



**Progress Report of the 2022 National Action Plan for  
Georgia's European Integration**

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Legislative Herald of Georgia

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## 1. General Overview

This report presents information on the progress of the 2022 National Action Plan for Georgia's European Integration covering the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, inclusive.<sup>1</sup>

The annual report covers activities across all sectors, including actions related to legislative and institutional approximation with the EU acquis, sectoral integration, international cooperation, and human resources development, including commitments that were not fulfilled under the 2021 plan and are currently in the process of implementation.

During the reporting period, Georgia took an important step towards EU integration, namely, **on 3 March 2022, Georgia presented its application for EU membership**. Accordingly, on 11 April and 19 April, the European Commission handed over to Georgia Part I and Part II of the special questionnaire for EU membership. Under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and with the active engagement of all state agencies, the questionnaire was completed and submitted to the European Commission within the shortest period of time (Part I was submitted on 2 May and Part II was submitted on 10 May). The process of preparation of the questionnaire was administered personally by the Prime Minister, and the inter-agency coordination was carried out by the Georgia's EU Integration Commission chaired by the Prime Minister. In 2022, five meetings of Georgia's EU Integration Commission were held.

On 23-24 June, a decision was made at the meeting of the European Council **on granting the European perspective to Georgia**.

During the reporting period, the negotiations on **a new EU-Georgia Association agenda (2021-2027) were completed, which combines medium-term (3-4 years) and long-term (7 years) priorities and includes commitments in the area of political, economic and sectoral integration**.

In terms of approximation of the national legislation to the EU acquis, during the reporting period, the Parliament of Georgia adopted **the Law of Georgia on the Protection of Consumer Rights (29.3.2022), a package of amendments to the Law of Georgia on Facilitating the Prevention of Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism (11.5.2022), amendments to the Law of Georgia on Motor Transport (7.6.2022), the Law of Georgia on Quality and Safety of Human Blood and Its Components (14.12.2022), a package of amendments to the Administrative Offences Code of Georgia** in relation to the regulation of the legal circulation of weapons **(14.12.2022)**, and three laws were adopted based on the submission of Georgia's application to the Single Euro Payment Area (SEPA): **the Law of Georgia on Commercial Bank Activities (CRD) (9.9.2022), the Organic Law of Georgia on the National Bank of Georgia (VASP) (9.9.2022), and the Law of Georgia on Payment Systems and Payment Services (PSD2) (9.9.2022)**.

In addition, a new draft Law **on Public Procurement**, which had been initiated at the legislative body, **was adopted by the Parliament at the third hearing**, on 9 February 2023.

The EU-Georgia Association Council made a decision, according to which **the EU public procurement market was opened for Georgian companies**. The decision officially entered into force on 22 July 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> Part of the information presented in the report goes beyond the reporting period.

It is notable that, on 20 September, **Georgia submitted an application to join the Single Euro Payment Area (SEPA), regarding which internal discussions are being carried out in the EU.** If Georgia joins SEPA, the credibility of the financial sector of Georgia will be significantly enhanced internationally, trade relations with the European Economic Area (EEA) will be simplified, and the citizens of Georgia will benefit from simplified and cheaper services, which is especially important, including in terms of making money transfers from EU Member States.

On 15 November, **the EU made a decision to grant Georgia observer status in the Transport Union,** which is a result of successful cooperation within the framework of the Association Agreement in the area of transport.

In 2021, **Georgia became an associate country of the EU customs and tax programme Fiscalis,** and work is in progress in terms of joining the Single Market Programme (SMP).

During the reporting period, **a meeting of the EU-Georgia Association Council, a meeting of the EU-Georgia Association Committee, a meeting of five thematic groups of the Sub-committee on Economic and Sectoral Cooperation, the EU-Georgia Human Rights Dialogue, a meeting of the EU-Georgia Association Sub-committee on Justice, Freedom and Security, and two meetings of the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee were held.**

The Government of Georgia actively cooperates with **civil society representatives** involved in the process of elaborating and monitoring the implementation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and the Association Agenda.

**Electronic software** and a respective web portal (aa-monitoring.ge) for monitoring the implementation of the Association Agreement and the Association Agenda are successfully operating, and are being systematically improved both in terms of functions and content.

## 2. Political Dialogue and Reform, Cooperation in the Field of Foreign and Security Policy

### 2.1 Cooperation in the Field of Foreign and Security Policy

Active cooperation continued on the accession of Georgia to the declarations of the EU on **Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)** issues, namely, Georgia acceded to 600 EU statements and 40 EU declarations; in terms of continuing cooperation in relation to the EU **autonomous sanctions**, during the reporting period, Georgia acceded to 23 EU sanctions.

On 28-31 March, another annual EU-Georgia consultation was held **at the Ministry of Defence** within the framework of the **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**. Current and future topical issues of cooperation with the EU were discussed during the meeting.

In March 2022, another rotation of a platoon size unit (35 soldiers) was conducted within the framework of **EUTM-RCA**; at the end of January, a Georgian liaison officer in **EUTM-Mali** was transferred to Georgia. The next rotation is planned for Q3 of 2022, which has been notified to the EU.

Within the framework of **PESCO**, specific projects have been identified at **the Ministry of Defence of Georgia**, in which the participation of Georgia is being considered. Active consultations are being carried out with the leading countries of the project in order to discuss the details of the participation of Georgia

therein. Participation will take place once the leading countries of the project share their positions and clarify all the details.

In order to conclude an administrative agreement and to cooperate with **the European Defence Agency (EDA)**, a meeting of the Georgian party with **Jiří Šedivý, the Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency**, was held on 5 July 2022. During the meeting it was stated that, in September 2022, EDA will notify its member states of an informal communication process with Georgia. After the meeting, it was decided that Georgia will resume active working processes at the level of embassies in the capital cities of EDA member states, so that, at the meeting in September, the member states support the continuation of EDA's further negotiations with Georgia, which should ultimately result in the conclusion of an administrative agreement.

Within the framework of active collaboration between the Ministry of Defence and its strategic partners (UK, USA), the process of **establishing a new Cyber Security Operations Centre (CSOC) for the Cyber Security Bureau** is in progress. The Ministry has selected a territory, where the Georgian and British parties will construct a new office for the Bureau and establish a Cyber Security Operations Centre (CSOC) in compliance with modern standards.

The participation of representatives from state agencies in panel meetings, bilateral consultations and respective events on the issues of **security, CSDP and civil protection**, is being ensured. From 30 May to 3 June, inclusive, a training course on issues of common security and defence was organised in Timisoara, Romania, by the European Security and Defence College, in which representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Security Service, and the National Security Council of Georgia participated.

## 2.2 Peaceful conflict resolution

During the reporting period, **work was in progress in terms of enhancing the non-recognition policy, levelling risks and preventing illegal contacts of occupation regimes abroad**. In this context, intensive cooperation with the EU for further enhancement and consolidation in the international arena of the policy of non-recognition of the so-called independence of the occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, and the provision of information on a regular basis, continued, in order to form an objective idea of the illegal processes taking place in the occupied regions of Georgia.

**The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality is leading** the second humanitarian working group of the Geneva International Discussions, where one of the main topics on the agenda is the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, and the protection of the fundamental rights of the population living in the occupied regions.

**The 56<sup>th</sup> round of the Geneva International Discussions** was held in 2022, during which the Georgian side discussed the grave humanitarian situation in the occupied regions and gross violations of human rights, including incidents of murder, unlawful actions aimed at artificial isolation, the unlawful arrest of citizens, and the restriction of free movement. Significant attention was paid to overcoming the humanitarian crisis in the Tskhinvali region, caused by the closing of the so-called 'crossing point' to Akhgori, and resuming free movement, as well as the necessity for unconditional and immediate release, based on a humanitarian approach, of illegally detained citizens of Georgia. In accordance with the agenda, special emphasis was placed on the safe and dignified return of IDPs and refugees from the occupied territories.

Regular communication and meetings continued with all three co-chairs of the Geneva International Discussions, Toivo Klaar (EU), Cihan Sultanoglu (UN), and Viorel Mosanu (OSCE), during which the issues on the agenda of the second working group were discussed.

The international community has actively called upon the Russian Federation, in different documents, to allow the EUMM to enter the occupied territories of Georgia, and to allow the monitors to exercise the mission mandate without any restriction throughout the territory of Georgia. The international community consistently emphasised the necessity of the access of international human rights organisations to the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. These issues are reflected in international documents such as the United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution on **Cooperation with Georgia**, a report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights '**Cooperation with Georgia**', the UN Security Council statement on the 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russia-Georgia War; the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Consolidated Reports of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe '**Conflict in Georgia**', the 9<sup>th</sup> Decision of the Committee of Ministers at Deputy Level of the Council of Europe, the Joint Statements of the OSCE Group of Friends of Georgia, the European Parliament resolution on security in the Eastern Partnership area and the role of the common security and defence policy, and a press release of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU-Georgia Association Council.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia successfully continued work to raise the issue of the protection of the rights of the IDP population of Georgia before various international organisations, including the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and others. The above issues were reflected in a number of international documents, among which **the Resolution on the Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia** is noteworthy, which had been initiated by Georgia and 60 countries, and was adopted on 8 June, at the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly. The Resolution enhances the inalienable rights to the safe and dignified return of IDPs and refugees from the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, irrespective of their ethnic affiliation.

The international response that followed Russia's active annexation policy is also noteworthy, in particular the parliamentary elections held in Abkhazia on 12 March and the presidential elections held in Tskhinvali on 10 April and 8 May, as well as the statements of the so-called representatives of the Tskhinvali occupation regime on holding a so-called referendum on accession to the Russian Federation, the transfer of Bichvinta country house, its surrounding territory and part of the water area to the Russian Federation, and the unlawful arrest of the citizens of Georgia. In addition, in their statements, press releases, or comments, the representatives of the EU and its Member States have regularly stated their clear positions in respect of the provocative actions of Russia in the occupied territories, and have publicly supported the territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders. **In addition, the European Parliament resolution of 8 June 2022 on security in the Eastern Partnership area, and the role of the common security and defence policy, should also be noted.**

During the reporting period, at all possible levels of the meetings with representatives from the EU and its Member States, whether in bilateral or multilateral formats, Georgia emphasised the role and importance of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM), and the necessity of the further enhancement of the Mission and the extension of its mandate. **As for now, the mandate of the EUMM has been extended to December 2024.**

In 2022, activities were actively carried out in order to determine the fate and location of persons missing as a result of the 1990 armed conflict and the August 2008 Russia-Georgia war.

During the reporting period, the identified remains of 11 persons (8 military and 3 civilians) missing during the 1990 armed conflict were moved from the occupied territory of Abkhazia.

In 2022, regular meetings continued with **young people interested in the reconciliation and engagement policy, including those affected by the conflict**. On 20 May, the State Minister held a meeting at Zugdidi State University with students living on both sides of the occupation line, which aimed at introducing them to the implementation of the reconciliation and engagement policy, and sharing the initiatives and opinions of young people; in addition, on 30 September, a meeting was held with the students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of the Caucasus International University. **To strengthen the role and involvement of young people in the peace process**, the Office of the State Minister introduced **'the SMR Peace Award for Youth'**, the first winner of which was announced on 21 September, at the event **'Youth in Peacebuilding'**, dedicated to the International Day of Peace, and was awarded with GEL 3000.

In 2022, representatives from the central government of Georgia participated in six meetings under **the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM)** (20 January, 4 March, 12 April, 7 June, 23 September, 10 November) in Ergneti, during which they placed strong emphasis on the issues of safety, human rights and the humanitarian situation of people living on both sides of the occupation line, who suffered from conflict, inter alia they demanded the unconditional and immediate release, based on a humanitarian approach, of illegally detained citizens of Georgia, as well as the lifting of restrictions of free movement in the direction of Akhalgori.

In addition, active work continued with international partners, primarily with the co-chairs of the Geneva International Discussions, to restore the IPRM meetings in the occupied region of Abkhazia, which have been suspended since 27 June 2018 as a result of deliberate provocative actions by the occupying forces.

**The 'hotline' mechanism** operating with the intermediation of the EUMM was actively used. Despite the attempts of the occupation regimes to politicise the hotline mechanism, as a result of the constructive approaches of Georgia, the mechanism remains an effective instrument for communication across the occupation line.

Within the framework of **the Interim Government Commission for Responding to the Needs of Affected Populations in Villages Adjacent to the Demarcation Line**, in 2022, work continued on the implementation of a number of social, economic, infrastructural, agricultural, and educational measures. In 2022, the total cost of completed, ongoing and planned projects reached GEL 85 million.

In order to provide heating to the local population during the winter period, 14 084 families were compensated for the expenses of consumed natural gas and heating, in the amount of GEL 200 each. 6 school buildings and 8 kindergarten buildings were built/rehabilitated within the framework of the implemented projects. In addition, the cost of the 2021-2022 academic year was financed for up to 2 400 students living in villages adjacent to the demarcation line affected by the conflict, for which GEL 5 million was allocated. In order to develop and better organise the existing educational programme, at the initiative and with the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the commission, together with partner agencies, had approved a plan of specific amendments, as a result of which a special platform was created, which enables students, for the first time, to register electronically in order to obtain financing for the 2022-2023 academic year.

In addition, important measures were taken in the village of Zardiaantkari for rehabilitating 28 houses damaged as a result of the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, whose owners had not received any compensation from the State and had been provided with temporary accommodation. For this purpose, respective expert opinions were prepared and design and cost estimation works were performed, on the basis of which GEL 1.8 million was allocated for commencing the rehabilitation process in the near future.

**The enhancement of the role and engagement of women in the peace process is one of the important priorities for the Office of the State Minister.** Therefore, in 2022, the Office of the State Minister continued regular dialogues with women-related non-governmental organisations, and non-governmental organisations working on women's issues, including with the members of the women's consultation platform at the Office of the State Minister, as well as with women affected by the conflict, on matters related to peaceful conflict resolution, the strategic revision of the reconciliation and engagement policy, the needs and challenges of women in the occupied territories and adjacent villages, the activities of non-governmental organisations, ongoing programmes and projects, and planned future measures.

On 19 May, together with the Head of UN Women Georgia, a meeting was held with women affected by the conflict living in Zugdidi municipality. On 14 September, with the support of UN Women, an information meeting was held in Gori between, on the one hand, participants in the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM), and on the other hand, representatives from civil society, including the heads of women's organisations, women human rights defenders, and women affected by the conflict.

The Office of the State Minister approved **60 projects of international and non-governmental organisations** related to the occupied regions, 9 (15%) of which were related to women or presented by women's non-governmental organisations. Furthermore, in order to prevent violence against women affected by the conflict and to provide information on available protection mechanisms in this regard, in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, 5 information meetings with women living adjacent to the demarcation line were held in the village of Jariasheni in Gori municipality, the village of Chorchana in Khashuri municipality, the village of Kodistskaro in Kaspi municipality, and the villages of Shamgona and Tkaia in Zugdidi municipality; in total, 101 women and 17 men affected by the conflict attended the meetings.

In order to economically empower women affected by the conflict, and representing ethnic minorities who live in the villages adjacent to the demarcation line, two training sessions named '**Practical Course of Entrepreneurship – How to Start a Business**' were held remotely, in which a total of 22 women participated.

In 2022, **active cooperation with civil society representatives continued in bilateral and multilateral formats**, including within the framework of the Advisory Council of Experts and Women's Consultation Platform established within the Office of the State Minister, in order to identify and analyse the current situation, challenges and needs in the occupied territories of Georgia, and to discuss priorities for the strategic review of the reconciliation and engagement policy.

One of the most important priorities for the Government of Georgia was **to ensure the availability of quality medical services** for the population living in the occupied regions, including to continue assistance in the process of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, the provision of medical equipment, medicines and hygiene products to the region of Abkhazia, as well as the transfer and

treatment of COVID-19 patients from the regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali to the territory controlled by the central government of Georgia, continued. In addition, the COVID-19 vaccination programme was available for the population living in the occupied territories, which envisages simplified vaccination, without prior registration, in the territory controlled by the central government of Georgia.

Together with the provision of medical care in relation to the pandemic, the effective implementation of **the state referral healthcare programme continued**, which envisages the provision of free healthcare services to populations living in the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions at medical facilities located in the territories controlled by the central government of Georgia. In 2022, 1 377 persons from both regions benefited from the programme.

At the same time, the Government of Georgia made efforts **to improve medical services within the occupied territories and continued supporting local medical facilities**. The Government of Georgia continued to supply necessary medicines and vaccines to the region of Abkhazia on a regular basis, through the coordination mechanism. In 2022, medical equipment and rapid tests, as well as immunisation vaccines, anti-rabies vaccines, medicines for diabetes, antibiotics for tuberculosis, and AIDS medicines, were supplied to the region of Abkhazia at a total cost of GEL 1.5 million. In total, in 2022, the amount of financing provided by the Government of Georgia on the healthcare component exceeded GEL 6 million.

The Office of the State Minister supported and facilitated **the engagement of international organisations in the occupied territories** and the implementation of various confidence building projects by them. In 2022, 60 new projects of international and non-governmental organisations were approved in relation to the occupied territories.

The process of the strategic revision of the 2010 state strategy '**Engagement through Cooperation**' and its accompanying action plan for the occupied territories started in 2021, within the framework of the Government Commission for the Implementation of the Engagement Strategy Action Plan, and aims to improve the social and economic condition of the population affected by the conflict and to enhance dialogue, based on common interests, and confidence building between artificially divided communities, that will be based on new visions, goals and priorities, using depoliticised, people-centred and needs-based approaches.

Based on the evaluation document prepared by the Office of the State Minister at the first stage of the strategic revision process, as well as the opinions and recommendations provided at the meetings held with the population affected by the conflict, the non-governmental sector and international partners, and the in-depth analysis of studies published by various non-governmental organisations, the first drafts of the updated strategy and action plan were prepared at the second stage, in January 2022. Taking into consideration the changed situation in the region due to the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, in 2022, the process of bringing the first drafts of the updated strategy and action plan into compliance with the new reality was being carried out, which will continue with the engagement of the general public, in cooperation with the respective state agencies, the Parliament of Georgia, international partners and civil society representatives.

In 2022, the Government of Georgia continued the effective implementation of the peace initiative '**A Step to a Better Future**'. The implementation of more than 40 commercial projects that won the grant competitions announced in 2020-2021 by the Peace Fund, launched within the framework of the peace initiative, also continued.

**The third grant competition of the Peace Fund** was held from 24 May to 24 June, during which 92 business applications were registered from both the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, 26 of which were financed. The projects concern areas such as poultry husbandry, animal husbandry, fruit and citrus cultivation, ajika production, wooden furniture and souvenir manufacturing, honey production, and coffee processing.

In order to ensure unhindered and simplified access to quality education for young people living in the occupied regions, their admission to the higher education institutions of Georgia through a simplified procedure continued within the framework of the reconciliation and engagement policy, including the peace initiative. Within the framework of the current programmes, in 2022, 230 students from the occupied territories were admitted to the universities of Georgia without exams under the ‘**1+4 programme**’, and 11 students were admitted through the Unified National Examinations.

In 2022, the unhindered access of the population of the occupied regions to public services was ensured. In addition, the number of persons receiving a passport of a citizen of Georgia has significantly increased, which is carried out in a simplified manner as a result of the implementation of the peace initiative.

**In order to support the integration of IDPs into Georgian society**, 2 973 IDP families were provided with long-term dwellings, including 270 IDP families being relocated from buildings with increased risk to life or health, ruined and/or unfit for habitation; 438 dwelling places were transferred into the ownership of IDP families; in order to improve the living conditions of the IDPs, co-financing was allocated for renovation works to be performed on at least 51 facilities in their ownership; 18 163 IDPs were provided with one-off financial aid in the cases of emergency, and 795 families were provided with temporary dwellings.

### 2.3 Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Continuing and deepening cooperation with the EU is one of the important directions for Georgia in terms of **the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and improving capacities to reduce chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats**.

During the reporting period, **a number of meetings were held on issues related to improving capacities to reduce CBRN threats**, in which various agencies participated from Georgia, namely the following:

- 1) Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia participated in **the extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency on the Situation in Ukraine** held on 2-3 March 2022, during which the Georgian side made a respective statement.
- 2) On 8-11 March 2022, **the meeting of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)** was held. Georgia acceded to three EU statements together with 48 Member States, which sponsored the statement initiated by Germany regarding Ukraine.
- 3) On 28 March 2022, the session of **the Chemical Security Working Group (CSWG) of the G7 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction** was held in online format. During the session, the issue of providing to Ukraine the necessary equipment for the protection from chemical weapons was discussed.
- 4) On 4-11 April 2022, the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of member states to the **Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)** was held at the UN office in Geneva, with the participation of experts invited from the capitals, in which a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated from Georgia. The main purpose of the meeting was to initiate/present topics and relevant documents related to the universalisation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).
- 5) From 28 March to 1 April 2022, a seminar on cyber security named **‘Improving Cyber Resilience in the EAP**

**Countries – Cyber Security Component**’ was organised by the EU and the Council of Europe, in which representatives from different state agencies took part. 6) On 28-29 April 2022, within the framework of the project named **‘Enhancing Georgia’s Capacity to Counter Targeted WMD Assassination Attempts’**, a meeting on the topic **‘Counter Targeted WMD Assassination Attempts and Disinformation’** was held in Tbilisi, with the organisation of the Georgian Center for Strategy and Development and with the support of the Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) of the U.S. Department of State. 7) On 9-13 May 2022, within the framework of the national project of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an inter-agency workshop was held in Tbilisi, under the coordination of the LEPL Nuclear and Radiation Safety Agency, for the purpose of preparing a protection strategy within the national plan for preparedness for and response to a nuclear or radiological emergency. Representatives from different agencies, based on their competences, participated in the meeting. 8) On 18 May 2022, within the framework of **the Fourth National Environmental Action Programme of Georgia for 2022-2026 (NEAP 4)**, a thematic public discussion was held on issues of nuclear and radiation safety, ambient air protection, and climate change. Respective agencies participated in the thematic public discussion through the Zoom platform. 9) From 30 May to 1 June 2022, inclusive, the 21<sup>st</sup> regular meeting of **the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOG)**, and an event celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the same Code, were held in Vienna. The main topic of discussion at the general debate on the agenda was Russia’s aggression and hostilities in Ukraine, in particular **incidents of using ballistic missiles by Russia, which is a clear and gross violation of the Code**. The participants talked about the importance of the Code and the active engagement in the process of universalisation. 10) From 31 May to 2 June 2022, inclusive, the comprehensive review organised by the 1540 Committee of the Security Council was held in New York regarding the implementation of the **UN Security Council 1540 Resolution** (the previous such review was held in 2016). Within the framework of the review, the Georgian side made a respective statement. 11) On 22-23 June 2022, the meeting of the Eastern European member states to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was held in online format, in which a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated from Georgia. The main activities of **the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)**, and issues related to the universalisation and implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), were discussed at the meeting. 12) In the area of nuclear safety, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lasha Darsalia, participated and delivered a speech at the **Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**, which was held in August 2022. 13) **At the meeting of the Eastern European OPCW Member States** held on 6-8 September 2022, in Zagreb, the Georgian side presented a report on activities carried out in the country for ensuring chemical security. 14) On 26-30 September 2022, **the 66<sup>th</sup> General Conference** of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was held. 15) Georgia participated in **the meetings of the working groups of the G7 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction** held on 5-6 October 2022 in Berlin, during which a respective national statement was made. 16) On 21-26 November 2022, a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in **the OPCW National Authorities Meeting** held in The Hague. 17) From 28 November to 2 December 2022, **the Conference of the States Parties of the OPCW** was held, within the framework of which Georgia also acceded to EU statements regarding Ukraine and Syria. 18) On 28 November 2022, **the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention** was opened. The delegation from Georgia made a speech within the framework of the General Debate of the Conference.

