



Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

JANUARY 2024

Otar Shamugia meets the European Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi in Brussels



During the working visit to Brussels, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Otar Shamugia, met with the European Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement, Mr. Olivér Várhelyi.

As mentioned, the collaboration between Georgia and the European Union enters a qualitatively new stage by granting a candidate status, implying more ambitious goals and fulfilling significant commitments, for which Georgia shows complete readiness.

Minister Shamugia briefed the European Commissioner on recent reforms in agriculture and environmental protection fields, achieved progress, and plans for the future.

According to Mr. Shamugia, environmental protection and rational use of natural resources remain crucial tasks in parallel with economic development in the country.

The Minister noted that crucial steps have been taken to fulfill the obligations. Under the Association Agreement, Georgia has effectively aligned its national legislation with European Union legal acts since

2015 and has already approximated its legislation to 133 legal acts out of 200 legal acts of the European Union. Moreover, Georgia has made tangible progress in the priority areas outlined in the analytical report of the European Commission, published last year, and therefore, this progress has been duly assessed by the EU.

“ We have already started following the recommendations outlined in the European Commission report and created a working group, which developed an action plan outlining specific steps, responsible agencies, and the resources required for fulfilling recommendations envisaged in the European Union report. It should be emphasized that the candidate status provides an opportunity to start working on giving Georgia the right to access various funds and supporting instruments of the European Union”, said Mr. Shamugia.

European Commissioner Mr. Olivér Várhelyi positively evaluated the implemented reforms, noting that Georgia, as a candidate country, continues to make progress on the path to EU enlargement.

“During the meeting with Mr. Shamugia, we addressed Georgia’s compliance with EU standards in the green economy and agricultural fields. These are critical areas for Georgia’s path to the European Union. Our support will continue,” stated European Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement, Mr. Olivér Várhelyi.



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Otar Shamugia holds bilateral meetings in Brussels



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Otar Shamugia, met with the European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Mr. Virginijus Sinkevicius, as part of his working visit to Brussels.

During the meeting, the parties emphasized the significant success of Georgia on the path to European integration. As mentioned, Georgia had tangible progress in the priority areas outlined in the analytical report of the European Commission issued last year, which was duly assessed by the European Union.

“We are ready to continue working even more intensively to fulfill the priorities and recommendations set by the European Commission. The Ministry is actively preparing for the next steps towards European integration”, said Minister Shamugia.

“It is reasonable for industry experts to discuss thoroughly the EU expectations and the required measures in the format of bilateral working groups, as this will contribute to the effective implementation of

the recommendations”, noted the Minister.

Mr. Shamugia briefed the European Commissioner on the reforms implemented in the environmental protection field - the national legislation has fully converged with the framework legislation and standards of the European Union in air quality management.

Following EU legislation last year, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a new Law of Georgia: “On Industrial Emissions”.

During the meeting, the Minister noted that the adoption of modern water resources management systems is one of the top priorities for Georgia. The country is gradually moving to a new system of water resources management - river basin management, which will improve access to quality water and protect water resources.

The protection of biodiversity and pollution of the environment with waste is a significant challenge for Georgia and almost for the whole world. Accordingly, preventing and developing the legislative framework in the mentioned directions is one of the priorities for Georgia. Following the European Union legislation, with the support of the European Union, a waste management system based on European approaches has been established in the country, which ensures the prevention of waste generation. In addition, the Ministry is working on developing the national concept of sustainable development of fisheries, which outlines all directions necessary for protecting fish resources and developing sustainable fisheries.

European Commissioner for Environment Protection, Oceans and Fisheries, Mr. Virginijus Sinkevicius positively evaluated and welcomed the environmental protection reforms carried out in Georgia, and the pace the country is taking in its European integration. The European Commissioner expressed his full support for future sectoral reforms.

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Otar Shamugia meets the European Commissioner for Agriculture Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski



“Congratulations on the success achieved on the path to European integration. The reforms carried out in this regard in Georgia are very important”, said Mr. Janusz Wojciechowski at the meeting with the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Otar Shamugia, at the European Commission in Brussels. According to the European Commissioner, granting the EU candidate status to Georgia is a significant step forward. Georgia has taken appropriate steps to achieve this goal.

Mr. Shamugia expressed appreciation to the European Commissioner for the European Union’s assistance to Georgia, notably in agriculture and rural development.

