



Newsletter

October – December 2008

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The Working Breakfast in the Frame of the Fact-Finding Trade Mission to Georgia

October 13-15, 2008, Tbilisi Georgia

The European Commission's services Fact-Finding Trade Mission to Georgia took place on October 13-15, 2008. The Mission aimed to assess the needs of the country for a future deep and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

On this occasion the working breakfast took place at Tbilisi Marriott Courtyard on October 14, in which the following Business associations and leading businesses participated: EU-Georgia Business Council (EUGBC), American Chamber of Commerce (Amcham), British Chamber of Commerce, International Chamber of Commerce, Baltic Chamber of Commerce, Bank Republic/Societe General Group, Castel, InterTrade, Siok Road Group, BP Georgia, Cosselin Georgia, Ferrero Representation, UGT, and TBC Bank. EUGBC was presented by Mr. Hugh McDowell, Chairman of the Board.

The participants of the working breakfast together with the representatives of the Fact-Finding Trade Mission discussed the business climate in Georgia taking into account an independent opinion of local and foreign businesses and chambers of commerces operating in the country. The discussion was particularly interesting in the scope of assessing the needs of the country for a future deep and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA).



Policy Briefing - Georgia on the EU's Mind - with Salome Zurabishvili former Georgian Foreign Minister took place at the European Policy Centre in Brussels

October 14, 2008, Brussels, Belgium

On October 14, 2008 the Policy Briefing "Georgia on the EU's mind" with Salome Zourabichvili, former Georgian Foreign Minister was held in Brussels. The event was organized by the European Policy Centre (EPC) and was chaired by Antonio Missiroli, Director of Studies at the EPC.

Events this summer have consolidated EU-Georgian relations, as the population feel that the Union's quick, decisive actions saved the country from foreign occupation and the EU now feels it can play a role in the Caucasus, said former Georgian Foreign Minister Salomé Zourabichvili at an EPC Policy Briefing. The EU needs to help strengthen the country's democratic institutions, as this is the guarantee against authoritarian government that thrives on conflict.

Full text of the report on the policy briefing can be found at EUGBC website www.eugbc.net under News.

Donors' Conference for Georgia
October 22, 2008, Brussels Belgium

The European Commission and the World Bank co-chaired, and the French and the Czech Presidencies of the Council co-hosted a Donors' Conference for Georgia on 22 October 2008 in Brussels.

The purpose of the conference was to mobilise external assistance to support the country in the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, reintegration of internally displaced people and in accelerating Georgia's recovery from the impact of the August 2008 conflict on its economy as well as improving the security of Georgia's energy infrastructure. EU Member States, third countries, international financial institutions and international organizations participated in the conference.



Full texts of the following documents can be found on EUGBC website www.eugbc.net under Events:

- Announcement of the Donors' Conference for Georgia
- Call for wide international support for stabilisation and growth in Georgia
- EU assistance fact sheet: GEORGIA
- Speech of Jose Manuel Barroso - President of the European Commission
- Speech of Benita Ferrero-Waldner - Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy

The EU-Georgia Business Council (EUGBC) published a second brochure for Georgian exporters

November 19, 2008, Tbilisi Georgia

The EU-Georgia Business Council (EUGBC) in the framework of the project supported by the Delegation of the European Commission (EC) to Georgia has issued the second of 3 publications. Main goal of the project is to raise business sector's awareness of internationally recognized trade practices, rules and conditions for access to the European Union (EU) market.



The publications intended for potential exporters will all be in Georgian with an English summary. They are part of a EUGBC-led project aimed at providing the Georgian business community (mainly, small and medium entrepreneurs) with practical information on the complex EU trade legislation, regulations, procedures, rules and standards. A series of roundtables/seminars will also be organized to provide interested parties, in different regions of Georgia, with an opportunity to better understand the requirements for trade with the EU.