**In terms of the reduction of CBRN threats**, a number of reports were prepared during the reporting period: 1) The annual confidence building measures (CBMs) report of Georgia under the Biological

Weapons Convention. 2) National Annual Declaration on Past Activities (ADPA) and Annual Declaration on Anticipated Activities (ADAA) under the Chemical Weapons Convention. 3) Annual Report under the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOOC). 4) Annual national report under the Joint Convention of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). 5) Annual report under the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). 6) Annual reports under Protocols 5 and 2 of the UN Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). 7) Report on the Global Exchange of Military Information, to be submitted to the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre.

During the reporting period, representatives from the **Security Policy and Euro-Atlantic Integration Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** were actively engaged in meetings held on various international platforms, namely as follows: 1) On 2-3 March 2022, an extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was held on the issue of nuclear safety in Ukraine. A respective statement was made by the Georgian side. At the meeting, the Board of Governors adopted a resolution on the topic: **'the safety, security and safeguards implications of the situation in Ukraine'**. 2) On 7-11 March 2022, a regular meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was held, during which the Georgian delegation made a respective statement. 3) From 31 May to 1 June 2022, an international conference **'Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals'** was held in Baku, which was jointly organised by Azerbaijan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The main purpose of the conference was to review the process of implementation of humanitarian mine actions and to provide assistance to the affected population. 4) From 27 June to 1 July 2022, inclusive, a meeting of the parties to the Joint Convention of **the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** was held in Vienna. Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia participated in the event. Within the framework of the event, the Georgian side presented an annual national report and held bilateral meetings with the representative from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). 5) On 1-2 March 2022, the **OSCE Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM)** was held. The delegation from Georgia made a statement at the opening session of the meeting, during which it strongly condemned the military aggression carried out by Russia against Ukraine, which grossly violates the UN Charter and the principles of the Helsinki Accords. A representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in the event. 6) On 26-27 January 2022, a meeting on the topic **'Violent Extremism and Radicalisation: Challenges and Ways to Deal with Them'** was held for representatives of state agencies, which was organised by the Georgian Center for Strategy and Development (GCSD) and the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament of Georgia. 7) During the reporting period (on 19 January, 9 March, 16 March, 23 March, and 30 March 2022), the plenary sessions of the **OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC)** were also held, chaired by Azerbaijan, during which the Georgian delegation made respective statements.

The following documents were drawn up within the framework of the project **P67 – Strengthening CBRN Waste Management Capabilities in South-East and Eastern European Countries** of the International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC) of the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence: biological materials sampling strategy and remediation strategy. The documents are now being finalised. These documents are intended as recommendatory guidelines for the countries in the region.

The LEPL Nuclear and Radiation Safety Agency has prepared new draft technical regulations regarding radiation safety requirements in the field of medical radiation, which were approved on 26 April 2022 by Ordinance No 226 of the Government of Georgia.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia updated the National Waste Management Strategy (2016-2030) and approved **the 5-year National Waste Management Action Plan (2022-2026)** by Ordinance No 414 of 9 September 2022 of the Government of Georgia.

### 3. Democracy, Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; Strengthening Institutions

#### 3.1 Human Rights

**The protection of human rights** is one of the main priorities in terms of the democratic development of the country, the introduction of European values, and the implementation of the Association Agreement.

A **one-year (2021) progress report on the implementation of the 2021-2022 Action Plan** was prepared by the **Secretariat of the Inter-agency Coordinating Council against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**. In addition, in order to prepare the 2023-2024 Action Plan against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the 2021-2022 Action Plan was analysed and the action areas and measures for the coming years were identified.

**In terms of the protection of human rights, one of the most important priorities is the fight against domestic violence, violence against women, crimes committed by minors and against minors, and discrimination and hate crimes.** In this area, during the reporting period, thematic training sessions on the issues of domestic violence and referral of minors was conducted for investigators of **the Ministry of Internal Affairs**, which was organised in cooperation with national and international non-governmental organisations. More than 400 representatives from law enforcement officers were trained. Also, in order to raise public awareness of the fight against domestic violence, violence against women, crimes committed by minors and against minors, and discrimination and hate crimes, the following activities were carried out during the reporting period: the closing event of the project 'Fighting Discrimination, Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Georgia'; the conference 'Lets End Violence against Women – Time to Act'. In order to raise awareness of child marriage, meetings were held with more than 800 pupils in all regions of Georgia within the framework of the campaign 'Do Not Deprive of Childhood'. About 100 press releases and informative articles were prepared together with accompanying photo collections. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is intensively carrying out the information and cognitive campaign named 'Befriend the Police', which aims to raise awareness among minors throughout the country on issues of discrimination, domestic violence and violence against women.

**The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia** has monitored the activities of prosecutors specialised in domestic violence and has prepared a respective report. A report has been prepared on the work performed by witness and victim coordinators with victims of domestic violence.

**The Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia** monitors the quality of investigations by assessing the adequacy and quality of notifications and the response of police officers to data entered in the electronic system. During the reporting period, using the above methodology, the Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia assessed and monitored more than

4 484 criminal cases related to domestic violence. Appropriate instructions were given to the heads of the respective police units regarding the shortcomings identified as a result of the monitoring. Also, written recommendations were prepared on certain issues.

A two-day training module on investigating hate crimes and effectively responding to them was prepared at the **LEPL Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA Academy)**. In addition, with the support of the UNDP and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) in the South Caucasus, a 3-day training module has been developed on the rights of persons with disabilities and communication standards. Textbooks, presentations, and other necessary materials were prepared in the Georgian language, and a cascade training on responding to hate crimes was planned.

For the implementation of **the National Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan**, and in compliance with the documents prepared by **the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe**, a cascade training of the employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was conducted. It covered issues of fighting against discrimination and hate crimes, and of raising awareness of the rights of minorities. 2 training activities were carried out and 37 investigators were trained within the framework of the training.

In 2022, 4 597 trainees were trained under 12 educational programmes/courses on issues of human rights.

91 training activities were carried out by the **Prosecutor's Office of Georgia** on **human rights and anti-discrimination** issues. A total of 1 112 prosecutors and investigators of the Prosecutor's Office were retrained within the framework of the training activities. Information on criminal prosecution and conviction for crimes motivated by intolerance on the grounds of discrimination was published on the website of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia; in addition, segregated statistical data for 9 months were collected on crimes motivated by intolerance **on the grounds of discrimination**; guidelines regarding crimes motivated by intolerance on the grounds of discrimination were updated for prosecutors and investigators of the Prosecutor's Office.

Two training activities were conducted by **the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia** on issues of **torture and ill-treatment**. A total of 38 intern prosecutors and intern investigators were retrained within the framework of the training activities. 13 training activities were conducted on the topic of **gender-based violence**. A total of 179 prosecutors and investigators of the Prosecutor's Office were retrained within the framework of the training activities. In addition, 2 training activities were conducted for intern prosecutors and intern investigators. 38 interns were retrained within the framework of the training activities; moreover, the activities of the prosecutors specialised in **gender-based violence against women** were monitored; criminal cases on incidents of femicide were examined and a relevant report was prepared; also, guidelines were prepared on efficient procedural guidance on crimes motivated by intolerance on the grounds of gender, and disseminated within the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia.

In addition, the Ministry of Defence has prepared **a draft action plan for the Gender Equality Concept**. The plan is in compliance with the 2022-2024 National Action Plan of Georgia for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.

In order to raise public awareness of **the fight against domestic violence, violence against women, crimes committed by minors and against minors, and discrimination and hate crimes**, the following activities were carried out during the reporting period:

- On 17-18 March 2022, a seminar was held on the topic ‘Strengthening response to trafficking in human beings, especially trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of their sexual exploitation, through transboundary criminal law cooperation in South Caucasus and Central Asia’, which was organised by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (and co-organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden and the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia), during which a representative from the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking provided information to the participants about **the services available for the victims of violence and trafficking**.
- In June 2022, World Vision conducted training **on mechanisms for the prevention/response to sexual and gender-based violence and violence in the country**, in which social workers from the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking took part. Trainings were also conducted within the framework of the grant project ‘Improving the System against Gender-Based Violence’ with the participation of the employees of the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking.

20 000 information brochures were printed in 4 languages with the support of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). During the reporting period, the brochures were disseminated in the villages of Laituri and Natanebi in Ozurgeti municipality.

Different services were provided to victims/alleged victims of **violence against women and domestic violence**. In all, 398 beneficiaries used the **services of the shelters for victims of violence** (Tbilisi shelter for victims of violence – 94; Batumi shelter for victims of violence – 46; Gori shelter for victims of violence – 88; Signaghi shelter for victims of violence – 82; Kutaisi shelter for victims of violence – 88; adults: 168 beneficiaries (159 females and 9 males); minors: 51 (43 females and 8 males); dependants: 179 (87 females and 92 males). **Medical care services** were provided to 138 individuals (114 females and 24 males); 202 beneficiaries (186 females and 16 males) were provided with **legal consultation; legal aid services** were provided to 38 beneficiaries (37 females and 1 male); **psychological assistance services** were provided to 265 beneficiaries (220 females and 45 males).

In all, 127 beneficiaries used the services of **the crisis centre for the victims of violence**. (Gori crisis centre for the victims of violence – 25; Marneuli crisis centre for the victims of violence – 66; Kutaisi crisis centre for the victims of violence – 12; Ozurgeti crisis centre for the victims of violence – 24; adults: 59 beneficiaries (56 females and 3 males); minors: 35 (33 females and 2 males); dependants: 33 beneficiaries (19 females and 14 males).

**Tbilisi crisis centre for the victims of violence provided various services to 3 161 individuals, including: legal, psychological, social, medical care, 24-hour accommodation/shelter services and others.**

**In 2022, 3 474 calls were made to the hotline (116 006) for assistance for victims of violence, operating under the LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance for (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking.**

**The Public Defender’s Office of Georgia** held 451 information meetings (with a total of 3 598 participants) on issues of **gender-based violence, domestic violence, and gender equality**, with municipalities and city councils (Sakrebulo), teachers and school resource officers, representatives of resource centres, employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, prosecutors, representatives of pre-school educational institutions, representatives from the primary health care sector, and social workers.

**In order to promote the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, during the reporting period, the Public Defender’s Office of Georgia held 57 information meetings (with a total of 568 participants) throughout the country. The target groups were: persons with disabilities, civil society, representatives from the organisations of persons with disabilities, representatives from local

municipalities, social workers from the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, family doctors, police officers, and representatives from the city halls of certain towns and villages.

**The Public Defender of Georgia has prepared three reports on the realisation of the social rights of persons with disabilities.** The element of provision of food for persons with disabilities was evaluated through monitoring the programme of free diners operating in the country and assessing access to them of persons with disabilities. The component of provision of adequate accommodation for persons with disabilities was evaluated by checking the availability of the accommodation services applicable in the country for persons with disabilities. The exercise of the right of persons with disabilities to employment was evaluated. Appropriate recommendations were provided based on the evaluation.

**In order to support the deinstitutionalisation of large institutions for persons with disabilities,** 9 persons with disabilities were transferred from large institutions for persons with disabilities to alternative services.

The Public Defender's Office made 24 monitoring visits to the **conflict regions of Georgia**, during which meetings were held with the local population in order to raise awareness in terms of human rights.

**In addition, in order to raise awareness of anti-discrimination legislation among civil servants,** an information meeting was held on equality issues with 450 representatives from 27 municipalities; also, training was held for 20 civil servants working on medical care issues.

**In order to disseminate information on anti-discrimination legislation and the practice of the Public Defender among different community groups,** 23 meetings were held on equality issues with the transgender community, representatives from trade unions, and representatives from ethnic and religious minorities, and 3 training sessions were held for private companies.

### 3.2 Penitentiary and Probation System Reform

In 2022, **an electronic programme for assessing the risks and needs of adult probationers was implemented** at the LEPL National Agency for Crime Prevention, Execution of Non-custodial Sentences and Probation, into which primary screening instruments for the assessment of risks and needs, and the victims of violence against women and domestic violence, determined by Order No 502 of 12 March 2020 of the Minister of Justice of Georgia, has been integrated. The programme automatically generates probability indicators for repeating a crime and the harm level, and ensures that the data are safely stored, which will enable the processing of such data for the purpose of further research and improvement after the process of rehabilitation.

**In accordance with the mandate imposed under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT),** during the reporting period, the Public Defender's Office made 23 visits to 9 penitentiary institutions, 5 visits to 5 police departments, 46 visits to 45 police divisions, 21 visits to 16 temporary detention isolators (1 of which was made to the temporary detention isolator of the State Security Service); 15 visits to 11 military units, 4 visits to 4 divisions of the MIA Facilities Protection Department, 1 visit to the first main division of the MIA Special Tasks Department, 3 visits to 3 external security services of penitentiary institutions, 1 visit to the temporary accommodation centre for migrants, 9 visits to 5 psychiatric facilities, 5 visits to 2 shelters and 3 facilities for persons with mental health problems, 8 visits to 8 court waiting cells, 1 visit for the purpose of monitoring the escorting vehicles, and 2 visits to the Psychiatric Examination Department

of the National Forensics Bureau. In addition, 2 collective return operations were carried out. 8 reports were prepared, and 5 workshops and 7 information/awareness-raising meetings were held.

Work is actively being carried out **with regard to the preparation for release of persons sentenced to life imprisonment**; 42 beneficiaries are engaged in the said process. Within the framework of the process, specialists of the Department of Re-socialisation and Rehabilitation of Convicted Persons and Former Prisoners within the LEPL National Agency for Crime Prevention, Execution of Non-custodial Sentences and Probation have evaluated each beneficiary's family. In addition, updated sessions of the programme for the preparation for release of persons sentenced to life imprisonment have been prepared, and work is actively being carried out regarding implementing and piloting the process of preparation for release and transition management. **From 1 January to 22 June 2022, inclusive, 158 former prisoners were engaged in the re-socialisation and rehabilitation programme.**

**At the initiative of the National Agency for Crime Prevention, Execution of Non-custodial Sentences and Probation, an innovative electronic control and service provision mechanism for probationers named 'PROBBOX' was created, which has been placed in pilot mode at Tbilisi, Telavi, Gori, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, and Batumi Public Service Halls since December 2021. For the first time in Europe, PROBBOX allows the better protection of probationers' anonymity when fulfilling relevant obligations and providing services, and the expansion of the area of electronic control over them and their access to services in alternative buildings, without additional human resources. As from 2022, using the device, probationers can see their reporting schedule, and receive information about the employment opportunities and vocational training courses offered specifically for them, as convicted persons, and other important information.**

In order to upgrade the qualifications of those working within the crime prevention and probation system, 19 different thematic trainings were conducted and 192 employees were trained.

During the reporting period, **52 different thematic trainings were conducted for employees of the Special Penitentiary Service, within the framework of which 935 employees were trained.** In addition, a new universal training module was created, within the framework of which 10 groups, comprising 152 employees, were trained during the reporting period. In 2022, 151 employees were trained within the framework of the training/teaching on mental health issues.

### 3.3 Rights of the Child

**To protect children working and/or living on the street from all types of violence, including trafficking, a draft State Strategy and a draft Action Plan for the implementation of the strategy have been developed, and they have passed through the stage of public consultations. Accordingly, policy documents will be approved in the near future.**

A publication **'Basic standards for the Administration of Justice in Relation to Crimes of Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children in the light of the Lanzarote Convention and Other International Acts'** has been prepared. The document analyses the applicable legislation of Georgia on issues of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children in the light of international standards, including the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

**Within the framework of monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Code on the Rights of the Child, a respective sub-chapter of the annual parliamentary**

report of the Public Defender of Georgia has been prepared, which is related to the legal status of minors. 20 small family-type homes, 2 large residential facilities for children, 2 facilities for mothers and children, 1 integrated service facility for children who are victims of violence, No 11 juvenile rehabilitation facility and No 8 penitentiary institution, 2 early and pre-school educational institutions, and 3 general educational institutions were monitored. A special report was prepared on the above issues and a study was conducted in order to assess the administration of justice regarding the child's relationship with both parents. Furthermore, the operation of child protection and support services in municipalities was evaluated in all the municipalities of Georgia.

**In terms of juvenile justice reform, the Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia** monitors the investigations of crimes committed by minors and against minors, by assessing the adequacy and quality of notifications and the response of police officers to the data entered into the electronic system. If a shortcoming is detected, an employee of the Department contacts the investigator of the case (and/or his/her superior), gives him/her appropriate instructions, and issues recommendations and, if necessary, plans future qualification upgrading activities. During the reporting period, more than 3 341 facts of crimes committed by/against minors were monitored using the above methodology.

The indicators of the commission of repeated crimes have been studied among **diverted minors** and a respective report has been prepared; the characteristics of minors who are in conflict with the law have been studied and a respective report has been prepared. The statistics have been collected and published with regard to minors participating in the process.

In 2022, 106 new cases were submitted to the **Minors' Referral Centre**. Currently, a total of 161 cases are being processed at the Minors' Referral Centre. Minors are engaged in the following training modules: healthy living awareness; development of communication skills; interpersonal relations; development of critical thinking; positive discipline; understanding the negative consequences of anti-social and illegal behaviour; emotion and anger management; personal development. In addition, the following modules have been implemented and are currently available: a module of developmental activities 'Me and the Environment' for children of 7 to 12 years old; a career guidance programme 'I will Become a Professional'; a cinema club; attendance at performances and various cultural and educational events; crafting activities. In addition, with the assistance of a non-governmental organisation 'World Vision', new rehabilitation modules were provided to the Minors' Referral Centre, which are aimed at improving parenting skills and family relations, and managing difficult behaviour.

As for **the rights of the child, the Prosecutor's Office** carried out 26 training activities on these issues. A total of 314 prosecutors and investigators of the Prosecutor's Office were retrained within the framework of the training activities.

In addition, during the reporting period, **the Main Division of Juvenile Affairs** was established within **Tbilisi Police Department**, which investigates crimes committed by and against minors in Tbilisi. During the same period, an environment suited for minors was established at **6 divisions** of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (the Main Division of Juvenile Affairs of Tbilisi Police Department; Kutaisi City Division of Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Police Department; Akhmeta Regional Division of Kakheti Police Department; the Police Department of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara, Rustavi City Division of Kvemo Kartli Police Department, and the MIA Academy).

During the reporting period, **434 information meetings were held throughout Georgia to provide information about the rights of the child, violence against children, the Public Defender's mandate, and a person's rights in relations with the police.** The target groups were: teachers, pupils, resource officers of general educational institutions, representatives from the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, representatives from municipality self-governments, representatives from resource centres, representatives from the kindergarten association, representatives from law enforcement bodies, students, community members, representatives from the healthcare sector, children who are in conflict with the law, and homeless children.

**In order to complete the deinstitutionalisation of large institutions for children with disabilities,** two large institutions for children with disabilities were closed, including Kojori facility for children with disabilities. 31 minors are registered in Tbilisi orphanage, although none of them are currently at the orphanage; 3 alternative care services have been provided on the basis of the Tbilisi orphanage – small family-type homes, where 15 beneficiaries have been placed (7 beneficiaries in one home, and 8 beneficiaries in another), and 16 children have been placed at healthcare institutions based on their health status.

### 3.4 Reform of the Judiciary

Strengthening the judiciary is one of the important areas of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, which aims at **reforming the judiciary and building confidence in the judicial system.**

**The Information Centre of Common Courts** was established by an Order of 18 January 2022 of the High Council of Justice, which aims to provide timely and accurate information to court users, in observance of the requirements of the Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection, on the activities of the judicial system and ongoing proceedings at the courts of all three instances (a case number, the date and the courtroom of hearing, the court forms, etc.). The Information Centre of Common Courts has 11 employees, and it has been fully operational from 14 April 2022.

In order to upgrade the qualifications of judges, various trainings and seminars were held during the reporting period. On 28 February, within the collaboration between the High School of Justice and the Council of Europe, a remote HELP training course was carried out on judicial decision-making and human rights. 25 judges were retrained. Moreover, on 26-27 March, the High School of Justice conducted a training called 'Case-law Decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (civil/administrative)'. 27 public servants were retrained.

On 16-17 April, the High School of Justice conducted an '**In-depth Training Course on Judicial Ethics**' on issues of judicial ethics and the disciplinary liability of judges. 6 judges were retrained.

On 21-22 May, within the framework of the cooperation between the High School of Justice and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a training was held on issues of **refugee law**. A total of 16 judges were retrained.

On 30-31 July, within the framework of the cooperation between the High School of Justice and the Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP) of the United States Department of Commerce, a seminar 'Intellectual Property Infringement Issues' was held. 25 judges attended the seminar.

With regard to the retraining of judges in matters of illegal migration, on 19-20 March, the High School of Justice held a training named '**Issues Related to Migration**'. 3 judges and 15 public servants attended the training.

On 29-30 October, within the framework of the cooperation between the High School of Justice, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the EU for Georgia project, a training of trainers was held at the Tskaltubo Regional Education Center of the High School of Justice on the topic 'TOT Issues Related to Migration'. A total of 6 judges were retrained.

A collection of interesting and important decisions of the EU court, the Board of Appeal of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), was prepared and translated into Georgian. The presentation of the collection was held on 11-12 November in Borjomi, at the Crowne Plaza hotel.

In order to raise public awareness about disciplinary proceedings against judges, during the reporting period, the Independent Inspector conducted 6 public lectures for students from different universities. In addition, the Independent Inspector participated in the radio 'Kommersant' programme and provided information to the public about the system of disciplinary liability of judges and the powers of the Independent Inspector.

