

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

US Vessels Mount Whitney and Porter arrive in Batumi, Georgia

The Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) arrived in Batumi, Georgia for a scheduled port visit on the 8th of November, 2021.

According to the statement, released by the US Embassy in Georgia, 'the port visit highlights an important relationship between NATO allies and vital Black Sea partner Georgia. Georgia has been a consistent and steadfast partner in promoting peace and stability in the region.'

Previously, USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) conducted a port visit in Batumi in February 2021. Legend-class Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL-753) similarly stopped in Batumi in May 2021, after completing interoperability exercises with the Georgian Coast Guard.

"Georgia plays a critical role in maintaining security and stability in the Black Sea and is a valuable NATO partner," said Rear Adm. James Morley, Deputy Commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO). "We look forward to further enhancing the relationship between NATO and our Georgian counterparts here in Batumi."

U.S. Sixth Fleet (SIXTHFLT) and STRIKFORNATO personnel are embarked aboard Mount Whitney, operating as an integrated team. The interoperability between the commands, and their presence in the region, demonstrates the U.S. and NATO's commitment to the Black Sea and to working with allies and partners to advance peace and prosperity in the region.

While in Batumi, the ships' crews will experience Georgian culture and traditions, while taking in the country's rich



"5 years later, the flagman of the 6th fleet, 'Mount Whitney' returned to Georgia. Georgia's ports are no foreign to this man because Mount Whitney has been visited 5 times, including in 2008 to provide humanitarian aid during Russia's war against Georgia."

history and interacting with local citizens.

While steaming to Batumi, Mount Whitney and Porter showed the power of

joint operations by participating in the U.S. Air Forces Europe-Air Forces Africa led Operation Castle Forge. Castle Forge

provides a dynamic, partnership-focused training opportunity in the Black Sea and demonstrates the joint force's combined ability to respond in times of crisis with a flexible, reassuring presence.

Additionally, both ships partook in bilateral ship maneuvering drills, communication testing, and simulated exercises with ships from the Bulgarian Navy and Turkish Navies and were escorted into Batumi by the Georgian Coast Guard. These maneuvers, executed in accordance with international law, highlight the professionalism and skillful seamanship of all nations involved.

USS Mount Whitney, forward-deployed to Gaeta, Italy, operates with a combined crew of Sailors and Military Sealift Command civil service mariners in the SIXTHFLT area of operations in support of U.S. national security interests in Europe and Africa.

STRIKFORNATO, headquartered on Oeiras, Portugal, is Supreme Allied Commander Europe's (SACEUR) premier, rapidly deployable and flexible, maritime power projection Headquarters, capable of planning and executing full-spectrum joint maritime operations, primarily through the integration of U.S. naval and amphibious forces, in order to provide assurance, deterrence, and collective defense for the Alliance.

SIXTHFLT headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.



"The interoperability between the commands and their presence in the region, demonstrates the US and NATO's commitment to the Black Sea and to working with allies and partners to advance peace and prosperity in the region."

Covid Passports to Come into Effect On December 1



According to Gharibashvili, anyone who has recovered from the virus will be eligible for the 'green passport'.

According to the government's decision, to encourage engagement in the vaccination process, pensioners will receive 200 GEL bonuses after their first vaccine doses

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

The COVID-19 passports will come into effect starting December 1st, announced Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili after the meeting of the Interagency Coordination Council. The PM said that to encourage vaccination the pensioners who will get vaccinated against coronavirus before January 1 will receive one-off GEL 200

pension supplements.

According to Gharibashvili, the so-called green status will be granted to those who are fully vaccinated, have been previously infected with coronavirus, have undergone a 72-hour validity PCR test, or a 24-hour validity antigen test. A green passport will be required of persons over the age of 18.

According to the decision of the Coordinating Council, only

those with Covid passports will be allowed to enter all entertainment facilities. The detailed list of facilities will be published soon. As Gharibashvili noted, the requirements will apply only to the guests of the facilities and not the employees.

