



Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

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Minister David Songulashvili Meets with the Hungarian Minister of Agriculture During the Official Visit to Budapest



During his official visit to Hungary, Georgia's Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. David Songulashvili, met with Hungary's Minister of Agriculture, Mr István Nagy, in Budapest.

Minister Songulashvili expressed his gratitude for Hungary's steadfast support of Georgia's European integration efforts and discussed ways to enhance collaboration in the agriculture and environmental protection fields.

Mr Songulashvili highlighted the importance of the strategic partnership with Hungary, providing updates on Georgia's ongoing and planned agricultural and environmental programs while also outlining the country's favorable investment environment.

He emphasized that Georgia has made significant strides under the EU Association Agreement, advancing reforms in agriculture, environmental protection, and climate change.

Strengthening trade relations with Hungary was also a key topic, including prioritizing the need to maximize the potential of the EU market access for Georgian products.

The discussions focused on successful cooperation in sustainable forest management; the parties also explored ways to expand future collaboration in the forestry sector.

"Our countries have vast potential for cooperation - from agricultural innovation and trade to environmental sustainability. Our shared interests lay the foundation for numerous opportunities; by deepening our

partnership and leveraging our unique strengths, we can achieve remarkable results for the benefit of our countries and our people.

Minister Songulashvili further highlighted the importance of enhancing academic cooperation by expanding student exchange programs in agriculture and environmental studies between Georgia and Hungary.

Minister István Nagy expressed his appreciation for the visit, noting that Georgia has great agricultural potential and deepening existing relations and cooperation will bring tangible and mutually beneficial results shortly.

"I am pleased to meet my Georgian counterpart. Our discussions covered Georgia's EU integration, forestry and irrigation issues, including trade opportunities and the assistance Hungary can provide on Georgia's path toward EU membership. We discussed partnership issues with Georgia in the field of trade and economic cooperation in the region," said Mr Istvan Nagy.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. David Songulashvili invited Minister Nagy to Georgia.

The First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mrs Nino Tandilashvili, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to Hungary, Mrs Tamar Liluashvili, Deputy Minister Mr Lasha Dolidze, and Director of the Rural Development Agency, Mr Giorgi Darchia, attended the meeting.

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David Songulashvili Discusses Strengthening Environmental Cooperation- Related Issues with Hungarian Counterpart



During his official visit to Hungary, Georgian Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. David Songulashvili, met with the Hungarian Minister of Energy, Mr. Csaba Lantos, to discuss current and future cooperation between the two countries, with a special focus on deepening collaboration in environmental protection.

According to Mr. Songulashvili, Georgia and Hungary have a unique relationship, and Hungary is a reliable and steadfast partner of Georgia on the path of European integration.

Environmental Protection is one of the top priorities of the Georgian Government. We have increased budget allocations and strengthened institutional capacity, which has led to tangible results in aligning with international environmental standards and enhancing our legal framework.

Georgia is fulfilling its commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the EU integration process. Significant achievements have already been made in expanding and enhancing early warning systems,” Mr. Songulashvili said.

The Minister emphasized the importance of sharing Hungary’s experience in the water resources management systems, including adopting the circular economy principles, while also noting that this support is crucial for the practical application of European regulations.

The Parliament of Georgia adopted the Law on Water Resources Management in 2023. The Law is based on the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management and meets the requirements of the EU water legislation.

We strive to establish a robust water management system that ensures effective and sustainable use of water resources. Hungary’s experience will be valuable to us in the practical application of the EU Water Framework Directive and related policies,” Mr. Songulashvili stated.

The Hungarian side expressed its readiness to deepen cooperation with Georgia across several areas, including institutional development, the introduction of modern technologies, the implementation of water resource management policies, investment attraction, and the advancement of production capabilities.

The First Deputy Minister, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, the Deputy Minister, Mr. Lasha Dolidze, Georgia’s Ambassador to Hungary, Mrs. Tamar Liluashvili, and the Director of the Rural Development Agency, Mr. Giorgi Darchia, accompanied the Minister at the meeting.

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Minister David Songulashvili Meets with Slovak Ambassador Matúš Bušovský



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. David Songulashvili, hosted Mr. Matúš Bušovský, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Slovakia to Georgia.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the prospects for enhancing bilateral trade and economic cooperation while outlining future collaboration in key sectors.

Minister Songulashvili emphasized the strategic priority of the state for advancing the environmental and agricultural sectors. He briefed the Ambassador on current state programs and measures taken in the mentioned areas. While highlighting the significance of Georgia’s free trade agreements with various countries, the Minister noted that these agreements create favourable conditions for Slovakia to invest in Georgia’s agricultural sector.

The discussion also covered potential cooperation in water resources management, efficient waste management, irrigation systems, and recycling.

