

**Remarks by Mr. Teimuraz Janjalia, Deputy Director of the European  
Integration Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia,  
At the University of Latvia “EU Relations with Third Countries – Focus on  
Canada and Eastern Partnership Countries”**

*Esteemed Audience,*

*Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my utmost pleasure to speak at one of the leading universities famous for its highest academic level of research and education. I would like to express sincere gratitude to organizers of this important event and for giving me an opportunity to present my views at this forum.

According to our topic for discussion today, I will briefly introduce Georgian perspective on Eastern Partnership, as well as provide some details about Georgia-EU cooperation topics.

Since absolute majority of the Georgian society is Euro optimist we have never made secret to anyone that the ultimate strategic foreign policy goal of Georgia is full membership of the EU.

Georgia belongs to Europe in cultural, historical and political sense and fully shares common European values and principles; therefore, its drive towards the EU is guided by its wish to restore its place in the common European family.

We are certainly not knocking on the EU's door yet. We are fully aware of the problems the EU is currently facing and understand that the pace of further enlargements will be slower; neither Georgia is yet ready to comply fully with the relevant requirements. Thus, we are taking a step-by-step approach, by making extensive use of all possible cooperation instruments.

EU integration process is about sharing values and successfully implementing respective reforms.

- Georgia has achieved significant progress in democratic and economic reforms. Many countries in the region are interested in sharing Georgia's experience. Another proof of the success is the respective international ratings.
- Doing Business 2012 report places Georgia 16<sup>th</sup> in terms of Ease of Doing Business.
- Apart from it, Georgia is amongst the leaders in other ratings, namely, Starting a Business Ranking – 7<sup>th</sup> position, Construction Permits – 4<sup>th</sup> position, Registering Property – 1<sup>st</sup> position.
- According to the World Bank report „Investing Across Borders 2010“ (IAB) Georgia is one of the most open countries to foreign equity

ownership among 87 countries as measured by the Investing Across Sectors indicators.

- According to the “Transparency International”, Georgia is the top country in the post-soviet region (except the Baltic States) in terms of fighting corruption.
- Georgia has the strong legal framework for protection of foreign investors.

The GoG is committed to continue path of successful reforms. We are fully aware of the solid commitments and hard tasks that the above-mentioned aspirations imply and are ready and willing to undertake those.

- It should be underlined that the EU-GE relations have considerably strengthened since 2008, when heads of states of the EU MS expressed their readiness to enhance EU’s relations with Georgia at the **Extraordinary European Council of September 1, 2008**. This stance was boosted by launching the *Eastern Partnership* in April 2008, when the EU made apparent its readiness to take the relationship with the Eastern European Partners to a new level and “accelerate political association and further economic integration.”

- It should be stressed that since 2008 the EU-Georgia relations have significantly enhanced according to the concrete prospects opened by the EaP. Namely,
- Negotiations on the **Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements** between the EU and Georgia started in April, 2009 and entered into force on March 1, 2011.
- Based on the good progress made by Georgia in implementing the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements and the decision of the EU-Georgia Cooperation Council of December 1, 2011 we expect to launch the visa dialogue by summer 2012.
- We hope that the Visa Liberalization Action Plan will be timely elaborated and the intensive and smooth cooperation for effective implementation be ensured, which would lead Georgia to the visa-free regime with the EU in due course.
- The official negotiations on the **AA** with Georgia were launched on July 15, 2010. So far we have agreed almost 75 % of the text. Though, of course there are some outstanding issues remaining, which we hope to agree as soon as possible (*those mainly concern the assessment by the EU of existing situation in Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region as occupation, and recognizing Georgia's European Perspective.*)

- On December 5, 2011 the EU decided to launch negotiations on DCFTA that will foster Georgia's closer economic integration with the EU. The first round of DCFTA negotiations are scheduled by the end of March in Tbilisi. Based on the considerable work done by Georgia in the preparatory process for the DC FTA, we hope that the process of negotiations will proceed smoothly, in order to finalize Association Agreement in 1.5-2 years, incorporating the DC FTA.
- The Agreement on **Mutual Protection of Geographical Indications of Agricultural Products and Other Foodstuff (GIs)** was signed on July 14, 2011. We welcome the European Parliament's legislative resolution of January 19, 2012 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement. **Agreement on Common Aviation Area** was signed on December 2, 2010.
- We are inclined to continue active participation in both, bilateral and multilateral platforms of the Eastern Partnership.
- Georgia is engaged as much as possible in the process of elaborating the Roadmap for the future implementation of the Eastern Partnership. We welcome the contribution of the EEAS and Commission in this process, as well as the Proposals by Germany, Czech Republic, Poland and Sweden regarding the EaP Roadmap. It should be noted, though, that based on the principles of joint ownership and joint responsibility, the deeper

engagement of the Partner countries in the process should be ensured. The extended V4 Ministerial held on March 5 in Prague adopted a joint declaration of the Visegrad Group and Baltic States, which among other issues expressed support to European perspective of the EaP partner countries.

- The Roadmap will list the objectives, instruments and actions and guide and monitor their implementation until the next EaP Summit in the second half of 2013. All these will certainly contribute to the effective implementation of the EaP, but from the Georgian perspective, the Roadmap should not be limited by the pre-defined aims, but rather also concentrate on the future goals of cooperation which would form the basis for the next EaP Summit.
- In such a way, first and foremost, the Roadmap could foster the development of the cooperation between the EU and its Eastern European partner countries by the second half of 2013 to the point, when it could create the possibility to determine the European perspective of the willing partner countries, based on their progress and aspirations, (that could not be achieved at the Warsaw EaP Summit).
- Already at this stage, Georgia is committed to promoting European principles and shared values upon which Article 49 of the TEU is based, taking significant commitments to deeper approximation with the EU

standards, regulations and legislation. Thus, the EU should not shy away from offering individual European Partners the clear prospect of gradual integration into the EU. The European perspective, as a guiding force, should be there.

In conclusion, I would like to once again stress the importance the EaP carries not only for the Eastern European partner countries but for the EU itself. It is an EU inspired joint project that should lead to a greater involvement of the EU in this part of the neighborhood and also to show the EaP countries the pathway to the ever closer integration with the Union. We very much rely on steadfast and adequate support of the EU and its Member States in making the EaP into a successful and productive initiative.