While explaining objectives of the project, Ambassador Kote Zaldastanishvili, EUGBC Secretary General said: "These publications, written in a simple and reader-friendly way will provide valuable information, serve as a practical guide, explain different aspects of trade with the EU to Georgian exporters and will help promoting export of Georgian products to the EU market."

This second publication focuses on main characteristics of the EU import tariff system, i.e. EU import policy; coding systems applied for the classification of goods, which are to be imported into the EU market. The publication also touches upon the VAT and excise duties in the EU member states. In addition, it gives some useful recommendations on functioning of EU export help-desk. In the final part the publication presents data on customs, VAT and excise duties for some agricultural products. The data includes import tariffs of all 27 member states of the European Union and helps identifying a favorable EU member state for export.

The electronic version of the publication can be found on EUGBC website www.eugbc.net (*page EUGBC Brochures*) as well as on the EC Delegation's website www.delgeo.ec.europa.eu

EUGBC Secretary General participated in the Round Table on "Alternative Solutions to the Abkhazia Conflict"

November 24, 2008, Brussels, Belgium



On November 24, 2008, Kote Zaldastanishvili, Secretary General of EU-Georgia Business Council (EUGBC) participated in the Round Table on "Alternative Solutions to the Abkhazia Conflict", organized by the European Policy Centre (EPC), in collaboration with the Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS) in Ljubljana (agenda of the Round Table see attached) on Monday, 24th November.

As the international community struggles to put in place a lasting and consensual resolution to the Georgian conflict, the possible solutions and/or formulas which may help move the process forward towards stability, prosperity and integration both in the conflict area and the broader Caucasus-Caspian region was discussed at the event. Ambassador of Georgia to Brussels, Salome Samadashvili, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Brussels, Emin Eyyubov, Political and Security Committee Ambassador of Bulgaria, Vesselin Valkanov, representatives of Diplomatic Corps, EU institutions and NGOs participated in the meeting.

Alexander Cooley, Associate Professor of Political Science at Columbia University in New York, Director of Columbia's initiative of Soft Borders and Limited Sovereignty in the Balkans and former Soviet Union and a member of the Atlantic Council-Harriman Study Group on Abkhazia was invited as a guest speaker. Professor Cooley has worked extensively on the issue of limited sovereignty, and is currently running a program on this topic and is the author of dozens of academic articles and three books, including a forthcoming book on "Contracting States: Sovereign Transfers in International Relations". He was also advisor to US President-elect Barack Obama on the CIS during his election campaign.



EUGBC Secretary General participated in the meeting on "EU Visa Policy towards EU Eastern Neighbours: challenges and opportunities"

December 1, 2008, Tbilisi, Georgia

The European Policy Centre (EPC) joint EU Neighbourhood Forum and Migration and Integration Forum meeting on "EU Visa Policy towards EU Eastern Neighbours: challenges and opportunities" was held on December 1, 2008.

The meeting was organized by the European Policy Centre and the King Baudouin Foundation. It took place at the EPC Conference Room in Brussels and was followed by drinks reception.

The aim of the meeting was to make a critical appraisal of the current European visa policy towards Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Using Ukraine as an example, participants discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the EU's current approach. In the light of recent developments in the EU-Ukrainian relations, the introduction of visa facilitation at the beginning of 2008 and recent start of talks on visa free regime, Ukraine finds itself in the forefront of EU negotiations for visa free travel. Yet, in practice a number of barriers remain, such as the differences between Member States regarding procedures and visa issuance.

The Ukrainian Ambassador to the EU, H.E. Andrei Veselovsky, offered a first hand overview of the situation on the ground and identified what works and what doesn't in the current approach.

Grzegorz Gromadzki, director of International Cooperation Unit at Stefan Batory Foundation in Warsaw framed the issue of EU visa policy towards the region for discussion.