Minister Songulashvili expressed his gratitude to the Slovak side for its continued support through various projects in the environmental and agricultural domains.

Ambassador Bušovský, in turn, reaffirmed the strong potential for successful bilateral cooperation, expressing confidence that joint efforts would lead to tangible outcomes shortly.

The senior officials from the relevant departments of the Ministry attended the meeting.

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One of the most popular wine shows in the United States, “V is for Vino” is preparing an in-depth feature story on Georgian win



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. David Songulashvili, met with “V is for Vino” film crew members during their visit to Georgia. The media team is producing a comprehensive segment- a feature story on Georgian wine, which will be distributed across all “V is for Vino” platforms-including its official website, social media channels, cable TV via ReachTV, and digital displays in over 90 airports across the United States (<https://visforvino.com/>).

“Over the last few years, Georgian wine exports to the U.S. have shown steady growth. Moreover, targeted marketing campaigns for the U.S. market are essential to boost awareness and demand for Georgian wine. I am pleased that “V is for Vino” collaborated with the National Wine Agency, capturing the essence of Georgian wine culture throughout the country. Through this initiative, millions of Americans will gain insight into our centuries-old winemaking traditions through all its platforms,” the Minister noted.

The production crew visited wine cellars across Georgia, capturing authentic experiences and stories from winemakers in diverse regions. Ac-

cording to both sides, the filming process was productive and inspiring. The upcoming feature is expected to reach hundreds of thousands of viewers, significantly enhancing the visibility of Georgian wine in the competitive U.S. market.

The project was part of a broader U.S. marketing strategy led by the National Wine Agency and supported by its American partner, Colangelo & Partners. The V is for Vino team spent a week in Georgia filming for the segment, which will debut later this year.

The United States is considered a strategic export destination for Georgian wine. Since 2013, the National Wine Agency has carried out sustained promotional efforts in the U.S., partnering with prominent media outlets such as CBS, CNN, The New York Times, and Wine Enthusiast. These campaigns have played a key role in driving awareness and sales. In 2024, Georgian wine exports to the U.S. reached a record-breaking 1.2 million litres-a 32% increase compared to 2023-marking a significant milestone in the country's wine export history.

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Georgia has demonstrated outstanding results in the regional locust control program involving ten countries across the Caucasus and Central Asia



The Deputy Minister Mr. Kakha Kakabadze met with FAO officials to discuss the achievements and future direction of the program “Improving National And Regional Locaust Management in Caucasus and Central Asia”, while also appreciating FAO's financial and technical support, expressing willingness for further cooperation towards locust control and highlighting the program's role in strengthening regional collaboration and modernizing pest control strategies.

“The program enabled a joint assessment of locust spread in border regions, significantly reducing the risk of pest outbreaks and establishing a regional network of experts. We are particularly grateful to FAO for providing high-altitude equipment to the National Food Agency and for introducing environmentally safe, modern locust control methods, including reduced chemical use and the application of high-tech biological agents that are safe for ecosystems, especially near protected areas and water bodies,” Mr. Kakha Kakabadze stated.

AO representatives praised Georgia's active participation in the regional program, stating that the country had emerged as a regional leader and a model for best practices and demonstrating the best results.

“Georgia was one of the most active participants in the program and played a key role in initiating several regional efforts. Among the ten participating countries, Georgia showed the most impressive results and became an example for other countries. As we move forward, we aim to build on these

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achievements by focusing on three core areas regarding combating locusts: enhancing regional cooperation, improving monitoring and early warning systems, and adopting and using advanced technologies, including biological pesticides,” said Ms. Marion Shiris, Locust Program Officer from the FAO’s Plant Protection and Crop Protection Department. The program “Improving National And Regional Locust Management

in the Caucasus and Central Asia” has been implemented in Georgia since 2011 to prevent the mass spread of locusts in the region and minimize the damage caused by invasive pests to crops. Mr. Zurab Chekurashvili, Head of Georgia’s National Food Agency, and senior officials from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture attended the meeting.

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Minister David Songulashvili hosts the Director of the Asian Development Bank



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. David Songulashvili, held a follow-up meeting with Mrs. Lesley Bearman Lahm, the Country Director of the Georgia Resident Mission at the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

During the meeting, the parties focused on the organizational and technical issues of the rehabilitation of the Kvemo Samgori Left Main Canal, a key initiative under the “Climate-Smart Irrigation Sector Development Program.” “Close collaboration with the Asian Development Bank is crucial for the successful implementation of the current project. We will have intensive communication and ensure that work progresses efficiently in the relevant groups and adhere to deadlines. Ultimately, we will hear regular reports on the achieved results,” said Mr. David Songulashvili.

Mrs. Leslie Bearman Lahm stated that the Asian Development Bank is ready to support the project.