In order to develop the strategy and action plan for the information and technological development of the judicial system, a **working group** was established with the support of donor organisations, which comprises court chairpersons, managers, heads of the panel secretariats, the Chairperson of the Court Management Department of the High Council of Justice, and appointed field experts. The appointed experts have prepared an information and technological development strategy and a three-year action plan.

A working group comprising members of the High Council of Justice, court managers, and judicial officers, continues work on the preparation of **the draft of the organisational work and case management procedures at common courts**. In addition, the information technologies group continues work on building case management software on a new platform.

In order to develop software for the disciplinary proceedings of judges, the Office of the Independent Inspector was awarded a grant by the Council of Europe. Currently, additional resources are being acquired in order to start work on the development of the software.

An updated training programme for judicial trainees (candidates for judges) has been developed and will be approved upon the enrolment of new groups.

Under the judicial mediation development programme, during the reporting period, work on the establishment of **Mediation Centres** at Gurjaani, Telavi, Tetrtskaro, Akhaltsikhe, Kareli, and Ambrolauri District Courts, was finalised.

The High Council of Justice is carrying out negotiations with a donor organisation regarding the preparation of comments on the updated **Norms of Judicial Ethics**.

In 2022, the Analytical Department of the Supreme Court completed an in-depth and large-scale research project on **the administration of justice with regard to gender-based crimes**. In particular, the research covers certain crimes of violence against women determined by the Criminal Code of Georgia, such as: stalking, forced marriage, and unlawful deprivation of liberty.

The statistics sector of the Supreme Court continues work on updating the reporting forms: the material forms of quarterly/annual statistical reports were replaced with electronic forms, in which the activities envisaged by international commitments and action plans were also taken into account.

In 2022, the forms of statistical reporting were also updated: **the material forms of quarterly/annual reports were replaced with electronic forms**, in which the activities envisaged by international commitments and action plans were taken into account. The 2021 **unified report on hate crimes** was published on the websites of the National Statistics Office and the Supreme Court. Within the framework of the Council of Europe project, a training was conducted for officials of Tbilisi City Court, which aimed at raising awareness of **the prohibited grounds of discrimination, the definitions developed by the structures of the Council of Europe, and the importance of producing statistics**. The statistics sector was actively involved in the process of updating the courts case management software, one of the goals of which is **to produce complete statistical data automatically**. Complete approximation of the statistical reporting model to international standards is an ongoing process, and activities in this direction will continue in the coming years as well.

During the reporting period, trainings/seminars were held for all three chambers of the Supreme Court. With the support of **the German Foundation for International Legal Cooperation (IRZ)** a training was held in September, which was attended by assistants of the chambers of civil and administrative cases (in all 30 participants); in cooperation with the French international cooperation agency (Expertise France) and the Czech Development Agency, and with the engagement of EU experts, a seminar was held for judges of the chambers of civil and administrative cases of the Supreme Court on the topic **‘European Case Law on Pensions and Labour’** (in all 22 participants). Within the framework of the Council of Europe project ‘Enhancing the systems of prevention and combating corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing in Georgia’, in October, a workshop was held for judges of the chamber of criminal cases of the Supreme Court with the participation of foreign experts on the topic **‘Best Practices Regarding Money Laundering and Economic Crimes’** (in all 6 participants). In December, within the framework of the Council of Europe project **‘Criminal Justice Reform in Georgia’**, a training was held for assistants of the chamber of criminal cases regarding the recent case law of the Strasbourg Court (in all 25 participants).

### 3.5 Civil Service Reform and the Fight against Corruption

During the reporting period, a number of activities were implemented regarding **civil service reform and the fight against corruption**.

With the engagement of the members of the Public Administration Reform Inter-Agency Coordination Council and other stakeholders, in the process of preparing the **Public Administration Reform Strategy and Action Plan**, the Secretariat of the Reform Council held a number of individual meetings with the public agencies involved in the process. As of December 2022, work has been completed on the **Public Administration Reform Strategy and 2023-2024 Action Plan**, which will be submitted for consideration to the Inter-Agency Coordination Council and then to the Government of Georgia.

In order to review and analyse the concept of **Public Administration Reform (PAR)**, during the reporting period, the **Human Resources Management Forum** was organised by the **Civil Service Bureau**, in which representatives from, including the heads of, the human resources management units of the Ministries of Georgia, the Administration of the Government of Georgia, the Administration of the President of Georgia, and the Parliament of Georgia, participated.

The LEPL Civil Service Bureau has prepared a **Vision Document of the Development of Public Service**, reformulated the mission and purpose of the Civil Service Bureau, and identified the areas of development of public service for establishing an attractive, open, accessible and conscientious public

service. Based on the Vision Document, in cooperation with the EU technical support project and with the engagement of a local expert, the LEPL Civil Service Bureau is working on a document analysing the current situation, which also includes the evaluation of the Law of Georgia on Public Service and relevant subordinate acts in relation to OECD/SIGMA Principles of Public Administration. Based on the analysis of the situation and the evaluation of the legislation, a **public service development policy** will be prepared, which will serve as the basis for **the 2023-2024 action plan of the LEPL Civil Service Bureau**.

In 2021, according to the amendment to Article 12<sup>1</sup>(5) of the **Law of Georgia on Conflict of Interest and Corruption in Public Service**, supporting the work of the Anti-corruption Inter-agency Coordination Council became the responsibility of **the Administration of the Government of Georgia**. According to the amendment, the **Anti-corruption Secretariat** was established at the Administration of the Government of Georgia, the main purpose of which is to provide analytical and organisational support to the Anti-corruption Council, as well as to prepare anti-corruption strategy and action plans, and to monitor and report on their implementation. As from 2022, active work is being carried out to staff the **Anti-corruption Secretariat**.

As a result of one year of intensive work performed by the state agencies implementing **anti-corruption policy** in Georgia, together with representatives from **OECD/ACN, 13 Performance Areas** have been evaluated using pilot indicators, and a pilot evaluation report has been prepared. A number of state agencies were engaged in the process, which was administered by the team from the Administration of the Government of Georgia. In addition, as a result of intensive work, a framework document and guidelines for the Fifth Evaluation Round have been prepared. In coordination with the Anti-corruption Secretariat, the Georgian side sent notes and opinions to the **OECD/ACN Secretariat**, based on which a number of amendments were made to the document.

Through cooperation with state agencies and the above-mentioned international organisations, the situation in major performance areas is currently being analysed. In its work on the anti-corruption strategy, the **Anti-corruption Secretariat** relies on the findings and recommendations identified as a result of the above process.

On 13-17 June 2022, at the **GRECO 91<sup>st</sup>** Plenary Meeting in Strasbourg, the measures taken by the Government of Georgia for the purpose of implementing the recommendations provided in the Fourth Evaluation Round on Georgia, which includes '**corruption prevention in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors**', were evaluated, and 14 out of 16 recommendations were considered to be fully or partially implemented.

From 28 November to 3 December 2022, at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Plenary Meeting in Strasbourg, a visit of the representatives from the evaluating countries to Georgia was planned within the framework of the Fifth Evaluation Round. In addition, within the framework of the Fifth Evaluation Round, at the initiative of the Anti-corruption Secretariat, a working group was formed comprising representatives from the respective state agencies, whose members are responsible for filling in the GRECO questionnaire within the established time frames.

It is notable that, in order to implement one (strengthening of anti-corruption mechanisms) out of 12 recommendations given to Georgia for EU candidacy, a working group established within the Legal Issues Committee of the Parliament of Georgia has prepared a draft law, on the basis of which the **Anti-corruption Bureau** will be established. One of the main objectives of the activities of the Bureau is to prepare and monitor the implementation of the anti-corruption policy (the National Anti-corruption

Strategy And Action Plan). Therefore, upon the entry into force of the law, the process of preparing a new strategy and action plan will be transferred to the mandate of the Anti-Corruption Bureau.

As of December 2022, the process of preparing the **National Anti-corruption Strategy and Action Plan** continues with the engagement of stakeholders. The progress reports and information on future priorities have been received from the council member agencies. The Anti-corruption Secretariat has processed the received information and has identified additional issues. Furthermore, the Anti-corruption Secretariat has processed the reports submitted by international organisations (OECD, GRECO, WORLD BANK, etc.), national non-governmental organisations and state agencies (State Audit Office, IDFI, TI, etc.). Working groups have been established in order to identify future priorities and challenges, and the situation is currently being analysed.

In order to prevent corruption in the public sector, the **Civil Service Bureau** actively cooperates with the **Council of Europe office in Georgia**. Namely, within the framework of the project **EU/Council of Europe Partnership for Good Governance**, the Civil Service Bureau aims to examine best practice in terms of the submission and verification of asset declarations by officials and, as a result, to prepare recommendations for improving the system. The Bureau has drawn up a **technical document** for improving the system. The technical document has been discussed with the participation of the employees of the Civil Service Bureau and representatives from the Council of Europe.

One training activity has been carried out on issues related to fighting against corruption. One prosecutor was retrained.

A new service of the National Agency of Public Registry named the 'address register' has been added as an iframe to the unified portal of electronic services 'My.gov.ge'; the description of the option and prototype of the iframe services of the Public Registry has been planned and is being carried out for its integration as a standard service on the portal. The total usage rate of 'My.gov.ge' services is as follows: Q1 of 2022 – 341 301; Q2 of 2022 – 962 970; Q3 of 2022 – 353 240, and Q4 of 2022 – 302 161.

The following changes were made in terms of **service updates**:

- Changes were made in the service related to 'a certificate on the legal status of a vehicle', provided by the LEPL Service Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia; accordingly, the software has been updated and the training has been planned.
- Changes were made in the services provided by the Georgian National Tourism Administration, the non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entity Rural Development Agency, and the LEPL Enterprise Georgia; instructions have been updated and trainings have been planned.
- A project of changes was prepared in relation to the services provided by companies distributing energy resources (conclusion of a supply agreement/registration of a consumer), which envisages the submission of information about a certain target segment, and the request for benefits based on that information. Changes were implemented in a test mode and it is planned to transfer them to the operational programme. In addition, a project of changes was prepared in the service 'personal information on a consumer', which will enable consumers to obtain substantiated answers regarding their accrued debt. Changes were implemented in a test mode and it is planned to transfer them to the operational programme.
- Technical documents on six services provided by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement were prepared, in which the services were described.

- It is planned to implement the services of the Pension Agency at Public Service Halls; the description of the services has been prepared and, currently, the electronic templates of the services are being developed; in addition, a confidentiality agreement has been concluded for access to the test programme of the services.
- The web verification option of the services of the Social Service Agency is being integrated with the 'psh.dea.gov.ge' unified management system.

It is notable that two new services have been added to the Public Service Hall services, for which Public Service Hall holds exclusive rights. These services are:

- provision of services outside the building (on site), in the case of marriage registration;
- provision of special ceremonial services, in the case of marriage registration.

During the reporting period, a number of trainings were also held for the purpose of the professional development of the employees of Public Service Halls.

The LEPL Legal Aid Service is gradually adapting its office buildings to persons and children with disabilities. So far, the Service has adapted its 4 office buildings (in Zestaponi, Poti, Akhaltsikhe, and Rustavi). Adapting office buildings to persons with disabilities requires large sums of money so, at this stage, due to the lack of financial resources, the Service cannot completely fulfil the undertaken obligations. At this stage, the Service offers additional services to persons with disabilities, which envisages provision of services on site. Currently, the said service solves the problem of territorial accessibility of services for persons with disabilities.

The LEPL Legal Aid Service has conducted 10 training courses for public lawyers. 132 public lawyers have been granted a narrow specialisation in issues of juvenile justice and the rights of the child.

## 4. Freedom, Security and Justice

### 4.1 Personal Data Protection

In order to raise public awareness of the activities of the **Personal Data Protection Service of Georgia**, and to increase trust therein, the following large-scale awareness raising campaigns were conducted during the reporting period:

- A campaign dedicated to Data Protection Day was conducted on 28 January, within the framework of which a graphic video clip on the importance of personal data protection, and a number of recommendations, were published.
- The process of rebranding of the Personal Data Protection Service: the logo has been changed.
- A small information campaign 'Personal Data Protection Glossary' was conducted through social media.
- Information on the meetings, trainings, and activities planned by the Service is periodically disseminated.
- Information on the decisions made by the Service is made available through the official website and social media, which serves to raise public awareness of the functions and activities of the Service.
- 14 trainings/lectures were delivered, which were attended by a total of 515 people. In addition, lectures were delivered for both public and non-governmental and educational organisations. Moreover, there were a number of activities in which any interested person could participate.

In total, 14 trainings/lectures were delivered and 6 campaigns were conducted, the summaries of two decisions were made available through social media, and a printed version of a decision was prepared.

- As from 1 March, after the establishment of a new Service, an introductory campaign on the functions of and referral to the agency has been carried out through social media.

In order to promote discussion of joint issues and the coordination of the activities of supervisory bodies, the Personal Data Protection Service is a member of a number of international forums and networks, which envisages the implementation of joint activities in cooperation with counterpart supervisory bodies. During the reporting period, a supervisory body from Georgia became a member of two GPA working groups, namely the **Working Group on Data Metrics** and the **Working Group on Future of Conference**. Under the working groups, workshops will be periodically organised for the purpose of implementing the GPA objectives. In addition, in order to deepen cooperation and to carry out joint activities, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the **Personal Data Protection Service of Georgia** and the **Croatian Personal Data Protection Agency**. Furthermore, in October 2022, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the **Italian Data Protection Authority and the Personal Data Protection Service of Georgia**.

'**The Procedure for Examining the Lawfulness of Personal Data Processing**' was approved by Order No 04 of 2 March 2022 of the **Head of the Personal Data Protection Service**, which establishes the procedure for receiving and dismissing applications, as well as the procedure for carrying out scheduled and unscheduled inspections, etc. In addition, instructions for the imposition of sanctions have been prepared, which is an intraorganisational document.

Moreover, it should be emphasised that, in order to regulate record-keeping and document management procedures, to create necessary conditions for processing information with modern technical means, and to increase efficiency of the Personal Data Protection Service, **the record-keeping and document management procedures of the Service have been prepared and approved**.

In order to increase the efficiency of the Personal Data Protection Service, within the framework of training and upgrading the qualifications of its employees, the employees of the Service participated in 16 events/trainings (115 employees were trained). The qualification upgrading activities included important activities, such as a 3-day training with the participation of German experts within the framework of the **TAIEX** project.

In order to ensure the availability of **the training courses of the Personal Data Protection Service** for the general public, it is planned to launch a remote platform that will be adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities. From 1 March to 28 December 2022, inclusive, the Service conducted a total of **35 awareness-raising events**, in which 982 persons participated.

In order to inspect the data processing organisations of the public and private sectors, including law enforcement bodies, the Public Sector Supervision Department **carried out 42 inspections**, as a result of which 42 administrative offences were identified. In addition, fines were imposed in 23 cases, and warnings were issued in 10 cases. 85 mandatory tasks were assigned and 2 recommendations were given.

The **Private Sector Supervision Department** carried out **78 inspections**, as a result of which 99 offences were identified. In addition, fines were imposed in 52 cases, and warnings were issued in 23 cases. 113 mandatory tasks were assigned and 3 recommendations were given.

The Law Enforcement Supervision Department carried out **26 inspections**, as a result of which 14 administrative offences were identified. In addition, fines were imposed in 8 cases, and warnings were issued in 4 cases. 14 mandatory tasks were assigned and 0 recommendation was given.

In order to take into consideration **personal data protection standards** within the framework of the international agreements of Georgia, and to support the Government of Georgia, the legal review of 19 international agreements/treaties was prepared. In order to inform the public and target groups about cases of high public interest, the Department of Public Relations of the Cases of High Public Interest immediately and proactively provides information to the public through information agencies and social media.

During the reporting period, the Personal Data Protection Service made 5 announcements through media. In addition, 96 press releases and decisions on the activities of the Service were disseminated through media.

For the harmonisation of the **internal legal acts** (subordinate acts, including legislative acts) **of the Ministry of Internal Affairs**, and for the legal regulation of state inter-agency relations in the area of personal data protection, during the reporting period, the unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs responsible for personal data protection prepared **the updated draft instructions regulating matters of personal data protection and processing within the system of the Ministry**, which included both requirements in the area of data protection of the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** and **the European Directive on data processing in the police sector (No 680)**, and the practice of the **European Court of Human Rights**.

Moreover, amendments were made to **the Law of Georgia on Police**, in particular, an obligation was established that certain issues will be regulated by an order of the Minister of Internal Affairs, including the procedure for taking and processing a person's dactyloscopic data and photo upon his/her admission to a temporary detention isolator.

The grounds for requesting and receiving information from mobile communication networks on the recording (indicating the time and location) of the fact of activating a mobile device gone out of lawful possession without the alleged commission of an offence, and on a mobile phone number and its owner, have been also regulated by the **Law of Georgia on Police**.

During the reporting period, with the active engagement of the Personal Data Protection Service, **amendments were made to the following laws:**

1. the Law of Georgia of 30 November 2022 on Making Amendments to the Law of Georgia **on Personal Data Protection**;
2. the Law of Georgia of 30 November 2022 on Making Amendments to the Law of Georgia **on Public Service**;
3. the Law of Georgia of 30 November 2022 of the Parliament of Georgia on Making Amendments to **the Administrative Offenses Code of Georgia**.

## 4.2 Migration and Asylum

During the reporting period, under readmission agreements concluded by Georgia, **the Migration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia** reviewed the readmission applications of 3 034 persons, 3 014 of which were decided positively, and 20 of which were decided negatively.

The implementation protocol between the Government of Georgia and the Government of the Republic of Poland regarding the **Agreement between the EU and Georgia on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorisation** of 22 November 2010 is ready for signature.

The process of implementing the **Agreement between the EU and Georgia on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorisation** was discussed at the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Committee, which was held on 30 November 2022, in Brussels.

On 1 December 2022, the **Agreement between the Government of Georgia and the Government of Montenegro on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorisation** entered into force.

**Within the framework of the State Programme for Supporting Reintegration of Returned Georgian Migrants**, in 2022, the following activities were carried out for the purpose of social and economic reintegration of returned migrants: 179 beneficiaries were financed under the programme of financing social initiatives and using the subsidy component of an economic agent; financial assistance was provided to 62 beneficiaries for financing medical care services and/or medicines; 28 beneficiaries applied to the Agency in order to engage in the professional training and retraining and qualifications raising programme, and 4 beneficiaries were given an administrative promise; 9 beneficiaries were provided with temporary dwellings.

Work continued with the European Commission and EU Member States in order to ensure the unhindered functioning of the visa-free regime. The European Commission published **the 5<sup>th</sup> visa suspension report** on 5 December 2022, according to which Georgia still meets the preconditions for a visa-free regime and is making progress in terms of fulfilling the recommendations of the European Commission given last year.

A one-year (2021) interim progress report on the implementation of the **2021-2022 Action Plan** has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Inter-agency Coordinating Council for Implementing Measures **against Trafficking in Human Beings**. A complete 2021-2022 progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan is currently being prepared.

On 21 December, the Inter-agency Coordinating Council for Implementing Measures against Trafficking in Human Beings approved the 2023-2024 Action Plan For Fighting Against Trafficking In Human Beings.

**A Brief Migration Profile on foreign students** has been prepared.

As a result of collaboration between the International Organization for Migration and the LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, on 11-15 April, **an information campaign** was conducted in various villages of the Guria region. Issues such as the common forms of forced labour in Georgia, the rights of the child, and the respective legal framework, were discussed during the meetings.

In order to proactively identify incidents of **trafficking in human beings** and effectively investigate criminal cases, for the purpose of the practical identification of incidents of **trafficking in human beings**, the mobile teams of the Division for Combatting Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration of **the Central Criminal Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs** have inspected 40 facilities with a risk of trafficking, and interviewed 452 persons. Criminal proceedings were brought against 5 persons on charges of trafficking.

In order to identify incidents of trafficking in human beings, the employees of **the Division for Combatting Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration** interviewed 1 154 citizens of Georgia, deported from different countries, at Tbilisi International Airport, and gave them information brochures.

With the organisation of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, the Training Center of Justice, and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, a project '**Moot Court Named After Giorgi Margiani**' is in progress, within the framework of which training on the topic of trafficking was provided to 33 students registered for the project; at present, the process of disseminating 50 000 information leaflets, prepared with the financial support of the International Organization for Migration, is being carried out.

**A number of events were held for raising the qualifications of personnel working on issues of fighting against trafficking in human beings**, including, on 7-8 April, training held on the topic of forced labour and labour exploitation, which was delivered by an invited field expert and in which 36 employees of the Labour Inspection Service participated; on 2-3 May, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia and the International Organization for Migration conducted a training on the topic 'Best Practices for Investigating Child Exploitation Cases Considering a Multidisciplinary Approach'. The training was delivered by a Moldovan expert and 22 employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia participated in it. On 4 May, as a result of collaboration between the Ministry of Justice of Georgia and the International Organization for Migration, a joint workshop was held with the participation of prosecutors, investigators and judges engaged in activities related to fighting against trafficking. The purpose of the joint workshop was to identify existing practical challenges and to plan appropriate response actions. On 7-11 November, with the support of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the representation of Switzerland in Georgia, a national simulation-based training on combating trafficking in persons was held in Georgia for the first time. A total of 37 employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, the Labour Inspection Service, the Ministry of Finance of Georgia, the LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, and local non-governmental organisations participated in the training. On 6-8 December 2022, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration and with the financial support of the EU, a training on the topic of trafficking in human beings was held, in which 25 border guard officers took part.

#### 4.3 Border Management

In order to enhance the capacities of the employees of the **Border Police**, modules designed according to the existing challenges in the area of effective border management have been developed and implemented; the employees of the Border Police have been retrained according to modern standards.

In order to enhance cooperation in the border-related area with the border agencies of partner countries, on 16-18 May 2022, a 2022 bilateral cooperation plan was signed in the Republic of Latvia by **the structural units of Latvia and of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia responsible for border protection**.

On 15-18 November 2022, a delegation from the Border Police paid a working visit to Türkiye. Within the framework of the visit, issues of bilateral cooperation between the Coast Guard Command of Türkiye and the Border Police of Georgia were discussed. **A protocol of bilateral cooperation** was signed at the meeting, which covers the measures of bilateral cooperation between the parties in 2023.

In order to enhance cooperation with the **European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)**, within the framework of cooperation with Frontex, five departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (**the Border Police, the Patrol Police Department, the Information-Analytical Department, the Migration Department, and the MIA Academy**) are actively engaged in activities organised by Frontex. During the reporting period, 40 employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia participated in 17 events organised by Frontex.

In addition, in order to reduce the flow of illegal migrants from Georgia, **cooperation with Frontex continued**. Frontex officers were seconded to respective Georgian airports and, within the framework of a joint operation, a Georgian officer was seconded to the airport of an EU Member State (Poland).