In addition, Peter Bosch, Head of international Aspects of Migration and Visa policy, immigration and asylum Unit of the European Commission described its current approach to visa policy, while officials from the Belgian government – Jan Bayart, Diplomatic Advisor to State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Belgian MFA and Michel Koukal, Justice and Home Affairs Counsellor of Czech Republic's Permanent Representation to the EU – offered national perspectives, the latter in view of the upcoming Czech Presidency.

Richard Whitman, head of the EU Neighbourhood Forum, chaired the meeting.

In the scope of the EU's visa policy towards its Eastern and South Eastern neighbours, the meeting put emphasis on the following main issues:

- People to people contacts are crucial;
- Visa facilitation and visa free regime is a gradual process;
- Visa facilitation is beneficial both for EU and its neighbors;
- In parallel of a regional approach, a bilateral approach with the neighbors shall be applied;
- Visa facilitation will be one of the main priorities for Czech presidency in the EU (01.01.2009-30.06.2009);
- Representatives of Czech Republic hope that negotiations between Georgia and EU on visa facilitation as well as readmission agreements will be concluded during the Czech presidency;
- Czech government, in capacity of the EU presidency is planning to organize the conference on a ministerial level on 27-28 April, 2009 in Prague. At the conference the foreign ministers of EU Member States and its neighbors will discuss the issue of migration and mobility partnership.



The Primer Minister of Georgia, Grigol Mgaloblishvili visited Brussels

December 1-2, 2008, Brussels, Belgium

Georgian Prime Minister, Grigol Mgaloblishvili had his first official visit to Brussels on December 1-2, 2008. Mr. Mgaloblishvili held meetings with the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for Energy, Andris Piebalgs, Commissioner for Trade, Catherine Ashton and members of European Parliament.

At the meetings the latest developments in Georgia and EU-Georgia relations, including eastern partnership initiative, perspectives of visa facilitation and free trade agreement as well as importance of the Geneva talks and EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) were discussed. Primer Minister also met with the representatives of media and participated in the public discussion on "Georgia's Future with the European Union and NATO".



EUGBC Secretary General, Kote Zaldastanishvili meets the Prime Minister of Georgia, Grigol Mgaloblishvili

December 1, 2008, Brussels, Belgium

EUGBC Secretary General, Kote Zaldastanishvili held a meeting with PM Mgaloblishvili and discussed the activities of EUGBC, its future plans and role in the recovery process of the Georgian economy.

Following topics were discussed at the meeting:

- Current economical situation and all major issues related to business climate in Georgia;
- Activities of EUGBC and its future plans;
- EUGBC's role in recovery process of the Georgian economy;
- Importance of the EUGBC publications and upcoming trade seminar, planned for 12 December in the framework of EUGBC trade facilitation project, supported by the Delegation of European Commission to Georgia;
- It was agreed that Prime Minister Mgaloblishvili and the EUGBC will stay in contact in order to exchange the views on the challenges faced by the business community in Georgia.



The Prime Minister of Georgia, Grigol Mgaloblishvili delivered a speech and participated in the discussion at the GMF organized event "Georgia's Future with the European Union and NATO"

December 1, 2008, Tbilisi Georgia

On December 1, 2008, Kote zaldastanishvili, Secretary General of the EUGBC participated in the discussion – "Georgia's Future with the European Union and NATO" – with Grigol Mgaloblishvil, Prime Minister of Georgia, Eka Tkeshelashvili, Foreign Minister of Georgia, Robert Cooper, Director General for External and Politico-Military Affairs, Council of the EU and **Jamie Shea**, Director of Policy Planning, Private Office of the NATO Secretary General.

The discussion was organized by the German Marshall Fund of the U.S. and took place in Crowne Plaza Hotel, Brussels.

Georgian Prime Minister informed about the state of reform in Georgia, discussed the role of the EU's new Eastern Partnership for the country, as well as talked about Georgia's future relations with the Atlantic Alliance on the eve of the NATO Foreign Minsters' meeting. According to the Prime Minister, his government has the following three major priorities:

- Rebuilding the countries economy;
- Strengthening the rule of law, further development of democratic institutions, support of free media and cooperation with opposition parties;
- Security of the country.

