

# FactCheck



## Irakli Gharibashvili:

Prime Minister of Georgia



“After we came to power, the education budget was increased by 50%. The salaries of teachers have also increased.”

Natalia VAKHTANGASHVILI  
FactCheck

On 14 September 2015, the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, congratulated teachers and pupils upon the start of the new academic year and underlined that before the Georgian Dream's coming to power, the education budget was GEL 640 million whilst it reached GEL 900 million in 2015. The Prime Minister stated: “The budget of the Ministry of Education and Science has increased by more than 50%. Additionally, teacher salaries have also increased.” Mr Gharibashvili added that there are plans to increase salaries in the next year as well which would be an additional incentive for teachers.

FactCheck took interest in the Prime Minister's statement and verified its accuracy.

In order to compare the budgets of the Ministry of

Education and Science and their growth rate, FactCheck studied the data of the Ministry of Education and Science in the period of 2006-2015.

As illustrated by the table, the Ministry of Education and Science's budget has been rising annually. The lowest growth rate, at 4.5%, was registered in 2011 whilst the highest growth rate, at 17%, was registered in 2009. The Ministry's 2015 budget is 31% larger as compared to 2012. According to the 2016 state budget, GEL 984.7 million will be allocated for the Ministry's budget. This number exceeds that of its 2012 budget by 53.6%. Since 2013, the Ministry of Education and Science has initiated the free school textbooks programme for which the state budget allocated GEL 16,323,630 in 2013 and GEL 13,216,000 in 2014. As of today, GEL 5,134,432 has already been spent on the programme.

At the end of 2013, teacher salaries increased by 26-59% according to the categories of teachers. There were

no changes in teacher salaries throughout 2014 which caused teacher dissatisfaction. As a result, the Minister of Education and Science, Tamar Sanikidze, stated that teachers would get increased pay starting from September 2015. The explanatory note of the 2015 budget indicated that for the new academic year, base salaries for all teachers would increase by GEL 50 and salaries for different categories of teachers would increase by GEL 100-200.

This year, Minister Sanikidze clarified that the new salary plan was launched on 14 September 2015. The plan envisages a 34% increase of the base teacher salary for the second time and, in total, for the 2015-2016 academic year. Salary bonuses will be GEL 100, GEL 200 or GEL 300 based upon the category of the teacher.

According to the decree of the Minister of Education and Science issued on 28 September 2015, base teacher salaries increased by 16.4% (GEL 50) and reached GEL 355.

Table 1: Budget of the Ministry of Education and Science (GEL million) and its Growth Rate

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Budget	332.6	379.5	425.2	497.6	542.1	566.5	641.2	682.5	739.7	840.8
Growth Rate	-	14.1%	12%	17%	8.9%	4.5%	13.1%	6.4%	8.3%	14.7%

Source: State Budget of Georgia

## CONCLUSION

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE'S 2015 BUDGET IS GEL 840.8 MILLION WHICH IS 31% MORE THAN ITS 2012 BUDGET AND WILL EXCEED THE NUMBER IN 2012 BY 55.6% ACCORDING TO THE 2016 BUDGET PROJECTION. OF NOTE, TOO, IS THE FACT THAT THE MINISTRY'S BUDGET HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY ON THE RISE AND 2015 WAS NO EXCEPTION IN THIS REGARD. THE BUDGET HAS BEEN GRADUALLY INCREASED FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS AND, THEREFORE, OBVIOUSLY EXCEEDS THE ONE FROM THREE YEARS AGO. IN REGARD TO SALARIES, FROM 14 SEPTEMBER 2015, ACCORDING TO THE NEW SALARY PLAN, PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS WILL SEE AN INCREASE IN THEIR SALARIES IN TWO PHASES AND BY 34% IN AN OVERALL TOTAL. THE FIRST PHASE WILL SEE AN INCREASE OF BASE SALARIES BY 16% (GEL 50). BONUSES FOR CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF TEACHERS HAVE INCREASED AS WELL. FACTCHECK CONCLUDES THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT IS TRUE.

TRUE



EUROPEAN  
ENDOWMENT OF DEMOCRACY



The German Marshall Fund  
of the United States



Kingdom of the Netherlands

STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

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## Number of Businesses Registered by Russian Citizens in Georgia on the Rise

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pany moves to the second stage of its development,” Mamuka Mgaloblishvili, Director of Nut and Agriculture Company, told The FINANCIAL.

Instar Projects Logistic Georgia offers a complete package of logistics, transportation and freight forwarding services worldwide. These include: air transportation; rail transportation; sea transportation; road transportation; project cargo (OOG) transportation; chartering services; and customs formalities. The owners of the company are Instar Logistics Ltd and Georgian Global Forwarding Ltd. Both companies are transport companies and have experience in freight forwarding and a wide of range transportation and lo-

gistics services, especially in oversized and project shipments.

