

No 9 (1583)

Friday, December 29, 2017

International Edition - Published by "The Georgian TIMES"

Media Holding Since 1993

www.geotimes.ge











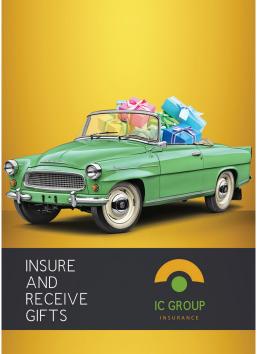












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## ARMENIAN PRESIDENT CON-**CLUDES VISIT TO GEORGIA**

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan paid an official visit to Tbilisi on December 25-26, and met his Georgian counterpart Giorgi Margvelashvili, Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili and Parliamentary Chairman Irakli Kobakhidze.



The Armenian President's visit comes a week after Tbilisi signed a contract with Geneva-based testing and inspection company - SGS - on Georgia-Russia trade monitoring, which Yerevan hopes will pave the way for diversifying its cargo transportation routes through Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions.

President Giorgi Margvelashvili was the first to meet Serzh

Following their face-to-face talks on December 25, and a meeting in extended composition, the two Presidents held a joint press briefing, with President Margvelashvilli telling his counterpart that the visits of Armenian officials were "always very im-

"We discussed issues of regional stability and development, and agreed that all difficult questions need to be resolved within international law and through negotiations," President Giorgi Margvelashvili said, adding that the two leaders also spoke on projects that "should bring more economic benefits and more stability to the region."

Margvelashvili also noted that the Georgian and Armenian leaders touched upon their countries' "strategic engagement" with the European Union and the Eurasian Union, respectively, and underlined that both countries managed "to avoid weakening of economic cooperation between the two nations" in light of their growing relations within the organizations.

President Sargsyan said in his remarks that that the two Presidents focused on "deepening the existing cooperation in the important areas of energy and transport, including on developing the transit capacity of our countries and the opportunities for its effective use.

According to the Armenian President, the two leaders spoke on regional security as well, highlighting "the importance of a balanced and constructive approach to sensitive issues." "We agreed that a comprehensive and long-term settlement of conflicts is possible only through peaceful means within the framework of agreed formats and only through negotiations," he added.

On December 26, President Sargsyan met with Georgia's Patriarch Ilia II, and visited an Armenian community center and an Armenian church. From Tbilisi, President Serzh Sargsyan travelled to Moscow, where will take part in the meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States leaders.

Armenia is one of the leading trade partners for Georgia. according to the State Statistics Office, Geostat. Georgia's trade turnover with Armenia stood at USD 367.6 million in 2016, with exports at USD 150.8 million (USD 180.1 million in 2015) and imports at USD 216.8 million (USD 175 million in 2015).

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# RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT: MOSCOW CAREFULLY OBSERVING 'MILI-TARIZATION' OF GEORGIA

"We are carefully observing the process of [Georgia's militarization by western nations] and are adjusting the security assistance to Abkhazia and South Ossetia accordingly," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin said in an interview for Interfax news agency on December 25.

"We are not afraid of Tbilisi, but we are seriously concerned about the actions of its Western allies," Karasin said, adding that militarization had once brought about.

The Deputy Foreign Minister underlined that "less than ten vears after the barbarian attack on South Ossetia." there was "a full-speed development of NATO military infrastructure in Georgia," pointing at the recently-approved anti-armor and anti-air systems sales to Tbilisi, as well as the new U.S.-funded Georgia Defense Readiness program.

Grigory Karasin also noted that despite the incumbent Georgian government's pledges that it would not use force against Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Tbilisi continued to avoid signing of non-use of force agreements with Tskhinvali and Sokhumi, and that there were "no guarantees that in western-equipped Georgia the militarist attitudes to its former territories" would not prevail again

"We will, naturally, not leave our allies in the face of a possible aggression, but considering the presence of NATO in Georgia, in such scenario a very dangerous situation can develop for international stability," Karasin added, calling on Georgia's partner countries and organizations "to think of the negative consequences of their actions.

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# **RUSSIA TO TRANSFER TWO** MEDICAL RESCUE HELICOP-TERS TO SOUTH OSSETIA

The Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations will grant two medical rescue helicopters to Tskhinvali, local authorities announced on December 22, two days after the meeting of Russia's Emergency Minister Vladimir Puchkov with Anatoly Bibilov, the region's Moscow-backed leader.