In 2021, the Migration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia participated in 22 Joint Return Operations coordinated by Frontex and ensured the return of 972 citizens.

In 2022, **5 654 non-biometric passports were annulled, and in the place of 2 866, biometric passports were issued**. In total, **6 728 non-biometric passports** remained valid. In total, **318 064 biometric passports were issued** during this period.

#### 4.4 Combating Organised Crime

The **Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia** continues to take action **against organised criminal groups**. With the financial support of the EU, the Ministry is carrying out an information campaign against organised crime, which aims to raise public awareness of the threats associated with organised crime, and reforms carried out by the Ministry in this regard, and achieved results. With the support of the EU, 4 video clips were prepared on the following topics: criminal mentality, cybercrime, drug-related crime, and trafficking. As from 12 April 2022, the video clips have been broadcast on TV and social media, and promotional materials have been prepared. The filming of season 4 of the TV series 'Police Files' continued, which aims to increase trust in the police and to raise public awareness of combating organised crime.

In addition, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the methods of combating organised crime, 4 meetings of thematic working groups were held during the reporting period, which aimed to monitor the implementation of the 2021-2022 action plan and to prepare the 2023-2024 action plan for combating organised crime.

**The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia**, together with EU Member States, is participating for the first time **in the work of a joint investigation group**, the purpose of which is **to fight against illegal migration**. In addition, during the reporting period, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia carried out **8 joint operations** together with EU Member States, within the framework of which a total of 45 citizens of Georgia and 1 'thief in law' were arrested.

**The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia** continued active work in terms of **intelligence-led policing and community-oriented policing**. During the reporting period, a special working group prepared a draft **Strategy (2021-2025) and Action Plan (2023-2025) for the Development of Intelligence-Led Policing**, which will be approved in 2023 by an order of the Minister of Internal Affairs.

**In order to strengthen control over police activities**, the methodology of keeping statistics has been improved, according to which statistical data are being processed.

During the reporting period, 101 public order officers/senior officers completed a special professional education programme of basic training for police at the **LEPL MIA Academy**. As of 26 December 2022, 19 public order officers are undergoing training under the above programme. Also, 225 employees, including 19 public order officers, were trained during 36 training courses conducted within the framework of cooperation with partner organisations.

In addition, during the reporting period, 28 public order officers completed two training courses conducted within the framework of the EU-funded project '**Technical Assistance to Support the Fight Against Organised Crime in Georgia**'.

In order to enhance the capacities of employees engaged in **intelligence-led policing**, during the reporting period, 37 employees of the **Ministry of Internal Affairs** participated in three training courses organised within the framework of the EU-funded project '**Technical Assistance to Support the Fight Against Organised Crime in Georgia**'. In addition, within the framework of the same project, a workshop with a Canadian expert was held for managers.

Within the framework of the OSCE project 'Enhancing Intelligence-Led Policing', a training on raising awareness of intelligence-led policing was conducted, which was attended by 15 employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Moreover, within the framework of the same project, an OSCE expert was invited to evaluate the intelligence-led policing activities.

Active work is being carried out by the **Special Investigation Service** for the purpose of the effective and unbiased investigation of cases assigned to its investigative jurisdiction.

- The number of investigations into cases commenced under the investigative jurisdiction of the Special Investigation Service is increasing. The Special Investigation Service has prepared and made publicly available statistical data for the reporting period.
- The Special Investigation Service has prepared a document on the implementation of the standards of provision of criminal case files and information to the alleged victims, which is in full compliance with the standards established by the European Court of Human Rights. The document will soon be approved by the Head of the Service.
- In March-November 2022, the Investigation Department of the Special Investigation Service commenced investigations into 379 criminal cases. Investigations were commenced into 212 criminal cases on crimes provided for by Article 19(1)(a) and (b) of the Law of Georgia on Special Investigation Service. Investigations were commenced into 50 criminal cases on crimes provided for by Article 19(1)(c) of the Law of Georgia on Special Investigation Service, and investigations were commenced into 117 criminal cases on crimes provided for by Article 19(1)(d) of the Law of Georgia on Special Investigation Service.

In addition, in June 2022, the Investigation Quality Monitoring Department and the Analytical Department were established at the **Special Investigation Service**, which were staffed with qualified personnel selected through competition. At the same time, the Investigation Quality Monitoring Department started monitoring the quality of the investigations, including starting work on a quality assessment document.

In order to raise public and target group awareness of the investigative jurisdiction and the notification and complaint mechanism of the Special Investigation Service, it has been fully branded, including creating a new logo, and a new official Facebook page of the Service. Within the framework of the Council of Europe project 'Promoting the Effective Protection of Equality and Non-Discrimination in

Georgia', during the reporting period, 2 000 information booklets were printed in the Georgian, English and Azerbaijani languages, and disseminated, with the engagement of stakeholders, at the temporary detention isolators of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the respective institutions of the penitentiary department of the Ministry of Justice.

In order to enhance efficient supervision and to prevent crime, in July (on 12, 13, 14, 19 July), 8 regional meetings of **representatives from the Special Investigation Service** with regional representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Security Service, the investigation departments of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance of Georgia, the LEPL Levan Samkharauli National Forensics Bureau, the LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, the regional Educational Resource Centres, and the LEPL Office of Resource Officers of Educational Institutions, were held (in Ajara, Samegrelo, Imereti, and Kakheti). About 150 representatives from law enforcement bodies working in managerial positions participated in the meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to raise awareness of the investigative jurisdiction and the notification and complaint mechanism of the Special Investigation Service, to share information about the measures implemented, ongoing, and planned within the Service, and to enhance cooperation between the target groups and the Service.

In order to prevent official misconduct, in January 2023 it is planned to establish a **special council for the prevention of official misconduct** with the participation of representatives from law enforcement bodies, to which the Special Investigation Service will present specific challenges identified during investigations in relation to these agencies, and offer ways to overcome them. Based on the above, the council will be authorised to produce recommendations and monitor their proper implementation. During the reporting period, the statute of the council and the text of a memorandum of cooperation between the agencies have been prepared and agreed upon.

More than 13 meetings were held in order to raise public awareness of the activities of the **Special Investigation Service** and to increase trust therein; one extensive interview was broadcast on TV, and 11 information banners were posted on the Facebook page of the Service.

The Special Investigation Service actively cooperates with the civil sector in the format of public discussions. Prior to approval, the guidelines drawn up by the Special Investigation Service 1) on the provision of criminal case files and information to the victims of ill-treatment, and 2) on the application of special measures of protection, were introduced to human rights organisations, the Public Defender's Office, and representatives from academia, in order for them to share their opinions and recommendations.

In order to inform public and target groups about cases of high public interest, during the reporting period, the Special Investigation Service disseminated 39 public statements through its website and Facebook profile, and held 8 briefings, and 21 internal and 22 external meetings. 22 information banners were posted through the social network. In addition, in order to raise public awareness, with the support of the Council of Europe, the Special Investigation Service held 4 regional meetings throughout Georgia, namely in Batumi, Zugdidi, Kutaisi and Telavi. More than 160 participants attended the meetings.

In order to ensure uniform criminal law policy, **the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia** has prepared 5 guidelines.

In the first 6 months of 2022, as a result of measures taken by the **Central Criminal Police Department** for the purpose of detecting, eliminating and preventing **organised crime**, criminal proceedings were brought against 227 participants in 53 organised criminal groups.

In addition, active measures are being taken against the ‘criminal underworld’ both within the country and abroad, in close cooperation with our colleagues from abroad. During the reporting period, criminal proceedings were brought against 6 ‘thieves in law’, and criminal prosecutions started against 77 persons on charges of participating in ‘gatherings of thieves in law’, membership of the ‘criminal underworld’, supporting the ‘criminal underworld’, and contacting a ‘thief in law’.

During the reporting period, the **Cyber Security Bureau** retrained 9 information security officers of the Ministry of Defence, and approved 3 information security policies.

In order to toughen **the legal framework regulating the legal circulation of firearms** and to increase its efficiency, a package of legislative amendments prepared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs was submitted to the Parliament of Georgia in the autumn session of 2022. The Parliament adopted the legislative amendments in the first hearing. As a result of the legislative amendments, taking into consideration the EU directives, the definitions of the types of firearms will be improved according to the firearms categories, and the rules of the purchase, storage, transportation and carrying of firearms will be redefined. The rules related to the registration of firearms will be improved.

In order to toughen **the legal framework regulating the legal circulation of melee weapons**, in the autumn session of 2022, the Parliament of Georgia adopted in the third hearing draft laws prepared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as a result of which the trade in and import of melee weapons have been made subject to licensing. The sale of melee weapons will be allowed only by licensed institutions at facilities meeting appropriate technical safety requirements. The types of melee weapons to be removed from civil circulation will be established. It will be prohibited to sell and/or give as a gift melee weapons to minors and persons with previous convictions, and the administrative and criminal liability for violating the rules of the circulation of melee weapons will be toughened. As a result of strict legal regulation, the illegal circulation of melee weapons will be reduced, including the availability of melee weapons to minors being restricted.

#### 4.5 Combating Illegal Drugs

The following are envisaged within the project EMCDDA4GE, launched between Georgia and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), which is financed by the EU: **1. strengthening the monitoring and reporting capacities of the Georgian National Drug Observatory; 2. enhancing prevention and treatment capacities at the national level.** During the reporting period, in order to fulfil the tasks determined by the first objective, a visit was made to the EMCDDA, where employees of the Georgian National Drug Observatory completed a training in data collection and reporting standards. In addition, a two-day media training was held in September, in order to facilitate the implementation of the communication strategy of the Georgian National Drug Observatory. A general population survey was conducted in parallel with the training. At this stage, the process of data analysis has been completed and the presentation of the final report is planned in February 2023. The process of implementing the drug-related deaths (DRD) indicator and the Early Warning System (EWS) has been commenced. Under the second strategic objective, a handbook of the European Prevention Curriculum (EUPC) has been translated, adapted and published. In addition, at a meeting held on 8 December, high-ranking decision-makers were trained in issues related to the prevention of drug abuse. In terms of

treatment, a training module adapted to Georgian needs was developed for specialists working in the area of drug addiction.

On 6 September, within the framework of the visit of the EMCDDA delegation, a working agreement document was signed between the Ministry of Justice of Georgia and the EMCDDA. In addition, the 2022-2024 working programme was signed by the parties. The parties are continuously exchanging information. Furthermore, during the reporting period, **the Georgian National Drug Observatory participated in the annual meeting of experts dedicated to all five key epidemiological indicators of the EMCDDA.**

In 2022, two action plan monitoring meetings were held, during which **the agencies involved in the implementation of the plan presented a progress report on the implementation of the 2021-2022 Anti-Drug Action Plan.** In all, 3 monitoring meetings were held in 2021-2022. In addition, at the meeting, the agencies responsible for implementing the Action Plan discussed the challenges posed in the process of implementing activities, and planned ways for overcoming them. At the beginning of 2023, a complete progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan will be drawn up, which will cover the activities carried out by the agencies in 2021-2022.

Within the framework of the implementation of the 2021-2022 Action Plan of the Anti-drug Strategy, the Georgian National Drug Observatory **is monitoring the performance of the activities provided for by the 2022-2023 Action Plan of the Strategy for the Prevention of Drug Abuse.** In addition, in order to carry out the activities determined by the prevention action plan, **together with the Council of Europe Pompidou Group, the council launched a joint project 'Developing a Drug Prevention Support Network for Parents and Professionals in Georgia'.**

**A draft 2023-2024 Anti-drug Action Plan** has been drawn up, which is planned to be approved in February 2023, at the meeting of the Inter-Agency Coordination Council on the Fight against Drug Abuse.

**In order to fight against drug trafficking, namely the transit and sale of drugs (including online trade),** during the reporting period, based on a risk analysis at the customs and border zones, and as a result of performed operative-investigative actions, a total of 6 kg. of heroin, 10 kg. of cocaine, 7 500 pills of Subutex and Suboxone, 5.5 kg. of alpha PVP, 1 kg. of Methamphetamine, and other drugs, were seized. 92 drug dealers were arrested. 11 persons were arrested and prosecuted for selling drugs online, and 4 online drug selling outlets were closed.

#### **4.6 Fighting against Terrorism/Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism**

The **State Security Service** actively cooperates with partner countries and international organisations in bilateral and multilateral formats in the area of fighting against terrorism.

Within the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the area of fighting against terrorism, in January-December 2022, 50 employees of the State Security Service participated in 30 counter-terrorist activities, namely as follows:

- An online meeting of the action group established within the Communications Working Group of the Global Coalition Against Daesh.
- An online meeting of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) Working Group of the Global Coalition Against Daesh.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT).

- The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Identification of Emerging Terrorist Threats established within the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT), held in online format.
- An online presentation of the joint project ‘CT Tech’ of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), and Interpol.
- An opening event of the Counterterrorism Law Enforcement Forum (CTLEF), held in Berlin (Germany) with the organisation of the governments of the United States of America and Germany.
- ‘NATO Defence Against Terrorism Course’, held in online format.
- ‘NATO Defence Against Suicide Attack Course’, held in online format.
- A ‘Training on Investigation and Prosecution of Terrorist Financing Cases’ held within the framework of a project under the joint programme of the Council of Europe and the EU ‘Partnership for Good Governance’ (PGG II).
- A virtual seminar ‘Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Responses during and in the Immediate Aftermath of Terrorist Attacks’, held with the organisation of the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT).
- An advanced course on tactical analysis held within the framework of the EU project ‘Technical Assistance to Support the Fight Against Organised Crime in Georgia’.
- A workshop on the topic of cryptocurrency risks and related investigative actions, held within the framework of the project ‘Support to the Public Administration Reform in Georgia (PAR)’.
- A ‘Crisis Negotiations Training’ organised by the U.S. Embassy and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), with the support of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
- A training ‘Management during Crisis Negotiations’ organised by the U.S. Embassy and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).
- A course ‘Protecting Soft Targets against Terrorist Attacks’, held within the framework of the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) in the United States of America, with the support of the U.S. Department of State.
- Simulation trainings conducted at Tbilisi and Batumi airports in order to improve cooperation between the Aviation Security Operations Center of Israel and the State Security Service of Georgia in the case of emergencies.
- A national training on combating trafficking of radiological and nuclear (RN) material, held within the framework of the regional project ‘CONTACT – Black Sea’ of the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI).
- A training ‘Counter Targeted WMD Assassination Attempts and Disinformation’, held within the framework of the project of the Georgian Center for Strategy and Development.
- A workshop of the project ‘Enhancing Information Sharing on Foreign Terrorist Fighters’ held in Dushanbe, which was organised by INTERPOL and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).
- The workshops conducted by German field experts under the ‘TAIEX 81317’ programme in Tbilisi, within the framework of the measures facilitating the introduction of the European standards regulating unmanned aircrafts, so-called drones, and their safe usage.
- A Communication Working Group (CWG) meeting of the Global Coalition Against Daesh, held in Washington, D.C.
- ‘The Programme on Countering Transnational Organized Crime’, carried out at George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (GCMC).
- A meeting with representatives from the Programme of Safety and Neutralization of Chemical Materials.
- A training called ‘Terrorist Use of Cyberspace’ organised by the NATO school.
- An international conference ‘Transnational Terrorist Threats’ held in Strasbourg with the organisation of the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT) and the German Federal Foreign Office.

- A visit of the delegation of the State Security Service of Georgia to the headquarters of Europol in The Hague, during which meetings were held with the management of the Europol European Counter Terrorism Centre and representatives of relevant analytical projects of Europol.
- The ‘Defence Against Terrorism Course’ held in Oberammergau at the NATO school.
- A one-day training on ‘Cyber Security in the Case of CBRN Incidents’ held in Tbilisi with the organisation of the Georgian Center for Strategy and Development (GCSD), the U.S. Department of State, and the National Security Council.

In 2022, five draft agreements were initiated with partner countries and international organisations, namely two draft agreements on cooperation in the fight against crime (including terrorism), and three draft agreements on the exchange and mutual protection of secret information. Respective consultations are being carried out.

#### 4.7 Legal Cooperation

On 22 June 2022, **the LEPL MIA Academy and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)** signed an updated working agreement.

In 2022, 17 law enforcement officers participated in the CEPOL exchange programme within the framework of the EU-funded project ‘Training and Operational Partnership Against Organised Crime’ (TOPCOP).

During the reporting period, 54 participants were trained under the special professional education programme of basic training for investigators at the **LEPL MIA Academy**.

During the reporting period of 2022, a total of 9 584 applications were submitted to the Centre of International Cooperation in Law Enforcement of the **Central Criminal Police Department**, whereby 1 201 applications were submitted, and the operational information about 4 749 persons was exchanged through the Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA).

**The MIA Academy**, as a contact entity for the **CEPOL** in Georgia, coordinates **CEPOL** Exchange Programmes and Residential Training Activities. Employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the State Security Service, the Ministry of Finance, the Prosecutor’s Office, the Ministry of Justice, and the Special State Protection Service of Georgia, are participating in the **CEPOL** programmes and training activities.

In 2022, within the framework of the **CEPOL** exchange programmes, 12 participants visited the law enforcement agencies of the respective countries. In addition, during the reporting period, 2 instructors from the MIA Academy participated in Residential Training Activities, and 4 instructors from the MIA Academy completed online English language courses.

**The Office of the Prosecutor at The Hague International Criminal Court**, in the context of investigating alleged crimes committed during the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, implemented appropriate domestic procedures to fulfil the requests of the Office of the Prosecutor and to efficiently pursue the investigation. Effective coordination with the respective state agencies, and the gathering, analysis, and provision of information to the Office of the Prosecutor, are regularly carried out. Meetings on issues important for cooperation and on the signing of international agreements are held on a regular basis (including remotely) with representatives from the International Criminal Court. As a result of the effective cooperation with the Court, **on 10 March 2022, a prosecutor of The Hague International Criminal Court submitted to the pre-trial chamber an official request to issue orders for the arrest of ‘high**

ranking officials' (three persons) from the Tskhinvali region accused of torture and ill-treatment of Georgian civilian hostages during the 'August War'. In the process of the investigation, the role of the deceased Vyacheslav Borisov (Major General of the Armed Forces and the Deputy Commander of the Air Forces of the Russian Federation at that time) was also established, who, as presumed by the investigation, intentionally contributed to the above-mentioned crimes. On 30 June, the pre-trial chamber granted the request and issued arrest warrants against three representatives of the de facto 'government' of Tskhinvali, namely Mikhail Mindzaev, Hamlet Guchmazov, and Davit Sanakoev. On 16 December 2022, the Office of the Prosecutor completed the investigation phase of the August War case. As a result, with the efforts and effective cooperation of the Georgian side, **the court established the liability of persons subordinated to the Russian Federation, former high-ranking officials of the Tskhinvali region, and the commander of the Russian Air Forces.** On the other hand, **the decision of 16 December 2022 of the Office of the Prosecutor confirmed that no liability of the representative of the Georgian side in the August War has been established.** The achieved results once again strengthened Georgia's position in the international arena and proved that Russia is unilaterally and fully responsible for the severe crimes committed during the August War.

During the reporting period, **the need to make amendments to the legislation of Georgia based on the 2005 Hague Convention on Choice of Court Agreements** was assessed, and respective draft legislative amendments were prepared. Based on the application of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted the Convention to the relevant agencies for the issuance of opinions determined by the legislation. Draft legislative amendments have been agreed with the High Council of Justice and the Supreme Court of Georgia. At this stage, the complete package has been submitted to the Parliament of Georgia for ratification, and committee discussions are in progress.

As for **the 2007 Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance and the Hague Protocol of 23 November 2007 on the Law Applicable to Maintenance Obligations**, in 2022, a workshop was held with the participation of representatives from the respective agencies. All respective agencies considered it appropriate to recognise the Convention and the Protocol as binding.

The Ministry of Justice has prepared draft laws of Georgia on making amendments to the Law of Georgia **on Private International Law**, the Law of Georgia **on Enforcement Proceedings**, and **the Civil Procedure Code of Georgia**. The draft laws have been agreed with the High Council of Justice and the Supreme Court of Georgia. The draft legislative amendments deriving from the Convention are at the stage of consideration by the Government, and after its completion, the complete package will be submitted to the Parliament.

In addition, **The Hague Convention of 15 November 1965 on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters** entered into force for Georgia on 1 January 2022.

**The guidelines on the implementation of the UN Security Council sanctions and on the formation of lists of sanctioned persons** were also prepared, which were approved at the meeting of the State Commission working on the issues of the UN Security Council, held on 18 May 2022.

On 17 March 2022, an information meeting was held with representatives from supervisory bodies and accountable persons on the implementation of targeted sanction regimes on the basis of the UN Security Council resolutions, which was attended by 23 persons. Later, on 10 June 2022, an information meeting

was held with 25 employees of the LEPL National Agency of Public Registry working in managerial positions. Based on the decision of the State Commission, in order to comply with the UN Security Council Resolution No 1373, 2 (two) natural persons have been entered in the national list of sanctioned persons.

**The Hague Convention of 15 November 1965 on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters** entered into force for Georgia on 1 January 2022.

During the reporting period, a test version of the electronic platform was developed **for the purpose of the effective implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the process of legal approximation** envisaged by the Association Agreement.

## 5. Trade and Trade-related Matters

**Within the framework of measures supporting the participation of Georgian companies in international events, trade fairs and missions** in EU Member States, as of 2022, with the support of the LEPL Enterprise Georgia, 106 Georgian companies participated in international events held in EU territory, and 56 Georgian companies participated in fairs and events outside the territory of the EU.

**Within the framework of supporting small and medium enterprises in terms of the availability of funds and technical assistance** by the LEPL Enterprise Georgia, as of 2022, 309 loans/leases to 275 enterprises, with a total approved amount of GEL 202 million, were co-financed under the universal industrial programme. Within the framework of the above projects, it is planned to make investments of a total amount of GEL 305 million, and to create more than 3 800 new jobs.

Within the framework of the training course for **export managers of small and medium-sized enterprises**, in 2022, the Agency implemented three certificate courses, which were attended by a total of 80 participants.

With the support of the LEPL Enterprise Georgia, in 2022, up to 250 new companies were registered on the **TradewithGeorgia.com platform**.

In accordance with Annex III-A to the Association Agreement, technical regulations have been adopted and the approximated legislation has been revised, in order to check their compliance with, or to bring them into compliance with, the amended and updated Directives and Regulations provided for by Annex III-A. Within the framework of approximation to Directive 214/53/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, a draft ordinance of the Government of Georgia '**On Approval of Technical Regulations on Radio Equipment**' has been drawn up. Meetings were held with public and private sector representatives, and their comments and remarks were reflected in the final draft of the technical regulations. The procedure has been started for the submission, according to the established procedure, of a revised draft of the technical regulations to the Government of Georgia for approval.