The PM stressed yesterday that no mandatory vaccination will be introduced in the country as he considers it as a gross interference with people's free-

dom of choice. According to him, the majority of Georgian people do not support mandatory vaccination. To enhance public trust in COVID-19 vaccination, the government implements various events, including the expansion of the vaccine marathon in ten big cities and two municipalities.

Georgia reported 2,191 coronavirus cases, 4,348 recoveries, and 74 deaths yesterday.

According to the Head of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) Amiran Gamkrelidze, more Covid-related deaths are expected as there are over 1,500 critical patients, among them more than 300 requiring mechanical ventilation. In total, there have been 755,046 confirmed cases, among them, 693,129 people recovered and 10,509 died.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY
THE MESSENGER STAFF

Ombudsman Representatives Says Saakashvili was Transferred to Gldani Prison by Force

Former President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili was carried to Gldani 18th Medical Institution by ambulance, according to the Public Defender's spokesperson, Mikheil Ghoghadze.

Ghoghadze stated that Saakashvili was transferred from Rustavi to Gldani against his will.

"He did not want to move to the 18th facility. He was removed from the 12th facility by force. According to Mikheil



Saakashvili, he was transported by car. They took him by ambulance," Ghoghadze said.

According to the Public Defender's spokesman, computed tomography equipment in the 18th facility is now being installed.

Melia Says PM Won't be Allowed in Government Administration Building Anymore

Near the government administration, a considerable number of law enforcers have been mobilized. They formed a human chain in front of the chancellery.

Protesters marched towards the government administration at Freedom Square yesterday.

The National Movement Chairman Nika Melia led the rally participants to the government administration. Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili "will not be permitted to enter or exit the building from today on," according to Melia.

Weather

Tuesday, November 9

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 18°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 8°C

Wednesday, November 10

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 15°C

Night Chance of Rain
Low: 5°C

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First EU and AFD supported International Conference on Potato Value Chain was held in Georgia

October 20-21, 2021 Tbilisi - Two-day International Agribusiness online conference "Situation and prospects of the potato value-chain in Georgia" was held in Tbilisi, to discuss the prospects, opportunities, as well as challenges in the country's potato sector. The event was supported by the European Union NIF program, in partnership with the French Development Agency, and was organized in close collaboration with MEPA and RDA.

The Forum provided a unique opportunity for the stakeholders from the public and private sector to exchange information about the hot topics in the potato value chain and extend recommendations for the sector's development. The meeting focused on the ways for the potato sector modernization, development of value-chain at farmer's level, promoting

better access to inputs and equipment, as well as better accessibility on finances and market opportunities.

In his opening speech Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia underlined that "the conference theme was correctly chosen as the potato sector development is very important for Georgia, and it has always been a challenge till today".

As Georges Dehoux, Programme Manager for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety of the EU Delegation in Georgia noted in this opening address: "For the EU the full development of specific value chains like potato from farm to fork is a core for the EU support to agriculture in Georgia".

Following the keynote addresses, FinExCoop presented a video film and the testimonies of the 8 FinExCoop's pilot

farmers in the potato value chain, where farmers explain the main challenges, they face in the market.

Raphael Jozan, Director of the AFD Tbilisi regional office underlined the importance of supporting the agriculture of Georgia and the role of AFD in the process of contributing to the sector's development: "AFD intends to support value chain development in connection with the support to the Government of Georgia for the implementation of their agriculture strategy. This Conference brought together the European and Georgian expertise, which is valuable for designing the strategy and further actions. Development of pilot operations with the support of FinExCoop demonstrated the potential of agriculture development in Georgia, as well as the need for consolidated approach, reforms, investment and technical assis-

tance that AFD is proposing in the frames of the Project and in line with the EU's Country development cooperation strategy for Georgia".

The EU supported NIF programme is a facility stemming from the financing options offered by the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) Regulation. It is intended to provide EU grant support for lending operations led by European multilateral development-finance institutions and also bilateral development finance institutions of the Member States. The NIF provides grants for investment co-financing, loan guarantee cost financing, interest rate subsidies, risk capital operations and technical assistance package. The objective is associate European Union grants with loans from consortia of European Finance Institutions in order to finance large investment projects in the ENI region.