The First Deputy Minister, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, the Deputy Minister, Mr. Lasha Dolidze, the Heads of the relevant Departments of the Ministry, the project Director, and other representatives of the project attended the meeting.

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David Songulashvili: “The Regional Service Agencies play a crucial role for local farmers, enabling them to efficiently and promptly access the state programs and services”



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr David Songulashvili visited the Samegrelo region, where he met with the employees of various agencies operating within the Ministry’s system.

The meeting brought together representatives from the National Food Agency, the State Agricultural Laboratory, “Georgian Amelioration,” and the regional departments of the Rural Development Agency. The Minister highlighted the essential role of these services and expressed gratitude to the employees for their dedication and contributions.

“The regional service agencies are crucial for local farmers, enabling them to access state programs and services promptly and effectively. In



recent years, we have made significant strides in strengthening regional services, but challenges remain. Engaging directly with farmers in municipalities is vital-your active involvement ensures that we can respond swiftly and appropriately to issues in both agriculture and environmental protection,” stated Mr David Songulashvili.

The Deputies of the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr Kakha Kakabadze and Mr Lasha Dolidze, the Minister of Agriculture of Adjara, Mr Zaza Shavadze, as well as State Representatives from the Samegrelo, Guria, and Imereti regions, alongside mayors and Ministry department heads, attended the meeting.

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David Songulashvili: “The demand for Georgian laurel has increased in the global market; both the primary production and storage-processing sectors are supported through state programs”



Minister Songulashvili, along with the State Representative of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region, Mr. David Verava, and the Director of the Rural Development Agency, Mr. Giorgi Darchia, visited the village of Nosiri in Senaki Municipality. During the visit, the state officials toured the laurel processing plant of the company “Laurus” and met with local laurel farmers.

In his remarks, the Minister focused on the recent surge in demand for Georgian laurel, noting that both primary production and storage-processing sectors are supported through state programs, which will continue in the future.

Notably, the “Plant the Future” program has financed the planting of laurel gardens across Georgia, covering an area of up to 2,000 hectares. Among these, the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region stands out as the leader, with the cultivation of laurel gardens spanning up to 1,200 hectares.



Currently, the company holds a loan of GEL 800,000. In total, the company employs 130 local workers on a seasonal basis. In previous years, the company produced around 200 tonnes of dried laurel per season. Due to growing interest in Georgian laurel from the Chinese market, production has increased to 300 tonnes this season.

Over GEL 9.4 million in preferential agro-credits have been issued for bay leaf processing nationwide, with more than GEL 6.1 million allocated for the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region. The Rural Development Agency subsidizes the interest rate on these loans.

Amid the increasing production and demand in global markets, the export of bay leaves is increasing. In 2024, the export value amounted to USD 34.4 million, marking an impressive 94% increase compared to 2023. It should be mentioned that the primary export market of Georgian laurel is China.

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Nino Tandilashvili: “Georgia faithfully fulfils all international obligations stemming from its participation in international climate change conventions and agreements”



At the joint session of the Parliamentary Committees on Environmental Protection, Natural Resources, and European Integration, First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs Nino

Tandilashvili, presented a comprehensive report on Georgia’s progress in fulfilling its international obligations related to climate change, emphasizing implemented measures and plans for the future.

Mrs. Tandilashvili stated that Georgia remains committed to addressing the global challenge of climate change by faithfully implementing its national climate change policy and international commitments. These efforts aim not only to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also to foster climate-resilient economic development.

“Georgia faithfully fulfils all international obligations stemming from its participation in international climate change conventions and agreements. The most important are the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, which outline specific climate change-related commitments for member states. Looking ahead, Georgia will need to pursue increasingly ambitious projects to meet its targets. Achieving a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas

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emissions by 2035 is a significant challenge, but the country is on the right path. With detailed calculations, targeted initiatives, and strategic government programs already in place for different sectors, we are confident that Georgia's efforts are aligned with our international obligations. These efforts also enable us to increase our ambition and work toward

halving national emissions by 2035.

We should mention that Georgia actively participates in international climate change initiatives and is a signatory to both the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Following these commitments, Georgia has developed its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. To achieve these goals, Georgia has adopted a cornerstone document - the 2030 Climate Change Strategy - which outlines specific policy directions and actions for emission reduction. We are also beginning work on a vital strategic document - the National Adaptation Plan, aiming to establish a comprehensive vision and concrete steps for adapting to the impacts of climate change," said Mrs Nino Tandilashvili.

Georgia's progress is consistently recognized in international reports prepared annually, such as the Fifth National Communication, Transparency Reports, and Inventory Reports, all of which are submitted to international climate bodies. These reports reflect positively on the country's climate efforts in both policy formulation and implementation.