“We have made tangible progress in the priority areas outlined in the analytical report of the European Commission issued last year. The EU duly appreciated this progress. We are ready to work actively to fulfill the priorities and recommendations set by the European Commission. The Ministry is preparing to take the next steps towards European integration”, said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

During the meeting, the Minister briefed the European Commissioner on the reforms carried out in the agricultural area.

“Since 2012, the Government of Georgia has taken unprecedented steps for rural and agricultural development in the country, resulting in large state investments in the mentioned directions. The Ministry continues to work based on the “Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia (2021–2027)” and its Action Plan. The strategy envisages diversification and development of economic opportunities in rural areas, improvement of social condition and standard of living, based on the principles of sustainable development”, said the Minister.

The Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia (2021–2027) aims to create an environment that will boost competitiveness in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, promoting steady growth of high-quality agricultural products, preserving ecosystems, sustainable use of natural resources, including the adaptation to climate change, and implementation of effective sanitary and phytosanitary systems.

As mentioned by Mr. Shamugia, a working group has already been created to coordinate the implementation of recommendations and develop an action plan. Moreover, the mentioned group will identify all the measures and needs required for the effective and timely completion of the relevant activities for fulfilling the indicated recommendations, following the recommendations presented by the European Union.

According to the European Commissioner, Georgia is successfully implementing the recommendations of the European Commission and is making progress. Georgia’s accession to the European Union will be crucial not only for Georgia but also for the European Union and the security of the whole world.

“Georgia’s accession has a significant geopolitical aspect for security. Thank you very much again. We are waiting for the integration of Georgia into the European Union”, said Mr. Janusz Wojciechowski.

Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, the First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, and Mr. Bidzina Javakhishvili, the Deputy Chief of Mission of Georgia to the Kingdom of Belgium, attended the meeting.



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Otar Shamugia meets Sandra Gallina, Director General of Health and Food Safety of the European Commission



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, met with Mrs. Sandra Gallina, Director General of Health and Food Safety of the European Commission, as part of his working visit to Brussels.

During the meeting, the parties focused on the progress achieved by Georgia on the path to European integration.

According to Mr. Shamugia, the Ministry is actively preparing to take steps towards European integration. The working group has already been established to coordinate the implementation of the rec-

ommendations and develop an action plan as outlined in the European Commission’s communication document on enlargement policy issues dated November 11, 2023. The mentioned group will identify all the measures and needs required for the effective and timely completion of the relevant activities for fulfilling indicated recommendations.

“Our primary focus is on the EU market and maximizing its potential. It is essential to improve the competitiveness of locally produced agro-food products to take full advantage of the EU market. We should emphasize the important progress in the food safety, veterinary medicine, and plant protection areas, which is essentially due to the European Neighborhood Program. Moreover, Georgia continues implementing the EU-Georgia Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement (DCFTA). We have already taken crucial steps to fulfill our commitments. Under the Association Agreement, since 2015, Georgia has been successfully approximating its national legislation with the EU legal acts in the veterinary, phytosanitary, and food safety fields, and this process will continue until 2028”, Mr. Otar Shamugia said.

The General Director of Health and Food Safety of the European Commission thanked Mr. Shamugia for providing detailed information, positively assessed the steps taken in the food safety field, and expressed readiness for active cooperation.

The First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Georgia to the Kingdom of Belgium, Mr. Bidzina Javakhishvili, and Deputy Head of the National Food Agency, Mr. Vasil Basiladze attended the meeting.

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15 Georgian companies are participating in the International Exhibition “Green Week 2024” with the support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture



The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze, attended the opening ceremony of the largest International exhibition of food, agriculture, and horticulture: “Green Week 2024” (Grueune Woche 2024) in Berlin.

Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze, along with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Levan Izoria, and the Director of the Rural Development Agency, Mr. Davit Tshitlidze, inspected the products displayed at the Georgian exhibition stand.

According to the Deputy Minister, similar exhibitions help to raise awareness of Georgian companies and sell quality agricultural products on international markets.

“This year, 15 Georgian companies are participating in the expo with the support of the Ministry. The majority of the exhibited products are exported to Germany and other European nations. By participating in similar marketing events, the state promotes the growth of awareness and sale of quality Georgian agricultural products,” said Mr. Nasaridze.

