



# Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

FEBRUARY 2022

## Prime Minister of Georgia, Mr. Irakli Gharibashvili nominated Otar Shamugia for the position of the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture at the Government briefing



Mr. Otar Shamugia has replaced Levan Davitashvili -the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture. Mr. Levan Davitashvili has been appointed as the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development.

*“It is a great honor and responsibility for me to serve my country with a very strong team and contribute to the development of both the environment and agriculture. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the Prime Minister for his faith and confidence in appointing me to this position; I would like to thank Mr. Levan Davitashvili for the fruitful cooperation over the years, for the reforms that have been carried out under his leadership in the Ministry, and I wish him success in his new, important position. I also wish success to Mrs. Natia Turnava “Mr. Otar Shamugia said.*

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20665/>

## Otar Shamugia: “We will be able to employ several thousand socially vulnerable people in the agencies of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture”

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia held a working meeting with the Heads of the departments of the Ministry and Chiefs of the agencies under the Ministry.

In the course of the meeting, the Minister spoke about the work plans of the Ministry and drew his attention to the employment program for able-bodied people receiving social benefits.

*“Upon the instructions of the Prime Minister of Georgia, we have worked on the issues of employment for socially vulnerable population. Within the framework of the program, which will be launched on March 1, our Ministry is ready to involve several thousand people in the public activities, to offer them specific jobs, which will allow them to actively realize their potential” - said Mr. Otar Shamugia.*

According to the Minister, infrastructure projects, as well as spring agricultural works and other related issues have been discussed at the meeting.

*“Development of irrigation infrastructure is a priority for us, we will have a specific plan in this area, which will entail large-scale activities and we will present it to the working group. It is also important to note, that all relevant structures are ready to start seasonal spring works. We work in coordination with farmers and will do our best to ensure the smooth implementation of the spring works” - said the Minister.*



Upon the instruction of the Minister, the Heads of the agencies will present their initiatives and visions in the near future, which will contribute to more effective teamwork and meet the needs of the target segment.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20669/>

## Levan Davitashvili “Attractive investment business environment in Georgia is confirmed by the fact, that this type of strategic investment is being carried out in the water supply sector of our country”



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Levan Davitashvili met with the Executive Director of the Spanish company “Aqualia”, Mr. Felix Parra Mediavila.

The company “Aqualia” will invest tens of millions of dollars to improve the water supply sector in Georgia.

According to the Minister, implementation of similar investments is very important for our country’s economy.

*“Attractive investment and business environment in Georgia is confirmed by the fact, that this type of strategic investment is being carried out in the water supply sector of our country. It is important for us, that commitments taken by our country in the water management are fulfilled in accordance with the European directives in the European integration process. “Sharing European experience is important for sustainable management of water resources,” - said Minister Davitashvili.*

In the course of the meeting, the CEO of the Spanish company, Mr. Felix Parra Mediavila noted, that Spanish company has many years of experience in the water supply, purification and water management, which will be interesting for the development of the water sector in Georgia.

The Spanish company “Aqualia” is among the top ten companies across the world, that operates in more than 17 countries, including France, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

## World Wetlands Day celebrated annually on February 2nd



World Wetlands Day is celebrated annually on February 2 worldwide to commemorate the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, also known as the Ramsar Convention, near the shores of the Caspian Sea in Ramsar, Iran in the year 1971.

In 1996, Georgia joined the Ramsar Convention, the International Treaty on wetlands.

“Wetlands Action for People and Nature” is the theme in 2022, which entails sustainable use of wetlands and promotes conservation efforts.

Wetlands enhance water quality, shoreline stabilization, groundwater recharge and stream flow maintenance, moreover, they control erosion, provide transformations of various nutrients and give home to threatened and endangered species. Since 1997, Kobuleti Protected Areas and Kolkheti National Park have been approved and granted the status of wetlands of international importance, and in 2020, Madatapi and Bogdasheni Lakes included in the Javakheti Protected Areas, were added to the list of Ramsar sites.

In 2021, 4 protected areas of Georgia: Kolkheti National Park, Kobuleti Protected Areas, Kintrishi Protected Areas and Mtirala National Park, as unique Colchis forests and wetlands are recognized under UNESCO - World Natural Heritage Site.

Around the world, natural heritage status has been granted to just 213 sites, including the Amazon rainforest, the Grand Canyon National Park, Yellowstone National Park, Mount Etna, and the Swiss Alps.