In order to bring the approved technical regulations into compliance with the updated directives, within the framework of dynamic approximation, in June 2022, **four amendments to the technical regulations** were approved by ordinances of the Government of Georgia. Therefore, the legislation of Georgia has been approximated to the following updated EU Directives and Regulations:

1. Regulation (EU) 2016/424 on cableway installations – Ordinance No 299 of 8 June 2022 of the Government of Georgia 'On making amendments to Ordinance No 320 of 15 August 2011 of the

Government of Georgia on approval of technical regulations on the cableway installations designed to transport persons’.

2. Directive 2014/33/EU on lifts and safety components for lifts – Ordinance No 302 of 8 June 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On making amendments to Ordinance No 289 of 20 July 2011 of the Government of Georgia on approval of technical regulations on the safety of lifts’.
3. Directive 2014/68/EU on the making available on the market of pressure equipment – Ordinance No 301 of 8 June 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On making amendments to Ordinance No 151 of 19 June 2013 on approval of technical regulations on pressure equipment’.
4. Directive 2014/29/EU on the making available on the market of simple pressure vessels – Ordinance No 303 of 8 June 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On making amendments to Ordinance No 150 of 19 June 2013 on approval of technical regulations on simple pressure vessels’.

Work is in progress on the identification of the harmonised standards of Directive 2014/68/EU and on their adoption as Georgian standards in accordance with the approximation plan. All the other harmonised standards corresponding to the updated directive/regulation have been fully adopted as Georgian standards.

The Georgian National Agency for Standards and Metrology has updated, as necessary, the standards harmonised with the mentioned directives/regulations. The Agency has updated, on the electronic platform of standards (sst.geostm.gov.ge), a list of standards designated for achieving the goals of the mentioned technical regulations.

As of 2022, the Georgian National Agency for Standards and Metrology registered in all **5 964 standards as Georgian standards**, including the following:

- Georgian Standard ISO (international standards) – 4 677;
- Georgian Standard EN (European standards) – 1 287.

The number of internationally recognised Calibration and Measurement Capabilities (CMC) records of the Georgian National Agency for Standards and Metrology has been maintained at **65 CMC records**.

In order to maintain international recognition and to ensure the traceability of measurements, the 2022 calibration programmes for reference materials and measuring instruments have been prepared at the Metrology Institute of the Agency. The calibration and measuring capabilities of national metrology institutes of different countries have been analysed. The reference materials and measuring instruments of the Agency have been calibrated by the appropriate institutes of Czech Republic, Türkiye, and United Kingdom, and currently the calibration works are being carried out at the institutes of Germany and Poland. In order to ensure the unhindered implementation of the process of international recognition of laboratories, taking into consideration the aspiration of Georgia to join the EU, GEOSTM has started preparatory works for joining the European metrology organisation ‘EURAMET’. In August 2022, GEOSTM prepared and submitted an official application for EURAMET membership. The application had been reviewed by EURAMET members, and **on 7 November 2022, as a result of electronic voting, the Agency was granted the status of an associate member of EURAMET**. The next stage entails the inspection of the Metrology Institute of the Agency by experts of the so-called peer evaluation EURAMET, in order to obtain full membership.

With the support of the EU project ‘Support for the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement – Phase II’, the work on **the Risk Assessment System (Programme) concept for the Market Surveillance Agency** has been completed. The next step will be the preparation of the technical

specifications of the IT system, in order to develop tender documentation. In this regard, activities are envisaged by a future EU twinning project 'Strengthening Capacities of the Market Surveillance Agency of Georgia'.

An informative electronic system **on harmful products** has been integrated into the website of the Market Surveillance Agency [www.msa.gov.ge](http://www.msa.gov.ge).

Based on risk analysis in the areas subject to surveillance, **the LEPL Market Surveillance Agency** carried out market surveillance procedures in relation to the following products:

- 62 types of marketed construction products were inspected on the local market;
- 13 types of marketed pressure equipment were inspected on the local market;
- 91 types of marketed machinery were inspected on the local market;
- 110 types of marketed toys were inspected on the local market;
- 38 types of marketed personal protective equipment were inspected on the local market;
- 148 types of appliances burning gaseous fuels were inspected on the local market.

The following advance notices from 7 Customs Clearance Zones of the Revenue Service were inspected:

- advance notices of the import of 8 784 items of construction products;
- advance notices of the import of 3 207 items of machinery;
- advance notices of the import of 5 386 items of toys;
- advance notices of the import of 1137 items of personal protective equipment;
- advance notices of the import of 2 937 items of appliances burning gaseous fuels.
- Samples of 39 types of construction products were taken and sent to appropriate accredited laboratories.

Samples of 71 types of toys were taken and sent to appropriate accredited laboratories.

According to Directive 2014/35/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 26 February 2014 on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making available on the market of electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits, the draft Technical Regulations **On the Electrical Equipment Designed for Use within Certain Voltage Limits** have been drawn up and are currently being agreed with relevant agencies. The draft will be approved in the first quarter of 2023. Harmonised standards have been fully adopted as Georgian standards.

For the approximation of the technical regulations on construction products to Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 laying down harmonised conditions for the marketing of construction products, **the draft amendments to Technical Regulations On Construction Products** have been prepared, and the regulatory impact assessment under the AA Facility project has been completed. The draft will be approved in the first quarter of 2023.

In October 2022, within the framework of a regular assessment, the European Accreditation (EA) assessed the activities of the Georgian Accreditation Center in the recognised areas:

1. Testing (accreditation according to international standard ISO/IEC 17025).
2. Calibration (accreditation according to international standard ISO/IEC 17025).
3. Medical tests (accreditation according to the international standard ISO 15189).
4. Inspection (accreditation according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17020).
5. Product certification (accreditation according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17065).
6. Personnel certification (accreditation according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17024).
7. It was planned to expand the recognition under the assessment, and for this purpose, the EA assessment team additionally assessed the activities of the Accreditation Center in the area of proficiency test providers (accreditation according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17043).

According to the ‘initial assessment’ of the group, the activities of the Accreditation Center were positively assessed in all the above areas, which is specified in the preliminary report. The EA will publish a final report in the spring 2023.

On 18 May 2022, the LEPL Unified National Body of Accreditation – Accreditation Center obtained the status of a **full-fledged member of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC)**. Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA) were also signed in the following areas:

- Testing (ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189).
- Inspection (ISO/IEC 17020).
- Calibration (ISO/IEC 17025).

On 4 July 2022, the Unified National Body of Accreditation – Accreditation Center became a **full-fledged member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and a signatory of the Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA)** in the following areas:

- ISO/IEC 17024 (personnel certification).
- ISO/IEC 17065 (product certification).

In terms of the approximation of the legislation of Georgia to the relevant EU normative acts under **Annex XI-B to the Association Agreement**, the following ordinances of the Government of Georgia have been adopted:

- Ordinance No 173 of 5 April 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On making amendments to Ordinance No 39 of 17 January 2020 of the Government of Georgia on making amendments to Ordinance No 336 of 13 June 2018 of the Government of Georgia on approval of the procedures for certification of seed and planting material of agricultural plant species subject to mandatory certification’.
- Ordinance No 304 of 8 June 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On approval of the technical regulations on plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food’.
- Ordinance No 326 of 20 June 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On approval of the procedure for determining places of origin and countries of origin of fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry’.
- Ordinance No 224 of 26 April 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On determining the characteristics and minimum conditions for inspecting vine varieties’.
- Ordinance No 360 of 12 July 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On the technical regulations on food additives’.
- Ordinance No 443 of 29 August 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On approval of minimum standards for the protection of calves’.
- Ordinance No 445 of 31 August 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On approval of minimum standards for the protection of pigs’.
- Ordinance No 418 of 9 August 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On making amendments to the ordinance of the Government of Georgia on approval of technical regulations on the procedures for the marketing of vegetable and fruit propagating and planting material (other than seed)’.
- Ordinance No 574 of 15 December 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On approval of technical regulations on the rules for exploitation and marketing of natural mineral waters’.
- Ordinance No 564 of 12 December 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On approval of technical regulations on establishing the list and concentration limits of the constituents of natural mineral waters, labelling requirements for natural mineral waters and the conditions for using ozone-enriched air for the treatment of spring waters and natural mineral waters’.
- Ordinance No 6 of 16 January 2023 of the Government of Georgia ‘On approval of the rules for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes’.

- Ordinance No 36 of 24 January 2023 of the Government of Georgia ‘On approval of the rules for the protection of animals at the time of killing’.
- Ordinance No 7 of 16 January 2023 of the Government of Georgia ‘On approval of the rules for the authorisation of establishments keeping laying hens’.
- Ordinance No 620 of 30 December 2022 of the Government of Georgia ‘On technical regulations on the emergency measures to prevent the spread within the country of the pine wood nematode *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus* (Steiner et Buhner) Nickle et al.’.
- Order No 2-814 of 2 November 2022 of the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia ‘On making amendments to Order No 2-152 of 28 September 2007 of the Minister of Agriculture of Georgia on additional requirements for the registration in Georgia of pesticides/agrochemicals registered in the Member States of the EU and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)’.

The following draft ordinances of the Government of Georgia have been drawn up:

- On approval of minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production.
- On approval of the rules for the protection of animals during transport and related operations.
- A draft ordinance of the Government of Georgia on approval of the criteria for staging points.
- A draft ordinance of the Government of Georgia on making amendments to Ordinance No 460 of 7 October 2016 of the Government of Georgia on approval of the technical regulations on the rules for assessing the potential risks of the contained use of living genetically modified organisms.

**In the sanitary and phytosanitary area**, within the framework of the measures for the introduction of new laboratory testing methods and the expansion of the scope of accreditation:

The following methods have been implemented at the **Animal Disease Diagnostics Department**:

1. Campylobacteriosis;
2. Yersiniosis;
3. bee Paratyphus;
4. bee Septicaemia;
5. diagnostics of viral haemorrhagic septicaemia in fish (PCR);
6. diagnostics of infectious hematopoietic necrosis in fish (PCR);
7. detection of *Salmonella* spp. from primary enterprises (animal feces, dust, and smear);
8. primary isolation from pathological animal tissue of pathogens caused by gram-positive diplococcus.

The following methods have been implemented at the **Food Research Department**:

1. determination of aflatoxin B1 in grains using the high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC);
2. determination of amitraz and its metabolites residue in honey with the QuEChers method using LC/MS/MS;
3. determination of bromuconazole and clotrimazole in honey with the QuEChers method using LC/MS/MS;
4. determination of tetracyclines (tetracycline, oxytetracycline, and chlortetracycline) in tissues using the CHARM II system;
5. determination of aflatoxin B1 in milk using the CHARM II system;
6. determination of pesticides in fruits, vegetables and juices using the CHARM II system;
7. determination of aflatoxin B1 in grains and animal feed using the CHARM II system;
8. determination of Amphenicols in tissues using the CHARM II system;
9. E.coli detection and enumeration method;
10. the DA method for the detection of *Campylobacter* in food and animal feed;
11. the DA method for the counting of *Campylobacter* in food and animal feed;
12. determination of the sodium chloride content in bakery products;
13. determination of sugars in flour-based confectionery;

14. determination of sugars in bakery products;
15. determination of sugars in lactic acid products;
16. determination of bread content in meat products;
17. determination of moisture levels in frozen poultry with a drip loss method;
18. determination of cephalosporins in honey and milk with a Triple Quadrupole Liquid Chromatograph Mass Spectrometer (TSQ QUANTIS);
19. determination of mercury in fish and meat with an atomic absorption spectrometer AMA 254 – Advanced Mercury Analyser;
20. determination of mercury in water with an atomic absorption spectrometer AMA 254 – Advanced Mercury Analyser.

The following testing methods have been implemented at the **Plant Pest Diagnostic Department**:

1. extraction of cyst nematodes from soil with organic solvents;
2. extraction of cyst nematodes from potato tubers, roots and plant samples with an enzymatic method;
3. detection and identification of *Ophiobolus graminis*, causing wheat disease, with a biological method;
4. detection and morphological and biochemical identification of *Pseudomonas corrugata*, causing pith necrosis of tomato;
5. detection and identification of *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *Morsprunorum*, causing bacterial canker of pome fruits and stone fruits, with a classical bacteriological method;
6. identification of *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *Morsprunorum*, causing bacterial canker of pome fruits and stone fruits, with the polymerase chain reaction (PCR);
7. identification of *Clavibacter michiganensis* subsp. *Michiganensis* bacteria, causing the bacterial canker of Tomato, with the polymerase chain reaction (PCR);
8. identification of *Pseudomonas corrugata* bacteria, causing tomato pith necrosis, with the polymerase chain reaction (PCR);
9. identification of *Pseudomonas savastanoi* pv. *Savastanoi* bacteria, causing olive knot disease, with the polymerase chain reaction (PCR);
10. identification of *Phytophthora ramorum* fungus, causing phytophthora, with the polymerase chain reaction (PCR);
11. detection of apple chlorotic leaf spot virus (ACLSV);
12. detection of apple stem grooving virus (ASGV);
13. detection of apple stem pitting virus (ASPV);
14. detection of blueberry shock virus (BlShV);
15. detection of cucumber mosaic virus (CMV);
16. detection of raspberry bushy dwarf virus (RBDV);
17. detection of raspberry ringspot virus (RRSV);
18. detection of strawberry latent ringspot virus (SLRSV);
19. detection of tomato black ring virus (TBRV);
20. detection and identification of *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (*Chalara fraxinea*);
21. detection and morphological and biochemical identification of *Pseudomonas corrugata*, causing pith necrosis of tomato;
22. morphological and morphometric identification of *Xiphinema italiae*;
23. morphological and morphometric characterisation and identification of *Xyleborus dispar* (pear blight beetle);
24. morphological identification of *Polygonum pensilvanicum* L.;
25. Morphological identification of *Crassula helmsii* (Kirk) Cockayne.

Within the scope of implementing **sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary border control procedures**:

- veterinary border control was carried out in relation to 15 348 goods items;

- phytosanitary border control was carried out in relation to 22 784 goods items;
- border control over the safety of food/feed of non-animal origin was carried out in relation to 3 693 goods items.

Within the framework of the complex reform in the area of public procurement, in relation to a new draft Law of Georgia **on Public Procurement**, the State Procurement Agency completed work on the draft law in the first quarter of 2022. The remarks and recommendations from the state agencies of Georgia have been taken into consideration in the draft law. The new draft Law of Georgia on Public Procurement incorporates the obligations provided for by phases II and IV of the legislative approximation under the AA/DCFTA, and the enactment of the obligations gradually. At the meeting of the Government of Georgia of 6 June 2022, the Government of Georgia approved the draft law and submitted it to the Parliament of Georgia for consideration. In December 2022, the Parliament of Georgia reviewed the draft Law of Georgia on Public Procurement at the first and second hearings at its plenary sitting and adopted it with a few comments. The comments of the Members of Parliament were reflected in the draft Law, and it was adopted at the third hearing on 9 February 2023.

At the same time, the State Procurement Agency actively cooperates with the USAID Economic Governance Program, within the framework of which it is planned to hold thematic meetings at the Parliament of Georgia with regard to a new draft law, in which members of the respective committee of the Parliament of Georgia, and representatives from the private and public sectors, will participate. The meetings will significantly contribute to the process of parliamentary consideration of the draft law.

In accordance with a decision made by the EU-Georgia Association Council, **the EU public procurement market was opened for Georgian companies**. The decision officially entered into force on 22 July 2022.

Within the framework of cooperation between the National Intellectual Property Center of Georgia Sakpatenti and the UNDP, the work on **the 2022-2024 institutional development strategy of Sakpatenti** has been completed. Under the USAID HICD, the work on the guidelines (strategy, action plan, etc.) of the Public Relations Office of Sakpatenti has been completed.

A group of experts selected within the framework of the EUGIPP project has completed work on a collection of court decisions in the area of intellectual property; a roadmap and the trademark guide, developed within the framework of the EUGIPP project, have also been finalised.

In 2022, employees of the **Competition Agency of Georgia** participated in 18 events related to **topical issues of competition policy**. In particular, the employees participated in seminars, meetings, study visits and conferences organised by ICN, OECD, OECD-GVH RCC, ABA, UNCTAD and OECD-GVH RCC, the Croatian Competition Agency, the Polish Competition Authority (UOKIK), and the EU-funded Twinning project '**Strengthening Capacity of the Competition Agency of Georgia**'. The above activities were related to various topical issues of the competition policy.

According to the data of 2022, 9 300 new visitors visited the [dcfta.gov.ge](http://dcfta.gov.ge) website. In addition to users from Georgia, the website was visited by users from the United States of America, China, Russia, Germany, Poland, the United Kingdom, Türkiye, and others. A total share of visitors from foreign countries is 20 %. The statistics and approximated legislation pages have been updated on the website. Various legal documents and the DCFTA implementation plan and reports have been made public.

On 14 November 2022, a joint meeting was held between the **Trade Advisory Board of Georgia (TAG)** and the **DCFTA Advisory Group** in online format. The progress and achievements in the implementation of the DCFTA were discussed at the meeting.

On 24 November 2022, a regular meeting of the **Inter-agency Subcommission** on the implementation of DCFTA was held in online format, during which the progress of the 2022 action plan for the implementation of the DCFTA, the identified problems and their solutions, as well as progress in the preparation of the 2023 action plan for the implementation of the DCFTA, were discussed.

**The 2023 Action Plan for the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) agreement** was approved by **an order of 27 January 2023** of the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. The Action Plan was made public on the website [dcfta.gov.ge](http://dcfta.gov.ge).

The following activities were carried out within the scope of measures of compliance with international obligations related to climate change:

**The 2021 report** on the implementation of the 2021-2023 Action Plan for the implementation of **the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) document** has been prepared and uploaded on the website of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia.

The preparation of the **Fifth National Communication of Georgia (FNC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR)** has been commenced. A project kick-off meeting was held, during which the project objectives were presented to the stakeholders. A project manager has been hired. A working group has been established for preparing the Fifth National Communication of Georgia, and a working group has been selected to conduct the national inventory.

On 2 May 2022, the Government of Georgia approved Ordinance No 231 '**On Approval of the Regulations for the Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management**'. All ordinances subject to the approval of the Government of Georgia have been officially adopted and have entered into force. On 2 August 2022, '**a list of forest forming species of woody plants**' was approved by an order of the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. In 2022, active works were carried out on the following: regulations 'on the rules for import, export and production of forest reproductive materials (FRM)', 'on the rules for establishing a Forester Day in Georgia and rewarding people employed in the forestry sector', 'on the commission determining the status of a forest', 'on determining the official uniform for persons employed in the state forest'. The drafts of the above documents are in the final stage of review and will be submitted for approval to the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia in the near future.

In order to facilitate **trade in timber products produced as a result of sustainable forest management**, 31 landings have been set up throughout Georgia.

## 6. Economic Cooperation

According to a preliminary estimation, the increase in real gross domestic product (GDP) amounted to 11.0 % in December 2022, compared to the same period of the previous year, and the average actual growth was 10.1 % in 2022.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of cooperation in the field of **statistics**, on 6 June 2022, the first meeting of the Government Coordination Commission of the Census of Population was held and **the programme for the 2024 general census of the population of Georgia** was approved, according to which the period of the general census of the population will be from 14 November to 19 December 2024, and the census moment (the critical moment of the census) will be 12:00 at midnight of 13-14 November. The programme for the 2024 general census of the population also provides for the method of carrying out the census. A draft of the document is available.

The Unit Value Indices (UVI) of export and import have been determined and disseminated according to the positions of the Commodity Nomenclature (HS) of Foreign Economic Activity. The data is available on the website of the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat).<sup>2</sup>

As from 2021, the quarterly/annual survey in international trade in services has been conducted on a regular basis. The experimental indicators of international trade in services have been calculated according to the results of 2020-2021. The revised data were published in October 2022, and the official statistics on international trade in services will be published as from 2023.

As regards the results of the time use survey (TUS), the findings of the time use survey (TUS) conducted in 2020-2021 have been processed and the respective indicators have been published on the Geostat website.

On 3 June 2022, the agreement on Georgia's participation in the EU **Customs Programme**, for cooperation between the EU and Georgia in the customs area, and the agreement on Georgia's participation in the **EU Fiscalis programme**, for cooperation between the EU and Georgia in the field of taxation, were signed between Georgia and the EU.

Within the framework of preparing the legislative/subordinate acts in compliance with the Convention on a Common Transit Procedure (CTC) and the Single Administrative Document (SAD) Convention, regular monthly meetings are being held between representatives from the **Revenue Service and the Taxation and Customs Union of the European Commission**, in order to prepare a package of legislative amendments. Sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary border control procedures were carried out:

- veterinary border control was carried out in relation to 15 348 goods items;
- phytosanitary border control was carried out in relation to 22 784 goods items;
- border control over the safety of food/feed of non-animal origin was carried out in relation to 3 693 goods items.

From 31 January to 4 February 2022, with the support of the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank, training was conducted for **the employees of the Customs Department of the Revenue Service** (9 employees). Issues regarding the implementation of the AEO manual were discussed during the training.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/single-news/2747/ekonomikuri-zrdis-tsinastsari-shefaseba-dekemberi-2022>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/713/sagareo-vachrobis-erteulis-ghirebulebis-indeksebi>

On 10-11 May 2022, a workshop organised with the support of the EU **TAIEX** programme was held for the purpose of developing the capabilities of the Authorised Economic Programme (AEO) in Georgia. Experts from the EU and the customs administration (13 officers/employees) participated in the event.

The development of the **NCTS software** has been completed; in order to define and implement harmonised VAT legislation, examples have been prepared and published on the website of the Revenue Service.

In order to prepare draft implementation norms for certain articles of a **new Customs Code**, on 24-25 May 2022, a TAIEX workshop was held regarding certain articles of the Customs Code. Experts shared their experience and best practices with the participants on simplified procedures under the Customs Code, additional tax returns, amendments to tax returns and records, and other matters.

From 21 June to 13 July 2022, an Italian expert visited the Revenue Service within the framework of the EU project 'Support for the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement' (AA Facility). During the visit, the expert was working together with employees from the Revenue Service on the preparation of the draft implementation norms for certain articles of a new Customs Code. On 12 July, a summary workshop was held with the participation of representatives from the private sector, during which the participants were informed about the progress of the project.

The **State Audit Office** has prepared a minimum of 10 performance audit reports; in addition, system-related recommendations have been issued in respect of the effectiveness, economy and efficiency of public resources management; covering the budget through financial audits has been increased and a minimum of 30 financial and compliance audits have been conducted; at this stage, 14 financial audits and 25 compliance audits are being carried out.

The report of the State Audit Office of Georgia concerning the Government's report on the Annual Execution of the State Budget of Georgia for 2021 has been prepared and presented to the Parliament of Georgia; in addition, an interagency system-based compliance audit has been conducted, and system-related recommendations have been issued in respect of crucial compliance issues.