"There is an urgent need of sanitary aviation so that we are able to quickly transport those requiring emergency medical treatment, who we usually send to the south of our republic (to Georgia proper), to medical facilities in North Caucasus, in North Ossetia," Alan Tadtaev, head of Tskhinvali's emergency management agency told the local television station on Friday.

Tadtaev also noted that the helicopters would be based in the region, and that the "all infrastructure for maintaining and servicing the aircraft" would be developed "with the assistance of our Russian colleagues." Tadtaev added that Moscow would also help the region in training "local specialists so that they are able to maintain and use the aircraft themselves.'

The announcement came slightly over a month after Moscow signed a medical cooperation agreement with Tskhinvali, extending its compulsory medical insurance program to Russian citizens living in South Ossetia.

The new agreement, head of the local "parliament's" health committee Alan Kozonov contemplated on December 17, would "allow if not to absolutely eradicate, then at least to significantly decrease" the growing number of Tskhinvali residents getting medical treatment in the Tbilisi-controlled part of Georgia.

According to Tamaz Bestaev, healthcare minister at the Tbilisibased Provisional Administration of South Ossetia, as of December 25, there were around 400 residents of the region who used the Georgian state-funded medical service program in 2017. The corresponding figure for 2016 stood at 679, Bestaev also told Civil Georgia

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# SECURITY SERVICE DETAINS FIVE, CLAIMS CHATAYEV **GROUP PLOTTED TERRORIST ATTACKS**

The Counter-terrorism Department detained five citizens of Georgia in a double operation in Tbilisi and Pankisi gorge of Akhmeta District, the State Security Service spokesperson, Nino Giorgobiani, said at her press briefing today.



According to the Security Service, Zurab Gornakashvili, Ruslan Aldamov, Ramaz Margoshvili, Badur Chophanashvili, and Temirlan Machalikashvili were arrested on charges of assisting the group of militants, who fought against the Georgian security forces on November 21-22 in Tbilisi.

The SSS representative added that one of the suspects Temirlan Machalikashvili - was shot in the head and hospitalized following his failed attempt to activate a hand grenade against the counter-terrorism officers.

According to the State Security Service, the group members facilitated the transportation of Akhmed Chatayev, a senior ISIS member who was killed in the November 21-22 operation, and his accomplices in Turkey and assisted them in "illegally crossing" the Georgia-Turkey border in the Kirnati-Maradidi section in Adjara

The detainees facilitated the group members' transportation to Tbilisi and helped them in renting an apartment and in obtaining the arms, the SSS also reported. The weapons cache, Giorgobiani noted, was discovered through examination of mobile phone data, and the arms were seized "in a joint operation with [our] American colleagues.

The spokesperson also informed that the State Security Service verified the identity of the single detained member of Chatayev's group, and identified him as Shoaip Borziev (previously, the suspect was named by different initials - S.D.), a 23year-old Russian citizen of Chechen origin as reported by Interpol's wanted persons list.

Two other deceased members of Ahmed Chatayev's group were identified as Ibragim Adashev and Aslambek Soltakhmadov. The former, Giorgobiani explained, visited Georgia in 2010-2012 "with various fake passports."

Giorgobiani spoke on the group's intentions as well, saying the examination of audio recordings from Ahmed Chatayev's computer and other electronic devices, exposed that Chatayev and his accomplices planned to carry out terrorist attacks against diplomatic missions in Georgia and Turkey.

The planning process, the SSS representative noted, was intercepted as a result of the November 21-22 operation.

Giorgobiani added that investigation against the five detained suspects was launched under Part 3 of Article 3311 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, involving funding and assisting terrorist activities, which is punishable by imprisonment for any term of not more than 20 years or less than 17 years, or by life imprisonment.

Investigation for identifying other individuals who might be linked to the criminal group continues, the spokesperson also noted.

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# PANKISI GORGE RESIDENTS CALL FOR 'OBJECTIVE' INVES-TIGATION OVER WOUNDING OF **DETAINED LOCAL**

Residents of Georgia's north-eastern Pankisi gorge, populated predominantly by ethnic Kists, a sub-group of the Chechen people, appealed to the authorities on December 27 expressing concern over the handling of the security forces operation a day earlier, which resulted into the detention of five individuals resid-

One of the detained - 18-year-old Temirlan Machalikashvili was shot in the head and hospitalized during the operation, following his failed attempt to activate a hand grenade, according to the December 26 statement of the State Security Service. Machalikashvili's relatives, however, claim he was asleep when the officers entered his room and opened fire.