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David Songulashvili visited a hazelnut processing plant in Zugdidi Municipality



Mr. David Songulashvili, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, visited the village of Ingiri in the Zugdidi municipality, where he toured the hazelnut processing plant of "Jima Nuts" along with Mr. Davit Verava, the State Representative of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, and Mr. Giorgi Darchia, the Director of the Rural Development Agency.

During the visit, the state officials observed the ongoing operations at the processing plant and met with local hazelnut farmers to discuss the challenges in the sector.

Minister Songulashvili emphasized that hazelnut production remains a key source of income for the population of Western Georgia. According to Mr. Songulashvili, the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug remains a top challenge for the crop, noting that this year, the Ministry continues to take proactive measures to combat the pest; however, the activities of local farmers remain a crucial factor.

"Jima Nuts" hazelnut processing enterprise was launched in 2020 as part

of the Rural Development Agency's "Preferential Agro credit" project. The company invested over GEL 2 million to create the processing enterprise, which currently employs 35 people and can process 1,500 tonnes of unshelled hazelnuts.

With the support of the Rural Development Agency's technical assistance program, the plant has adopted the international food safety standard BRC. Since 2022, the company has been exporting its products, primarily to Asian and African markets.

As part of the "Preferential Agro credit" initiative, more than GEL 80 million in loans have been distributed across Georgia for hazelnut storage and processing, with the Rural Development Agency co-financing over GEL 24 million. In the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, loans totaling GEL 54.6 million have been issued, with co-financing from the Agency exceeding GEL 16.7 million.

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture has been implementing programs tailored to the needs of farmers for years. This support will continue actively in the future.



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Solomon Pavliashvili participates in the Samarkand International Climate Forum



Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia participated in the high-level Samarkand International Climate Forum in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

During the event, Deputy Minister Pavliashvili emphasized Georgia's ongoing efforts and achievements in the climate change policy.

"Georgia is committed to collaborating at both regional and global levels

to advance climate sustainability and implement the principles of the circular economy. Platforms like the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation Program provide a vital framework for joint action. Only through coordinated efforts we can tackle climate challenges, meet our ambitious mitigation goals, and ensure a sustainable future for future generations," stated Mr. Pavliashvili.

The forum aimed to enhance climate change adaptation and mobilize financial and technological resources while addressing regional and global challenges related to climate policy.

The parties emphasized the importance of strengthening regional cooperation in environmental protection and climate change areas.

The Government of Uzbekistan has organized the Samarkand International Climate Forum with the participation of leaders and Presidents of Asian countries, including the Presidents of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, heads of UN organizations, Environmental Ministers from various countries, financial sector representatives, and members of civil society.

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Nino Tandilashvili: "The Proposed Amendments to the Environmental Assessment Code Aim to Address Identified Shortcomings"



Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, the First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, recently met with representatives from the Georgian Business Association and the broader business community to introduce a proposed package of Amendments to the Environmental Assessment Code.

Notably, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, jointly with the Parliament of Georgia, developed the package of Amendments.

"We submitted the proposed Amendments to the Environmental Assessment Code at the Georgian Business Association to eliminate the shortcomings identified in practice. The mentioned Amendments focus primarily on enhancing the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process, streamlining administrative procedures, reducing deadlines, and increasing transparency.

I am pleased to report that the business community has positively evaluated the Draft Amendments prepared by the Ministry. Importantly, these changes align with Georgia's international commitments and relevant

EU directives," stated Mrs. Tandilashvili.

Mr. Shavleg Mishveladze, Chief Business Development Officer at Gulf Georgia, emphasized that the proposed Amendments would significantly simplify administrative procedures for businesses, which would be a substantial step forward.

Mr. Levan Vepkhvadze, Executive Director of the Georgian Business Association, also welcomed the planned changes, calling them timely, crucial, and necessary while noting that the implementation of these amendments would stimulate the launch and growth of new projects, providing a significant boost to business development.

"Many companies represented at the meeting expressed satisfaction with simplifying of procedures. We aim to effectively implement projects, foster economic growth, and uphold environmental standards. These planned changes will reduce bureaucratic hurdles, which have been much needed, and will create a more favorable environment for the initiation and growth of new ventures," said Mr. Vepkhvadze.

The proposed Amendments to the Environmental Assessment Code include new procedures for modifications in the operational conditions of activities alongside clear definitions of the information, content, and required documentation within EIA reports.

The changes aim to clarify the list of spatial documents subject to strategic environmental assessments (SEA), refine the activities listed in the annexes, and establish appropriate thresholds.

Mr. Soso Pkhakadze, President of the Georgian Business Association Mrs. Nino Kvetenadze, Deputy Business Ombudsman Mr. Vasil Gedevanishvili, Head of the National Environmental Agency and the Members of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee of the Parliament of Georgia attended the meeting.

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