

EU Ambassador Carl Hartzell Completes His Diplomatic Mission

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

EU Ambassador to Georgia H.E. Carl Hartzell, who is completing his mission in Georgia, shared a farewell video on Wednesday, expressing gratitude to the host country and its people and expressing hope the country will use its chance to become a member of the EU and noting 'Georgia will always be a part of us'.

"After four unforgettable years in Georgia, the time has come for us to leave. Thanks for having invited us to be a part of Georgia. Georgia will always be a part of us," said the Ambassador, standing in central Tbilisi with his wife, Mrs. Mette Hartzell.

Hartzell, who was actively engaged to help Georgian political forces to resolve political standoffs while in office, described Georgia as an 'amazing, unique country, standing on the shoulders of your ancestors who fought for this country, its traditions, culture, language and heritage'.

"Last month the European Union recognised Georgia's European perspective, Georgia's belonging to the family of European nations. Of course, you already knew that Georgia was a European country and so did I and many other friends of Georgia. But still the significance of this formal recognition of Georgia as a potential future member of the European Union cannot be underestimated."

He stated that by the move the EU recognized Georgia as its potential member.

"Although there are many struggles ahead, we are proud to witness this historic moment and we believe that Georgia will successfully use the opportunities created by this moment," Hartzell said.

Hartzell stated that Georgia is capable of using the opportunity not only because Georgians dislike stepping back, 'but also



because Georgia rests on a European foundation'.

"You have even been part of defining what today are called European values and you have it in you to contribute to making Europe even stronger. The energy and spirit you have here is admirable. And when the day comes that all this energy is projected in the same direction, you simply will be unstoppable," Hartzell concluded.

Ambassador of the European Union

in Georgia, Carl Hartzell, bids farewell to the population in a video address and thanks them for "becoming a part of Georgia" during this period. The video appeal is distributed on the Facebook page of the EU Representation in Georgia.

The EU delegation in Georgia has been headed by Ambassador Hartzell since September 2018, his 4-year term of office expires in September of this year.

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and

Security Policy, Joseph Borrell, nominated Pawel Herczynski to the position of Head of the European Union Delegation to Georgia. Herczynski is the Head of Directorate for Common Security and Defense Policy and Crisis Response of the EU External Action Service. Before that, he held the position of Polish ambassador to the Committee on Politics and Security. He will be appointed after the respective official agreement received from the host country.

MEP Sven Mikser Says De-Oligarchization Should be Viewed as Systemic Issue

By MESSENGER STAFF

According to MEP Sven Mikser, de-oligarchization should be viewed as a systemic issue and significant nominations to significant positions should be done transparently.

"As for de-oligarchization, I think this issue should be considered as a systemic issue. This also includes inclusiveness. Important appointments to important positions should be made in a way that is transparent and no one, not even any institution or political party or group, should be allowed to monopolize the process. I think this is a systemic issue," said Sven Mikser.

He also discussed the 12 suggestions made by the European Commission, emp-



hasizing the need for a well-coordinated implementation process.

"I think we were very clear. The ruling party seems to have a plan, the opposition party also seems to have a plan and maybe more than one. NGOs have ideas on how to work to implement the 12 recommendations. We hope it will be a well-coordinated procedure. I think that all political institutions have their role: the president, the parliament, the speaker of the parliament, but it is important that this process be inclusive. There are some areas, where it is difficult to measure progress, but it can be estimated. One of them is depolarization and this implies that the process should be inclusive," said the MEP.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 2.8281 | EURO - 2.8994 | GBP - 3.3994 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 5.0280 | SWISS FRANC - 2.9201 |

Georgian Government Maintained ‘Highest Level’ in Combating Human Trafficking, US State Department Says



► According to the report, the Georgian Government fully met the “minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking” and remained on Tier 1 in performance evaluation on the metric.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

The United States Department of State has published its annual 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report, which notes that the Georgian Government has maintained the “highest level” in combating human trafficking. According to the report, the Georgian Government fully met the “minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking” and remained on Tier 1 in performance evaluation on the metric.

