

# EU ASSISTANCE AND SECTORAL INTEGRATION NEWSLETTER

No 1  
AUGUST 2020

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## EU SUPPORT TO GEORGIA ON COVID-19 IMPACT

In total €430 million to support  
Georgia on COVID-19 impact



While the European Union is itself feeling the strain of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, it demonstrates solidarity and continues supporting its Eastern European Partners under a “Team Europe” approach that combines the resources from the EU, its Member States and their financial institutions, as well as the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. As of now, three Team Europe packages for Georgia have been announced and are already being implemented: The first package, implying €140 million support to Eastern Partnership countries, provided for urgent healthcare supplies and technical expertise, assistance to vulnerable groups, and wide liquidity support to small and medium-sized enterprises, including in local currency. The assistance also envisaged provision of €30 million to the World Health

Organisation (WHO) for the purchase of medical devices and personal equipment, such as ventilators, laboratory kits, masks, goggles, gowns, and safety suits for the six Eastern Partnership countries. The second package aiming at supporting Georgia for its Covid-19 response included redirection and acceleration of over €183 million EU Assistance in support of economic and social recovery. The above assistance is being provided at local level, and also strengthens state finances to help Georgia successfully get through this difficult economic period. The third package is directed towards enhancing macroeconomic stability and allowing resources to be channeled towards protecting citizens and mitigating the pandemic’s severely negative socio-economic consequences and will be provided in the form of €150 million of loans on highly favourable terms.



## TWINNING IN GEORGIA

Georgia has successfully implemented 31 Twinning projects since the launch of the first one in 2009. As of today, 13 Twinning projects are being implemented in a wide range of areas and up to 5 new projects to be launched till the end of the year. Currently, 2 new calls for proposal are announced for interested EU Member State countries:

The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development aims to upgrade national railway transport legislation and to strengthen national institutional capacities, inter alia, through the approximation of Georgian legislation to the relevant Union acquis to meet the commitments undertaken by Georgia under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

The deadline for submission of proposals by the National Contact Points to the Contracting Authority is 31 August, 2020, 16:00 Brussels time.

The Georgian National Agency for Standards and Metrology (GEOSTM) under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development aims to further strengthen its institutional as well as human capacities to meet the requirements derived from the AA/DCFTA through continued legal approximation process, development of National Quality Infrastructure Institutions, alignment of GEOSTM's practices and procedures to the EU ones; Broadening network in the field of Metrology and Standardization, with special focus on European research programmes e.g. EMPIR.

Deadline for submission of proposals by the National Contact Points to the Contracting Authority is 9 September 2020, 16:00 Brussels time.

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On 22-23 July 2020, the EU Assistance and Sectoral Integration Department/PAO in cooperation with EU Delegation and EU-funded Facility for the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement - II held remote network meetings for RTAs and Georgian Beneficiary Institution counterparts. During the meeting, the participants discussed important aspects of the operation of TWINNING projects during the Covid-19 Pandemic and exchanged the information on common challenges and future steps keeping in mind the Georgian context.

## EXPERIENCE SHARING ON REMOTE WORK

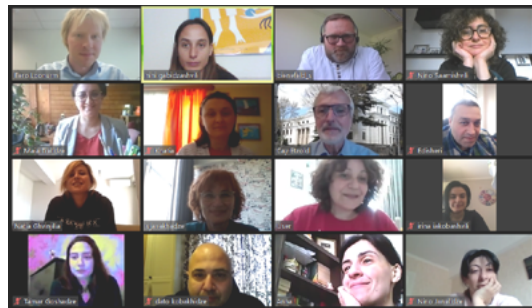
*Interview with the Resident Twinning Advisor RTA Mr. Cay Etzold*

**How did your project manage to adapt to the "New Normal" caused by the COVID-19 epidemic?**

"Firstly, it was not clear, how long we would have a kind of lockdown. But one thing was obvious to our Twinning team that in view of lots of urgent issues and European commitments of our Beneficiary, the project had to find a way to proceed. We immediately asked our experts if they could have online missions and looked for technical solutions like zoom. The first zoom experiences were successful and helped a lot in convincing our experts to give it a try as well. Secondly, I have to mention the role of the RTA assistants and thanks to my experienced team we managed pretty well. They play an important role as mediators between multiple Twinning actors and, frankly saying, I should admit that effective communication and close cooperation with the beneficiary are decisive. Every morning we have Twinning team meetings via Skype and we are already accustomed to it. On the other hand, at least twice per week we hold meetings with my Georgian counterpart and our colleagues from the MS German and Estonian implementing organizations - German Academic Exchange Service DAAD and Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education/ Archimedes Foundation EKKA. To be honest, my team has been informing me of the recent developments on a daily basis, that still helps in personal terms as well."

