

Alex Petriashvili, State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration speaks about Georgia-EU relations after EaP Vilnius Summit

It is an honor for me to address you after the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit. Initialing of the Association Agreement including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the EU at the Summit, was an important step-forward towards Europeanization of Georgia.

Joining the European family of nations is the choice of Georgian people. After last year's historic parliamentary elections, all major political actors have reached consensus on foreign policy priorities, including strong impetus to accelerate EU integration. Georgia's recent presidential election has even stronger stressed the population's choice for Europe.

Together with the EU we devoted significant efforts to negotiate the Agreement and reached the most difficult – "Post Vilnius implementation stage" which requires mobilization of institutional capacities and intensification of the reform process. At the same time, we believe that solid political and financial support from the EU would have a crucial importance for effective implementation of EU- integration agenda.

The Government of Georgia is committed to ensure sustainability, irreversibility and continuity of the reforms in order to advance the political association and deep economic integration with the EU as well as to enhance cooperation with the Partner Countries.

We are confident that the Association Agreement will bring the political and economic relations between the EU and Georgia to the qualitatively new stage and will make the Europeanization of the Country irreversible. In addition we believe that the DCFTA will open the EU's internal market, promote export and increase investment attractiveness of the country. Association Agreement together with the DCFTA could be seen as a modernization plan for the Country that will allow us to achieve the level of development we have never reached before.

I am pleased with the first positive assessments of the implementation of the Visa Liberalization Action plan by Georgia. Visa Liberalization is one of the most important deliverables from the EU side as the real integration is impossible without close people-to-people contacts and cultural exchange.

Today, the EU is one of the strongest supporters of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and European Union Monitoring Mission remains the only monitoring mechanism in the vicinity of Russian-occupied Abkhazia and South Ossetia. At the same time we very much rely on EU's more active involvement in regional security and stability. We believe that the EU and the Eastern European partners share similar interests in building up a common space of stability and peace, as far as our security is interlinked.

At the same time, vigorous promotion of the Moscow-led Eurasian Union indicates a new reality in the EaP region and we have to face this changing environment. The EaP can only be successful and bring feasible results if it thoroughly implements basic principles of differentiation, a tailor-made approach that would facilitate individual partners to meet their expectations and allow the EU to effectively apply the "more-for-more" principle.

We are step-closer to achieving the final goal, which requires consolidated efforts aimed at making Europe more secure and prosperous. We believe that Georgia's advancement on its way to European and Euro-Atlantic Integration through further economic modernization and democratic development will greatly contribute to the reunification of the country and bring long-awaited prosperity and stability.