It should be mentioned that with the support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, this year, 15 companies (Chelti Winery LTD, Achinebuli LTD, Toreli Winery LTD, Dabi LTD, JSC Teliani Valley, Gemuani LTD, I/M Gocha Otarashvili, Marneuli Food Factory LLC),

Mtevino LLC, Tengiz Baluashvili LLC Georgian Vine, and Wine, Canning Factory Tiemti LLC, Georgian Lemonade LTD, Terakisi Wines LLC, Chempi LLC, Maister Brau LTD) showcased their products: honey, alcoholic beverages (wine, chacha, cognac), natural juices, dried fruit, tea, Churchkhela, tkemali, sauce, fruit chips, Georgian spices at the Georgian exhibition stand. The presented products comply with the EU standards. 8 of the participant companies are beneficiaries of state programs.

According to the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Republic of Germany, Mr. Levan Izoria, the awareness of Georgian products is annually increasing in the Federal Republic of Germany.

“Participation in the exhibition is the best way to increase the export of our agricultural products to the European market, specifically to the Federal Republic of Germany. The exhibition format provides an opportunity for bilateral meetings, which will promote Georgian products,” said Mr. Levan Izoria.

The National Administration of Tourism of Georgia also participates in the exhibition, which introduces visitors to tourist products and destinations of Georgia.

The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze, hosted the Minister of Economy of Armenia, Mr. Vahan Kerobyan at the Georgian exhibition stand and introduced the presented products. Mr. Nasaridze held meetings with the Minister of Regional Relations and Agriculture of the Republic of Estonia, Mr. Madis Kallas, and the Minister of Agriculture of Latvia, Mr. Armand Krause.

This year’s “Green Week 2024” expo featured over 1,400 enterprises from various countries, with over 400,000 attendees.

Since 1926, the Berlin International Fair “Grueune Woche” has been annually held for 98 years. The exhibition comes to an end on January 29, 2024.



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Within the scope of the international exhibition “Green Week Berlin 2024” the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze held important meetings



At the meeting with the Minister of Agriculture of Latvia, Mr. Armands Krause the parties emphasized the prospects of improving trade in agro-food products between the two countries and the importance of bilateral cooperation in the mentioned area.

“Georgia has recently received the status of a candidate member of the European Union. We are taking important steps towards Europe, and on this path, Latvia is our important supporter and partner. The two countries have fruitful cooperation regarding import-export, and their partnership is expanding. Moreover, the import of cattle from Latvia is increasing. Georgia exports wine, soft drinks, and freshwater to Latvia. We are ready to deepen cooperation in different directions”, said Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze.

Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze held a meeting with Mr. Madis Kalas, Minister of Regional Affairs and Agriculture



of Estonia. The Deputy Minister underlined the importance of the support of international partners on the path of European integration.

“Cooperation with our friends, the Baltic countries, is crucial for us. They are our supporters on the path to European integration. Our goal is to implement changes quickly; We are working on transforming the Rural Development Agency, land identification, and developing an integrated data system and farmers’ registry system according to European principles. In this respect, the cooperation of partners and the sharing of their experiences is essential for us”- said Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze.

The Minister of Regional Affairs and Agriculture of the Republic of Estonia emphasized the importance of the European integration process of Georgia and promised to support Georgia in the said process.



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Tengiz Nasaridze participated in the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA 2024) in Berlin



The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze, participated in the opening of the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA 2024) and the regular 16th ministerial meeting in Berlin.

The Ministers of Agriculture from more than 60 countries and high-level representatives of international organizations attended the largest Global Forum for Food and Agriculture.

During the Ministerial, the parties addressed the prospects for agricultural development.

As mentioned, joint efforts are essential to overcome current challenges, improve productivity, transform food systems, eradicate world hunger, develop international trade, and encourage women's involvement in agricultural activities.

“The forum addressed the international community’s concerns about food security and agricultural development. We face these challenges as well. Georgia is actively participating in these discussions. A rather important communique was adopted, which covers all the main aspects of food security-related challenges. Our agricultural production is actively expanding, and our export indicators worldwide and in the direction of the European Union are increasing. Therefore, joint engagement with our partners is crucial on the ways to rapprochement with the EU”, said Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze.

The Deputy Minister participated in thematic conferences, where parties discussed the European integration of Eastern European countries, achieved progress, and existing challenges. In his remarks, the

Deputy Minister pointed out Georgia's efforts on the path to EU integration and the progress made in agriculture, rural development, and environmental protection areas, including overcoming the challenges caused by climate change. Mr. Nasaridze also emphasized the importance of the projects implemented with the support of the European Union, noting that the mentioned programs significantly contribute to rural and agricultural development.

Significant discussions were held with the participation of the Minister of Food and Agriculture of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Cem Özdemir, and the European Commissioner for Agriculture, Mr. Janusz Wojciechowski, which included challenges and mechanisms that must be used jointly by the candidate countries.

Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze attended the conference, where the leaders and the Ministers of Agriculture from the G7 countries addressed current challenges related to the rapprochement of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine with the European Union.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the crisis created by the war situation in Ukraine and its impact on agriculture, trade, and supply chains in the countries across the region. In his remarks, the Deputy Minister emphasized the challenges of food security, noting that the joint actions of the countries play a crucial role in overcoming the existing challenges.



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Otar Shamugia meets the Ambassador of Finland to the South Caucasus and representatives of the Finnish Meteorological Institute



During the meeting, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, the Finnish Ambassador to the South Caucasus, Mrs. Kirsti Narinen, and representatives of the Finnish Meteorological Institute discussed prospects for future cooperation in the areas of climate change risk reduction and disaster mitigation, including water resources and air quality management.

“One of our top priorities is to ensure that the country’s early warning systems operate efficiently. Active work has been underway in this direction for years. Long-term cooperation with the Finnish Meteorological Institute and sharing their experience will bring significant results.

It is necessary to create a system in the shortest possible time that will insure the risks caused by climate change to the greatest extent possible. Last year, Georgia received the EU candidate status. Within the scope of its competence, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture is actively working towards the fulfillment of its obligations. The support of our partners in the mentioned processes is crucial”, said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

During the meeting, the Minister called attention to the country's recent advances in water resources management and air quality monitoring and highlighted existing challenges. Mr. Shamugia thanked the Finnish side for their support.

According to the Ambassador of Finland to the South Caucasus, Mrs. Kirsti Narinen, Finland supports Georgia on its path to European integration, where environmental issues play a crucial role and will help the country achieve its goals as much as possible.

Mr. Vasil Gedevanishvili, the Head of the National Environmental Agency, and representatives of relevant services within the system of the Ministry attended the meeting.



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National Water Policy Dialogue on Georgia's Progress, Challenges, and Future Plans



The National Policy Dialogue is a platform supporting the implementation of water policy reform and thus fulfilling the national goals and international commitments.

The First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, delivered opening remarks at the event.

"Water resources management is particularly pertinent in light of current climate changes. Water is a significant resource for developing virtually all sectors of the economy. Accordingly, work on sectoral reform in water resources management is actively underway in Georgia.

Within the framework of the National Policy Dialogue, crucial steps were taken toward sustainable water resources management, eventually resulting in the adoption of the Law on Water Resources Management. The mentioned law is consistent with the national needs and challenges of Georgia and its commitments taken under international agreements, treaties, and association agendas. The main provisions of the mentioned law will come into force on September 1, 2026, ushering in the implementation of the river basin management mechanism in the country.

At the same time, we have enhanced the national water monitoring system, which assists us in ensuring the quantitative and qualitative state of water resources across the country. It is worth mentioning that the European Union, specifically the European Commission, has been a main supporter of the reform during its implementation, and I would like to express my gratitude to

them. Today, when Georgia has been granted the status of a candidate for the European Union, we must continue our work with even greater efforts to fulfill all the preconditions /requirements for full membership in the European Union", Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili said.

Mr Nicholas Cendrowicz, the Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia, said: "As an EU candidate country, Georgia will need to take ownership of reforms in the water sector, building on last year's Law on Water Resources Management. We trust that these reforms will be designed and implemented with strong involvement of all stakeholders, including Georgia's international partners."

Speaking on behalf of the EU program's implementing partners, Mr Alexander Zinke, Environment Agency Austria, declared: "Like other countries of the European Union's Eastern Partnership region, Georgia improves step by step its environment management. Overall, the adoption of the Water Law is a big milestone towards EU compliance. International partners will continue to support Georgia's efforts to approach EU standards.

In his remarks, Dr. Sabine Machl, UN Resident Coordinator in Georgia noted that the United Nations is ready to continue supporting Georgia in activities towards sustainable development, including reforming the water sector.

The parties of the National Water Policy Dialogue discussed the necessary measures for the adoption of the new Law of Georgia on Water Resources Management. The discussion focused on the alignment with water-related EU directives in the context of sectoral action and climate change.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia in cooperation with the "EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data" program, organized the National Water Policy Dialogue session.

Within the framework of the event, the Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Mrs. Mzia Giorgobiani, and the Chair of the non-governmental organization "Georgian Green Movement/Friends of the Earth Georgia", Mrs. Nino Chkhobadze, participated in a high-level panel discussion along with the First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe moderated the panel discussion.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia in cooperation with the "EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data" program, organized the 10th National Policy Dialogue on Water.