The Pankisi Council of Elders, which convened a special meeting in village Duisi on the matter, released a brief statement on behalf of the Council and other civic organizations based in Pankisi, saying they were "closely watching the recent developments concerning the security forces operation.'

"We unanimously agree that it is the government's task to establish order in the country, and in this context nobody is against the implemented measures, but we are dissatisfied with the forms and the methods which led to the gravest condition of Temirlan  $\,$ Machalikashvili," reads the Council's statement.

The Council members then stressed their wish "that investigation should be objective and everything should be done to ensure that innocent people are not held accountable," and expressed their hope that the government would "take into consideration the opinion of Pankisi residents and lead the investigation in the right direction.

Later, several hundred local residents held a protest rally in village Duisi.

One of their speakers - Muraz Goderdzishvili - told journalists after the meeting that the incident involving Machalikashvili "caused great outrage in the entire gorge.'

He also said the protesters were not against enforcement of law, but added that they had "questions" over the way Machalikashvili was detained, and said the incident "was a negative development for the area after positive steps made during the last years."

Goderdzishvili also expressed his hope that the case would be "objectively" investigated, and that the shooter that had wounded Machalikashvili would be punished, adding that otherwise the protesters would "see what we can do, within the law."

# The Georgian TIMES

# 1 English-Language Newspaper in Georgia First published in 1993.

The Founder and the President Malkhaz Gulashvili. Tel: (+995) 577 461 046

The Georgian Times Media Holding.

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# NEW GOVERNMENT WINS CONFIDENCE VOTE

The Parliament confirmed late night on December 22 Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili's new cabinet composition with 103 votes in favor to 17 against.



The new government had to face the parliamentary confidence vote following the recent structural and staff changes in the cabinet, which reduced the number of ministries from 18 to 14.

The following ministers have retained their positions:

Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development - Dimitri Kumsishvili, who led the Ministry of Finance before November 2017:

Minister of Internal Affairs - Giorgi Gakharia, who served as the Minister of Economy before November 2017;

Minister of Foreign Affairs - Mikheil Janelidze;

Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs - Davit Sergeenko; Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia - Sozar Subari; Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure - Zurab

Alavidze; Minister of Defense - Levan Izoria;

Minister of Justice - Tea Tsulukiani;

Minister of Corrections - Kakha Kakhishvili:

State Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality - Ketevan Tsikhelashvili

Two other ministers, who also retained their positions in the new cabinet, will lead the recently-merged ministries. These are: Levan Davitashvili, former Agriculture Minister, who will lead the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture;

Mikheil Giorgadze, former Culture and Monument Protection Minister, who will lead the Ministry of Culture and Sport.

Cabinet newcomers are:

Mamuka Bakhtadze, former Director General of the Georgian Railway, who assumed the post of the Finance Minister;

Mikheil Chkhenkeli, former Deputy Rector of the Tbilisi State University, who will serve as the Minister of Education and Science.

The nearly eight-hour-long parliamentary debates that started mid-day yesterday ended at 2 am on December 22.

The parliamentary opposition criticized PM Kvirikashvili's government, with MP Davit Bakradze of the European Georgia saying the new cabinet composition was not "oriented to people's problems," and with MP Roman Gotsiridze of the United National Movement stressing the ministers were "incompetent."

MP Nika Melia's address to the lawmakers ended with a dispute again but the incident was quickly resolved.

As part of the Prime Minister's reform plan, three ministries (of Energy, of Sport and Youth Affairs, and of Environment & Natural Resources Protection) and one office of the state minister (for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration) were abolished, with their respective functions transferred to other ministries.

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# PARLIAMENT ADOPTS CONTRO-VERSIAL AMENDMENTS TO BROADCASTING LAW

On December 22, the Parliament of Georgia approved with its third and final reading amendments to the Law on Broadcasting, increasing the powers of the state-funded Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPR)

The amendments bill lifted the Public Broadcaster from its obligation to observe the Law on Public Procurement. As a result, the company will no longer have to announce public procurement calls when purchasing media products or services.