Granting World Natural Heritage status enabled the unique nature of Georgia to once again appear on the world map, as a country of unique biodiversity, which is important not only for Georgia, but for the whole world

## Nino Tandilashvili participated in the 10th sitting of the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee in the European Parliament

Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili took part in the 10th sitting of the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee in Brussels.

In the course of the sitting, the Deputy Minister spoke about the measures taken by Georgia in the field of environmental protection and climate change and highlighted achieved results.

It was mentioned, that, in 2021, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the Law on “Environmental Liability”, which is based on the “polluter pays principle” and serves to eliminate and reduce the damage to the environment, in accordance with the EU best

practice.

The sides also emphasized, that the one who caused the damage to the environment would have the obligation to repair this damage and not just pay a monetary penalty or fine.

The participants mentioned measures to improve the air quality, which means, that Georgia will fully embrace European Ambient Air Quality Directives and adopt the European air quality management system.

It was noted that, the development of an integrated water resources management system and transition to a basin management model is a top priority for water sector



reform in Georgia. A draft law on water resources management has been prepared in accordance with EU directives and submitted to the Parliament.

The participants discussed a wide range of issues, including, biodiversity protec-

tion, forest governance and development of protected areas; The importance of waste management and the development of the circular economy, fisheries and maritime governance was also underlined at the session.

Significant steps have been taken by Georgia in relation to climate change, such as the adoption of the NDC, the Climate Change Strategy (2030) and the Action Plan (2021-2023).

The sides underlined the importance of the European Green Deal as well. Considering the fact, that European Green Deal sets out various policy initiatives and ambitious goals for the EU and its Member States, it is very important for Georgia to deepen the dialogue with the EU on the expectations of the EU, on how Georgia can act to achieve the goals set out in the European Green Deal from the perspective of the associated country.

The 10th sitting of the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee in the European Parliament was attended by members of executive and legislative branches, who made reports on a wide range of important issues addressing cooperation with the EU.

## Draft amendments to the Environmental Assessment Code discussed in the Parliament of Georgia



Under the proposed legislative amendments, the Department of Environmental Assessment, which is responsible for carrying out the environmental impact assessment procedure, as well as the strategic environmental assessment, will be transferred from the central office of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture to the National Environmental Agency's system.

In 2017, the Parliament of Georgia adopted one of the most important laws "Environmental Assessment Code". As a result, one of the first commitments taken by Georgia under the Association Agreement- to bring our environmental impact assessment system closer to the European requirements, has been fulfilled.

*"The new legislation is in full compliance with the European requirements, which means ensuring public access to information, supporting public participation at the early stage of infrastructure or investment projects planning" said the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.*

Mrs. Tandilashvili provided Members of the Parliament with the details of the amendments to the Code.

According to the Deputy Minister, the transfer of the Department of Environmental Assessment to the LEPL National Environmental Agency will further enhance the capacity of the Department of Environmental Assessment.

The amendments proposed by the draft law will ensure a comprehensive a maximum review on the environmental impact assessment report, screening or scoping reports and will make an environmentally sound decisions as promptly as possible..

The respective bodies are interlinked, both have much in common institutionally as well as functionally. Specialists (geologists, hydrologists, climatologists) of the LEPL National Environmental Agency are still actively involved in both environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment procedures.

A number of top European countries embrace a similar institutional approach. It is noteworthy, that in line with the legislative changes, the rule remains unchanged, according to which, the Government will make a decision on the exemption from the EIA, on changes to the terms and conditions to EIA decision, on the initiation of transboundary environmental impact assessment procedures. (after the procedures will enter into force). " - said Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili.

## "Swirl Wine Group" to launch Georgian wine marketing campaign in UK in 2022 organized by National Wine Agency

An agreement on cooperation between the National Wine Agency and the British marketing company "Swirl Wine Group" has already been signed.

"Swirl Wine Group" is headed by Sarah Abbott, a famous master of wine. Within the framework of the campaign, in 2022, Georgian wine tasting-seminars will be held for wine professionals and representatives of the wine trade in the cities of UK; Georgian wine will be presented at international exhibitions, targeted advertising and media campaigns will be carried out.

The UK is one of the largest importers and consumers of wine in the world. Since 2014, the UK has emerged as one of the potentially growing strategic markets for Georgian wine exports. With the consistent cooperation of the National Wine Agency with Georgian wine producers, it became possible to create a growing trend of Georgian wine exports. In 2021, 736 thousand bottles of wine were exported, which is an increase of 71% compared to 2020.