“Instar is an international company network with professionals and experts in project cargo transportation in Europe and Russia. With the support of our engineering department in Germany we have a very good chance to get projects in the Georgian energy sector,” said Revaz Uchaneishvili, Director of Business Development at Instar Projects Logistic Georgia.

Paritet Georgia was founded by Timur Esmurziev. The company is importing natural juice 'ABC' from Belarus. “We are distributing products to all around the country. At first we imported three containers. At the end of November we will import the second consignment of goods,” said Gia Papishvili.

It is the first time that Es-

murziev has tried his hand at business in Georgia. “The import of juice has been quite successful, so we will soon start importing ketchup, mayonnaise and all of the products which ABC produces,” Uchaneishvili said.

Frescura, which means cleanness in Spanish, was registered in February 2015. The company is importing self-care products from the Spanish Laiseven and MPL companies.

The company is distributing products in Tbilisi, Samtredia, Kutaisi and Batumi. Frescura has invested over EUR 25-30,000. “We plan to expand our import share in Georgia. However, it requires more investments, so currently it is difficult to talk about our future plans,” Nodar Sidamonidze, one of the founders at Frescura, told The FINANCIAL.

## The First Ever Annual Official Ceremony in the Tourism & Hospitality Industry of Georgia – Welcome to Georgia! National Tourism Awards

WELCOME TO GEORGIA! NATIONAL TOURISM AWARDS is a chance to celebrate highest-achieving tourism businesses and brands that work towards creating a positive image of Georgia worldwide. This opportunity will bring together local and national authorities, hotels, restaurants, tour operators, travel agencies and more.

The winners will be named during the First Official Ceremony of the WELCOME TO GEORGIA! NATIONAL TOURISM AWARDS which will be held on November 20th, 2015 at the Funicular Restaurant Complex Tbilisi-twenty of the best companies in the tourism industry of the country, in 20 different nominations.

More than 300 guests will be invited to the event, representatives of the hotels, tour-companies, wine cellars and

others, which will be finalists of the Award as well as owners and chief executives of Partners' companies, business and specialized journalists, life style magazines and TV.

We are honoured to present the Official Supporters of the WELCOME TO GEORGIA! NATIONAL TOURISM AWARDS – MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF GEORGIA; TBILISI CITY HALL; BATUMI CITY HALL; GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND RESORTS OF AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC OF AJARA, MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND MONUMENT PROTECTION OF GEORGIA. An Independent Auditor of the Award - BDO Georgia Company. Sponsored by: Mercedes-Benz Georgia, Julius Meinel, HydroDizayn, Yan Air, Inglost, Sam Raan, TV Lux, HRS, Weekend Max Mara, Elements Group.

General Media partner of the Event is The FINANCIAL newspaper.

We strongly believe that with common efforts we will create a unique platform for real competition of Georgian Tourism industry players with an astonishing awarding Ceremony. Do believe this occasion will obtain genuine interest and become the event that will lead to new phase for development – tourism growth and hospitality industry advancement as a whole.

We are happy and pleased to announce that GNTA is a co-organizer of the WELCOME TO GEORGIA! NATIONAL TOURISM AWARDS. It is very important occasion indeed, accordingly our cooperation will be productive for the development of Georgian Tourism industry in whole.

Welcome to Georgia! National Tourism Award steam wishes success to all key players of Georgian hospitality and tourism industry!

## FOR SALE

9,8 ha non-agricultural, privately owned parcel for industrial use (cadaster code # 01.19.26.004.088) located next to Tbilisi Airport

Address: Airport settlement, Samgori district, Tbilisi  
Tel: +995 599 529 529  
info@cei.ge

# In Search of Light in the Hearts of Delinquent Juveniles

Continued from p. 2

normally do in their everyday prison routine. The whole classroom transforms into a happy place filled with positive energy. One can hear a lot of noise and laughter. Once it so happened that a security guard stepped in to double check if everything was all right.

**LL: What is the social structure of the group? Are they supportive and caring of each other? Are they cooperative as a group?**

**TL:** I remember them playing a game which involved jumping over chairs across the classroom. When I conducted this very game in public school classrooms, they quickly became a mess. The class became uncontrollable: students were throwing chairs around and hurting themselves. Initially, I hesitated to play this game in Avchala but then decided to take the risk. To my surprise, they helped each other in case somebody stumbled and was at risk of falling. No chair was turned upside down. They completed the game in a very organized and cheerful manner. I also played with them and they have been extremely careful not to hurt me and their friends.