For the purpose of approximation to EU directives in the area of **financial services** (Directive 2014/65/EC, Regulation 600/2014 of 15 May 2014, and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/565 of 25 April 2016 supplementing Directive 2014/65/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards organisational requirements and operating conditions for investment firms and defined terms for the purposes of that Directive, and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/568 of 24 May 2016 supplementing Directive 2014/65/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to regulatory technical standards for the admission of financial instruments to trading on regulated markets), **the analysis of legal acts and their approximation is being carried out gradually, taking into account the level of development of the local market.**

A draft law has been drawn up on the basis of the **Directive on Supplementary Supervision of Credit Institutions, Insurance Undertakings and Investment Firms in a Financial Conglomerate**, which was prepared together with an appropriate body, the Insurance State Supervision Service of Georgia. The draft law was also sent to sector representatives for information. Consultations are on-going regarding the submission of the draft law to the Parliament.

For the purpose of further approximation to Directive (EU) 2015/2366 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 (which repealed Directive 2007/64/EC of the European Parliament

and of the Council of 13 November 2007 on payment services in the internal market, which was envisaged by the Association Agreement), **the main draft law and accompanying draft laws have been prepared**. Taking into account the compliance analysis, the National Bank of Georgia has prepared extensive draft legislative amendments, namely the Law of Georgia on Making Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Payment System and Payment Services, and the related drafts. The Parliament of Georgia adopted the said Law on 9 September 2022, which entered into force on 1 November 2022.

**The National Bank of Georgia** is actively working on the changes to be made in the capital adequacy framework which, inter alia, entails the introduction of a neutral countercyclical buffer, which will be included in the Pillar I Requirements and will be added to the combined buffer requirement (CBR). This, in turn, is based on Regulation 575/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms, which had been drawn up based on the Basel III framework. The National Bank of Georgia also continues working on the framework for consolidated supervision.

In 2022, the National Bank of Georgia completed work on the improvement of the eligibility criteria for administrators and shareholders, and the requirements for the acquisition and licensing of a significant share, which were based on Directive 2013/36 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on access to the activity of credit institutions and the prudential supervision of credit institutions and investment firms. The legislative amendments were adopted by the Parliament of Georgia **in September 2022 and they entered into force on 1 November 2022**. After the entry into force of the legislative amendments, the National Bank of Georgia also updated subordinate acts, in particular new regulations on the acquisition of a significant share of a commercial bank, and updated procedures for licensing commercial banks and for the eligibility of administrators became effective as from 1 November 2022.

In terms of approximation to Directive 2004/25/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 21 April 2004 on takeover bids, shortcomings have been identified, and currently a project on remedying the shortcomings is being finalised. A respective draft law will be submitted to the Government of Georgia in 2023 for its initiation at the Parliament of Georgia.

In order to prepare the legislative framework and the insurance industry for the implementation of the **Solvency II standards for insurance activities**, the EU-funded twinning project for the civil service was completed in September, the purpose of which was harmonisation with Directive 2009/138/EC. Project experts (from Spain) have prepared the initial framework of the legislation, which includes a main regulatory draft law and the respective subordinate normative acts. Taking into consideration the scope of the issue and the particularities of implementation, a special working group established within the Service is now processing the documents for their proper adaptation to Georgian legal practice, in view of the respective stages of implementation.

Within the framework of a cooperation project between **the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and the Asian Development Bank**, international experts (with the engagement of Service representatives) have prepared a primary legislative framework governing private pension provision (**Pillar III**), which has been submitted to the Parliament of Georgia for further consideration.

The **Financial Monitoring Service** has prepared all the amendments to the **Law of Georgia on Facilitating the Prevention of Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism** planned for 2022. The existing practice of the identification by the Financial Monitoring Service of Georgia of possible incidents of

money laundering and financing of terrorism has been improved; all scheduled lectures/seminars have been held.

In terms of **macroeconomic cooperation**, the **2021 consolidated annual report** on the development of public internal financial control reform **was submitted to the Government of Georgia**. The report was approved by the Government.

For the purpose of approximation to Council Directive 2003/96/EC of 27 October 2003, **draft amendments to the Tax Code** have been prepared. In the second half of 2022, the draft amendments will be discussed by EU experts.

In terms of enhancing the implementation of the **financial management and control system**, with the support of the Swedish National Financial Management Authority (ESV), the system is being piloted at 6 central ministries (the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth), which entails improving the goals and indicators of the activities of the ministries, improving the systems of delegation of powers and accounting, and establishing a risk management system. As regards the 2021 consolidated annual report on the development of the public internal financial control system, it has been approved by the Government of Georgia.

A project has been implemented at the city halls of 3 municipalities (Lentekhi, Tianeti, and Dusheti), which envisaged meetings with top management regarding the role of internal audits, and the provision of assistance in risk-based strategic and annual planning to entities subject to internal auditing. A project has been implemented at 2 municipalities (Mestia and Kazbegi), which envisaged meetings with top management regarding the role of internal audits, and support in establishing a monitoring system for the implementation of recommendations produced as a result of internal auditing. A project has been implemented at 2 municipalities (Gurjaani and Sachkhere) regarding a quality assurance programme.

The implementation of recommendations produced as a result of the external quality assessment of the activities of entities subject to internal auditing has been monitored in 20 cases.

4 performance audits and 3 system audits have been carried out with the support of the Central Harmonisation Unit.

The process of gradual approximation to EU law **in the area of accounting and audit** continues; in this regard, a legislative amendment has been made to the Law of Georgia on Accounting, reporting and audit. As a result of the amendment, the circle of accountable persons subject to the supervision of the Service for Accounting, Reporting and Auditing Supervision has been expanded based on the goals of the Law of Georgia on Facilitating the Prevention of Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism, and now covers accountants and accounting companies providing professional services. In addition, in order to introduce the International Standard on Quality Management (**ISQM**) for operation instead of the International Standard on Quality Control (**ISQC**), the entire version of the law has been respectively amended. It is worth noting that, according to the transitional provisions of the Law, the authority of audit firms to carry out auditing of financial statements of public-interest entities, which has been granted so far, will be maintained until the results of the monitoring of the quality management system become available.

On 24 November 2022, an online event ‘Key Challenges for Audit Committees in Corporate Governance’ was organised by **the Service for Accounting, Reporting and Auditing Supervision and the World Bank**, within the framework of a joint project of the EU and the World Bank named ‘Financial Inclusion and Accountability’.

## 7. Other Fields of Cooperation

### 7.1 Transport

The Association Agreement envisages approximation to EU standards in the areas of **maritime, road, rail and air transport**.

#### Maritime transport

In terms of legislative approximation to the directives provided for by the Association Agreement (Title VI, Chapter 1, Annex XV-D, **Maritime Transport**, technical and operational rules), work is in progress on the approximation of the legislation of Georgia to Directive 1999/63/EC of 21 June 1999 (concerning the Agreement on the organisation of working time of seafarers concluded by the European Community Shipowners’ Association (ECSA) and the Federation of Transport Workers’ Unions in the European Union (FST) – Annex: European Agreement on the organisation of working time of seafarers), and Directive 1999/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 1999 (concerning the enforcement of provisions in respect of seafarers’ hours of work on board ships calling at Community ports); the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia submitted to the Government of Georgia a package for ratification of the **Maritime Labour Convention (MLC)**, a draft Law of Georgia **on Seafarers’ Labour** and accompanying draft laws. The said draft laws were reviewed at the meeting on 12 December 2022, and the procedures for the adoption of the draft laws were commenced. After the ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), the above Directives will be implemented.

For the purpose of the approximation of the legislation of Georgia to Directive 2010/65/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 (on reporting formalities for ships arriving in and/or departing from ports of Member States), the Maritime Transport Agency has prepared a **draft Law of Georgia on Making Amendments to the Maritime Code of Georgia**. The draft Law will be adopted in 2023. Regulation (EU) 2019/1239 **establishing a European Maritime Single Window environment** and repealing Directive 2010/65/EU was adopted on 20 June 2019. The timeframe for the implementation of the said Regulation is 15 August 2025.

#### Road transport

Within the framework of approximation of the legislation of Georgia to the directives provided for by the Association Agreement (Title VI, Chapter 1, Annex XXIV, **road transport**), the following activities were carried out in 2022:

A new AM category (moped and light quadricycle) and A2 subcategory were introduced from 6 December 2021 under the Law of Georgia of 16 November 2021 on Making Amendments to the **Law of Georgia on Traffic**, for which the minimum age and the procedure for issuance of the respective driving licences are in compliance with the requirements of Directive 2006/126/EC. The categories/subcategories of the driving licences of vehicles provided for by the said Directive have been

fully implemented in the legislation of Georgia, including equivalence between categories/subcategories. In this regard, the respective amendments have been made to the subordinate normative acts as well.

In order to conduct the practical test to obtain a driving licence on roads, the obligation to pass an additional second stage of the practical test (on roads) to obtain a driving licence has been introduced under both the legislation and the respective subordinate normative acts. Namely, **as from 25 April 2022, the practical test to obtain a driving licence for B and BE category vehicles has two stages**. As for the other vehicle categories/subcategories, the obligation to pass the second stage of the practical test to obtain a driving licence will become effective by the end of 2022.

For the purpose of the approximation of the legislation of Georgia to Directive No 2003/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2003 (on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers), Article 8<sup>4</sup> has been added to the **Law of Georgia on Road Transport**, based on which respective subordinate acts have been adopted: **Order No 08/6 of 15 September 2022 of the Director of the LEPL Land Transport Agency** ‘on approval of a special training programme for drivers transporting dangerous goods, a special training programme for Dangerous Goods Safety Advisers, a programme of initial qualification of managers (CPC managers), a programme of initial qualification and periodic training of drivers (CPC drivers), and a digital tachograph training programme for drivers and companies’; **Order No 09/6 of 15 September 2022 of the Director of the LEPL Land Transport Agency** ‘on the granting of initial qualification to persons engaged in the transportation of dangerous goods and/or in international transportation of goods and/or passengers’; **Order No 13/6 of 15 September 2022 of the Director of the LEPL Land Transport Agency** ‘on approval of the forms of a certificate of professional competence (CPC) of drivers and a driver qualification card, and their issuance procedures’.

### **Railway**

In order to implement Directive 2004/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 (on safety on the Community’s railways), Directive 2007/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 (on the certification of train drivers operating locomotives and trains on the railway system in the Community), and Directive 2008/68/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 24 September 2008 (on the inland transport of dangerous goods, in the area of railway transport), draft normative acts have been drawn up and submitted to the Government of Georgia for further initiation at the Parliament of Georgia. The estimated period of initiation at the Parliament of Georgia will be January/February 2023.

For the purpose of the approximation of the legislation of Georgia to Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 (on public passenger transport services by rail and by road), respective amendments have been made to the Railway Code of Georgia. **On 24 May 2022, Ordinance No 266 of the Government of Georgia ‘On approval of the procedure and conditions for signing public service contracts and the procedure for determining public service compensation’ was approved.**

### **Air transport**

Within the framework of the approximation of the legislation of Georgia to the directives provided for by the Association Agreement (Title VI, Chapter 1, Annex XXIV, **Air Transport**, Common Aviation Area Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the

other part), in 2022, work has been in progress for approximation to Commission Regulation (EU) No 1321/2014 (on the continuing airworthiness of aircraft and aeronautical products, parts and appliances, and on the approval of organisations and personnel involved in these tasks). Due to the complexity of the Regulation, it is being implemented gradually. At this stage, the procedure for the aircraft and aeronautical products maintenance organisation approval (Part-145), the procedure for certifying staff (Part-M), and the procedure for maintenance training organisation approval (Part-147) have been implemented, and work has been completed on the continuing airworthiness management organisation approval (part-CAMO), which will be implemented in the near future.

Within the framework of approximation to Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 of 3 November 2011 (laying down technical requirements and administrative procedures related to civil aviation aircrew), at this stage the Regulation has been partially implemented. In particular, the requirements for the certification of aero-medical centres and aero-medical examiners, as well as the certification of flight simulation training devices (FSTD) have been implemented in the legislation by an Order of the Director of the Agency.

## 7.2 Cooperation in the Field of Energy

In compliance with the commitments undertaken under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (Title VI, Chapter 2, **Energy Cooperation**, Annex XXV), the following reforms were implemented in 2022 in order to approximate national legislation to EU legislative acts and international legal instruments:

The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia is working on the modification of the **plan for the separation of electricity transmission system operators**.

In addition, work continues on **draft rules to safeguard the security of natural gas supply**, which will be approved by the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia in Q1 of 2023.

In order to obtain the **status of a natural gas transmission system operator**, the preparation for certifying the LLC Georgian Gas Transportation Company is in progress, which will be completed in 2023.

In order to approximate the legislation of Georgia to Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on energy efficiency (amending Directives 2009/125/EC and 2010/30/EU and repealing Directives 2004/8/EC and 2006/32/EC), a technical assistance project is being implemented in order to draw up the corresponding draft subordinate normative acts. The budget of the project is EUR 8 440 000 million. For the provision of the said technical assistance, a tender was held which was won by a company called GOPA-intec International Energy Consultants. On 16 July 2021, an agreement was signed with the company on the provision of consultation services. The preparation of the subordinate normative acts provided for by the legislative framework on energy efficiency has begun. At this stage, **11 subordinate normative acts have been drawn up, 3 subordinate normative acts are ready for uploading and will be approved in the near future, and working drafts of 5 subordinate normative acts have been prepared**.

In order to fulfil the requirements of Directive 94/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 1994 (on the conditions for granting and using authorizations for the prospection, exploration and production of hydrocarbons), **respective legislative amendments to the Law of Georgia on Oil and Gas** have been prepared, which have been submitted to the Parliament of Georgia for review and adoption in an expedited manner.

The Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission (GNERC) has prepared the first draft of **the natural gas wholesale market rules**. The adoption of the natural gas wholesale market rules is envisaged by the 2023 Action Plan.

Software has been developed for trading in certificates of origin. On 23 December 2022, Ordinance No 58 of 23 December 2021 of the GNERC '**on the procedure for issuing certificates of origin of the electricity generated from renewable sources**' was amended. The updated procedure determines rules for keeping a register of certificates of origin of the electricity generated from renewable sources, the content of a certificate of origin of electricity, and the terms and conditions of its issuance, transfer and withdrawal, and regulates other issues related to a certificate of origin.

### 7.3 Environmental Protection

In compliance with the commitments undertaken under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (Title VI, Chapter 3, **Environment**, Annex XXVI, and Chapter 4, **Climate Action**, Annex XXVII), the following measures were taken in 2022, in order to approximate national legislation to EU legislative acts and international legal instruments:

In January-December 2022, 5 subordinate normative acts were drawn up based on the Law of Georgia **on Environmental Liability**, the following 4 of which entered into force on 1 July 2022:

- **On Determining the Composition of the Environmental Programme Commission and Approving its Statute (24.6.2022, No 335);**
- **Technical Regulations on the Procedures for Monetary Compensation for Environmental Damage;**
- **On the Criteria for Determining Remedial Measures and the Procedure for Drawing up a Plan of Remedial Measures by an Operator Responsible for Causing Significant Environmental Damage (4.7.2022, No 347);**
- **On the Procedure for Selecting Compensatory/Adequate Remedial Measures at a Site Adjacent to the Damaged Area or at an Alternative Site (27.6.2022, No 338).**

The final draft of the fifth normative act '**on the procedure for providing financial security for the risks of environmental damage caused by carrying out particularly hazardous activities for the environment**' is currently in the process of agreement with various agencies.

This year, a draft Law **on Biodiversity** has been discussed with the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure. Taking into account the opinions expressed during the discussion, the draft law has been revised. The draft law will be submitted to the Parliament in 2023.

In addition, within the framework of approximation of the legislation of Georgia to EU standards, work is in progress in terms of the preparation of various legislative acts, namely:

In accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 (on the classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures), a draft Law of Georgia **on Chemical Substances and Mixtures** has been prepared.

In order to create a sampling system and to determine analytical methods, draft amendments to Ordinance No 256 of 25 May 2017 of the Government of Georgia '**On Approval of Technical Regulations for Determining Threshold Values of Sulphur Content in Certain Liquid Fuels**' have been prepared. The

finalisation of the draft amendments continues with the engagement of interested bodies, which will be submitted for approval to the Government of Georgia in the near future.

A draft normative act '**on approval of the boundaries of river basins/basin districts**' has been prepared.

A draft normative act '**on the procedure for identifying and determining the boundaries of water bodies**' has also been prepared.

Within the framework of the implementation of Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 (on the assessment and management of flood risks), flood hazard maps were prepared for **5 river basins of Georgia** (Natanebi, Kintrishi, Supsa, Enguri, and Khobistskali) within the framework of the project 'Strengthening the Climate Adaptation Capacities in Georgia', which is implemented by the UNDP in Georgia and financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The flood hazard mapping methodology fully complies with the requirements of the above Directive.

In order to improve **the groundwater water monitoring network**, two new automatic stations were installed and monitoring was carried out at 68 water points. An information bulletin has been prepared on the quantitative and qualitative properties of underground freshwater in Georgia (according to the results of the monitoring carried out in 2021), and at present, the results of the monitoring carried out in 2022 are being processed.

The safety standards for small radioactive waste conditioning plants have been improved and up to 20 disused radioactive sources in the radioactive waste storage facility have been processed.

A working draft of a **long-term (2050) Low-Emission Development Strategy (LT LEDS)** has been prepared. The remarks submitted by state agencies have been reflected in the document. Public discussions were held and the submitted remarks were taken into consideration in the document. The official procedures for the adoption of the document have begun.

In accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1005/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 on substances that deplete the ozone layer, that are envisaged by the Association Agreement, in order to regulate the refrigeration and air conditioning sector, to improve the refrigerant management system, and to mitigate climate change, a package of legislative amendments has been prepared under the Institutional Strengthening Project financed by the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, which covers the issues of increasing the quality of services in the sector and reducing the emission of hazardous substances into the ambient air, in particular, requirements for the collection, recovery, recycling and destruction of refrigerants. Furthermore, a project of accession to the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol **on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer** has been prepared. On 10 August, the planned amendments were discussed with representatives from the private sector and agreed with competent agencies. The package of legislative amendments and the project of accession to the Kigali Amendment have been approved by the Government of Georgia, and submitted to the Parliament of Georgia for approval. In addition, in order to implement in practice the planned legislative amendments and to fully harmonise with the provisions of the respective EU Regulation, draft subordinate acts have been drawn up and an electronic refrigerant management system has been developed within the framework of the same project. The approval of the said drafts, the launch of the system, and the provision of respective trainings are planned in 2023.

The updated final draft **technical regulations for the management of fluorinated greenhouse gases** have been prepared. Consultations were held with the stakeholders. The official procedures for approval of the technical regulations have begun.

#### 7.4 Agriculture and Rural Development

In 2022, support for agricultural development projects continued. Within the framework of the **Preferential Agrocredit Project**, in 11 months, banks disbursed 17 909 loans amounting to GEL 916 219 932. The co-financing provided by the non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entity Agricultural and Rural Development Agency amounted to GEL 152 497 269. A total of 27 711 loans were serviced.

During the reporting period (1.1.2022-30.11.2022), **within the framework of the Agro Insurance Project**, a total of 14 586 policies were issued and 16 465.04 hectares of crops were insured. The cost of the insured crops is GEL 167 339 494. The share of the Agency in the insurance premium is GEL 8 489 629.

Within the framework of the **'Plant the Future'** programme, in 2022: (1) 537 garden projects to be cultivated on an area of 3 857.39 hectares were approved, and the investment amounted to GEL 64 037 317, out of which GEL 31 257 405 was the amount of co-financing on the part of the Agency; (2) Within the framework of the component of co-financing the construction of anti-hail systems under the 'Plant the Future' programme, 2 applications were granted and the investment amounted to GEL 755 600, out of which GEL 75 560 was the amount of co-financing on the part of the Agency, and the area in question 14.20 hectares; (3) Within the framework of the component of co-financing the installation of drip irrigation systems under the 'Plant the Future' programme, 44 applications were granted and the investment amounted to GEL 1 364 948, out of which GEL 643 962 was the amount of co-financing on the part of the Agency, and the area in question 307.74 hectares; (4) Within the framework of the component of co-financing the installation of wells/bore-holes/pumping stations under the 'Plant the Future' programme, 81 applications were granted and the investment amounted to GEL 2 893 179, out of which GEL 1 339 298 was the amount of co-financing on the part of the Agency, and the area in question 644.76 hectares; (5) Within the framework of the component of co-financing nurseries under the 'Plant the Future' programme, 3 applications were granted and the investment amounted to GEL 1 221 901, out of which GEL 406 808 was the amount of co-financing on the part of the Agency.

Within the framework of the **tea plantation rehabilitation state programme 'Georgian Tea'**, in 2022, agreements were signed with 3 beneficiaries, the area of rehabilitation plantations being 31.12 hectares. The total value of the rehabilitation is GEL 107 998, out of which GEL 75 049 is the amount of co-financing on the part of the Agency. 6 cooperatives were equipped with the necessary machinery.

18 280 farms/farmers were registered under the **Farms'/Farmers' Registration Project**.

Within the framework of the **project of co-financing processing and storage enterprises**, 14 projects were approved under the component of processing enterprises with the total cost of GEL 14 715 557, out of which GEL 5 039 489 was the amount of co-financing. 44 projects were approved in the component of storage enterprises with the total cost of GEL 57 042 900, out of which GEL 21 229 672 was the amount of co-financing. The establishment of 20 processing enterprises and 68 storage infrastructures have been fully/partially financed.

**In terms of implementing the technical support programme for existing projects**, 44 beneficiaries have implemented the international food safety standard (HACCP, ISO-22000, BRC, FSSC-2200, FSSC v.5.1., GLOBAL G.A.P), and 19 beneficiaries branded their products/company. Agreements (for agricultural cooperatives) on purchasing the equipment necessary for giving the products their final commodity form was concluded with 5 beneficiaries. 1 beneficiary registered a trademark. The total cost of the activities/projects is GEL 1 879 306.79 and USD 34 455.00, out of which GEL 1 143,849.76 and USD 10 996.50 is the amount of co-financing of the activities/projects on the part of the Agency. The amount of co-financing on the part of the Agency is GEL 850 563.49.

**For the purpose of the infrastructure development of agricultural cooperatives**, 3 cooperatives were equipped with necessary machinery within the framework of the State Programme for Milk Producing Cooperatives.

During the reporting period (1.1.2022-31.12.2022), 69 agreements were concluded within the framework of the **Co-financing Project for Purchasing Agricultural Equipment**. The total investments of the projects amount to GEL 11 228 821, out of which GEL 4 568 994 was the amount of co-financing on the part of the Agency.

