by EU foreign policy chief Nabila Masrali, responding to the legislative changes in Georgia, found it ‘disappointing’ that the Georgian parliament was in a hurry to adopt the changes without an in-depth consultation process.

EU announces the winning project for the promotion of European businesses and economic interests in Georgia

Following the call for expression of interest “Promoting European business and economic interests in Georgia” of 4 March, the EU announces that the European Business Association Georgia is the organisation that submitted the winning project.

The project aims at encouraging coordinated and pro-active actions of business, support the implementation of the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and, pursue the EU's economic diplomacy interests. In particular, objectives are

- Strengthening business relations between the European Union and Georgia, in particular as regards the elimination of obstacles to business;

- Promoting fair, open and long-term relationships between business, customers/beneficiaries and the authorities;

- Establishing a key interlocutor to the EU Delegation, the EEAS and European Com-



mission, also relaying the views of other existing business organisations (general / sectoral / bilateral), and for Member States' embassies, notably those with no bilateral chamber of commerce in Georgia.

EU Ambassador Carl Hartzell said:

“Let me warmly congratulate EBA Georgia for their hard work and strong proposal, which led them to win this call! I look forward to our common work in the years ahead. A big thanks to all the applicants for their interest and the quality of their proposals. I encourage these applicants and other relevant organisations to seize the opportunity of upcoming invitations from EBA Georgia and to work together towards the creation of an inclusive platform. We look forward to your contribution to the project's implementation, in the interest of European businesses and EU-Georgia economic interests.”