**Well-managed teaching determines not only the fate of future generations but also of the country, since the future of the country belongs to future generations**

**It has already been several months since the project shifted to a remote working mode. Could you reflect on any disadvantages and advantages of this mode?**



Twinning project "Strengthening Capacities for Quality Assurance and Governance of Qualifications"

"One of the advantages is surely the fact that we have already made it a rule not to devote more than two hours to one online meeting and to have a very short break after one hour, which includes sharing documents and getting quick comments. At that, I have observed that the representatives of the Beneficiary institutions are becoming increasingly dedicated in terms of showing up in time for our online meetings, being very focused and expressing their opinions. Regular 5-day missions last for 10 days when working remotely and reflecting on the issue has become more in-depth, whereas asking questions and common understanding result in a more sustainable commitment. The important factor is a translation and the most positive aspect of translating/interpreting from home is that the translator can configure her work environment according to the needs, which allows for more comfort, fewer interruptions, and less noise. One of the disadvantages is that getting prepared for longer missions is more time-consuming. Scheduling a 10-day activity in a way that suits both the Beneficiary and MS experts is not always an easy task. Another disadvantage is that when working via e-platform e.g. zoom, the format makes it quite challenging to hold a training session by applying innovative tools like a moderation kit, magic charts that we used quite frequently. Last but not least, It should be noted that the project has become a bit more bureaucratic as well."



## OPPORTUNITY FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

European Commission, in co-operation with EU Member States, is mobilising the TAEIX to support good public governance and reforms through job shadowing. Building on the long-standing experience of TAEIX, the TAEIX Job shadowing pilot scheme for the Eastern Partnership has been put into motion with the clear objective of providing professional development to civil servants and create a community of practitioners. At the first stage, 4 civil servants from Georgia working in the fields of Energy, Environmental Protection and Human Resources management have been selected to take part as participants in the Job shadowing pilot scheme in 2020.



Public launch event of the EU Copernicus assisted Environmental Monitoring Across the Black Sea Basin (PONTOS) project took place on July 22, 2020. PONTOS is a 30-month regional project funded by the European Union's ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme (2014-2020), which is implemented in the following countries: Georgia, Greece, Armenia, and Ukraine. The overall objective of PONTOS is to make information about the Black Sea environment from the EU Copernicus Earth Observation platform accessible to scientists, policymakers, citizens, and other relevant stakeholders. The environmental monitoring system to be developed will be tested in pilot sites across Armenia, Georgia, and Ukraine.

## *Do you believe that the “New Normal” and the remote working mode are compatible with the “spirit” of Twinning?*

Yes, well, definitely, as I said before: regular 5-day missions have now become 10-day activities and reflecting on the issue has become more in-depth, asking questions and common understanding result in a more sustainable commitment. Teleworking has given us much needed flexibility in terms of mission planning. The opportunity to divide the mission time based on the needs of the BC and MS counterpart and activities has facilitated meaningful changes and mutual learning. Longer regular meetings strengthen relationships and sense of community. It should also be noted that, not all activities can be conducted online, but a

mixture could be a solution. Reflecting on what should be achieved, discussing with the colleagues their needs, where Experts could share their ideas. As a final remark I may admit as we mentioned earlier, it is a win-win situation for all partners involved. OECD and UNESCO have highly commended Georgia for the way the country has introduced online and televised teaching. This commitment is shared by NCEQE colleagues as well. As Ilia Chavchavadze, a great Georgian writer said: “Well-managed teaching determines the fate not only of future generations, but of the country as well, since the future of the country belongs to future generations, and, is thus created at their hand”.



