



Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

Otar Shamugia's Working Visit to Finland: Key Meetings Strengthen Climate and Environmental Cooperation



During his working visit to Finland, Georgian Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, held a series of important meetings aimed at enhancing environmental collaboration. A notable highlight was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI), which seeks to modernize Georgia's meteorological and environmental systems.

Mr. Petteri Taalas, Director General of the Finnish Meteorological Institute, echoed this sentiment, highlighting that upgrading international meteorological systems is essential for economic development. "It is essential that Georgia carries out reforms in line with the standards of EU member states," he remarked, reinforcing the importance of Georgia's commitment to international standards.

Mr. Shamugia also met with Mr. In his remarks at the signing ceremony, Mr. Shamugia underscored the significance of this partnership in addressing climate change, stating, "The MoU will enable us to modernize meteorological and environmental observation networks, update equipment, and improve our forecasting systems." He noted that the installation of 231 hydrometeorological stations across Georgia will significantly enhance the quality of weather forecasts and early warning systems.



Juhani Damski, Permanent Secretary of Finland's Ministry of the Environment, to discuss expanding bilateral collaboration in environmental and climate change initiatives. Mr. Shamugia stated, "Environmental protection is one of the top state priorities in Georgia," emphasizing the country's legislative progress towards aligning with EU standards in environmental management and climate initiatives.

Additionally, Mr. Shamugia engaged with Ms. Sari Essayah, Finland's Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, to explore avenues for deepening agricultural cooperation. He outlined Georgia's efforts in agricultural development and sustainable forest management, declaring, "The agricultural sector in Georgia plays a significant role in the country's economy." Ms. Essayah acknowledged the positive trajectory of Georgian-Finnish relations, emphasizing, "Today, we discussed the possibilities of expanding our bilateral cooperation and deepening trade relations."

Through this partnership, Georgia aims to enhance its climate resilience and align its environmental practices with European standards, paving the way for future growth and sustainability.



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Solomon Pavliashvili participates in a High-Level Dialogue on Climate Transparency in Baku



Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku hosted the High-Level Dialogue: Advancing Climate Transparency through Universal Participation in the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF).

The High-Level Dialogue aims to augment global efforts on climate transparency, increase trust among parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), raise political awareness of climate change regarding accountability, and deepen cooperation among all stakeholders.

In his remarks, Mr. Pavliashvili thanked the President of the United Nations Framework Convention (COP 29), the Secretariat, and international partners for

their support in developing climate policy and reporting systems in Georgia.

“On behalf of my country, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the COP29 Presidency, the Secretariat, and our international partners for their unwavering support in developing Georgia’s climate change policy and reporting systems. Through our joint efforts, Georgia plans to submit its Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) ahead of schedule.

During this period, we have identified the strengths of our reporting systems, which we can share with our colleagues, and the weaknesses where we need additional support to improve the accuracy and completeness of our climate policy reporting,” Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili noted.

It is worth noting that the event featured the launch of the Global Climate Transparency Platform (BTP), aiming to provide dialogue among stakeholders and support the capacity-building efforts of developing countries in preparing and finalizing their BTRs.

Over 120 countries and officials of international organizations attended the event.

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Otar Shamugia got acquainted with the grape harvesting and delivery process in Kakheti region



During recent visits to the Kakheti region, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Otar Shamugia, highlighted the critical role of state support for winegrowers and the diversification of export markets. Accompanied by regional representatives, Mr. Shamugia toured the “Khutsishvili Brothers Wine Cellar” in Kisiskhevi, where he emphasized that tangible results are already evident.

“We participate in more international exhibitions, specifically in markets where we believe Georgian wine has significant export potential,” Mr. Shamugia noted. He reported that Georgian wine exports to Germany have exceeded one million bottles this year, reflecting a 40% increase, while exports to the United States have also surged by up to 35%. “The markets in Poland and the Baltic countries are expanding, and Georgian wine enjoys widespread recognition,” he added.

