

## Lelo Party Presents 'Georgia Protection Act': A 9-Point Plan to Counter Russian Influence

By Liza Mchedlidze

The opposition Lelo party has formulated a comprehensive 9-point plan titled the "Georgia Protection Act" with the primary objective of eliminating Russian influence in Georgia.

Presented by Lelo leader Mamuka Khazaraze on November 20, the plan outlines nine key steps to safeguard the country's interests:

**Full Integration with EU Sanctions:** The establishment of visa regulations for Russian citizens is crucial. Currently, Georgia is the only occupied country globally where occupiers enjoy nearly the same rights as our citizens. The objective is to keep Georgia open to tourists while preventing occupiers from having the same privileges.

**Protection of the Employment Market:** Unemployment is the primary issue in Georgia today, largely due to the influx of Russians replacing Georgians in lucrative jobs. Consequently, the second paragraph of the 'Georgia Protection Act' imposes restrictions on the right to work for Russian citizens.

**Limiting the Sale of Land:** The sovereignty of a country is unmistakably expressed through its land, which belongs to its people and not to any occupier. It is imperative that occupiers do not have unrestricted rights to purchase our lands. Consequently, the third paragraph of the 'Georgia Protection Act' advocates for the complete prohibition of selling land to them.

**Prohibition of Vehicles with Russian License Plates:** The 'Georgia Protection Act' mandates the prohibition of vehicles with Russian license plates from entering our country, a measure already implemented in many EU countries.

**Prohibition of Participation in State Tenders for Russian Companies:** The funds paid by Georgian taxpayers should not end up in the pockets of Russians. Therefore, the 'Georgia Protection Act' prohibits Russian citizens and companies from participating in tenders. It's time to halt the enrichment of Russians through the 'Georgian Dream.' 'Lelo' aims to ensure that Georgian money benefits Georgians directly.



**Imposition of Occupation Fee for Russian Business:** We propose the establishment of an 'occupancy fee' in all municipalities. This fee would be applicable to Russian businesses owned by Russian citizens, with the collected funds dedicated to supporting internally displaced persons from the occupied territories.

**Flight Ban:** We call for a prohibition on direct flights with the Russian Federation as these flights primarily cater to the convenience of Russian citizens and do not contribute to the well-being of Georgian citizens.

**Prohibition of Broadcasting Russian TV Channels:** The uncontrolled broadcasting of Russian propaganda TV channels in Georgia should be banned.

**Prohibition of Russian Funds:** To prohibit the activities of Russian foundations in Georgia that serve the Kremlin's occupation policy.

tribute to the well-being of Georgian citizens.

**Prohibition of Broadcasting Russian TV Channels:** The uncontrolled broadcasting of Russian propaganda TV channels in Georgia should be banned.

**Prohibition of Russian Funds:** To prohibit the activities of Russian foundations in Georgia that serve the Kremlin's occupation policy.

## Vakhtang Tsintsadze Reports 'Record' Employment Level of 45.3% in the Third Quarter of 2023

By Liza Mchedlidze



As highlighted by Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Vakhtang Tsintsadze, in the third quarter of 2023, following significant positive trends observed in the same period of the previous year, the upward trajectory in employment dynamics continued.

The workforce also experienced growth, with the number of employees reaching a record quarterly figure of 1,366.3 thousand, representing an increase of 7.7 thousand. The employment rate also reached a record level of 45.3%.

Deputy Minister Tsintsadze pointed out that Georgia has been experiencing high economic

growth trends for the third consecutive year, making it a leader in economic growth within the wider region and among European countries. This positive economic performance has had a beneficial impact on labor market trends.

"In the third quarter of 2023, the number of employed persons increased by 29,300, while the number of self-employed individuals decreased. This shift indicates a transition from self-employment to formal employment. We anticipate that the ongoing economic growth trend will persist in the coming years, further contributing to increased employment and poverty reduction," stated the Deputy Minister.

The information has been provided by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Russian Occupation Forces Illegally Arrest Georgian Citizen



სახელმწიფო უსაფრთხოების სამსახური / State Security Service Of Georgia

According to the State Security Service, representatives of the Russian occupation forces illegally arrested a local resident, a Georgian citizen near the occupied village of Zemo Artsevi. The citizen has since been released and is now in the territory controlled by the central government of Georgia. "Communication regarding the incident took place through the 'hotline,' op-

erating with the direct involvement of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia. The information was promptly shared with our international partners. The responsibility for all destructive actions carried out in the occu-

piated regions of Georgia and along the occupation line rests with the occupying power. The central government, in collaboration with international partners, will continue to actively work towards the release of all citizens of Georgia who are illegally imprisoned in the occupied territories," the State Security Service's statement reads.

