

FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT EU-GEORGIA RELATIONS



The European Union and Georgia's close relationship is based on **the EU Georgia Association Agreement** including a **Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA)**, which entered into force in July 2016 and strives for political association and economic integration. Through its firm support for Georgia's territorial independence within its internationally recognised borders, its political dialogue, cooperation and assistance programmes, **the EU remains committed to supporting a strong, independent and prosperous Georgia.**

ECONOMY

✓ **Economic development and job creation are key priorities.** The EU is Georgia's main trading partner, with a 27% share of its total trade. **The ongoing opening of the EU market to more Georgian products** continually offers Georgians new export and income opportunities.

✓ Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the Georgian economy. To support their development, **the EU provides funding, training, and export support through its EU4Business initiative.** Since 2009, 40,000 SMEs, microenterprises and farmers have received loans. In addition, a total of €130 million in loans are made available for innovative SMEs and medium market value (midcap) companies under Horizon 2020. This has led to the creation of an estimated 10,300 new jobs.

✓ Through its ENPARD programme, **the EU is modernising Georgian agriculture** by supporting the rollout of the agriculture cooperative model, leading to the establishment of 1,200 cooperatives in Georgia. The EU's financial and technical support to them aims to **help farmers improve their working conditions and income.** EU support has also helped establish 59 information and consultation centres around the country, which have trained over 250,000 farmers.

✓ Through Local Action Groups, **the EU has supported 360 local development initiatives in rural areas**, which have provided better employment conditions for over 1,000 households and improved living conditions for over 10,000 people.

ENVIRONMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

✓ **The EU provides large grants to Georgia for the development of its transport connections, electricity and water infrastructure**, including the East-West highway, large scale water infrastructure in Adjara, Kakheti, and Imereti, and the modernisation of the Enguri dam and other electricity infrastructure across the country.

✓ **The European Union is committed to fighting climate change and supporting Georgia** in its green energy production. Not only has the EU significantly contributed to the modernisation of key hydropower stations, Georgia is now also home to the first commercial wind farm in the Caucasus.

✓ **The EU supports large programmes on waste management** including promoting the adoption of the Extended Producer Responsibility strategy and the development of landfills. The EU is also helping address transnational challenges: the **Black Sea Basin Cross-Border Cooperation Programme** brings together municipalities in neighbouring countries to face common challenges such as marine litter.

GOVERNANCE

✓ The EU works with the Georgian government to establish an **efficient, accessible, and fair state that safeguards citizens' rights** and makes it easier for them to pursue their lives and ambitions.

✓ To ensure equal access to justice for all citizens regardless of their income, the EU supported the establishment of **the State Legal Aid Service.** With over 20 offices across the country, the service has offered free assistance to over 330,000 people, including court representation in more than 150,000 cases. In many cases, these were citizens unable to afford a lawyer otherwise.

✓ **The EU has trained over 5,000 judges, prosecutors, prison and probation staff, police investigators, public defenders, and lawyers** to increase their skills and efficiency and further protect Georgians' rights.

✓ The EU has supported the Government in its reforms of the juvenile justice system. This has led to 3,000 juvenile offenders benefitting from diversion and mediation activities allowing them to atone for their crimes while avoiding the possible negative aspects of criminal prosecution.

✓ The EU is supporting the **Public Defender and the State Audit Office of Georgia** to strengthen the system of checks and balances.

✓ To facilitate access to Government services, **the EU has supported the establishment of 76 Government Community Centres in smaller towns and villages** across the country. These centres offer 200 public and banking services, as well as free internet and libraries to over 90,000 Georgians living in remote areas.

SOCIETY

✓ Since the entry into force of visa liberalisation for Georgians on 28 March 2017, **more than 500,000 Georgian citizens have travelled to the EU without a visa** on a total of over 1 million trips, according to the Georgian authorities.

✓ Under Erasmus+, **almost 7,500 students and academic staff exchanges have taken place between Georgia and the EU.** Over 9,300 young people and youth workers from Georgia have been involved in joint exchanges, training and volunteering projects.

✓ Since 2018, Georgia hosts **the European School in Tbilisi**, bringing together students from across the Eastern Partnership region, who receive a high quality education inspired by European and international teaching standards.

EU STANDS BY GEORGIA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The EU reacted fast and responded to the urgent needs of countries in the Eastern Partnership during the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of Team Europe, the EU has mobilised an ambitious support package totalling over **€980 million** of grants to help tackle immediate needs, such as support to the health sector and vulnerable communities, as well as short-term needs to support the social and economic recovery of the six countries.