The Public Broadcaster will also able to place commercials throughout its entire airtime (previously it could do so only during sports and international events programs), except non-working days and working day primetimes (from 19:00 to 24:00). The total length of commercials per 24 hours has increased from 30 minutes to 60 minutes, while the 24-minute free airtime allocated for social ads has been reduced to 12 minutes. The company will also be able to accept sponsorship of entertainment programs and TV series

The Public Broadcaster, the budgetary funding of which constitutes 0.14% of the country's GDP (GEL 52.5 million in 2018), is no longer obliged to return unused funds to the state budget. The company will also be entitled to allocate budgetary funds for supporting "start-ups and innovative television, radio and online prod-

ucts, as well as for fostering development of the broadcasting

The bill also limited the powers of GPB's nine-member board of trustees, which will no longer be able to reform the Broadcaster bodies without the director general's consent.

The GPB management has argued that the amendments bill would make its work more efficient and increase its independence both financially and politically, while private broadcasters and civil society organizations have claimed that the amendments would harm private channels, and allow undue preferences to the Public Broadcaster. They also urged President Giorgi Margvelashvili to veto the amendments bill.

The amendments met opposition within the ruling party as well, with the Parliament's sectoral economy and economic policy committee turning down the bill on its second and third readings.

It is yet unknown whether the President, who held bill-related meetings with private broadcasters and the GPB management, will sign the amendments into law.

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# GEORGIA SKIPS UNGA VOTE ON JERUSALEM

Panels in the General Assembly Hall showing the final count for the resolution on the status of Jerusalem, during the resumed 10th Emergency Special Session on Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Photo: UN/Manuel Elias

Georgia decided not to attend the December 21 vote at the Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which voted on the draft resolution condemning the move of the United States embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

The resolution was adopted with 128 votes in favor to nine against, with 35 abstentions. 21 nations, Georgia among them, chose not to take part in the vote.

Shortly after the General Assembly vote, Nikki Haley, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, thanked the countries that did not support the resolution, including those that voted against, abstained and did not attend the vote.

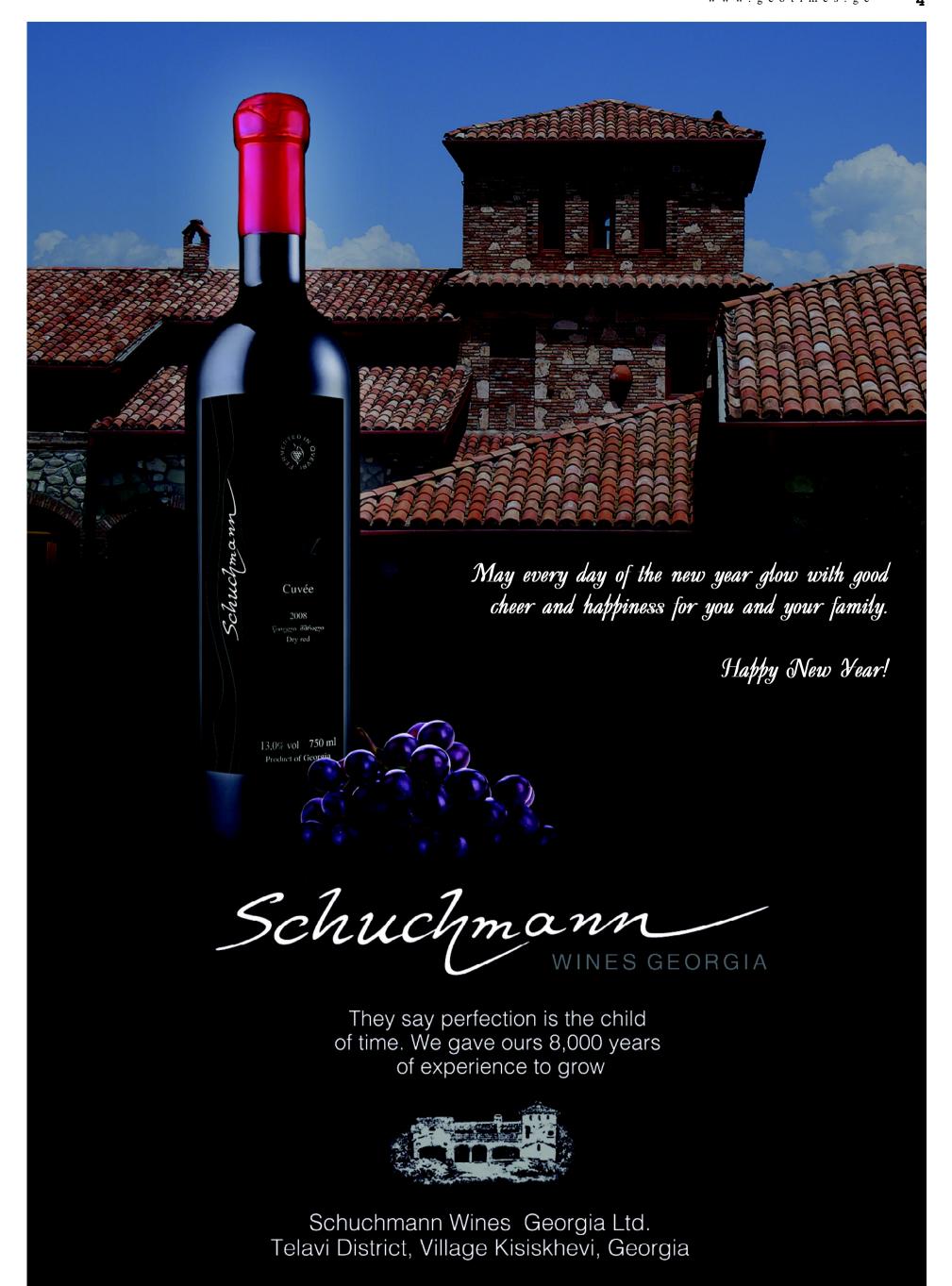
Georgian Foreign Minister Mikheil Janelidze commented on the matter few hours before the vote, saying the country would make its final decision on the basis of consultations with its partners. "This is a very sensitive matter," stressed Janelidze.