The Primer Minister underlined that integration in NATO is the core objective for Georgia.

EUGBC Secretary General participated in the Conference "European Neighborhood Policy – interregional cooperation as a road towards the efficient support to democratic transition process in Georgia"

December 2, 2008, Brussels, Belgium

On December 2, 2008, the Secretary General of the EUGBC, Kote Zaldastanishvili participated in the conference "European Neighborhood Policy – interregional cooperation as a road towards the efficient support to democratic transition process in Georgia". Conference was organized by the Wielkopolska region of Poland and took place at the Committee of the Regions of the EU.



At the conference the project "REGIO-TAMAR, self-governments across divides, exemplifying actions strengthening collaboration between European and Georgian regions" was summarized. Mr. Luc Van den Brande, President of the Committee of the Regions, Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions, Mr Jan Tombiński, Minister Counsellor of the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to EU, Mr. Marek Wozniak, President of the Wielkopolska Region, EU officials, Mr. Mamuka Akhvediani, Vice Mayor of Tbilisi and Mr. Vano Khukhunaishvili, Chair of the Regional Policy, Self-Government and Mountainous Regions Committee of the Parliament of Georgia participated in the conference.

The possibilities to support Georgian local governments by providing EU funding and enhancing competitiveness of Georgian regions by promoting their development potential were also discussed at the conference.

EUGBC Secretary General participated in the Business Breakfast titled "Czech Presidency Business Priorities"

December 3, 2008, Brussels, Belgium

On December 3, 2008, Kote Zaldastanishvili, Secretary General of EU-Georgia Business Council (EUGBC) participated in the Business Breakfast titled "Czech Presidency Business Priorities". The event was held in the premises of the Czech Center in Brussels and was organized by *CEBRE - Czech Business Representation to the EU* in cooperation with Czech Permanent Representation to the EU.



For the first time, the Czech Republic will hold its six-month Presidency of the Council of the EU from January 2009. After Slovenia, it will be only the second New Member State presiding. Most likely 95% of its agenda will be inherited from the French Presidency and will be very much influenced by ending mandates of both, the European Parliament and the European Commission.

The aim of the Business Breakfast was to discuss business priorities of the Czech presidency.

Following speakers have been invited to the meeting:

- Jan Procházka, Director of the EU Dept., Ministry of Industry and Trade Czech Republic
- Petr Dolejší, Czech Permanent Representation to the EU
- Ivan Voleš, Czech member of the EESC and Acting Secretary General of the Czech Chamber of Commerce
- Vladimíra Drbalová, Czech member of the EESC, Confederation of Industry CR



The Eastern Partnership – an ambitious new chapter in the EU's relations with its Eastern neighbors

December 3, 2008, Brussels Belgium

On 3 December, 2008 the European Commission proposed a new Eastern Partnership initiative that represents a step change in the EU's relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus (The level of Belarus' participation in the Eastern Partnership will depend on the overall development of EU-Belarus relations), Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Building on the successful work already accomplished within the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) the Eastern Partnership proposes to go even further: It is a policy based on a differentiated approach with each partner and dedicated to supporting each individual country to progress in its own way and at its own speed.

The Eastern Partnership responds to the desire of the EU's Eastern neighbors to move closer to the European Union. Yet, it is also in the EU's vital interest to contribute to the development of stability, better governance and economic development at its Eastern borders.

This ambitious Partnership foresees:

- substantial upgrading of the level of political engagement, including the prospect of a new generation of Association Agreements,
- far-reaching integration into the EU economy,
- easier travel to the EU for citizens providing that security requirements are met,
- enhanced energy security arrangements benefiting all concerned, and
- increased financial assistance.