**LL: What themes or circumstances do you see most often with all of your students? Are there any social or economic constants with Georgia's at-risk youth?**

Major risk factors pushing young kids towards crime are poverty and family violence. These are children coming from the lowest strata of the population. One child told me he was living in a garage, his family had no food, and he was subject to severe parental violence during every day family fights. Two kids passed national examination and wanted to acquire a university education. Yet, as one of them told me, his mother had no interest in hearing about his success. It is very rare that a kid from an average middle class family would end up in a rehabilitation facility.

**LL: And then what about their future? What do they aspire to once they get out of prison?**

**TL:** These are incredibly talented kids. Perhaps because they had experienced so much hardship at an early stage in their lives, they are forced to devise coping strategies that

would help them navigate through the complex social environment. They are very good in logical reasoning. As a part of the course, we worked on logical exercises and they were able to solve significantly more complex problems than public school kids of the same age.

They like painting and are typically very creative. For instance, I remember how they picked dandelion as a symbol of peace. When asked why, they explained that it is associated with breath and life, and when its seeds are blown off, they spread in all directions as peace ought to. A really brilliant idea!

There is enormous cognitive and artistic potential in these kids. It just needs to be channeled in the right directions.

**LL: If you compare these children in the beginning and now, what changes do you observe in their behavior?**

**TL:** First of all they are becoming more social. Initially they are shy or reluctant to speak, but later they very actively participate in discussions. I also see them beginning to reflect on their inner self and increasingly appreciate the importance of social values. Another great achievement of the course is in raising their appreciation for discipline and patience.

**LL: Based on your interactions with the kids and the stories you hear from them, do you think we as a society can do more to prevent juvenile crime or at least make sure juvenile prisoners are successfully reintegrated in the society?**

**TL:** It is heartbreaking to see all these beautiful young boys locked up in a cell, especially at an age when one mostly craves for and appreciates freedom and having fun. As I told you before, many of them come from extremely disadvantaged social backgrounds. But what is most tragic is that having completed their term, many return to prison. Oftentimes, prison is the only place where they feel safe and at home.

I am sure we can do better as a society. A key social reintegration issue is employment. The government and the private sector must make a coordinated effort to offer juvenile offenders a real chance of getting a job when they get out of prison. This may be not sufficient, but in the absence of employment they are very likely to

commit another crime and go back to prison. It is incredibly sad to see the enormous potential of these kids wasted.

Additionally, there is scope to review and modify our current legislation. I believe that age and social backgrounds of these kids are not given proper consideration when passing verdicts. Also, the risks of habitual relapse into crime are not correctly evaluated.

Finally, it is very important for our society in general to be less prejudiced towards juvenile offenders. They themselves anticipate the society to judge them harshly. However, when people outside think of them as very dangerous, their beliefs act like self-fulfilling prophecies. Such beliefs feed a vicious cycle of mutual distrust, leading these young ex-prisoners towards self-exclusion from the main stream of life.

My work with these kids was extremely satisfying, both professionally and emotionally. For them to have a chance, the society at large must be better informed about the sorrow circumstances in which they have grown up. People also have to better understand their needs, their talents and aspirations. With a little bit of understanding and help, they have the potential to become legitimate members of the society, and get to the energy to work harder and fulfill their dreams.

**LL: And to wrap up, what was the most memorable moment during your long tenure in the juvenile prison?**

**TL:** Perhaps my happiest moment was this year, when I met one of my former students. He greeted me warmly and was extremely generous towards me. As it happened, he successfully passed national university examinations and became a student. What a success story!

**LL: Thank you very much Tea. We are sure our readers would appreciate your dedication. Are there any final comments you would like to make?**

**TL:** I wanted to paint these kids as normal, innocent, charming and lovely as they are. They have all the necessary qualities for being good humans and good citizens. What matters is how we treat them and whether we accept them as worthy individuals. Respect and social inclusion is what they need as much as a fresh air.



## Government of Georgia:

# “Numerous airlines have entered the Georgian market.”

true

Zaza ABASHIDZE  
FactCheck

**O**n 11 September 2015, the Government of Georgia published an annual work report with one of the chapters dedicated to the development of local and international flights. The report states that various airlines have started operating in Georgia, including Yanair, Air Arabia, Air Cargo, Air Astana, Elinair, Dart and Borajet. Pegasus and Belavia have started their flights from Kutaisi.

**FactCheck** took interest in the aforementioned issue.

The Ukrainian Yanair entered the Georgian market in 2014 and offers flights to Kyiv from two Georgian cities – Tbilisi and Batumi. According to the information of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, a total of 3,174 passengers have used Kyiv-Tbilisi-Kyiv flights in 2014 whilst about 7,467 passengers were transported using the Kyiv-Batumi-Kyiv route. Apart from the Ukrainian capital, Yanair offers flights from Batumi to Odessa as well.