## 2021-2027 EU-BLACK SEA CROSS BORDER COOPERATION (CBC) PROGRAMMING

Georgia continues successful participation in the EU funded Black Sea Basin (BSB) Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) programme, which aims at promoting regional cooperation in the Black Sea region through implementation of joint regional projects in the priorities areas such as tourism, environment protection, culture and business-to-business partnership. While the ongoing 2014 – 2020 BSB CBC programme is coming to an end, multilateral consultations regarding the future 2021-2027 programme priorities among the black Sea participating Countries are underway. Representatives of the EU Assistance Coordination and Sectoral Integration Department/MFA, acting as a Georgian National Authority (NA) under the BSB CBC programme, participated in the Annual Conference of the EU Cross Border Cooperation Programme and the First Joint Programming Meeting (JPC) held in Brussels on 28-29 January 2020. Conference and JPC meeting was devoted to post-2020 CBC strategic program-



ming that will provide the basis for the new generation of Cross-Border Cooperation programmes on the EU's external borders in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Cohesion Policy for the period of 2021-2027. In addition, national working group (WG) composed of SC Organizations, labor unions, chamber of commerce, respective line ministries and other potential stakeholders was set following the on-line briefing organized by the Georgian National Authority on 5 May 2020. WG will continue working on identification of needs and priorities of cooperation at national level as well as contribute to development of programme strategy, methodology of programming and the territorial analysis.



# COORDINATION OF THE EU-GEORGIA ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION



## EU-GEORGIA ASSOCIATION SUB-COMMITTEES (SC) IN 2020

Active bilateral dialogue between the EU and Georgia on the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) continued within the institutional framework envisaged by AA:

On 23 January 2020, the 4th meeting of the EU-Georgia SC on Geographical Indications was held in Brussels, Belgium.

On 13 February 2020, the 5th meeting of the EU-Georgia SC on Employment, Social Policy, Equal Rights and Public Health was held in Tbilisi, Georgia.

On 5 June 2020, the 6th meeting of the EU-Georgia SC on Customs was held via video conference.

On 24 June 2020 the 5th meeting of the EU-Georgia SC on Industrial and Enterprise policy, Mining and Metals, Tourism, Company Law and Corporate Governance, Consumer Protection, and Taxation was held via video conference.

On 1 July 2020, the 6th meeting of the EU-Georgia SC on Justice, Freedom and Security (JFS) was held via video conference.

On 6 July 2020, the 6th meeting of the EU-Georgia SC on Trade and Sustainable Development was held via video conference.

On 7 July 2020, the 5th meeting of the EU-Georgia SC on Agriculture and Rural Development, Fisheries and Maritime Governance, Regional Development, Cross-Border and Regional Level Cooperation was held via video conference.

Georgia continues successful implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA) which represents the main legal basis for Georgia's European integration reforms. Coordination of the planning and implementation of the AA is organized through annual European Integration National Action Plans (NAP) consisting of respective EU Regulations and EU directives, which are subject of mandatory implementation in the concrete timeframes. Elaboration of NAPs falls under the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Georgia and is dealt by the EU Assistance Coordination and Sectoral Integration Department (EUACSI). This process requires mobilization of substantial resources in all the line ministries and state agencies in order to assure successful and timely implementation of NAP, which is unofficially named as the "Europeanization Reform Plan" of the country. At the beginning of 2020, due to the new realities related to introduction of the EU Integration Road Map (RoadMap2EU) in 2019, traditional NAP for the AA implementation has been transformed into the wider and much more ambitious European Integration NAP. This novel "reform plan" incorporated not only activities of the AA and the EU-Geo Association agenda, but also benchmarks of the RoadMap2EU and of the Eastern Partnership strategic "20 deliverables for 2020" document. In addition, EUACSI finalized elaboration of Implementation report of the 2019 NAP for the Implementation of the Association Agreement and the Association Agenda through electronic monitoring system (EMS). The report reflects substantial progress in the process of Georgia's legal and institutional approximation with the EU, particularly in the spheres of Rule of Law, Human Rights, Education, Science and innovations, agriculture, transport, energy, regional development, etc.



