



The European Union
for Georgia
EU4Business



Project “Georgia on European Way: Effective Model for DCFTA and SME Strategy Implementation” Discussion Featuring Findings & Recommendations for Further Action

Fostering Partnerships for a Successful DCFTA Implementation

June 26, 2019

Venue: Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the European Union,
Rue Belliard 41-43, 1040 Brussels

Since signing the Association Agreement (AA) with the EU in 2014, and subsequent initiation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), Georgia has come several steps closer to integration into the European market. Yet, the DCFTA represents both an opportunity and a challenge for Georgia’s small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In addition to providing a boost to exports and foreign direct investment, it could catalyse institutional and regulatory reforms, helping align Georgia’s domestic standards with those of the EU single market. On the other hand, the DCFTA requires changes both in the ways Georgian producers operate and in the ways their activities are regulated. Until now, it has not been clear to what extent Georgian SMEs are willing and capable of adapting to these new, more stringent requirements.

This discussion will summarize results of the two-year project “**Georgia on the European Way: Creation of Effective Model for DCFTA and SME Strategy Implementation**” (launched in April 2017), funded by the European Neighbourhood Instrument of the European Union and co-funded by Lithuanian Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme, the Slovak Official Development Assistance – SlovakAid and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The project addressed the lack of awareness about opportunities provided by the DCFTA Agreement between Georgia and the EU. It sought to increase the role of Georgian civil society organizations in a nation-wide DCFTA/SME communication campaign and their capacities to assist local small and medium entrepreneurs in their preparations to access the EU single market. Moreover, in a form of DCFTA Advisory Councils it strengthened cooperation between the civil society organizations, SMEs and public officials on the local and central levels in order to solve challenges faced by regional producers.

In addition to Georgian speakers, among which partnered civil society organizations, representatives of public administration and SMEs, the event will also feature Moldovan and Ukrainian experts and civil society representatives. They will assess and compare results of DCFTA implementation in their own countries with the ones of Georgia, including the state of partnership between the state, public and private actors.



Agenda

13.30 – 14.00 Registration

14.00 – 14.15 **Opening and Welcome remarks by**

HE Jovita Neliupšienė, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania to the European Union

HE Natalie Sabanadze, Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium and Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and Head of Georgian Mission to the European Union

Dovilė Šukytė, Policy Analyst, Eastern Europe Studies Centre, Lithuania

14.15-15.30 **Civil society engagement in economic development and DCFTA implementation: good practices and lessons learned**

The session will look into current *status quo* of Georgian civil society organizations' capacities to work on economy related issues and to assist both Georgian government and small and medium enterprises with the DCFTA implementation. Georgian approaches will be compared with those applied by the civil society in Moldova and Ukraine.

Speakers:

Tamta Tsotskhalashvili, Project Evaluator & Former Head of the European Integration Coordination Division, Office of the State Minister of Georgia for European Integration

Ján Cingel, Research Fellow & Head of the European Neighborhood Programme, GLOBSEC Policy Institute, GLOBSEC, Slovakia

Rusudan Kalichava, Executive Director, Association ATINATI, Zugdidi region, Georgia

Shota Buchukuri, Director, Mountain Development Center, Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, Georgia

Zoriana Mishchuk, Team Leader & Key Expert, Civic Synergy Project, Ukraine

Ina Coseru, Chair, National Environmental Center, Moldova & Working Group 3

“Environment, Climate Change and Energy Security” Coordinator, Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Moderator: **Vera Rihackova Pachta**, Advocacy Manager, Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

15.30-15.45 Coffee break



15.45-17.00 Challenges and perspectives for DCFTA implementation: focus on SMEs

The session will focus on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Georgia by looking into how they have been benefiting or are preparing to benefit from the DCFTA, including their motivation to enter the EU single market. Moldovan and Ukrainian experts will share where their respective countries stand when it comes to using DCFTA provided opportunities, what are the main challenges faced by local SMEs and how to overcome.

Speakers:

Natia Daghelishvili, Project Officer, Georgian Institute of Politics & Associate Professor of Grigol Robakidze University, Georgia

Irma Kitriashvili, Ltd NEBIERA, Dairy production, Georgia

Iason Sherozia, Administration of the State Representative-Governor, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region, Georgia

Iulian Rusu, Policy Moderator, Institute for European Policies and Reforms, Republic of Moldova

Maksym Koriavets, President, Polissya Foundation for International and Regional Studies, Ukraine

Moderator: **Dovilė Šukytė**, Policy Analyst, Eastern Europe Studies Centre, Lithuania

17.00 – 17.10 Closing of the event



Consortium partners:



Leading partner:

Eastern Europe Studies Center (EESC, Lithuania)

Partners:



GLOBSEC Policy Institute (GPI, Slovakia)



Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP)



Association of Business Consulting Organizations (ABC, Georgia)



ATINATI (Georgia)



Young Scientists Union "Intellect" (Georgia)



Association Caucasus Genetics (Georgia)

