

The Way to Europe – Experience and Prospects

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Georgia is the plenipotentiary member of the European family.

How do we realize this conception and where are we? Are we far or near from the goal?

From ancient times human beings have been searching for ways to live in unity, in global peace and felicity, to gain their noble aims, which will make our planet more cooperative, instead of wars and clashes. This was impossible for many centuries.

But some human desires may come true. The pattern of such desire can be the unity of states, called the European Union.

Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of the UK was the first to speak on the very aim of uniting Europe in Zurich on the 19th of September, 1946.

The EU proved that cooperation between the member states is possible in special status, when a state gives up its privilege to negotiate tightly with other countries to solve problems. It is hard to determine whether it is positive example of globalization or not, but one thing is clear, that the states only benefit from such co-operation. We aren't inclined to represent the picture of flawless co-operation.

The EU is gradually growing in its size. Its attitude towards deepening integrity can be revealed in its assistance and co-operation with Georgia.

Georgia being the member of the Council of Europe has made its choice.

The integration with Euro- Atlantic bodies is the one of the main priorities of its foreign policy, which can promote it's attempt towards independence and sovereignty, develop it's economy, enforce it's jurisdiction throughout the country, settle the conflicts in a peaceful way, and become the integral part of a new European community.

It must be noted that the integration with the European Union is consistent, as this organization is one of the most significant entities, and being its member can be beneficial for developing countries like countries were willing to support such countries in their infancy and showed their will to co-operate with the above –mentioned states on the basis of equal rights.

Georgia in its hard fought battle for independence, has found the reliable partner, providing assistance in every field.

The basis of co-operation between Georgia and EU is “The agreement on partnership and co-operation” signed in April 22, 1996 in Luxemburg.

The main objectives of the agreement are as follows:

Elaboration of the appropriate structure for political dialogue between the parties, providing for the development of political relations.

Assistance to Georgia in strengthening democracy, improving economic conditions and encouraging market economy.

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Encouraging trade and investment and economic relations, thus facilitating economic development.

Laying the basis for the co-operation in legal, economic, financial, social, civil, scientific, cultural and technological fields.

The agreement signed on a 10 –year term was enforced in July 1, 1999.

One essential point in co-operation between Georgia and the EU is Caspian oil, having become a significant factor in world politics and it's safety, arousing overall interest. This very interest implies Russia's strategic interest in post-soviet republics, Turkish political and economic ambitions in Middle East countries, and Iran's interest in the region and the west, besides these China's, Pakistan's, and India's ambitions as well.

The prospects of Caspian energy resources had been shaped by 1998.

The west acknowledged Georgia's significant role on the "geopolitical arena" of the Caspian energy resources.

After the Rose Revolution on June 14, 2004 Georgia, Armenia and Azeri republics were recognized as the members of "the European Neighboring Policy". Romano Prodi, the President of Euro Commission, paying a visit to Georgia in September, 2004, declared "It's an important step towards Euro COUNCIL REGION". The co-operation between Euro Union and Georgia has reached a new stage.

Georgia has set it's priorities for the action plan of EU neighboring police, comprising many important aspects.

Ensuring the supremacy of law, implying the implementation of reforms in penitentiary and law-enforcement.

Ensuring stability and safety, providing peaceful settlement of existing conflicts in Georgia, preventing border violation and development of frontier co-operation.

Human rights protection, comprising struggle against trafficking and organized crime.

Co-operation in different fields (migration, commodity transportation, service delivery and capital transaction).

Trade development and attracting investments.

Rehabilitation of infrastructure.

Energy system development, focusing on Georgia's involvement intrans-regional energy systems in order to supply Caspian energy resources to EU markets.

Elaborating national strategy in the field of transport.

Georgia's integration in European educational and research network.

Co-operation in Georgia on the basis of social partnership aiming at professional education and lifelong learning, etc.

The Georgian state has accumulated considerable experience towards Euro-Atlantic integration, but judging by everything, it isn't sufficient. We have to study from our partners, mostly from those we have close partnership within the organization of

Black Sea economic co-operation. These states became the members of the organization or failed to enter at different periods with different preparedness.

We must make conclusions based on the example of our partnership. People never take into consideration that historic events and governments can't be exclusive either. In most case authorities believe their innocence and faultlessness and are wrong to think that past misdeeds won't reoccur. Fortunately, history has it's own logic. We should be above, all the prejudice and consider historic experience and make right decisions.

Establishing democracy and human rights protection is the main priority to be observed by all members of the EU. Human rights protection implies not only general concepts, but also monitoring all the ongoing processes in the country.

The main goal of the Post- Soviet republics is to overcome pseudo-democratic approach. Generations were indoctrinated with the illusions of ideal future equality and common well-being. People having suffered from repression were satisfied with the outward democratic changes. Even today, most people can't realize that nonexistence of unemployment is disastrous for economy and progress. Struggle against unemployment must be a domain for every progressive authority, through real work places and not through the extension of production.

Thus, we want to prove that unreal slogan policy trapped society in the world of illusions. More than two decades have passed since the collapse of the Soviet Empire, but still many people prefer to live in falsehood. We would be mistaken to think that ideological problems are overcome and that everyone is aware of reality. Moreover, even new generations live with illusions. These problems make some obstacles in order to reach the goal, that serves to destroy their believe in "Communist Paradise". The final aim could be achieved through real tangible activities and formation of civil society, implying sense of responsibility of each citizen.

In order to achieve this aim it is necessary to implement consistent policy, comprising real social, economic and cultural – ethnic problems. People should notice the positive impact of the economic reforms. It's said that the Georgian economy should be transformed, but it has nothing to do with the transformation. The main problem is reinventing economy. Energy crises have been solved, and other problems are to be settled. The most important step towards the main goal is that pensions have been doubled, but this is not sufficient, as it should approach the real indicator. Serious educational problems have been overcome. Knowledge has become the only criterion in getting higher education. The educational system should be adequate to European standards. Education received in Georgia mustn't be less prestigious than of one received abroad. It should be noted that legal reforms have been carried out, and a new attitude has been shaped toward justice. The supremacy of law should reign.

Use should make our partners believe, that we will be not only the "consumers" of integral European security system, but we'll make a valuable contribution to it. Our integration into the EU is the main objective of our country. This process is not an easy one and we've realized this complexity in the example of own neighboring country Turkey. This is the continual and consistent activity. Our endeavors designed to reach this goal should be translated into the issue of own national dignity.

The implementation of the treaty on partnership and co-operation with Europe is one of the ways to EU. Added to the above mentioned, we should be able to removal our life, in order to enable all our citizens to get the guarantee of their lives and activities; to acquire the opportunity to integrate and participate in the European cultural and educational processes. Each citizen should enjoy real freedom, the benefit of democratic values, and perceive the charm of being integrated into European economic space .We should reach the European standards of living and enjoy this benefit.

All the above-mentioned is within the reach but it requires the appropriate international environment. We can't have any security guarantees, if we don't settle differences with our neighbors, especially with Russia. We should make our neighbors aware of the fact that our desire to integrate into Europe is no threat to our neighbors. When Peter the Great paved the way to Europe, this move was directed at cooperation between east and west. Today's Russia is trying to cooperate with the west, so why should we say no to this cooperation. The age of satellite countries has gone. The choice of our country is to have close relations with other countries. But it doesn't mean that we should reject our neighbors, especially a great one like Russia. Friendship and cooperation is a mutual phenomenon. We hope for active cooperation and partnership with EU and our neighboring countries.

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