Mr. Gela Khutsishvili, founder of the “Khutsishvili Brothers Wine Cellar,” acknowledged the importance of state assistance in promoting his winery at in-

ternational exhibitions. He reported that approximately 3,000 wineries are now registered in Georgia, with about 500 actively exporting wine.

Following this, Mr. Shamugia and Mr. Giorgi Aladashvili visited the state enterprise “Harvest Management Company” in Akura village, where they reviewed the grape delivery process. Mr. Shamugia remarked, “The state’s active involvement in the Saperavi grapes delivery process is crucial due to the abundant harvest and climatic conditions.” He noted that the volume of recycled grapes this season is double that of last year.

To facilitate this process, the government has set a price of GEL 1.50 per kilogram for Saperavi grapes and will compensate growers delivering grapes at lower rates. Mr. Aladashvili expressed gratitude for this decision, stating, “The fact that it will be possible to sell the Saperavi grape variety for GEL 1.50 once again confirms that the government is continuously taking care of the development of the industry.”



In another stop, Mr. Shamugia visited “Bolero and Company” in Gurjaani municipality, where he observed the efficient grape processing operations. The company’s general director, Mr. Irakli Bekauri, reported that their facilities are running at full

capacity, processing between 800 to 1,000 tonnes of grapes per hour. “Our marketing efforts include continuously looking for new markets,” he stated, highlighting their successful exports to more than ten countries, including France, Spain, and China.



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The Government of Georgia approves the 2024–2026 Air Quality Management Plan for the Tbilisi Agglomeration



The goal of the 2024-2026 Air Quality Management Plan for the Tbilisi Agglomeration is to reduce pollution caused by harmful substances in Tbilisi Municipality and maintain other toxic substances within acceptable limits. The document outlines a 3-year action plan, detailing specific activities, the responsible agencies, performance indicators, deadlines, and the budget.

The action plan focuses on four main objectives:

- Reducing particulate matter pollution in the Tbilisi agglomeration;
- Reducing nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions in the Tbilisi agglomeration;
- Enhancing the assessment of air quality and the impact of air pollution on human health in the Tbilisi agglomeration;
- Raising public awareness about air protection in the Tbilisi agglomeration.

The Air Quality Management Plan serves as a sectoral policy document, designed to improve ambient air quality through targeted, results-driven measures.

The Draft Government Decree was developed with the involvement of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, other government agencies, the Parliament of Georgia, Tbilisi City Hall, and civil society representatives, with support from the European Union and the participation of Georgian and European experts. Public consultations and discussions were held during the drafting process.

The 2024-2026 Air Quality Management Plan for the Tbilisi Agglomeration was prepared in accordance with the Law of Georgia “On Protection of Ambient Air” and the Government Resolution “On Approving the Rules for Development, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Policy Documents.” The plan also incorporates elements from other national strategic documents and Georgia’s international commitments.

It is worth noting that the development of air quality management plans follows best practices used by EU countries to address air pollution issues.

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Due to its efforts towards fostering a Circular Economy, Georgia is among the top candidates for joining the EU



Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Mikheil Dundua, Deputy Minister of Finance of Georgia, and Mr. Giorgi Kvesitadze, General Adviser to the President of the National Academy of Sciences of Georgia, attended the presentation of “Georgia’s National Roadmap for Transitioning to a Circular Economy”.

The national roadmap serves as a strategic plan outlining the long-term vision for transitioning to a circular economy and determining the top initiatives needed to achieve, including reducing the municipal solid waste and waste generation, increasing the overall waste recycling rate, restoring areas damaged by illegal dumping, minimizing energy consumption in transportation networks and reducing raw material losses, increasing energy efficiency, improving land and water resource management and material yield, and creating new green jobs.

The Deputy Minister claims that during the past five years, the Government of Georgia has made significant progress toward transitioning to a circular economy, including developing the rules and regulations in compliance with the EU legislation.

Based on the evaluation of global experts, Georgia stands out among EU candidates for membership due to its progressive steps toward a circular economy.