Georgia recognized the statehood of Palestine in 1992, and voted in support of the UNGA resolution upgrading Palestine to non-member observer state status in the United Nations in 2012. The country also supports the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue on the basis of a two-state solution.

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### PUBLICITY





୪୫୬୯୬୬୪ TSKALTUBO



# Tskaltubo is a resort of global importance, best known for the therapeutic qualities of its radon mineral water

Radon gas was discovered in 1903 in England by A.S. Allen. The next year its benefits were explained in Germany and Austria, and soon afterwards it was promoted around the world as a natural resource having a curative effect on human body.

In 1906 data on the composition of radon in various European resorts (Hustyns, Schlem, Baden-Baden, Teplice, Yakhim etc) was published. It should be noted that Europe in general is very rich in radon waters, as they are found in Greece, France, Hungary, Bulgaria, Spain, Austria, Italy and several other countries.

The first "guide" to the radon resorts was published in 1906, and grouped them in a special category called "Radiumbad". The list included 30 radon waters in 11 European resorts.

Radon and its by-products enhance the defence functions of the body, strengthen the immune system, activate blood circulation, regulate blood pressure and heart rhythm, help cell restoration-regeneration (post-injuries and burns), have analgesic and anti-inflammatory effects, have a sharply expressed sedative (calming) effect and activate cognitive functions. It is believed that radon therapy is an effective alternative to non-asteroid anti-inflammatory antibiotics. Observations on the effects of radon are published primarily in Germany and Austria.

Tskaltubo's radon springs hold weak radon waters, 4—100 bk/l. The natural temperature of water (33-35 degrees



Celsius) allows us to use it without preheating. The water flows into the baths direct from the springs without using pumps. Therapeutic procedures are performed in continuously running water, free of toxic substances, which is not aggressive in composition. Therefore, we can welcome holidaymakers of all ages (from 4 upwards).

Radon therapy is usually taken for a period of 20-25 minutes per day in 12-14 day courses of treatment. Radon and its by-products are absorbed into the skin, where they generate a kind of deposit, meaning their effects last not only during the treatment period but afterwards.

The curative effect of the radon baths begins as soon as the course of treatment does, reaches its maximum in 1.5-2 months and lasts from 8 months to 1 year.

Tskaltubo thermal-mineral springs are used for the treatment of the following diseases:

 Locomotive system dieases (osteochondrosis, osteoarthritis, arthritis, discogenic radiculitis etc).



- Cardiovascular diseases (post stenting and shunting rehabilitation, hypertension etc).
- Central and peripheral nervous system diseases (neurosis, central blood circulation disorders, neuritis and neuropathies etc).
- Gynaecological diseases (inflammatory processes, infertility etc).
- Urological diseases (inflammatory processes, impotence).
- Skin diseases (Psoriasis, eczema, neurodermatitis etc).