Tbilisi has become the 100<sup>th</sup> destination for the low-budget Arabic Air Arabia which started to operate on the Georgian market on 28 October 2014. The company is owned by the United Arab Emirates and offers

regular flights to numerous countries of the world. After entering the Georgian market, it started offering flights on the Sharjah-Tbilisi-Sharjah route.

Air Astana is a Kazakh airline which started operating on the Georgian market in 2011. It has provided its services to over 120,000 passengers since entering the market, offering flights from Tbilisi to Almaty. The airline added a new destination, Tbilisi-Astana, from 2 June 2014 which operates twice a week from Tbilisi International Airport.

A low-budget Greek airline founded in 2013, Elinair, started offering flights from Tbilisi International Airport to Thessaloniki on 9 June 2015. This is the only route offered by this airline on the Georgian market. Tbilisi-Thessaloniki and Thessaloniki-Tbilisi flights operate once a week. Overall, Elinair flies to 30 different destinations.

The Ukrainian low-budget Dart airline started offering charter flights to Georgia from 31 May 2015. The airline transports passengers from Kyiv to Batumi with flights being operated for a limited period of time during the tourist season. Batumi is included in the airline's list of resort destinations. According to the permit issued by the State Aviation Service of Ukraine, Dart flights will be

offered only until 24 October 2015.

Information of the Georgian Civil Aviation Agency indicates that the Turkish Borajet airline has been authorised to offer regular flights from Batumi to Istanbul since 4 September 2015. The Turkish company is mainly occupied with offering local flights and this will be its first destination in Georgia.




The aforementioned annual work report also lists those airlines which started their flights from Kutaisi. One of them is the Turkish Pegasus Airlines which started flights from Kutaisi to Istanbul from 10 May 2015. Pegasus has been operating on the Georgian market for five years already. It offered its first international flight from Tbilisi International Airport in 2010. Flights from Kutaisi to Istanbul are offered three times a week with the minimum cost of the ticket at EUR 30.

The Belarusian Belavia airline flew its first flight from Kutaisi to Minsk on 28 May 2013. Kutaisi has become the third city after Tbilisi and Batumi from which the airline offers regular flights and, therefore, was included in the previous year's annual work report. Travellers can use the services of the airline three times a week from Kutaisi International Airport with the average cost of the ticket at EUR 300.

## CONCLUSION

DESPITE CERTAIN INACCURACIES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA'S ANNUAL WORK REPORT (FOR EXAMPLE, AIR ASTANA IS NAMED AMONG THE AIRLINES RECENTLY ENTERING GEORGIA WHILST IN REALITY IT HAS BEEN OPERATING IN GEORGIA SINCE 2011 ALTHOUGH ADDING A DESTINATION LAST YEAR), IN GENERAL, THE FACTS GIVEN IN THE DOCUMENT ARE CORRECT. THE AIRLINES MENTIONED IN THE REPORT HAVE INDEED RECENTLY ENTERED GEORGIA OR ARE EXPANDING THE NUMBER OF THEIR DESTINATIONS. HENCE, **FACTCHECK** CONCLUDES THAT THE INFORMATION IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA'S ANNUAL WORK REPORT ABOUT FOREIGN AIRLINES OPERATING ON THE GEORGIAN MARKET IS TRUE.

TRUE


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## Georgian Universities and the EU launch a new Academic and Research component under ENPARD

The FINANCIAL – The European Union, Limerick University of Ireland, Agricultural University of Georgia and the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA) launched the Academic and Research component of the EU-funded European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) project.

Strengthening the Agrarian education and boost the Civil Society/Research institutions involvement into the development processes, is vitally important for the development the Agriculture system in general. ENPARD aims to build capacity in the agriculture research sector

in Georgia with two new projects with a budget of €350,000 (approx. GEL18,000) each, running for 18 months.

The first project, facilitated by Limerick University of Ireland together with Agricultural University of Georgia focuses on empowering civil society for influencing policy development, as well as strengthening the role of the higher education and research institutions in Agriculture. The project also aims the capacity building of Rural and Agriculture Policy and Development Institute (RAPDI)

The second project, facilitated by the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA) with

the support of the Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN) and PMC Research, aims to build capacity of regional universities through trainings and joint research into key problem areas. The project will also boost the capacity of universities to advise regional bodies on agricultural development, support their contributions to regional development plans and promote their role among key stakeholders, such as local governments, agribusinesses, cooperatives and farmers.

Georgia is at present benefiting from €52 million in support to agriculture and rural development through ENPARD.