**AA implementation requires mobilisation of substantial resources in all public authorities**

The Title VIII (INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK) of the Association Agreement regulates bilateral dialogue between the EU and Georgia on the implementation of the Association Agreement. According to the above Article, the Government of Georgia (GoG) has to report about the state of play of implementation of the sectoral integration with the EU on the EU-Georgia Sub-Committee Meetings. Organization of bilateral dialogue through six sectorial Sub-Committees falls under the responsibility of MFA / EUACSI and four Trade related Sub-Committees are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development as well as sub-committee on Justice, Freedom and Security is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice.

According to the AA, GoG should enhance sectoral dialogue with the Civil Society (CS) and assure engagement of the CS in monitoring of the implementation of the agreement. Implementation of the above commitment is regulated in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the GoG and the EaP Civil Society National Platform in 2015. According to the provisions of the MoU, EUACSI has organized sectoral meeting between the CS and respective Line Ministries in the fields of energy, agriculture, environmental protection and climate, emergency management and communications.





## AA FACILITY

**Facility for the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement - II**, implemented on behalf of the European Union, supports enactment of bilateral agreements between the European Union and Georgia.

The Project's overall objective is to assist the public authorities to deepen Georgia's integration with the European Union in line with the priorities set out in the Association Agreement (AA) and the Association Agenda via further strengthening the policy development, coordination, reporting and monitoring by the Government, Parliament and other institutions; rendering assistance to implementation of the sector-related reforms, enhancing the legal approximation and regulatory impact assessment frameworks, advancing practice across the Government and Parliament relevant institutions as well as contributing to the effective communication and outreach to the Georgian public on the EU-Georgia agreements.

[www.facebook.com/AAFacility](http://www.facebook.com/AAFacility)

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## LEGAL APPROXIMATION

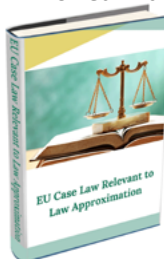
Legal approximation is a very complex exercise which has many implications that influences changes of legal culture

One of the key elements in the AA is legal approximation (LA) dimension, which requires alignment of the national legislation with the Union *acquis* in line with the concrete timeframes identified within the Regulations and Directives of the 34 Annexes of the AA. This process requires gradual approach and prior communication with the stakeholders as it might have a regulatory burden including financial consequences, particularly in the spheres related to economy. In this direction, Georgia has made tremendous efforts not only in terms of adoption of the new laws and amending the existing legislative acts, but also in terms of strengthening enforcement of the legislation by setting new institutions and increasing the capacities of the existing ones.

AA as a dynamic framework provides the possibility to reflect changes in accordance with the novelties introduced in the Union *acquis*. In its turn, Georgia expresses readiness to follow those changes and works with the European Commission on a bilateral format to agree on the sector specific matters. In light of the changes, several rounds of discussions have been held and the following AA Annexes agreed, e.g: XXVI, XXVII, XXIX, III-A, XVII-C and XVII-D, XVI.

In 2020, Georgia has adopted ambitious energy efficiency legislation (Law on Energy Efficiency and the Law on Energy Performance of Buildings). By adopting the above two laws, the Government of Georgia paves the way for significant investments in public building renovation programmes. The new framework will not only make Georgia's building industry more competitive, but also its households better supplied with energy services and its building stock better insulated. It will boost the usage of greener energy sources for heating, cooling and lighting. The adoption of the two energy efficiency laws is the substantial step forward towards the market-oriented and sustainable energy reforms. In addition to that, Georgia has adopted the novel Forest Code which is in line with the EU requirements and it will fill the legal vacuum in forestry field. As a step towards effective implementation, Market Surveillance agency has been established as well as capacities of the Labor Inspection have been increased from 40 to 100 inspectors.

For increasing coordination and strengthening effectiveness of the legal approximation process in the country, Government of Georgia adopted [Legal Approximation Guidelines](#) that will provide additional guidance to all the line Ministries involved in the Legal Approximation Process under the AA.



With an aim to support the LA process and facilitate the work of Georgia's officials, the AA Facility has produced the [EU Case Law Manual](#), as an useful point of reference.



### Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

Directorate General for European Integration  
EU Assistance Coordination and Sectoral Integration  
Department



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