“The government continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts during the reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity, therefore Georgia

remained on Tier 1. These efforts included providing comprehensive victim assistance, including robust pandemic mitigation efforts at government-run shelters,” the report reads. The report also highlights that a new mobile group and crisis center has been created in the Adjara region for identifying potential victims among vulnerable children. It is also noted that the country’s criminal code fully criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking, and provided adequate punishment for the crime with a maximum sentence of 12 to 15 years imprisonment.

The report positively evaluated the signing of an updated memorandum between the Central Criminal Police Department of

the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia and the Labour Inspection, which aimed to detect cases of forced labor through joint inspections by mobile teams and labor inspection units.

It is also noted that the government provided equal services for Georgian citizens and foreign national victims and granted foreign victims renewable one-year residence permits with the ability to seek legal employment. However, the report reads that though the government meets the minimum standards, it convicted fewer traffickers and identified the lowest number of victims since 2016.

“Police conducted some ad hoc raids on commercial sex establishments without a clear strategy on victim identification, and authorities continued to lack the knowledge to investigate and collect evidence in complex cases involving financial crimes, organized crime, and digital evidence,” the US Department of State notes. The report included priority recommendations on increasing efforts to identify victims proactively and encouraging their participation in investigations and prosecutions through victim-centered court procedures, as well as on improving measures to order restitution for victims, among other advice.



► The report recommends the government to increase awareness-raising campaigns about the existence of trafficking, legal recourse, and available protection services to vulnerable groups.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Government Plans to Raise Salaries in Public Sector by 10% Annually, Until 2026

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Until 2026, the government of Georgia plans to increase salaries in the public service by about 10% every year. Minister of Finance Lasha Khutsishvili announced this after the end of the government session.

According to him, the basic official

salary should be determined so that the average salary in the state sector is not less than 80% and not more than 90% of the average salary in the non-public sector.

Certain guidelines have been defined on what part of the salary in the public service should be based, and these directions are as follows: from January

1, 2026, the basic official salary should be determined by the percentage of the average salary increase in the non-state sector during the last 4 quarters, and also, Starting from 2026, the basic official salary should be determined so that the average salary in the state sector is not less than 80% and not more than 90% of the average salary in the non-state sector,

that is, the determined range in which the average salary level in the public service should be compared to the private sector.

According to the Minister, now this indicator is 74%, historically the lowest rate, and that is why, in the next years, salaries in the public sector will increase by 10% annually in order to adjust these parameters.

THURSDAY		JULY 21	
Day		Partly cloudy	High: 29°C
Night		Partly cloudy	Low: 20°C
FRIDAY		JULY 22	
Day		Partly cloudy	High: 28°C
Night		Partly cloudy	Low: 18°C

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Exhibition 'Italian Routes. Mountains, Alpinism, Climate Change' Opens in Tbilisi

By MESSENGER STAFF

On July 19, an exhibition 'Italian Routes. Mountains, Alpinism, Climate Change' was opened in Tbilisi, the Italian Embassy reports. The exhibition, curated by Italian photographer and researcher Fabiano Ventura, is a project of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

International Cooperation and the non-profit association 'Macromicro', which aims at sharing Italian culture related to mountains and mountaineering to the international society.

The exhibition, which is organized by the Italian Embassy in Tbilisi, consists of three parts - 'General introduction', 'Italian mountains' and 'View of the

world', and is also accompanied by historical material about the first expeditions. This is an impressive display of historical and contemporary photographs of the world's most important mountain systems (including the Alps, Caucasus, Andes, and the Himalayas), perfectly depicting the impact of melting glaciers and climate change on

mountain landscapes.

The exhibition at Ioseb Grishashvili Tbilisi History Museum will be open until August 31. As for the part of the exhibition related to Svaneti, it will be hosted by the Museum of History and Ethnography of Svaneti (Mestia) from August 1 to August 31.



The Ambassador of Italy
H.E. Enrico Valvo



