

## Georgian PM Participates in UN COP26 in Glasgow

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili is participating in the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, which brings together the leaders of almost 120 countries. The delegation accompanying the PM of Georgia to Glasgow includes Vice PM/Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani and Head of the Gov't Administration Iliia Darchiashvili.

On the 1st of November, the prime minister delivered a speech addressing some of the difficulties triggered by the pandemic and focused on the significance of joint effort in dealing with climate change-related threats.

After thanking the UK for its dedication to making the COP26 a reality in the light of the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gharibashvili went on to tell the global leaders of the changing living environment in the Caucasus - a beautiful land of mountains, glaciers, and rivers — has already lost 40% of its glaciers. During the last 2 decades alone, the speed of glacier loss in eastern Georgia has exceeded projections from the end of the 20th century.

He said that Georgia fully shares the alarm presented by the UN Sec-Gen's latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that declared a 'red code for humanity'. The head of the gov't explained that the report makes crystal clear that the combined commitments of each nation in the Nationally Determined Contributions are insufficient to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases below dangerous levels, and that greater ambition and effort is needed if we are to meet the long-term temperature goals of the Paris Agreement and avert a global disaster.

According to the PM of Georgia, the challenges are clear, but so are the solu-



**"We look forward to bold and visionary outcomes from COP26 that will dramatically advance our collective climate ambition and help us build back from the pandemic — greener, stronger, and more secure than ever."**

tions, "together, we must rise to the challenges presented by climate change and increase our commitment to developing more greener, productive, and resilient societies." He named the concrete steps that will reduce emissions and prepare societies for the unavoidable impacts of climate change - the investments in clean energy, climate-smart agriculture, and

enhanced adaptive capacity.

According to Gharibashvili, the Government of Georgia has a development plan with a clear vision for 2030 that aligns perfectly with the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development - Georgia will diversify its renewable energy sector; expand the share of wind and solar segments in its energy market; transform the

country's urban mobility; develop low-carbon approaches in the construction, industrial, and waste sectors; advance climate-smart technologies and services, and increase the carbon-capturing capacity of Georgia's magnificent forests.

"Equitable geographical representation, the sovereign equality, and dignity of all states are fundamental bedrock principles of the UN. Georgia wishes to realize the widest possible cooperation under the Convention as it is noted in its preamble in response to this unique global challenge. Georgia looks forward to working with the Presidency and our partners to address these issues in a collaborative, transparent, and equitable manner." - PM said.

Within the scope of COP26, Gharibashvili also held a bilateral meeting with Austrian Chancellor, Alexander Schallenberg, whom he invited to Georgia to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the two countries in 2022. The parties focused on the expectation of the upcoming EaP Summit and underlined the importance of applying the differentiated principle of 'more for more'. The meeting also underscored the need to secure the Associated Trio's greater engagement and offer these states additional EU integration mechanisms.

The conversation also touched on the successful and effective partnership between Georgia and the Austrian Development Agency, the importance of deeper trade and economic ties. The parties commended the recent meeting of the



President of EBRD confirmed the commitment assumed towards continued support of Georgia in addressing the difficulties caused by the pandemic and encouragement of strong, sustainable, and inclusive recovery.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.1678; Euro - 3.6740; GBP - 4.3174; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.4115; Swiss Franc - 3.4704

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Intergovernmental Economic Commission and the Round Table in Vienna, with the participation of the business communities of both countries.

The PM also met with Mark Rutte, PM of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The parties expressed a mutual interest in deeper cooperation across a variety of areas, including trade and economy, tourism, and maritime interaction. The meeting underlined that next year is special for the 2 countries' bilateral relations in that it marks the 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations. Gharibashvili thanked the Kingdom of the Netherlands for its support and co-sponsorship of UN resolutions on Georgia.

Prime Ministers singled out

successful cooperation with NATO and the engagement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the implementation of the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package. The importance of Black Sea security for ensuring overall Euro-Atlantic security and Georgia's important role in this direction were emphasized as well.

Within this format, another high-level bilateral meeting was held with the PM of Slovenia, Janez Janša. Gharibashvili underlined the successful Slovenian Presidency of the CoE and expressed hope that the agenda of Georgia's integration will be addressed even more actively. The PMs discussed security issues and relevant challenges, underlining the significance of deeper defense cooperation. The meeting commended the active bilat-

eral trade and economic ties, emphasizing the importance of tapping into the full potential in this area. Garibashvili received the invitation to Slovenia from the PM.

All high-level meetings singled out the dire humanitarian situation in Georgia's occupied territories. Leaders reaffirmed their firm support for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The PM of Georgia also met Odile Renaud-Basso, President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Successful cooperation between the Government of Georgia and EBRD was highlighted at the meeting, "as it resulted in a number of significant projects implemented in the country."