“All our efforts were based on the recommendations of the European Union. We are making progress gradually; increasing public awareness of the circular economy was the first step. Moreover, we held meetings with policymakers, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and business groups at all levels. Thus, the next step was to evaluate the potential, which we divided into different sectors. There are sectors where adopting a circular economy can be the most effective. Ultimately, the next step is the national roadmap, which will define the nation’s circular economy strategy, eventually enabling us to draft a policy document,” said Mr Solomon Pavliashvili.

The Deputy Minister of Finance focused on the economic growth rate and establishing a high-standard economic system.

According to Mikheil Dundua, making economic progress while maintaining high environmental standards is crucial for the Government of Georgia. The current high economic growth process needs to focus on environmental protection, ecology, circular economy, and the proper use of resources.

According to the General Adviser of the President of the National Academy of Sciences of Georgia, the development and implementation of circular business models require innovations and research.

“The Members of the National Academy of Sciences started exploring circular economy-related issues years ago.

The Academy of Sciences shows great interest in assessing the circularity level of the economy and preparing the Circularity Roadmap. We receive valuable recommendations in the mentioned processes”, noted Academician Giorgi Kvesitadze.

The work on the circularity roadmap has been launched since September 2023.

The Government of Georgia created the Inter-Agency Coordination Council to promote the transition to the circular economy, while the expert team of the Union of Nature Researchers of Georgia “Orchis,” including international experts, are working on the roadmap.

The roadmap was developed with the financial support of the Swedish government within the framework of the “Governance Reform Fund” (GRF) project of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) sub-project “Supporting the Government of Georgia in Enhancing Governance & Policies for a Transition to a Circular Economy”.





The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture hosted the fourth working meeting of the National Forestry Program process



The parties highlighted the pathological state of Georgian forests and the measures taken by the forest management bodies to address the mentioned issues.

According to Mr. Carl Amirgulashvili, the Head of the Department of Biodiver-

sity and Forestry of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, similar meetings are crucial for the prompt planning and execution of actions to improve the sanitary condition of forests.

During the meeting, the parties touched upon a wide range of issues regarding managing diseases and pests spread throughout the forest territory of the National Forestry Agency, including dealing with the pathological conditions of species of woody plants in Adjara forest and protected areas.

The conversation included the importance of developing effective tools for combating new chestnut and oak pests (Chestnut Weevil and Oak Borer).

The representatives of the Adjara Forestry Agency and the National Botanical Garden of Georgia, experts, field specialists, researchers, scientists, and stakeholders, along with the Heads of the respective Departments of the Ministry, attended the meeting.

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Tengiz Nasaridze: “Encouraging agricultural education will contribute to the development of the agricultural sector”



The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze, hosted Mr. Roland Siegwart, Chairman of the Swiss Foundation “Gebert Rűf Stiftung” and the board members. The parties discussed various issues, including promoting agrarian education, attracting young people to the agriculture industry, and conducting re-training courses.

“The state will always be the driving force in attracting, educating, and engaging youth in agriculture. Sharing the Swiss experience in this direction is crucial for us”, Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze stated.

In 2019, the Swiss Foundation “Gebert Rűf Stiftung” constructed the “Swiss Agricultural School Caucasus” in the village of Sarkineti, Dmanisi Municipality, which offers students a 3-year professional program in animal husbandry, processing of milk and dairy products.



The complex also includes a training center where farmers and amateurs can take short-term professional courses.

“We aim to ensure the involvement of youth in the development of the agricultural sector and give them an impetus. We would like to introduce innovative projects in your country as well. We are happy when we see that the state shows this kind of commitment and interest,” said Mr. Roland Siegwart.

The “Gebert Rűf Stiftung” is a Swiss organization- focusing on implementing creative educational programs that encourage new technological breakthroughs and entrepreneurial thinking.

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Otar Shamugia gets familiar with the ongoing harvesting and delivery process in the Racha region



During a recent visit to Racha, Ambrolauri Municipality, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, engaged with local winegrowers and examined the grape harvesting process. He reported that the harvest is in full swing, with expectations of around 2,000 tonnes, and noted that 500 tonnes have already been processed.