In addition, **the following activities were carried out for the purpose of developing and extending scientific and research activities in the area of agriculture**: 141 trainings were conducted; 81 articles were published; 637 recommendations were produced; 41 conferences were held and 6 grant projects were carried out; 15 monographs/books/pamphlets were published. 1169 varieties and species of vegetables and legumes were sown; 186 hectares of experiment and demonstration plots of land were used; 216 collection plants of local fruit varieties were cultivated; the corresponding number of processed samples of agricultural products included in the research is 52. The genetic resources of annual and perennial crops were collected, as follows: 1. 506 specimens of vine (460 of which are local forms and specimens, and 46 of which are wild); 2. 477 varieties and 216 forms of fruit; 3. 28 forest varieties, stored in the genetic bank in the form of seeds; 4. local forest woody plants: living collection of 91 specimens (66 of which are local); 5. 30 varieties and 6 forms of Mulberry; 6. the number of specimens stored in the in vitro bank: 1435 ( including 1320 potato specimens (450 of which are local, 320 of which are introduced, and 550 of which are Cip clones), vine – 20, sweet potato – 30, goji berries – 30, chrysanthemum – 10, stevia – 5, test explants – 20); 7. specimens stored in the plant genetic resources bank: wheat – 59, corn – 75; 8. soil on 20 000 hectares of land was examined; 350 samples of soil of agricultural land were examined in the laboratory; 9. 21 biological preparations were tested; 10. qualified plant nurseries – 27; 11. collection plants of local tea varieties – 10, local varieties and forms – 5 000. Conservation of the Georgian gene pool of agricultural animals: 1. Georgian mountain cow – 19 (including 1 bull), Caucasian chestnut cow – 20; Ajarian cow – 11, Caucasian chestnut cow subjected to examination – 240; 2. Kakhetian pig – 90 (including 9 introduced species), Kakhetian pig subjected to examination – 500; 3. soft woolled and semisoft woolled sheep – 46; 4. Imeretian sheep – 71; 5. Tushetian sheep – 30; 6. Megrelian goat – 122; 7. Megrelian cow – 46; 8. Jersey Buff turkey – 15; 9. collection hen – 240; 10. Mottled duck – 30; 11. pheasant – 10; 12. Paravani carp with biomass – 60 kg., crossbreed of Paravani carp and Rioni carp (Parioni) with biomass – 200 kg., crossbreed of Parioni and mirror carp with biomass – 45 kg; 13. bees – 60 families; 14. Mulberry silkworm – 65 species.

## 7.5 Employment, Social Policy and Equal Opportunities

An important priority is approximation to EU standards in terms of employment, social policy and equal opportunities (Association Agreement, **Title VI, Chapter 14, Annex XXX**).

In 2022, 2 meetings of the working group created within **the Tripartite Social Partnership Commission** were held. A draft ordinance of the Government of Georgia ‘on approval of the list of industries with specific operating conditions’, draft amendments to the Law of Georgia on Labour Migration, and an order on approval of the form of records of working time, were discussed at the meetings. On 22 December 2022, a meeting of the **Tripartite Social Partnership Commission** was held, during which the issues of the possibility of ratification of Labour Inspection Convention No 81 and Additional Protocol to Forced Labour Convention No 29 of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the reform of the national minimum wage, including the issue of paid maternity and child care leave, were discussed.

During the reporting period, mediation in respect of 13 collective labour disputes was being carried out, 6 of which were concluded with conciliation (the parties failed to reach an agreement in 7 cases). Amendments were made to **Ordinance No 301 of the Government of Georgia of 25 November 2013 ‘on approval of the procedures for the consideration and resolution of collective disputes through conciliation procedure’**. Co-mediation has been introduced and the remuneration of labour dispute mediators has been increased.

**Within the framework of the 2022 Employment Support Services Development Programme**, 3 145 job seekers were registered in the system, and 903 employers registered 10 017 vacancies. **Consultants of supported employment** provided support services to 245 persons with disabilities. **In order to support the employment of less competitive groups**, 78 vacancies were found for persons with disabilities. Individual consultations were provided to 3 165 job seekers. Consultations on career planning and professional consultations were provided to 3 640 job seekers. **14 employment forums were held**. 12 645 job seekers were employed within the framework of the 2022 Employment Support Programme.

**Within the framework of the 2022 State Programme for Qualification Raising for Job Seekers**, 32 training organisations were registered for the participation in the Programme. 2 517 job seekers started their training. 24 employers and 283 interns were engaged in the internship component of the State Programme for Professional Training, Retraining and Qualifications Raising of Job Seekers. The process of internship has not yet been completed.

**Progress reports of the Government of Georgia on the compliance with the ILO Conventions (29, 105, 182,138)** have been drawn up and submitted to the ILO. In addition, **a progress report on compliance with certain articles/paragraphs of the European Social Charter has been submitted to the Council of Europe**.

**In terms of occupational safety**, according to the Association Agenda, the table of correspondence has been prepared for 14 EU directives to be adopted in 2019-2022 based on the draft technical regulations. The draft documents are being prepared in accordance with the timeframes determined by the Law of Georgia on Occupational Safety. In addition, under Article 16(2) of the Organic Law of Georgia on Occupational Safety, **the technical regulations on minimum health and safety requirements for the workplace** were approved by **Ordinance No 341 of 1 July 2022 of the Government of Georgia**, in which the requirements of Council Directive 89/654/EEC of 30 November 1989 were fully incorporated. The norms determined by Council Directive 90/270/EEC of 29 May 1990 are also partially incorporated in the said Ordinance. **Ordinance No 457 of the Government of Georgia of 16 September 2022 established**

**technical regulations on the minimum requirements for the provision of safety and/or health signs at work**, in which the requirements of Council Directive 92/58/EEC of 24 June 1992 on the minimum requirements for the provision of safety and/or health signs at work (ninth individual directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) were fully incorporated. In addition, draft technical regulations regarding Council Directive 89/656/EEC of 30 November 1989 on the minimum health and safety requirements for the use by workers of personal protective equipment in the workplace (third individual directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) is in the process of approval.

**The approved structure of the Labour Inspection Service envisages 167 staffing positions**, 109 of which are positions of a labour inspector. Together with them, taking into account the managerial positions engaged in the inspection processes (heads of labour safety and labour rights supervision departments, divisions and units), the total number of staff in 2022 was 123 personnel.

**A Handbook on Forced Labour and Labour Exploitation** was published and provided to labour inspectors. In addition, based on the handbook, **a training module was prepared for labour inspectors in Q1 of 2022**, in accordance with which the professional training of labour inspectors was carried out.

**Within the scope of the reporting procedure provided for by the European Social Charter**, 2 thematic trainings were conducted for labour inspectors for the purpose of preparing national reports. In order to enhance the skills of persons employed in the area of monitoring of labour rights, including labour inspectors, **with the support of the Council of Europe project ‘Strengthening Protection of Social and Economic Rights in Georgia’**, a training course developed within the framework of the Council of Europe ‘Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals’ (HELP) programme has been successfully carried out (with the highest indicator of 96% in the region), which, in addition to the European Convention on Human Rights, covered other instruments as well, such as the European Social Charter and the Council of Europe conventions in key areas of data protection and labour rights. With the support of the project, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the respective EU law, and the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) have been covered by the training course.

In addition, in 2022, short-term and long-term training courses on a total of 16 different topics were carried out for the purpose of training/retraining of the employees of the LEPL Labour Inspection Service.

As for the **results of the inspections** carried out by the **LEPL Labour Inspection Service**, the results for the past 11 months are as follows:

- 745 inspections (primary and follow-up) were carried out in 645 workplaces within the framework of supervision over the implementation of the **Labour Code of Georgia**;
- 199 inspections were carried out in accordance with **Ordinance No 112 of the Government of Georgia on the prevention of forced labour**; a total of 3 256 instructions were issued. During the reporting period, violations were completely remedied in 95 workplaces. The conducted inspections concerned more than 67 554 employees;
- **under the Organic Law of Georgia on Occupational Safety**, 2 293 inspections (initial and follow-up, until the elimination of violations) were carried out at 1 228 facilities.

A total of 10 458 instructions were issued to all the facilities based on violations identified as a result of the inspections. It is notable that 742 facilities have fully taken into consideration the instructions. The inspections affected 101 972 employed persons.

## 7.6 Healthcare

On 15 December 2022, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a **Law of Georgia on Quality and Safety of Human Blood and Its Components**. The EU Twinning project has been completed. In accordance with the recommendations produced within the framework of the project, during the reporting period, work continued on the respective subordinate normative acts.

In addition, work on the **draft laws of Georgia ‘On the Use of Human Tissues and Cells’ and ‘On the Transplantation of Human Organs’** has been completed. The draft laws have been submitted to the Parliament of Georgia for approval.

In May 2022, the **2022-2030 National Healthcare Strategy** and the corresponding Action Plan were approved.

A **Guideline for Surgical Antibiotic Prophylaxis** was drawn up, which was approved by an order of the Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia. Modern principles of antibiotic prophylaxis have been implemented at the surgery departments of three inpatient care facilities.

A **draft 2021-2025 National Strategy for the Elimination of Viral Hepatitis in Georgia** was drawn up.

The monitoring and control of the implementation of infection prevention and control regulating documents, protocols, and guidelines, was carried out at 80 inpatient care facilities. The infection prevention and control measures were improved at hospitals.

**With the support of the UNDP and the Government of Sweden**, under the project ‘Expanded Access to Public Health Care Services, an e-learning platform <https://learn.ncdc.ge/> of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health was created for healthcare personnel, which aims to raise awareness of public health issues in order to increase the effectiveness of preventive measures in conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. A training programme ‘**prevention and control of infections at medical institutions**’ has begun, which is based on the recommendations of reputable international organisations and is accessible from any device connected to the Internet. Healthcare personnel are provided with 24/7 access to training materials, testing and certification, as well as to consultations with field experts according to the topic of the modules. Within the framework of the project, training on infection prevention and control, both face-to-face and in an online format, was conducted for 3 000 healthcare specialists. Trainings in infection prevention and control were conducted for the personnel (epidemiologists, doctors, nurses) of 20 inpatient care facilities.

**On 14 March 2022, Ordinance No 129 of the Government of Georgia** ‘On approval of the maximum levels of emissions (tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide) from filter and non-filter cigarettes intended for sale in Georgia (except for heated tobacco), and the rules for their measurement and regulation, and the volume of electronic cigarettes or nicotine containing materials/cartridges/capsules/refill containers of other similar devices, intended for sale in Georgia, the maximum limits of nicotine content in them, and the health warnings to be placed at tobacco products sale locations and on the unit packets/pouches and outside packaging of tobacco products, and the rules for the placement of such health warnings’ was adopted, which amended Ordinance No 150 of 6 March 2020 of the Government of Georgia. On 16 May 2022, Ordinance No 257 of the Government of Georgia ‘**On approval of technical regulations for the standardisation of tobacco products intended for sale in Georgia and their packaging**’ was adopted. A hotline to quit tobacco and a telephone-based psychological assistance hotline are operating in

Georgia. Work is in progress for the accession to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products; the advocacy for making a decision in compliance with Article 5.3 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is being carried out.

### 7.7 Cooperation in the Field of Innovation

In accordance with the commitments determined by the EU-Georgia Association Agenda (2.8 Mobility and People-to-People Contacts, **Cooperation in Research, Technological Development and Innovation**), in order to support the development and implementation of innovation policy, the following activities were carried out in 2022:

Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA), together with the World Bank, is engaged in the preparation of a **Long-term National Strategy for the Development of Digital Economy and Information Society and its Implementation Plan**.

Within the framework of the project of establishing innovation hubs/centres in the regions, a **Tech Park was opened in Ozurgeti**.

**In order to form a regulatory framework regarding innovations**, together with GITA and the State Procurement Agency of Georgia, work has been completed on a technical assistance project with the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which is assisting in the preparation of a new draft law on Public Procurement. A training programme for top managers in the area of innovative public procurement has been carried out in Norway.

Three memorandums of understanding have been signed (not with EU Member States, although they cover the global integration of start-ups):

- between GITA and QUANTORI, and the representation of QUANTORI in Georgia;
- between the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- between the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, and the European Innovation Academy.

**In terms of financing innovation and technology projects**, in 2022, 40 projects won co-financing grants (GEL 150 000) and 26 projects won small grants (GEL 15 000).

**In order to engage Georgian companies in the EEN instrument**, GITA actively cooperates with the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) and the Association of Chambers of Commerce of Veneto Region (Unioncamere del Veneto). Together with the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP), GITA is working on the project 'Acceleration Program for Georgian Innovative Start-ups'. Under the project, the winning start-ups undergo trainings free of charge, after which they visit Poland where meetings with potential investors and Polish companies are planned. Within the framework of the cooperation, start-ups operating in the ICT field have undergone an acceleration programme. Trainings for Fintech start-ups have been completed. GITA, in partnership with the Association of Chambers of Commerce of Veneto Region, participated in the project 'PLAT4FOOD', which was financed by the 'EU4Business: Connecting Companies', at the initiative of the EU and under the management of EUROCHAMBRES. The purpose of the project is to develop new programmes in the bio/organic food industry, to establish small and medium-sized enterprises on the international markets, and to increase export potential. As a result, a number of Georgian companies are in the process of

negotiations with potential Italian partners. In addition, an application has been submitted for Georgia's membership in the EEN network.

In order to facilitate the **participation of Georgian start-ups in online and physical events** (conferences, seminars) **organised by the EU and other countries**, at the initiative and under the organisation of GITA, and with the financing of the EU, the **Integrated Development Programme of Pilot Regions** is being carried out in four regions of Georgia (small grants for pilot regions – GEL 30 000, innovation enterprise grants for pilot regions – GEL 100 000). 175 applications were submitted from four pilot regions during the first round, and 25 projects were financed; 141 applications were submitted during the second round, and currently the process of identifying the winners is in progress; in January 2022, within the framework of the programme, demonstration days of acceleration courses were held in four regions of Georgia, during which more than 100 participants successfully completed the programme.

The following activities were carried out under the project:

- In cooperation with the Vault Academy, in May and June 2022, a pre-acceleration programme was implemented in Ambrolauri; the course was successfully completed by up to 40 beneficiaries. 10 start-up teams were formed in the Racha-Lechkhumi region, which will participate in the regional grant programme.
- In cooperation with Clevertone, a pre-acceleration programme was implemented at Ozurgeti Innovation Centre in the Guria region, which was successfully completed by more than 30 start-ups; also, 11 start-up teams were formed, which will participate in the regional grant programme and will present their ideas.
- In May and June 2022, in cooperation with Tbilisi School of Communication, a pre-acceleration programme was implemented at Telavi Tech Park in the Kakheti region. Over 6 weeks, up to 40 youngsters completed an intensive acceleration course and 12 start-up teams were formed.
- In cooperation with the Business and Technology University, a pre-acceleration programme was implemented in Kutaisi, the Imereti region, within the framework of which 35 young persons living in the region completed an intensive four-week acceleration course. 12 start-up teams were formed, which will participate in the regional grant programme.
- Under the project 'PLAT4FOOD', on 26-28 January, an event and bilateral meetings with representatives from partner organisations and companies were held at Tbilisi Tech Park.
- On 17-18 March 2022, the EU-Georgia conference 'Georgia's Full Engagement with Horizon Europe' was held. The session 'Missions of the Programme and the European Innovation Council' was held within the framework of the Conference.
- Within the framework of the project 'STEM Study Visit to Italy', on 16 May 2022, an event 'Italian Innovation and Research Day' and an award ceremony of the winners of the project were held at Tbilisi Tech Park.
- A competition 'start. up!, Germany Tour 2022' was organised and held by the German Economic Union with the support of GITA.
- On 23-26 June 2022, under the partnership of GITA with the Hungarian organisation 'MeOut', and with the financing of the International Visegrad Fund, an international hackathon was held, in which up to 70 beneficiaries participated.
- A programme 'Youth Tech Club Network' is being carried out under the coordination of regional Tech Parks and Akhmeta Innovation Centre. The project is being carried out with the financing and support of the 'European Union for Georgia' programme, and under the joint cooperation of Ilia State University, GITA, the ICT cluster, and the Innovative Education Foundation (IEF).
- An event 'Gathering of Ajara Start-up Community' was held in Batumi Tech Park, within the framework of which a tripartite memorandum of cooperation was signed between the UNDP Georgia, Batumi City Hall, and GITA Batumi Tech Park. The project aims to develop a start-up ecosystem in Ajara.

- With the financial support of the Action Against Hunger foundation and the EU, under the project ‘Developing Innovation and Technology (STEAM) Skills in Young People Living in Rural Areas in the Municipality of Akhmeta’, the following trainings were held at Akhmeta Innovation Centre: Littlebits, LEGO Robotics, CorelDraw, mBot simulator and mBlock, Front-end Development. Animation and Programming, Arduino, Social media and Copywriting.
- With the organisation of the International Labour Organization (ILO), a training course ‘Start and Develop Your Business’ was held at Zugdidi Tech Park for start-up entrepreneurs living in the Samegrelo region. The participants presented their ideas to the organisations operating in the relevant industry and to potential partners.
- With the support of GITA, on 12 September 2022, Batumi hosted the Startup World Cup national competition, in which Georgian start-ups participated. The winner was sent to Silicon Valley, at the final stage of the world’s biggest start-up competition.

In terms of **connecting angel and venture investors and/or mentors with Georgian start-ups (organisation of pitching sessions and B2B meetings)**:

- On 2 March 2022, the Axel investment meeting was held with the organisation of the ‘Startup Büro’ and with the support of GITA. During the meeting, pitching sessions were also held with angel investors, as a result of which investments were successfully made in a number of start-ups.
- On 11-15 April 2022, with the support of GITA and the Bank of Georgia, ‘Globalize Silicon Valley Conference’ was held in California, Silicon Valley, in which technology investors and representatives from the business sector participated. The purpose of the Conference was to discuss investments and current trends in the growing technology ecosystem. Pitching sessions and meetings between foreign investors and start-ups were held within the Conference.
- On 11 June 2022, Globalize held the first ‘Globalize EU Conference’ in Paris. The purpose of the Conference was to support investments in Georgian start-ups, to facilitate entry into the European market, and to discuss trends in the growing technological ecosystem in the format of panel discussions.
- On 15-16 July 2022, with the organisation of the ‘Startup Büro’ and with the support of GITA, ‘Tbilisi International Business Angel Summit’ was held, in which up to 300 participants took part.
- On 2 July 2022, with the organisation of the ‘Startup Büro’ and with the support of GITA, ‘Tbilisi Startup Day’ was held, in which up to 640 participants took part. Within the framework of the event, meetings were held between Georgian start-ups and foreign investors.

In 2022, within the framework of the **Training Programme for 3000 IT Specialists**, the first and second phases of the programme were completed; trainings were conducted by ‘New Horizons’, which is one of the largest and well-known international training centres, together with the Tbilisi School of Communication; in 2022, 2 909 students were selected in 39 directions. During the reporting period, within the framework of the programme, the training course was successfully completed by 2 524 participants, who were granted a certificate by the ‘New Horizons’; 921 of them have successfully passed an international examination and received an international certificate. A total of 3 098 participants were trained under the programme, 1 292 of whom were granted an international certificate. GITA has also conducted preparatory training courses in IT for the population of 9 regions of Georgia (Rutavi, Gurjaani, Ambrolauri, Kaspi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Tsalenjikha, Ozurgeti, and Kvareli), with a total of 500 beneficiaries. In addition, in 2022, short-term ICT trainings were also held at the regional Tech Parks, with more than 1 500 beneficiaries in total.

## 7.8 Cooperation in the Field of the Information Society

In the first half of 2022, work was being carried out to identify innovations and discrepancies between the new Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) and the respective legislation of Georgia.

Based on discrepancies identified in the legislation regulating the audiovisual field, the Parliament of Georgia prepared and, on 22 December 2022, adopted a **new Law of Georgia on Broadcasting**, which ensures full approximation to a new Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) (2018/1808/EU).

## 7.9 Tourism

During 2022, the LEPL Georgian National Tourism Administration participated in the following international tourism fairs organised in EU Member States: ITB Berlin (online) – Berlin, Germany (8-10 March), Georgia was represented as a partner country of the exhibition in the area of adventure; FITUR (offline) – Madrid, Spain (19-23 January); Connect 2022 (offline) – Tampere, Finland (23-25 February); IFTM Top Resa (offline) – Paris, France (20-22 September); Traverse Conference (offline) – Brno, Czech Republic (17-18 September); Ptak Warsaw Poland (offline) – Warsaw Poland (24-26 November); Berlin Travel Fest (offline) – Berlin, Germany (25-27 November); IBTM Barcelona (offline) – Barcelona, Spain (from 29 November to 1 December).

In 2022, the following marketing campaigns were carried out in EU Member States: the Georgian National Tourism Administration conducted a promotion campaign on the international platform CNN (from 29 November 2021 to January 2022), which included TV and digital campaigns. The target markets of the campaign in the EU were Germany, France, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Spain.

A Georgian advertising and marketing campaign was launched on the international booking platform 'Expedia' (from 29 November 2021 to January 2022). Marketing activities were carried out in three target markets across the EU, namely: Germany, France, and Spain.

The Georgian National Tourism Administration carried out an advertising campaign in the in-flight magazine of a German airline 'Eurowings' (in July-August 2022). In addition, a marketing campaign was carried out on one of the world's leading media platforms 'Bloomberg' (from 28 September to 15 December 2022). The target markets of the said campaign were the following EU Member States: Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. In November-December 2022, an integrated marketing campaign was carried out in the Baltic states: Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

In order to promote the business tourism potential of the country, in 2022, the Conventions and Exhibition Bureau of the Georgian National Tourism Administration participated (from 27 February to 1 March 2022) in the forum 'MCE Central and Eastern Europe', which was held in Budapest, Hungary. The Forum was attended by countries, convention bureaux, and service providers from Central and Eastern Europe, as well as by representatives from international events client companies and associations from priority markets, such as Scandinavian countries, Benelux, Germany, France, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and others. During the event, Bureau representatives held B2B meetings, during which Georgia was promoted as an attractive destination for business tourism.

In cooperation with airBaltic airline and the Department of Tourism and Resorts of Ajara Autonomous Republic, (on 25-29 April 2022) the Conventions and Exhibition Bureau of the Georgian National Tourism Administration organised a Roadshow in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Within the framework of the event, representatives from the Georgian private sector (up to 20 companies that are members of the Bureau) and leading organisations operating in the local business tourism sector were able to hold

meetings in a B2B format, in order to deepen cooperation between the countries in terms of business tourism.