The EU proposes much more intensive day to day support for partners' reform efforts through a new Comprehensive Institution Building program, and a new multilateral dimension which will bring partners together to address common challenges.

The new Partnership includes new measures to support the social and economic development of the 6 countries, and following five flagship initiatives that will give very concrete evidence of the EU's support:

- Integrated Border Management Program
- Small and Medium sized Enterprise Facilities
- Southern energy corridor
- Prevention of, preparedness for, and response to natural and man-made disasters.
- Implementation and Structure of the Eastern Partnership

The Commission proposes to launch this initiative in spring 2009 at a special "Eastern Partnership Summit".

A new Eastern Partnership initiative proposed by European Commission on 3 December will be discussed in the European Parliament and in the Council of European Union.



European Union gave Georgia duty-free access with GSP+
December 9, 2008, Brussels, Belgium

On 9 December the European Commission decided to give Georgia and 15 other developing countries duty-free access to the EU market for around 6400 tariff lines, under the European Union's special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance.

The preferences, called GSP+, are in addition to the standard Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) extended to developing countries. GSP+ is offered to vulnerable developing countries that have ratified and effectively implemented 27 core UN and ILO conventions on human and labour rights and other international conventions related to the environment and governance principles.

As a result of the Commission's decision, the GSP+ beneficiaries from 1 January 2009 until the end of 2011 will be Georgia among other developing countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Sri Lanka and Venezuela.

EUGBC participated in the Policy forum on EU-Georgia Free Trade Agreement organized by Eurasia Partnership Foundation

December 9, 2008, Tbilisi, Georgia

EUGBC participated in the third policy forum on EU-Georgia Free Trade Agreement organized by the Eurasia Partnership Foundation. The topic of the meeting was whether Georgian Food Safety Legislation Major Impediment on the Way to the EU-Georgia Free Trade Agreement. The forum was held on 9th of December, at Sheraton Metechi palace. Representatives of government of Georgia, business community, European Commission and civil society organizations will participate in the forum.



EU-Georgia Cooperation Council 9th Meeting

December 9, 2008, Brussels, Belgium

The Cooperation Council between the European Union (EU) and Georgia held its ninth meeting on Tuesday 9 December 2008. The meeting was chaired by Mr Jean-Pierre Jouyet, Secretary of State for European Affairs of France. The EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Peter Semneby also took part in the meeting. Mr Hugues Mingarelli, Deputy Director-General of the External Relations Directorate-General, represented the Commission and Mr Tomas Pojar, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, represented the incoming Czech Presidency. The Georgian delegation was led by Giorgi Baramidze, State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Issues and Vice Prime Minister of Georgia.



The Cooperation Council discussed the repercussions of the recent conflict in Georgia and the increased EU role in the conflict settlement, in particular through the dispatching of an EU civilian observation mission under the European Defence and Security Policy, the participation of the EU in the Geneva discussions and the provision of increased EU financial assistance for alleviating the humanitarian situation and sustaining Georgia's economic recovery. The EU side reiterated its support to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia.

The Cooperation Council welcomed the intensification of bilateral EU relations with Georgia, and in particular looked forward to the launching of negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreement between the EU and Georgia.

During the meeting, the parties discussed a wide range of issues. One of the main topics was the European Neighbourhood Policy, particularly the implementation of the ENP Action Plan. The parties stated that the signing of the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan with all three Southern Caucasus countries in November 2006 opened a new era in the EU relations with the region, offering Georgia a deeper political relationship and broader economic integration. The Cooperation Council noted Georgia's strong commitment to the implementation of the ENP Action Plan, welcomed the good progress made in some areas and agreed on the need to focus the efforts on further implementation.

The EU side seized the opportunity to present the main lines of the Communication on the Eastern Partnership, adopted by the European Commission on 3 December, which proposes the creation of a stronger policy framework for EU's future relations with Eastern partners at both the bilateral and multilateral level.