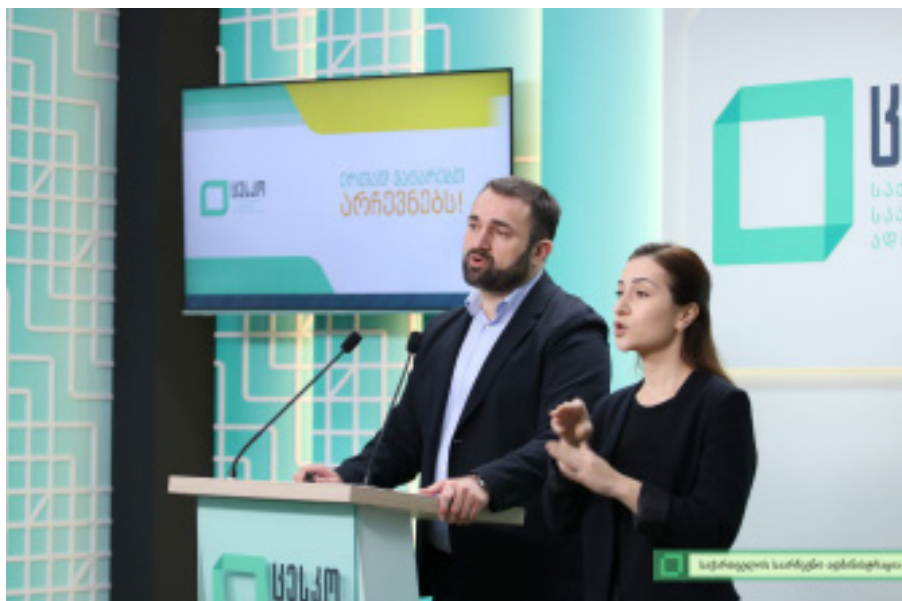
The President of EBRD stressed the importance of politi-

cal stability in Georgia, thereby noting that it is essential to focus on the development agenda after the completion of the election process. It was noted that exposure of EBRD in Georgia has amounted to almost €4 billion so far, which were channeled through 250 projects and it is most important that the bulk of it is disbursed in the private sector of the country, which has a tremendous impact on the development of the economy. The focus of the meeting was the significant importance of EBRD for the reforms implemented on the way to the European integration and economic transformation of Georgia. The specific directions of possible cooperation in various sectors and the significance of support towards small and medium enterprises were voiced as well.

Among the priorities of the EBRD, Renaud-Basso listed the support for further development in the private sector of the country, greater inclusiveness of the economy, human capital development, advancements in infrastructure, and connectivity, thereby noting that EBRD continues to have close and productive cooperation with the Gov't of Georgia.

COP26 will take place in Glasgow from October 31 through November 12, 2021. Within the scope of the world leader summit, heads of states and governments, as well as experts and subject-matter professionals will discuss ways of intensifying and coordinating actions to achieve goals of the Paris Treaty and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

## Recount of Ballots Didn't Affect Preliminary Results of Second Round, CEC Says



Chairperson of the Central Election Commission, Giorgi Kalandarishvili.



After the first round of elections, a total of 812 polling stations have been recounted nationwide.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

The Central Election Commission (CEC) has recounted data of the 201 polling stations and stated that the recounting of ballots did not affect the preliminary results of the municipal election run-offs. According to the CEC, the process was conducted transparently

and could be monitored by the media, observer organizations, and representatives of eligible entities.

Per the changes of election reform prescribed by the April 19 agreement, within 6 days, 5 polling stations revealed randomly from each electoral district must be recounted. According to CEC's Chairperson Giorgi Kalandarishvili, after the first round of elections, a total of 812 polling stations have been recounted nationwide, which is an "unprecedented case of ballot recounts of such scale in contemporary electoral history."

"The recount process of ballots at District election commissions (DECs) once again confirmed that the key goal of election administration is having a transparent and open electoral process and high trust towards the election results," Kalandarishvili stated at yesterday's briefing.

According to him, as a result of recounting, data was slightly changed in some polling stations but the result of the election was not affected. Ballots in 194 polling stations were recounted in mayoral elections and in 172 cases, the results remained unaltered. In total, mayoral candi-

dates lost 31 votes and gained 53 votes. Of 33 polling stations recounted in majoritarian elections, the results remained the same in 27 cases. In total, majoritarian candidates lost 7 votes and gained 5.

On Monday, Ivane Norakidze, the CEC member announced at the meeting that the recount procedures, as well as video recording of counting, have contributed to the increased transparency of the process. Video recording was implemented at 1 457 election precincts during the second round of municipal elections and was not conducted at

292 election precincts. "To ensure the increased credibility and transparency towards the process" the CEC has addressed the District Election Commissions with a new recommendation to randomly select and recount ballots at polling stations where the vote-counting process was not recorded on camera.

According to the final election results of the election run-offs, the ruling party mayoral candidates have won in all self-governing cities and municipalities except for Tsalenjikha, where the UNM party candidate, Giorgi Kharchilava, won with 51.11%.

### Weather

Wednesday, November 3

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 21°C

Night Overcast

Low: 12°C

Thursday, November 4

Day Overcast

High: 18°C

Night Light Rain

Low: 11°C

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