



Statement of GYLA on Old Batumi Boulevard

GYLA releases the present statement in relation to recent developments around Old Batumi Boulevard. It has been officially reported that Batumi Boulevard Administration started working on the concept of development of the boulevard. The latter is a monument of cultural heritage, while under Georgian law any modification or interference with a monument of cultural heritage should serve the best interests of the monument itself and should not violate its artistic, esthetic, historic and cultural values, or change its authentic elements and deteriorate its perception.

The authorities have not yet provided adequate and valid documents about the necessity of development of Old Batumi Boulevard, and whether planned changes are in the best interests of the monument. In addition, neither the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection nor the National Agency for Protection of Cultural Heritage has publicly taken a position about the issue. In the meantime, a contracting company to

prepare the development concept has already been selected in a forcible and unreasonable manner, through a simplified public procurement.

GYLA would like to stress the following about development of Old Batumi Boulevard:

- Over the last ten years, many monuments of cultural heritage (including in Batumi) were destroyed in Georgia in the name of investments and economic development. The foregoing questions that remain unanswered lead us to believe that Old Batumi Boulevard will share the same fate;
- We believe that the concept of future development of the boulevard should aim to protect the boulevard as a monument of cultural heritage, while central, autonomous and local authorities should to everything in their powers to preserve cultural and historic value and authenticity of the monument;
- Selection of contracting company in a forcible and unreasonable manner, through simplified public procurement suggests that relevant administrative bodies failed to ensure high-level transparency of the process from the very beginning. We regret that the use of uncompetitive form of public procurement significantly reduced participation of companies with international experience and reputation in procurement process;

GYLA will continue monitoring of developments around Old Batumi Boulevard and keeping public informed.