EU launches information campaign "Doing More with Less" on energy efficiency

10 public schools, 7 kindergartens, 4 public buildings have been renovated with the EU's support to provide a greener and healthier environment to the citizens of Georgia. In addition, businesses have been supported to introduce energy efficiency measures, thus lowering operation costs and investing the savings in new opportunities and jobs. These are only some of the results of EU's work to improve energy efficiency in Georgia.

To raise awareness about the benefits of energy efficiency and EU's work to this end in the country, the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia is launching

an information campaign on energy efficiency under the slogan "Doing More with Less".

"Energy efficiency in Georgia is a key priority for the European Union. A greener environment, enhanced energy security, more jobs, prosperous families and warmer houses are only some of the benefits of improved energy efficiency. Besides supporting the legislative reform process, we have made continued efforts to help businesses and citizens. Reliable and affordable energy is essential for communities and household, and our goal is to continue supporting energy efficiency initiatives to help improve people's lives", - stated Carl Hartzell, EU

Ambassador to Georgia.

Energy efficiency matters. It has the potential to contribute to lowering the costs on a household and economy-wide level, boost economic growth, sustainable growth and job creation. Apart from that, energy efficiency is one of the ways to reduce demand for energy imports and to strengthen the country's energy independence.

The EU has been assisting Georgia's energy sector for over a decade. This includes support to the Government to promote better policy and help modernize the sector, work with partners to support and raise energy efficiency initiatives throughout the country. By encouraging

private sector participation, the EU also supports the government's ultimate objectives of creating jobs and improving the quality of life. Clean energy transition will be at the center of reforms to accelerate the development of modern and reliable energy infrastructure that will decrease use of greenhouse gas emissions.

Over the course of the next three weeks, we will share success stories of projects implemented with the EU's support in Georgia. The campaign will promote the benefits of energy efficiency, showcase the projects that impact the communities and environment they live in and motivates change.

Culture & Lifestyle

On November 7, the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia hosted the closing event of the exhibition "Life and Death – Glory of Pompeii" and the presentation of the November issue of National Geographic Georgia. Pompeii treasures first were displayed for three months at Vani Archeological Museum and then in Tbilisi. It is worth mentioning that the main theme of the magazine is those 100 archeological discoveries telling the stories of our ancestors. Among them are Dmanisi hominins and the town of Pompeii.



DJANSUG KAKHIDZE
VI INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL
THE FESTIVAL IS SUPPORTED BY MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORT AND YOUTH OF GEORGIA

24.11.2021 - 19:00

DINI VIRSALADZE & FRIENDS

Dini Virsaladze (keyboards)
Mariko Ebralidze (vocal)
Levan Deisadze (bass guitar)
Nikoloz Gabadze (electric guitar)
Zaza Taertsvadze (drums)
David Japaridze (percussion)

On 24th of November, in the frames of Djansug Kakhidze 6th International Music Festival, famous Georgian jazz pianist and composer, Dini Virsaladze will perform with her band – Mariko Ebralidze (vocal), Zaza Tsertsvadze (drums), David Japaridze (percussion), Levan Deisadze (bass guitar), Nikoloz Gabadze (guitar). They will perform the original compositions of Dini Virsaladze and popular jazz standards. Since 1993 Dini has given concerts at jazz clubs and concert arenas Georgia and abroad, she participated in many international jazz festivals, collaborated with numerous well-known jazz musicians from all over the world. From 2003 till present she is a piano player in Tbilisi Big Band. Also, she is active as jazz piano professor at Tbilisi State Conservatory.

Tickets on: www/biletebi.ge
*The concert will be held in full compliance with epidemiological regulations;
*Please note, that the procedures provided by the Covid regulations require some time, therefore please be at the door from 18:00;
*During the concert, it is necessary for the listener to wear a medical mask;