The Deputy Chair of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee of the Parliament of Georgia, Mrs. Khatia Tsilosani, representatives of state agencies, non-governmental and international organizations, and other stakeholders attended the session.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21556/>

Solomon Pavliashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia leads the Interagency Delegation of Georgia to the United States Department of State



The working visit aimed to determine the needs and possibilities for assisting Georgia in chemical substance safety management and threat reduction and to plan future steps.

The Delegation of Georgia embraces representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Security Service, and the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus).

During the visit, the Georgian Delegation met with Mrs. Kathryn Insley, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation Programs at the U.S. Department of State.

"Georgia has made significant progress in the chemical safety area across the country. The United States of America plans to further support Georgia in reducing the threats still existing in this direction, which has never been more important than today," Mrs. Kathryn Insley stated.

"The United States of America is a strategic partner of Georgia. Our Government, within the scope of compliance with the EU membership criteria, and with the support of the US Department of State, continues to actively bring the chemical substances management framework closer to the systems of the European Union and the United States of America", Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili noted.

The Georgian delegation and the representatives of the Agencies of the State Department working on chemical, biological, radiation, and nuclear threats-related issues addressed the current state of security. The discussion included Georgia's plans, challenges, and ongoing joint initiatives.

Within the framework of the visit, the Georgian Delegation met with Mr. Clifford Villa, the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the U.S. EPA Office of Land and Emergency Management.

"For Georgia, as an active participant of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, it is very important to align with the United States position to support our initiatives related to the safe management of chemicals and waste in the negotiation process," said Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili.

"The US has extensive experience and guidance documents in preventing and responding to chemical pollution incidents, which the Georgian side may use in strengthening planned legislative and institutional capacities for preparedness and timely response to chemical threats. The US Agency is ready to support the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia in this direction", said Mr. Clifford Villa.

The US Environmental Protection Agency representatives shared the American experience with their Georgian colleagues in reducing the risk of environmental pollution with chemical substances and restoring polluted areas and agreed on issues of deepening cooperation.

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GREEN CLIMATE FUND



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development

ENABLING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GEORGIA'S FOREST SECTOR REFORM - ECO.Georgia



ISSUE#10 / January 2024

“What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another.” - Mahatma Gandhi

PROJECT BRIEF

The project “Enabling the implementation of Georgia’s forest sector reform - ECO.Georgia” is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture together with the National Forestry Agency, Rural Development Agency, Environmental Information and Education Centre, Department of Environmental Supervision; by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The project aims to mitigate GHG emissions through the nature-based management of the country’s forests and the improvement of energy efficiency to reduce the demand for fuelwood. It also envisages the strengthening of local self-governance and diversifying livelihood opportunities in the forest adjoining rural communities to benefit from diversified income opportunities through improved forestry value chains and better access to forestry knowledge and skills. The project focuses on three target regions (Guria, Kakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti) and eight municipalities: Ozurgeti, Chokhatauri, Lanchkhuti, Telavi, Kvareli, Akhmeta, Dedoplistskaro and Tianeti. The Project is funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Government of Georgia (GoG) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).



Component 1: Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

Activity 1.1: Development and implementation of SFM plans

Activity 1.2: Strengthening of forest supervision

Activity 1.3: Provision of sustainably produced fuelwood by NFA

Activity 1.4: Enhancement of enabling environment for the nation-wide implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM)

Activity 1.5: Improvement of monitoring and measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) systems for the forest sector



Component 2: Market Development for Energy Efficiency (EE) and Alternative Fuels (AF)

Activity 2.1: EE-AF supply chain development

Activity 2.2: Implementing consumer financing instruments for EE-AF solutions

Activity 2.3: Creating consumer awareness and provision of technical advisory services for fuelwood users

Activity 2.4: Enabling policies and regulations



Component 3: Livelihood opportunities and local self-governance in forest management

Activity 3.1: Development and introduction of municipal-level tools, practices, plans and necessary capacities for participatory SFM and conservation

Activity 3.2: Development, testing and promotion of mechanisms at the local level to better protect interests of adversely affected stakeholders

Activity 3.3: Development of professional skills and knowledge relevant to SFM and conservation through vocational education and international partnerships with centers of knowledge

Activity 3.4: Strengthening of selected value chains (e.g., timber, NTFP, parts of eco-tourism)

■ Activity in 3 target regions only

■ Nation-wide activity

□ Nation-wide activity with focus on 3 target regions

The presentation of the results and the preliminary political conclusions took place on January 29



© MEPA: The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture opening the event

On the 29th of January, the first National Forest Inventory results and preliminary political conclusions/recommendations were unveiled, engaging an audience of both international and domestic stakeholders deeply interested in the forestry sector. The proceedings were moderated by Ms. Carl Amirgulashvili, the Head of the Biodiversity and Forestry Department (BFD) at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and the results and recommendations were presented by the forestry division of BFD.