In addition, the Conventions and Exhibition Bureau of the Georgian National Tourism Administration participated in the following events: On 5 May 2022, during an event organised by 'Partance MICE Expert' in Paris, the Bureau held a meeting with representatives from 15 French associations. On 8-11 May 2022, representatives from the Bureau participated in an event 'M&I Forum Spring 2022' held in Seville, Spain. Within the framework of the event, up to 60 meetings were held with clients operating in the business tourism industry in markets such as Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Poland, Scandinavian and Baltic countries, etc. The Conventions and Exhibition Bureau of the Georgian National Tourism Administration participated in the international business tourism exhibition 'IMEX 2022', held in Frankfurt, Germany. The Bureau was represented together with 7 member companies (hotels and travel companies) at the exhibition. From 31 August to 3 September 2022, in order to promote business tourism in Georgia, to provide necessary information, and to hold meetings with potential partners, the Bureau participated in 'm&i Europe Autumn 2022', which was held in Porto, Portugal. Within the framework of the forum, meetings were held with representatives from leading companies operating in the business field, invited from 45 different countries. On 19 September 2022, the Bureau participated in 'PURE Meetings and Events, 2022', which was held in France (Paris). During the event, meetings were held with representatives from up to 20 leading French companies operating in the field of business tourism, and with potential clients. Together with the Conventions and Exhibition Bureau, 4 member companies of the Bureau also participated in the event. On 6-9 November 2022, representatives from the Conventions and Exhibition Bureau of the Georgian National Tourism Administration attended the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Congress of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), held in Kraków, Poland.

In 2022, the LEPL Georgian National Tourism Administration hosted 29 press and information tours from EU Member States.

### 7.10 Education, Science, Youth

During the reporting period, within the framework of the **EU research and innovation programme 'Horizon Europe'**, in all 119 project proposals were submitted with Georgia's participation, 17 of which were financed, and 1 grant agreement is in the process of preparation. The total contribution of the EU is EUR 2 172 090.

**The Horizon Europe National Office is operating in Georgia.** The structure of the office, based on the pillars of the programme, includes the coordinators of four directions and national contact points, who were selected through a competition. University grant offices were established at 14 universities across the country, that actively cooperate with the national office, in particular with the network of National Contact Points (NCPs). Their main function is to increase the engagement of scholars in the competitions announced by the 'Horizon Europe' programme at the universities.

**On 17-18 March 2022, a conference 'Georgia's Full Engagement with Horizon Europe'** was held in a hybrid format, with the participation of European experts, at the Kutaisi International University, which was attended by over 300 participants (50 participants in person, and 250 participants remotely). The papers presented at the Conference covered the structure and new opportunities of the 'Horizon Europe' programme, the European Innovation Council, the European Research Council, competitions under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, expansion opportunities, and COST Activities.

**On 19-20 April 2022, an interactive training** was organised by the Horizon Europe National Office and the Research Management School **for the coordinators of grant offices of different universities of Georgia**. The funding schemes available under the Horizon Europe Framework Programme were discussed during the training. With the support of the EU Twinning project, within the framework of the training, an international expert Gilbert Ahamer (Environment Agency Austria) conducted a workshop on the development of scientific networks, project financing schemes, and the management of scientific bases.

**In March 2022, Georgia became a full-fledged member of the COST Association (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).**

51 researchers and 9 organisations from Georgia obtained financing under the 'Horizon 2020' Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme. The total amount of EU contribution is EUR 1.38 million. According to the latest data, 1 grant proposal was financed under the 'Horizon 2020' Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme. The grant was awarded to the Economic Policy Research Center.

On 7 July 2022, under the joint organisation of the Horizon Europe National Office and the Research Management School, a conference on Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions was held named 'Preparation of Young Researchers for a New Academic Year within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions'.

On 13 October 2022, **an information day was held regarding widening the Horizon Europe programme**, during which the audience was informed about future competitions and funding opportunities with a view to widening of the Horizon Europe programme.

On 20-21 October 2022, **an informal meeting of the Eastern Partnership working group was held in Georgia on issues of research and innovation**, which was organised by the Ministry of Education and Science.

From February 2022, **the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)** started the implementation of the 'Georgia's Researchers' Mobility Programme' (GRM) funded by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR). An electronic platform for submitting applications has been developed on the website of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD); the grant competition under the 'Georgia's Researchers' Mobility Programme' (GRM) has been announced, the website of the Programme has been created, and information and printed materials have been prepared.

In order to continue future cooperation, on 3 March 2022, Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia and DAAD signed an agreement renewal document, within the framework of which a joint scholarship programme is being implemented. The agreement allows doctoral students and young scholars from Georgia to participate in scientific and research visits to the leading universities of Germany. Under the renewed agreement, the amount of the scholarship for doctoral students has been increased and amounts to EUR 1 200 (instead of 1 000).

On 7 April 2022, based on the updated agreement, **Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia and DAAD announced and administered the 2022 competition for the joint scholarship programme**, within the framework of which 38 project applications were registered. 27 applicants obtained financing for a scientific and research visit to Germany.

In 2022, the admission quota was increased under **the EU programme 'Developing and Bringing Skills into Compliance with Labour Market Requirements'**. Registration has been announced for 17 200 places, 1 500 of which are designated for persons with special educational needs.

During the reporting period, 4 900 persons were enrolled in **vocational training and retraining programmes**. 9 institutions have obtained **the right of recognition of informal education**. In 2022, the informal education recognition service was added in 3 fields, and is now available in the following 11 fields: business and administration; information and communication technologies; personal services; engineering; security services; education; healthcare; architecture and construction; agriculture; production and processing; art.

During the reporting period, 1 500 students were enrolled in **integrated vocational education programmes**, 450 of whom were enrolled as a result of the 2022 admissions.

**In order to develop work-based learning**, the following draft regulatory documents have been prepared and approved by the Government of Georgia: (1) Ordinance of the Government of Georgia ‘On the procedure and conditions for the implementation of vocational education programmes/short-term educational programmes/vocational training programmes/vocational retraining programmes in a form of work-based learning’; (2) The procedure and conditions for obtaining the status of a training enterprise.

In close consultations with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and representatives from the European Commission, **at the beginning of 2022, the International Director of the Eastern Partnership European School** was selected through competition. Together with the Local (National) Director, the International Director will be responsible for the management of the School. Within the framework of the implementation of the second phase of the Eastern Partnership European School project, a concept of the European School project, and the elementary and secondary school curricula of general education, were approved. In 2022, 40 pupils (4 from Ukraine, 5 from Armenia, 5 from Azerbaijan, 12 from Georgia, 8 from Moldova, and 6 from Belarus) graduated from the Eastern Partnership European School. On 1 October 2022, the construction of the European School was commenced in the territory near Lisi Lake, which will be completed in 20 months. An architectural design of the European School complex includes a school building for 400 pupils (grades 7-12), and sports and cultural infrastructure, as well as accommodation for 100 persons and a parking lot.

In 2022, 200 teachers joined the **eTwinning programme**. In total, 2 300 teachers from 1 400 schools are registered on the portal.

**For the purpose of professional development**, teachers participated in the following training modules: ‘Media Literacy for Teachers’ – 383 teachers were trained; ‘Digital Storytelling in eTwinning Projects’ – 276 teachers were trained; ‘Protection of the Rights of the Child during the Educational Process’ – 770 teachers were trained. In 2022, 136 projects were planned under the eTwinning programme, 285 projects were awarded National Quality Labels, and an eTwinning manual was translated into Georgian.

**In 2022, a Guide to Virtual Volunteering was drawn up**. In addition, recommendations have been drawn up regarding the recognition and assessment of informally acquired skills, which entails the piloting of a Youthpass analogue.

A final draft of the report on the current situation in the area of camp services has been drawn up; the improvement of camping infrastructure in Dmanisi and repair works on two camping facilities have been completed, which hosted the 2022 cohorts in Anaklia and Shaori. In 2022, about 1000 youngsters attended camps.

The **2023-2026 State Youth Strategy** has been approved by the Government of Georgia, in which the tasks and activities under the volunteering component have been fully incorporated.

100 young persons from 6 Eastern Partnership countries participated in the **European School Summer Camp**, who were engaged in informal educational activities in Georgia for 15 days.

### 7.11 Cooperation in the Area of Culture and Sport

Deepening cooperation with the EU in the area of culture and sport within the framework of the Association Agreement (Association Agreement, Title VI, Chapters 17 and 19) is an important area. During the reference period, various activities were planned and implemented in order to promote Georgian culture and to participate in EU programmes.

**In order to facilitate the participation of representatives of Georgia in the competitions announced under the EU programme ‘Creative Europe’**, 15 events were held with the organisation/co-organisation of the Creative Europe Desks, including in an online format. Information meetings on the announced competitions, as well as intensive training on the use of the EU portal ‘FTOP’ and on the process of submission of project applications, were held. The Creative Europe Desks has completed the submission of the GAP process and signed a grant agreement for the 2022-2024 activities. The amount of the grant is EUR 162 810. At the initiative of the Creative Europe Desks and with the support of the Ministry, the **Creative Europe Beneficiaries Support** programme has been announced. 2 organizations and 9 film professionals have been financed (the total amount of financing is GEL 123 000) 8 projects (6 culture sub-programmes and 2 MEDIA sub-programmes) were financed in 2022, with a total funding of up to EUR 400 000.

In order to comply with the UNESCO 2005 **Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions**, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia carried out a number of activities: 1. 3 LEPL theatres of ethnic minorities (Alexander Griboedov Russian State Professional Drama Theatre in Tbilisi, Petros Adamian Tbilisi State Armenian Professional Drama Theatre, Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Professional Drama Theatre) operate and regularly deliver performances; 2. The state museums of ethnic minorities (the LEPL Mirza Phatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijan Culture, the LEPL Smirnov Museum, the LEPL David Baazov Museum of History of the Jews of Georgia and Georgian-Jewish Relations) were financed, which hosted approximately 20 exhibitions and carried out approximately 40 educational programmes in 2022. One of the programmes is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Mirza Phatali Akhundov Museum; 3. The following events were held in the Marneuli region, which is densely populated by ethnic minorities:

- a performance ‘An Invisible Man’s Hat’ was delivered by the LEPL Tskhinvali Ivane Machabeli Professional State Drama Theatre;
- a performance ‘The Little Prince’ was delivered by the LLC Chveni Teatri;
- a New Year’s Eve concert by Irao Group;
- on 15 May 2022, Shota Rustaveli Day was celebrated in Marneuli.

4. Tours of the Tbilisi Armenian Theatre in the villages of the Samtskhe-Javakheti region, which are densely populated by Armenians; 5. A project ‘Revived Debris’ was implemented, which envisaged the ‘revival’ of the cultural treasures of Georgia and of ethnic minorities living in Georgia (Assyrians, Kurdish Yezidis, Greeks, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Jews, etc.), such as ornaments, carvings, bas-reliefs, and murals. 100 works were created; 6. Based on the poetry of contemporary Azerbaijani author Leyla Aliyeva, a play ‘The World Dissolves, Like a Dream’ was staged; 7. Within the framework of cultural

cooperation between Georgia and Armenia, a joint concert of the LEPL Tbilisi State Chamber Orchestra and the Armenian State Chamber choir was held; 8. An exhibition of graphic works by Armenian artists from Tbilisi from Alexander Piradov's private collection was held in the IArt Gallery in Tbilisi; 9. A photo-book 'A View from the 80s, Tbilisi 1985-1987 – Iuri Mechitov' was published; 10. A collection of short stories by an Ossetian writer, translator, public figure, Meri Tskhovrebova, was translated and published in the Georgian language; 11. Novels by Guram Odisharia and Abkhazian writer Daur Nachkebia were translated into the Georgian and Abkhazian languages; a novel by Dato Turashvili 'Flight from the USSR' was translated and published in the Abkhazian language. Abkhazian Blind and Deaf-and-Dumb Union 'Hera' recorded with subtitles the audiovisual books of plays by Grigol Robakidze, and Georgian fairy tales; 14. Within the framework of a competition announced by the Ministry named 'Upgrading Instruments in Music Schools', a non-entrepreneurial non-commercial legal entity Ninotsminda Music School purchased a concert grand piano; 15. Within the framework of a competition 'Supporting the Education of Talented Young Artists', the studies of 1 representative of the ethnic minorities was financed at the Royal Conservatoire of Brussels; 16. A project of a creative union of Georgia 'Musical Community of Georgia' named 'XI Competition of Arts Educational Institutions of the Regions of Georgia' was held, with a total of 105 participants, including representatives from ethnic minorities; 17. Ossetian dance master classes were delivered in the hall of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia; 18. Within the framework of a project 'The Motif of Chechen Ornaments in Stained Glass', a training course was carried out in the village of Duisi concerning the restoration of cold painting technology of old Chechen ornaments and ceramic (within the framework of which 8 adults studied glass and ceramic processing technologies over the course of 12 lessons); an exhibition was held after the completion of the project; 19. A project of a natural person Zurab Shevardnadze named 'Ghorjomi Woven Patterns' was implemented, under which a workshop of traditional crafts of the Muslim Adjarians in the Ghorjomi valley of the Adjarian highlands was put to operation, handmade embroideries were made, and 1000 copies of an album-book were prepared and printed.

As a result of a dialogue with the parties and public consultations, **the 2023-2024 Strategy and Action Plan for the Development of Creative Industries have been prepared for approval.** A diagnostic part of the Strategy has been prepared, which includes economic data analysis, and qualitative and quantitative research. Currently, an inter-agency team is being formed, the content of the strategy is being prepared with the engagement of an international expert, and it is planned to hold workshops.

**The preparation of a package of legislative amendments on cultural heritage and its protection** continued during the reporting period. In 2022, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia started the preparation of a Culture Code. Issues of cultural heritage and its protection will be covered by the Culture Code.

In order to fight against the manipulation of sports competitions, the second stage of the **project 'InegriSport Next'** was implemented during the reporting period, under which a 2-day awareness-raising session was carried out on 29-30 June with more than 40 participants.

## 7.12 Regional Development

Regional development is an important component in the formation of the sustainable development policy of Georgia, and therefore approximation to EU standards (Association Agreement, Title VI, Chapter 21) will facilitate the raising and further development of the quality of life of the population of Georgia using the resource potential of the country and its regions.

Within the framework of a complex process of preparation of the pilot strategic document (for Imereti region) of **Smart Specialisation/S3 in Georgia**, in accordance with the S3 framework methodology, works for an in-depth qualitative research project for mapping the economic and innovation potential of the Imereti region have been completed, based on which the 4 most promising domains have been identified for the Imereti region.

Respective works have been carried out in relation to the Enterprise Discovery Process (EDP); the opening conference of the process was held in the Imereti region, followed by 15 extended working sessions with the participation of representatives from the region's business and academic community, and governmental and non-governmental organisations. The final report is now being finalised, which will serve as the basis for the preparation of a draft strategic document in 2023.

**For the purpose of approximation of Georgia to the EU Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)**, an accessibility evaluation document has been prepared for 11 additional databases of the Eurostat NUTS; in addition, a final version of the (interim) harmonisation plan has been prepared and agreed upon, including an indicative financial plan for data harmonisation, which has been uploaded on the website of the Ministry.

A consolidated 2018-2021 monitoring report on the implementation of the **2018-2021 Regional Development Programme of Georgia (RDP)** has been prepared and uploaded on the website of the Ministry.

Within the framework of the implementation of an integrated regional development programme (PIRDP 2020-2022) for 4 pilot regions (Kakheti, Imereti, Guria and Racha-Lechkhumi, and Kvemo Svaneti), a 2021 report on the implementation of **the 2020-2022 integrated development programme (PIRDP)** for pilot regions has been prepared and uploaded on the website of the Ministry.

As regards the construction of a regional landfill, the tender procedures for selecting a construction company are being carried out. The construction works are planned to start in 2023.

## **8. Financial Aid, Anti-fraud and Control Provisions**

As planned, all three EU assistance programmes envisaged by the 2021 EU Assistance Action Plan have been signed during the reporting period. 1. EU4 smart economic development; 2. EU Green Connectivity; 3. Support to the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and Migration Management. The financial agreements were signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Ilia Darchiashvili, and the Director of the Neighbourhood East and Institution Building of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission, Lawrence Meredith.

In June, under the guidance of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), an online information meeting was held, during which anti-fraud measures and their results in the partner countries of the EU Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) programme were discussed.

The Financial Monitoring Service has prepared a draft Law of Georgia **on Making Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Facilitating the Prevention of Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism**, which was approved by the Parliament of Georgia **on 11 May 2022**. The MONEYVAL recommendations were taken into consideration in a new version of the Law, according to which the Financial Monitoring Service is authorised to submit the results of the analysis to the Investigation Service of the Ministry of

Finance, and in turn, the Investigation Service of the Ministry of Finance is authorised to request from the Financial Monitoring Service the submission of confidential information. According to the draft Law, the grounds for requesting confidential information have also been increased, namely, it is no longer limited by certain articles of the Criminal Code of Georgia.

Within the framework of cooperation between **the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia and the EU Asset Recovery Office (EU ARO)**, 11 requests have been fulfilled and a further 1 request is in the process of being fulfilled by the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia. Furthermore, 2 requests of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia have been fulfilled and a further 4 requests are in the process of being fulfilled.

**The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia** has fulfilled 2 requests from **the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)**.

## 9. Institutional Cooperation

Meetings of various formats under the EU-Georgia institutional cooperation were held during the reporting period, within the framework of which important issues of cooperation and future plans were discussed.

On 6 September 2022, **the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU-Georgia Association Council** was held in Brussels, during which a joint press release was adopted.

On 24-25 March, **the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU-Georgia Association Committee** was held in Tbilisi.

On 22 June, **the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU-Georgia Human Rights Dialogue** was held in Brussels, within the framework of which important human rights issues were discussed.

On 1 December 2022, **the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU-Georgia Association Sub-committee on Justice, Freedom and Security** was held in Brussels.

On 10 February, in Strasbourg, and on 21 September, in Tbilisi, **2 meetings of the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee** were held.

During the reporting period, in order to exchange information with the EU on progress in terms of fulfilling obligations undertaken under the Association Agreement and the Association Agenda, and to plan the steps for the following one year, with the coordination and engagement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, meetings of **three thematic groups of the EU-Georgia Association sub-committee on economic and sectoral cooperation** were held, with the participation of the relevant bodies and agencies of Georgia, the European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), and the EU Delegation to Georgia. Namely, the following meetings were held:

- On 25 March, the seventh meeting of the thematic group of the EU-Georgia Association sub-committee on economic and sectoral cooperation '**Employment, Social Policy and Equal Opportunities; Public Healthcare**' was held in a video conference format.
- On 9 June, the seventh meeting of the 5<sup>th</sup> thematic group of the EU-Georgia Association sub-committee on economic and sectoral cooperation '**Agriculture and rural development; Fisheries and maritime governance; Regional development, Cross-border and regional level cooperation**' was held in Brussels.
- In July, the seventh meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> thematic group of the EU-Georgia Association sub-committee on economic and sectoral cooperation '**Industrial and enterprise policy and mining activities; Tourism; Corporate law and corporate governance; Consumer Policy; Tax Policy**' was held in Brussels.

- On 7 October, the seventh meeting of the 4<sup>th</sup> thematic group of the EU-Georgia Association sub-committee on economic and sectoral cooperation ‘**Information society; Audiovisual and media fields; Science and technologies; Education, training and youth; Culture, sports, and physical activity**’ was held in Brussels.
- On 12 December, the sixth meeting of the 1<sup>st</sup> thematic group of the EU-Georgia Association sub-committee on economic and sectoral cooperation ‘**Economic dialogue, public finance management and financial control; Statistics; Financial services; Accounting and audit; Anti-fraud and control provisions**’ was held in Brussels.

## 10. Strategic Communication

In 2022, with the organisation and participation of the **LEPL Information Center on NATO and EU**, 652 various information and educational events were held across the country regarding the EU. Up to 26 000 people participated in the events.

59 events were held within the framework of an annual event ‘**European Days**’, in which 2 681 people participated.

Furthermore, a joint project ‘**European Vacation**’ was implemented in cooperation with the government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, in which more than 300 internally displaced youngsters from Abkhazia took part.

During the reporting period, 4 cycles of a two-day cultural and educational tour were held for about 130 youngsters and teachers from the Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, and Kakheti regions, which are densely populated by ethnic minorities.

With the organization of the Information Center on NATO and the EU and with the support of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, 3 seminars ‘**Importance and Perspectives of the process of Georgia’s European and Euro-Atlantic Integration**’ were held with the participation of up to 70 students living in the occupied territory of Abkhazia.

With the organisation of the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNA Georgia), in cooperation with the Information Center on NATO and the EU, and the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, and with the financial support of USAID, the implementation of the next stage of the project ‘**Young European Ambassadors**’ has started, under which a 3-day trainers’ school was held for 35 young people.

**Within the framework of an intensive digital campaign**, from January to December 2022, 57 informative posts were created and published on EU-related topics, which include about 130 social media products (infographics, video clips, banners, quizzes, blogs), and which accumulated a total of 2 466 003 views. In addition, 250 social media products were translated and published in the Armenian and Azerbaijani languages, which accumulated more than 800 000 views. 130 media products were prepared about Georgia’s EU integration, and the benefits thereof, in regions populated by ethnic minorities, which were disseminated through local TV channels.

In February 2022, a meeting of the inter-agency working group on the ‘**2021-2025 Communication Strategy of the Government of Georgia for Georgia’s EU and NATO Membership**’ was held for the purpose of preparing the 2022 Action Plan. Based on the information provided by the authorities, the 2022 Action Plan of the Strategy has been prepared. The adaptation of the documents has begun in relation

to the submission of the application for Georgia's EU membership and in accordance with the official approval by the EU of Georgia's European Perspective. With the assistance of the project '**Support for the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement -II**', a roadmap for working on the communication strategy has been prepared for state agencies. Based on the recommendations of the roadmap, employees of the strategy working group were selected from government agencies, who are responsible for communication. An interim report of the 2022 action plan was prepared together with a new working group. The draft amendments to the strategy have been submitted to the agencies. The text and logical framework of the strategy have been amended according to the comments agreed with the agencies. The legal process of making amendments to the communication strategy will start in the near future. Work on the development of the strategy monitoring software continues. In this regard, 7 meetings were held with representatives from the Digital Governance Agency, during which the program module was discussed. The 2022 Action Plan for the 2021-2025 Communication Strategy of the Government of Georgia for Georgia's EU and NATO Membership has been implemented.

### **11. Cooperation with Civil Society**

**Civil society participates in the process of monitoring the implementation of the Association Agreement and the Association Agenda.** In addition, civil society had the opportunity to become familiarised with the draft 2021 National Action Plan for Georgia's EU Integration.

During the reporting period, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia participated in a number of panel meetings on EU integration issues, organised by the non-governmental sector.