

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



Statement of Georgian Civil Society Representatives

The Government of Georgia has declared the country's integration with European Union (EU) as one of its major foreign policy goals that would bring Georgia political and economic stability, development and welfare. We, the undersigned, fully subscribe to this approach and to the extent possible contribute to Georgia's approximation to EU standards.

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Unfortunately, representatives of the Georgian Government at times make statements that discredit European integration process among the citizens. For example, several days ago, one of the Government representatives stated that the price hike on meat that has been observed recently on the Georgian market is a consequence of European integration process.

During the past several years, the Government of Georgia has been trying to initiate official negotiations on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). This issue was brought to an agenda by the Georgian government. The DCFTA foresees both the abolition of trade barriers and approximation of economic activity standards to those of the EU. If implemented properly, this should facilitate export of Georgian production to the European Union and contribute to increased foreign direct investments. More importantly, by introducing the European standards, the rights of Georgian citizens will be better protected and the standard of living in the country will be improved.

Georgia is not doing this alone. The EU provides multimillion Euro assistance to Georgia to support the approximation process. However, the European Union is refraining from concluding the trade agreement until Georgia moves closer to the European standards in a number of fields, including food safety. While opening of modern slaughter-houses is linked with harmonizing Georgia's practices with those of the EU, it does not have to translate into dramatic price hike. Indeed, the EU standards require that the slaughter-houses follow strict sanitary norms, in order to ensure the safety of meat produce that enters the Georgia market. However, EU standards also foresee creation of an enabling environment for competition, so that large companies do not misuse their monopolistic positions on the market, harming the interests of the Georgian citizens. Thus, the dramatic price increase on meat products come not from following the EU trade standards, but from not ensuring free and fair competition on the Georgian market. Consequently, the Government of Georgia must take effective measures to address the latter issue.

From our side, we are ready to support the Government in real approximation to European standards.

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Civil Society Organizations:

Eurasia Partnership Foundation

Association European Studies for Innovative Development in Georgia

Union 21st Century

National Center for Monitoring and Scientific Research of Ecologically Clean and Genetically Modified Food Production

Liberal Academy Tbilisi

Association of Food Product Experts

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association

Georgian Center for Strategic and International Studies

Open Society Georgia Foundation

Caucasian Institute for Economic and Social Studies

Georgian Trade Union Confederation

Association Green Alternative

European Integration Forum

Individuals:

Lasha Tugushi, Editor in Chief, Newspaper Resonance

Kakhaver Koniashvili, Executive Director, Association Dairy Georgia

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