The Cooperation Council also provided a timely opportunity to take stock of political developments in Georgia, as well as the advancement of political and economic reforms. The EU highlighted the importance of the respect of the rule of law, democratic and pluralistic principles, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as freedom of expression and freedom of the media, as essential elements in the bilateral dialogue. It reaffirmed its willingness to continue its support for the further development of democratic institutions in Georgia, including in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The EU side welcomed the recent commitments of the President Saakashvili for strengthening democratic institutions in Georgia, and expected concrete steps in this sense. The Cooperation Council agreed that consolidation of democracy was the key to ensuring Georgia's long term stability and its successful transformation into a prosperous, harmonious and united society.

The Cooperation Council also discussed the broad framework for the implementation of the EUR 500 million EU financial assistance package for 2008-2010, which will start to be delivered by the end of 2008.

The recent crisis in Georgia confirmed that the EU plays a constructive role in the region and is stepping up its cooperation with the Southern Caucasus. Alongside deepening bilateral relations, the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative, and the Black Sea Synergy, will further strengthen relations with Southern Caucasus countries.

The plenary meeting of the Cooperation Council was followed by a joint ministerial working lunch between the EU and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to discuss matters of regional interest, as well as conflicts in the Southern Caucasus. Mr Jean-Pierre Jouyet, Secretary of State for European Affairs of France represented the EU Presidency. He was accompanied by Mr Javier Solana, High Representative for CFSP, and by Ms Benita Ferrero-Waldner Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as Mr Tomas Pojar, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, representing the incoming Czech Presidency.



The Vice-President of StatoilHydro, Geir Westgaard Visits Tbilisi

December 11-15, 2008, Tbilisi, Georgia

The Vice-President of StatoilHydro, Member of the EUGBC Board, Geir Westgaard visited Tbilisi on December 11-15. His official visit included several important meetings with the representatives of Georgian government. Namely, Mr. Westgaard held meetings with Grigol Mgaloblishvili, Prime-Minister of Georgia, Temur Iakobashvili, Minister for Reintegration, Tamar Beruchashvili, Deputy State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Grigol Vashadze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Lasha Jvania, Minister for Economic Development and Mariam Valishvili, Deputy Energy Minister.

Mr. Westgaard also held meetings with some representatives of NGOs and politicians: Nino Burjanadze, Democratic Movement – United Georgia, Alexander Rondeli, Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS), and Irakli Menagarishvili, political expert and former Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In addition, meetings were held with the US Ambassador John Teft, Ambassador Per Eklund, Head of the EC Delegation to Georgia, Peter Nicolaus, UNHCR Representative,

Mr. Westgaard also met representatives of the business community – Jemal Inaishvili, Chairman of the Advisory Board of the International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University, President of the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Core Member of the EUGBC, as well as Hugh McDowell, BP Country Director and Amy Denman, AMCHAM Executive Director..

During his visit, Mr. Geir Westgaard participated in the EUGBC trade seminar that took place on 12 December at the International School of Economics and EUGBC Extraordinary Member’s Meeting held at TBC Bank office on 15 December.

The Vice-President of StatoilHydro, Geir Westgaard’s and EUGBC Secretary General, Kote Zaldastanishvili’s meeting with the Prime Minister of Georgia, Grigol Mgaloblishvili

December 11, 2008, Tbilisi, Georgia

In the framework of their visit to Tbilisi, the Member of the EUGBC Board, Vice-President of StatoilHydro, Geir Westgaard and EUGBC Secretary General, Kote Zaldastanishvili held a meeting with the Prime Minister of Georgia, Grigol Mgaloblishvili.

During the meeting, global economic crisis and its influence on the Georgian economy was discussed. The talks also referred to Georgia’s role and its future as an oil and gas transit country. Mr. Westgaard informed the PM that, despite the worldwide economic crisis, StatoilHydro continues functioning in the region and is open to future cooperation. Mr. Zaldastanishvili also noted that in its effort to support and develop Georgia’s business sector, EUGBC will enhance its role and importance in sustaining a credible investment environment in the country. The Council will actively continue lobbying Georgian Business and organizing business event in Brussels and other major cities of the EU Member States.