The event commenced with an opening address from Nino Tandilashvili, the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, who articulated advancements within the Forest Sector Reform implementation. Tandilashvili underscored the significant role of the ECO.Georgia project in this progress, extending gratitude to the German side for their steadfast support and collaborative efforts in Georgia's forest sector.

During her address, Deputy Minister Tandilashvili emphasized the importance of continuing the Forest Sector Reform actively. She stressed the need for a dedicated focus on measures related to forest maintenance and restoration, particularly given the vulnerability of Georgian forests—occupying over 40% of the country's territory—to the challenges especially posed by climate change. Tandilashvili highlighted the successful initiation of the Forest Sector Reform through the adoption of the new Forest Code, urging the incorporation of sustainable practices in timber processing and a heightened emphasis on forest maintenance to safeguard the nation's unique forest resources.

The German Ambassador also took the stage to articulate the critical significance of measures aimed at the protection and preservation of Georgia's invaluable treasure—the Georgian forests. In his statement, the Ambassador emphasized the urgency for Georgia to intensify its commitment to forest-related initiatives, rallying international support for concerted efforts that transcend governmental boundaries.

“With the support of its international partners, including German partners, and we will support, Georgia has to urgently get really serious about its forests, focus on it, invest into it and get across governmental effort that all the ministries focus on the forests so that you preserve the nature, preserve economic benefits and you can also take fuelwood in the future which remains an important issue.” – the Ambassador stated in his comment.

Christian Goenner, the Head of the Sustainable Forest Management component of the ECO.Georgia project echoed the sentiments of the importance of forest resources and their maintenance for the country.

“We see Georgia's forests are rich in biodiversity and very reach in tree species and natural structures of the forests. So, to build up good forest stocks Georgia will need quite some time, the country has to invest in the restoration of the forests to build up its timber resources and to ensure the maintenance of biodiversity.”- mentioned Christian Goenner.



© MEPA: the Head of Development Cooperation, Lidija Christmann, the German Ambassador – Peter Fischer, the ECO.Georgia project director -Lutz Jarczyński

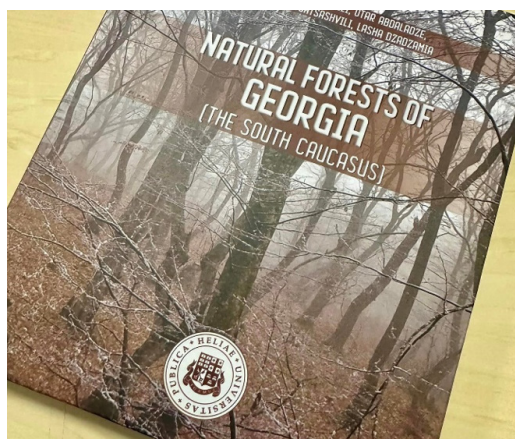
The event attracted representatives from esteemed international organizations and embassies, including the Kingdom of Sweden, the Republic of Austria, the Swiss Confederation, the Czech Republic, the United States Agency for International Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency, and the European Union. Additionally, attendees included representatives from various ministries such as the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Science, along with representatives from universities, academia, and the Tbilisi municipality city hall.

The book about the natural forests of Georgia was published

The Ilia State University published the book “Natural Forests of Georgia” based on the research conducted in 2019-2022.

“The book is devoted to one of the most pressing issues of botanical science in Georgia – the study of the current state of natural forests. It presents a large amount of factual material collected in reports of phytosociological and forestry research of the major forest formations of western and eastern Georgia. Attention is focused on rare, relict forests and ecosystems subject to transformations as a result of the ongoing global climate change (e.g., the treeline ecotone). The book is intended for a wide range of readers: botanists, ecologists, foresters, other representatives of the natural sciences, researchers and lovers of Georgia's nature, and doctoral, master and bachelor-level students at universities. Field research was carried out and the book was published with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), within the framework of the project “Enabling the Implementation of Georgia's Forest Sector Reform - ECO.Georgia.”

The presentation of the book took place at Ilia State University and interested persons had also an opportunity to attend the presentation online.



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