As part of this, a tailor-made **COVID-19 response package specifically for Georgia** worth over **€183 million** of grants is being mobilised using a mix of existing and new funds to deliver concrete support to people.

✓ SUPPORT TO THE HEALTH SECTOR AND EMERGENCY NEEDS:

- Front-line healthcare workers like medical and laboratory staff will receive medical devices, testing kits, masks, goggles, safety suits, gowns and other equipment, as well as training through a cooperation between the EU and the WHO.
- Helping ensure equal access to healthcare for Georgian citizens, through innovative solutions, including remote care and telehealth approaches.

✓ SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND VULNERABLE GROUPS:

- Working through civil society partners, the EU has so far set up programmes to **support vulnerable groups** during the COVID-19 crisis, including victims of domestic violence, internally displaced persons and people with disabilities.

✓ SUPPORT TO SMEs AND TO SMALL FARMS:

- Through the **EU4Business** Initiative, SMEs and the self-employed can access GEL-denominated grants, loans and business advice to withstand the crisis.
- Rural areas will have access to over €20 million worth of grants for both agriculture and non-agriculture activities to help with development and recovery.

✓ SUPPORT TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN TRANSITION:

- More green recovery measures including advisory services for SMEs; technical assistance to the Government of Georgia; more support to develop a circular economy.

✓ SUPPORT TO FISCAL RESILIENCE:

- The EU will provide €75 million in grants to support the Government of Georgia's Anti-Crisis Economic Plan aimed at socio-economic recovery. It includes social support for citizens, recovery actions for businesses and tools and equipment for the healthcare system.

✓ SUPPORT TO MACRO-FINANCIAL STABILITY:

- Georgia will have access to a further €150 million of new emergency Macro-Financial Assistance loans from the EU on highly favourable terms to cover immediate, urgent financing needs.

IN FOCUS:

examples of what has already been delivered

EU initiatives mobilised resources quickly to produce or provide much-needed medical equipment:

A Georgian company was able to produce **40,000 medical gowns** within a week thanks to additional sewing machines provided through support from the EU and the German Government.

Nuns from Kakheti worked together to make **5,000 masks** for people at risk and medical staff in their municipality.

More than **40,000 protective face shields** were produced from recycled plastic bottles with support from the EU and UNDP.

EU supported initiatives are providing support to the most vulnerable:

Local Action Groups in **12 regions** and civil society partners have mobilised to provide COVID-19 related information in Georgian and minority languages and organised local resources to aid elderly and people with disabilities.

3 new projects providing specific support to persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence or internally displaced and conflict affected persons.

Local funding schemes made available:

Over **€1.1 million** available in **remote mountainous regions** (Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Upper Imereti) for economic recovery through organic farming.

Non-agricultural businesses in **8 rural municipalities** can apply for over **€3 million** in grants available to stimulate economic development and recovery.

EU-supported loans to SMEs through Bank of Georgia, TBC, Basis bank, Liberty, Procredit, Crystal, Credo have been expanded to be available to more businesses and provide more **local currency lending**.

IN FIGURES

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500,000 Georgian
citizens have benefitted from
visa-free travel to the Schengen
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STANDING BY GEORGIA ON SECURITY

The EU remains firmly committed to its policy of supporting Georgia's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders as well as engagement with the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in support of longer-term conflict resolution. Immediately in the wake of the August 2008 hostilities, the EU deployed the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) to Georgia, which has been patrolling areas adjacent to the Administrative Boundary Lines with Abkhazia and South Ossetia day and night. This has reduced tensions and potential risks of escalation and contributed to stability throughout Georgia and in the surrounding region. Currently, **EUMM has over 200 monitors working on the ground**, and a 24/7 hotline, allowing the parties to the conflict to communicate on security-related issues in order to defuse tensions.

The new EU SAFE programme will provide support on the fight against crime, border management, cybersecurity, and civil protection from natural disasters while also ensuring public oversight and accountability of the security sector.

The EU also welcomes Georgia's support to uphold the international rules based order in the relevant multilateral organisations. Georgia is also a contributor to tackling global and regional security challenges. A Framework Agreement on Georgia's participation in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy operations entered into force in March 2014, and Georgia has since made remarkable contributions to several operations. Currently, Georgia provides 32 troops to the EU Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic and is also involved in the EU Training Mission in Mali.



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