The EU-Georgia Business Council (EUGBC) Seminar for Georgian Exporters - *What the Georgian Exporters Should Know to Access EU Market*

December 12, 2008, Tbilisi Georgia

The EU-Georgia Business Council (EUGBC), in the framework of the project supported by the European Union, organized a seminar for the Georgian exporters: *What the Georgian Exporters Should Know to Access EU Market*. The goal of the seminar was to raise Georgian entrepreneurs' awareness about the standards and requirements in the trade with EU. The seminar was held on December 12, at the Auditorium of the International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University.



The seminar was opened by Tamar Beruchashvili, Deputy State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Geir Westgaard, Vice President of StatoilHydro, Core Member of EUGBC, Jemal Inaishvili, Chairman of the Advisory Board of the International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University, President of the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Core Member of EUGBC and Tamar Mikadze, Press and Information Officer, European Commission Delegation to Georgia.



Kakha Gogolashvili, Director of Georgian-European Policy and Legal Advice Centre (GEPLAC) delivered an interesting presentation on the European Economic Area. The issues of creation and development of the European single market as well as EU's trade policy towards developing countries were discussed with the seminar participants.

In the seminar's closing part, Alexander Khvtisiashvili, Executive Director of International Center for Trade Policy and Law of Georgia (ICTPL Georgia) spoke on EU's Tariff policy in trade with third countries. The issues of tariff and non-tariff barriers to the trade with the EU (Import tariffs, excise, VAT, standards and other requirements)

and EU export help-desk for the exporters of third countries (Concrete examples of Customs, Excise and VAT duties levied on certain categories of third country products when imported to the EU market) were brought up for discussion.

The participants of the seminar received EUGBC brochures published with the support of the EC Delegation to Georgia: *Exporting to the European Union market – specific issues* and *Taxation of goods imported into the European Union market*. The electronic version of the publication can be found on EUGBC website www.eugbc.net (page EUGBC Brochures) as well as on the EC Delegation's website www.delgeo.ec.europa.eu



The EU-Georgia Business Council has elected a new Board

December 15, 2008, Tbilisi Georgia

On 15 December, the EU-Georgia Business Council has elected a new Board at the Extraordinary Members' Meeting held at TBC Bank's Marjanishvili branch office.

Following EUGBC Members were appointed as Members of the Board of Directors:

- Mr. Howard Chase - Chairman of the Board of Directors;
- Mr. Badri Japaridze - Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors;
- Mr. Geir Westgaard – Director;
- Mr. George Chirakadze – Director;
- Ms. Natia Turnava – Director;
- Mr. David Loladze – Director;
- Mr. Giorgi Maglakelidze – Director;
- Mr. Nick Gvinadze – Director.

The EUGBC Members thanked previous Board Members (Hugh McDowell, Arve Thorvik and Esben Emborg) for their contribution and active engagement in the Council's activities during 2008 and expressed readiness to actively cooperate with the new board and management in the upcoming 2009 year.

EUGBC introduces a new membership category – Honorary Membership

December 15, 2008, Tbilisi Georgia

EUGBC has introduced a new membership category – Honorary Membership – and agreed to make a relevant amendment to the Articles of Association, which has already been approved by the Board at the Extraordinary Members' Meeting held on 15 December.

According to the new amendment in the EUGBC Articles of Association, Honorary Members are individuals, who support the objectives of the Association, have distinguished themselves by meritorious service in the furtherance of the Association's goals, have a link with Georgia and the EU, and are in good standing in the community.

Honorary membership candidates can be nominated by any member of the EUGBC as well as by the Secretary General. Honorary Members shall be entitled to services of the Association, participate in the activities organized by the Association and be exempt from the payment of membership dues.

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