“The harvest in Racha is already in full swing. We receive a quality harvest. This year, we continue to subsidize the Alexandrouli and Mujuretuli grape varieties to ensure that grape growers can deliver, handle, and store their crops on time and obtain increased income,” stated Mr. Shamugia. He highlighted that, for the first time, the minimum price for grapes is set at GEL 8, with a state subsidy of GEL 4. As of September 26, 27 companies are involved in processing the grapes, collecting them from 17 locations. Ampelographers monitor the deliveries to maintain varietal accuracy and quality for the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) “Kvanchkara” wine. Special checkpoints have been established to prevent mixing with other grape varieties.

Mr. Shamugia also visited Mr. Kakhaber Getsadze, a local winegrower in Itsa village, participating in the grape harvest. Mr. Getsadze cultivates both Alexandrouli and Mujuretuli grape varieties on one hectare and plans to deliver up to four tonnes to a wine company. “With the support of the state, I can focus on growing quality grapes without worrying about market access,” he remarked.

The Minister further inspected the “Itsa Marani” wine factory in Itsa village, which aims to process up to 20 tonnes of grapes this year, primarily sourced from local residents. “Private companies are actively involved in the grape processing; indeed, the state enterprise is ready to deliver grapes if needed. I’m confident that the grape harvest in Racha will be as successful as it was in Kakheti,” Mr. Shamugia asserted. Established in 2019 with state support, “Itsa Marani” has invested GEL 1.3 million, producing around 80 tonnes of wine, with exports to the United States and various European nations, including a recent agreement to export to China.

State Representative Mr. Papuna Margvelidze emphasized the importance of the harvest process, stating, “We had to start harvesting early this year due to climatic conditions. The government decided to implement a subsidy program to ensure that different varieties of grapes are not imported from other municipalities.” He added, “We have good expectations for this harvest.” Mr. Shamugia also visited “Barakoni Winery” in Bostana village, where he learned that the enterprise has already processed 100 tonnes of grapes and plans to process an additional 100 tonnes. The founder, Mr. Kakha Gordeziani, praised the state subsidy program, saying, “The implementation of this program is significant support for our community and helps ensure a successful harvest.”

Under this program, companies purchasing and processing at least three tonnes of Alexandrouli and Mujuretuli grapes will receive a subsidy, ensuring that growers are paid no more than GEL 8 per kilogram. In the Racha-Lechkhumi region, the subsidy is GEL 4 per kilogram.



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Nino Tandilashvili: “The country has drafted several political documents for environmental protection, and now it is crucial to put them into practice”



The First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, met with Mr. Douglas Webb, Resident Representative of UNDP in Georgia, who is in charge of waste management, reduction of single-use plastics, and adoption of the Green Economy in Georgia.

During the meeting, the parties focused on fulfilling obligations outlined in the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of Georgia. According to the First Deputy Minister, the country has drafted several political documents and action plans to protect the environment, it is now crucial to put these documents into practice, and for this, the nation requires the assistance of several UN agencies.

“Raising public awareness is crucial for achieving progress in waste management, adopting a circular economy, and reducing plastic consumption. To this end, donor organizations, the private sector, and local government must all be involved in this effort,” said Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili.

During the bilateral meeting, the parties focused on initiating cooperation in waste management. As mentioned, one of the top national priorities is to manage food and agricultural waste.

“ Putting into action national priority projects tailored to Georgia’s requirements is essential to us. We can share our best European practices towards environmental protection, specifically in the waste management field,” said Mr. Douglas Webb.

It is worth mentioning that in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia is carrying out several significant projects aimed at reducing disasters caused by climate change, enhancing air quality, and setting up an environmental monitoring and reporting system.

The Environment & Energy Team Leader, Mrs. Nino Antadze, and the Head of the National Environmental Agency, Mr. Vasil Gedevanishvili, attended the meeting.



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