



# European Union

## Supporting Georgia in its reforms of higher and vocational education

Today, young people want to be informed, to be heard and to participate in the cultural, economic and social life of Georgia and in the world. They want to make a career and to achieve economic independence. Education plays a key role in enabling young people as well as adults to face the challenges of today's world. In its 'Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs' the EU underlines the importance of life-long learning for individual employability and global competitiveness, which is also one of the themes for cooperation with partner countries in the European Neighbourhood.

The European Union also adopted the Millennium Development Goals of universal primary education and gender equality in its fight against poverty and support to development. At the same time, the commitment of the European Union goes beyond these goals, taking into consideration the needs of primary to tertiary education levels, issues of quality, as well as vocational training and higher education.

The European Union uses various means and programmes to support the reform and development of Georgia's education system.

The European Union's main targets are:

- the education policy development at national and regional level;
- the promotion of equal access to quality basic education for children in remote regions; and
- better opportunities for professional education and skills training.

### Supporting the Education Policy

Given the importance of education for the development of the country both the Georgian Government and the European Union decided to make it a joint priority. Between 2005 and 2008, € 2.8 million was channelled to address a wide variety of needs from primary schools to higher education.

In the primary schools, rights of minorities' children and gender equality are the main targets for two projects totalling € 450.000 carried out in the most multi-ethnic regions of Georgia, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Shida Kartli. Promotion of tolerance towards differences, diversity and the right to education, in particular, to non-formal education, has been at the centre of the programme.

Besides civic education, the European Union has tackled the improvement of vocational training provided to the adult population using modern interactive training techniques; € 200,000 has been channelled through the Ministry of Education and Sciences to support the Reform of the Georgian Vocational Education and Training System.

With a budget of € 1 million three youth centres have been created in Telavi, Kutaisi and Batumi to increase the employment prospects for vulnerable young people by giving them key skills for the job market.

The European Commission is the European Union's executive body

"The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".

€11.1 million in 15 years of European Union's support to the Georgian Educational System

€1.6 million to support children's education in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Shida Kartli regions

€1 million project to support the employability of vulnerable youth



European Union



### A well connected higher education system

The European Union is a champion for improved access to a strong higher education sector.

Between 2006 and 2008, €1.3 million was allocated by the EU for Georgia to further develop and integrate the higher education system into a regional academic network. The foundation of the interdisciplinary Institute for European Studies at Tbilisi State University has enabled the establishment of links to other Georgian State Universities in Batumi and Telavi.

In May 2005, Georgia joined the Bologna process and has made good progress towards becoming part of the European Higher Education Area. The European Union gives particular encouragement to academic cooperation and cultural exchanges between higher education institutions from the EU member states and the South Caucasus. This has been achieved through the promotion of exchanges addressing students and academics from eleven universities from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and six European Higher Education institutions. Undergraduate, graduate and PhD students have been offered the opportunity to conduct their studies or research within the EU.

The Erasmus Mundus programme is fostering a more structured cooperation between the European Union and Georgia for higher education mobility. It provides scholarships to study for top quality European joint Master and Doctorate and assists the establishment of partnerships with non-European higher education institutions. €3 million was available to Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan for the period 2007-2008.

### Partnership for reforms

The European Union and Georgia jointly agreed to support higher education reforms over a three year period from 2007 until 2010. The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia is supported by the European Training Foundation, through a €1.1 million programme, in preparing the integration of the country into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This means that Georgian students can choose from a wide and transparent range of high quality courses and benefit from a common approach to the recognition of degrees.

Georgia is also benefiting from the Tempus (IV) programme which supports reforms in the field of higher education. Between 1995 and 2008 the Tempus programme has funded 71 projects including 12 Georgian universities (€7 million). Currently (2010) there are six Tempus projects involving ten Georgian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) totalling € 3.3 million.

### Assisting youth in finding their path

It was *World Vision Georgia* that began to carry out the **Learners for Life project**. It helped to prepare vulnerable teenagers aged between 14 and 20 in Telavi, Kutaisi and Batumi. It also addressed youth living in child care institutions by teaching them how to start leading independent lives by offering life skills training, vocational training, access to small group loans, and employment assistance. Three Community Youth Centres have been opened. Through these Centres youth was able participate in educational programmes, sports, and have access to various employment placements. Groups of highly qualified Social Workers were supporting these young people in planning their future. Around 3.500 young people attended these training, almost 600 got a job.

Since 2006 Georgia and the European Union are working together to develop a national and regional academic network

Between 1995 and 2010 in total 71 projects worth €10.3 million were implemented while assisting to reform the higher education system

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