Otar Shamugia: All Prerequisites in Place for License to be Declared Invalid



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Otar Shamugia, stated that the administrative proceedings related to the cancellation of the license issued to Racha forests will be concluded by the end of the month at the latest. The minister said that all prerequisites for declaring the license invalid are in place. He made this announcement after the conclusion of the government

meeting. "I want to emphasize once again that a decision from the National Environment

Agency in this administrative proceeding is expected very soon, likely by the end of the month. Considering the factors I've just discussed, I believe all the necessary conditions are present for declaring the license invalid. However, this is an administrative proceeding conducted by the National Environment Agency, and we should allow it the opportunity to bring this process to a conclusion," Shamugia said.

Georgian Ombudsmen honours EUMM as Guardian of Tolerance 2023



On 16 November, the Public Defender of Georgia and Council of Ethnic Minorities Levan Ioseliani awarded the European Union Monitoring Mission to Georgia (EUMM) as the 'Guardian of Tolerance 2023'. Dimitrios Karabalis, the Head of EUMM, attended the award ceremony dedicated to the Inter-

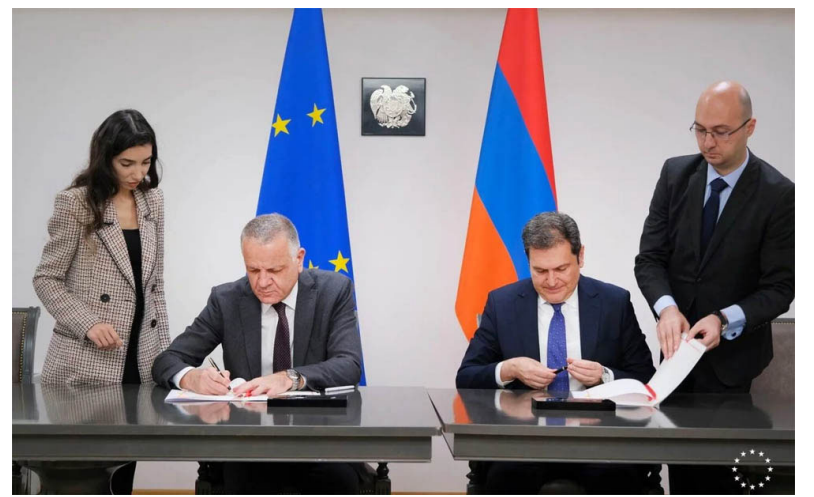
national Day of Tolerance. This annual event has been hosted by the Office of Public Defender

(Ombudsman) of Georgia and the Tolerance Center of the Public Defender of Georgia since 2008. According to Levan Ioseliani, EUMM commitments not only prevent the potential escalation of security incidents, but also promote communication, co-operation and the protection of human rights. At the ceremony, he also emphasised the importance of EUMM engagement with local communities beyond immediate security tasks, helping to improve the lives and livelihoods of those living in conflict-affected areas.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



EU and Armenia sign agreement on European Union Mission in Armenia



On 20 November, the Republic of Armenia and the European Union signed an agreement on the Status of the European Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA). The document was signed in Yerevan by Vassilis Maragos, Head of EU Delegation to Armenia, and Paruyr Hovhannisyian, Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia. The agreement regulates the legal status of the EUMA. EUMA is a non-executive, non-armed civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Mission. EUMA observes and reports on the security situation along the Armenian side of the international border with Azerbaijan. It contributes to human security in conflict-affected areas in Armenia and aims to build confidence between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The Mission was deployed on 20 February 2023 with a two-year mandate and 103 international staff from the EU Member States, including EU experts and monitors.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Tuesday, November 21
Day Overcast High: 10°C
Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 5°C
Wednesday, November 22
Day Partly Cloudy High: 13°C
Night Partly Cloudy Low: 3°C

published by The Messenger
43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof. Zaza Gachechiladze
Tamar Gachechiladze Publisher
Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli Commercial Director
Mariam Mchedlidze Editor-in-Chief
Khatuna Gogichaishvili Layout Designer, Photographer

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.