- Diseases of the endocrine system (Diffuse goitre, gout, some forms of diabetes mellitus etc).

We have developed appropriate therapeutic programmes for the treatment of these diseases, which are administered individually by doctor-balneologists based on the patient's general condition, diagnosis and age.

The buildings 6 and 1 of JSC Balneo-Service are built directly on top of the springs. These therapeutic-rehabilitation centres are equipped with modern medical equipment produced in Europe, including hydro units. Five pools full of healing mineral water are included, together with 37 individual cabin-baths, 16 hydro massage rooms, a horizontal extension room etc. The capacity of these rooms is 1,500 people per day. They are staffed by highly qualified medical personnel.

- The following therapeutic procedures are carried out in JSC Balneoservice:
  - 1. Mineral water baths;
  - 2. Underwater (hydro-massage);3. Hydro-vibration massage;
  - 4. Physical exercise in the pool;
- 5. Classic medical massage;
- Spinal horizontal extension in mineral water;
  - 7. Physiotherapy;
- 8. Gynaecological irrigation;9. "Sharko" shower:
- 10. Circular shower:
- 10. Circular shower
- 11. Mechano-therapy in mineral wa-
- 12. Peloido-therapy (mud applicaon);
- 13. Pressotherapy
- 14. Hydro colon therapy (*Deep intestinal* lavage);
- 15. Stimulation of the prostate + rectal tamponade;
- 16. Inhalation

The direct effect of treatment with Tskaltubo mineral waters is recovery from certain professional diseases: those of sportsmen, dancers, pilots, cosmonauts, sailors, oil dealers, miners, military personnel, special services personnel etc.

Tskaltubo is a non-seasonal resort, open 365 days a year with no holidays.









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Tskaltubo is known for its thermal radon mineral water with a natural temperature of 33-34 degrees Celsius. It is also well-known for its springs, whose unique properties are used to treat a wide variety of diseases:

- · Locomotive system
- · Cardiovascular system
- · Nervous system
- · Gynaecological diseases
- · Skin and endocrinological diseases
- · Metabolic system diseaes

Hotel Prometheus is situated right in the centre of Tskaltubo, in the vicinity of the beautiful park and balneology baths which opened in 2011. It was reconstructed in 2016 and now consists of 48 rooms with the capacity to host 100 guests. These guests may enjoy the hotel, wellness services, therapeutic, cardiological and urological services. The wellness room is equipped with the latest model German physiomed equipment. A qualified doctor-resortologist develops your treatment plan and observes the dynamics of your recovery.

The hotel includes a conference hall which can seat 70 persons and is equipped with all the necessary state-of-the-art audio-visual devices. The restaurant is situated on the first floor, and serves Georgian and European food. There is an open terrace on the fourth floor. All guests can enjoy a delicious morning breakfast on the terrace and gain the maximum enjoyment from the amazing views of Tskaltubo available there.

The hotel team will always ensure the comfort and satisfaction of each guest. We look forward to seeing you!











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# Astoria Tbilisi Hotel $\star\star\star\star$



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The two buildings of the 4-star Astoria Tbilisi hotel are located on the slope of Mtatsminda at the junction of Chitadze and Chonkadze Streets in a green and quiet part of the capital.



The hotel is well furnished, and offers a comfortable courtyard, indoor swimming pool, sauna and gym, two meeting

rooms and two technically equipped conference halls (which can hold 60 and 120 people respectively), a lounge bar, internal parking and two restaurants which offer breakfasts of Georgian and European cuisine. The hotel has 146 rooms, including executive suites, junior suites, family rooms, standard rooms and rooms adjusted to the needs of disabled persons.





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At present, merit to new technologies and advanced treatment methods cancer patients have possibility of prolonging life and recovering from disease. Unfortunately, very often patients have to go abroad in order to get high quality medical service, which is related to big financial expenses

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- Experienced group of doctors
   Liv Hospital Medical Management
- 'Tumour board' supervision
- Focus on patient safety
- Commitment to increasing the knowledge and qualifications of medical personnel

Pleasant and comfortable environment

On 9-10th December 2017 The first International B2B (Business to Business) Days of Medical Tourism was held in Batumi to promote medical tourism development in Georgia with active involvement of Georgian clinics.

The B2B days are a unique format for the buyers and suppliers meetings of medical tourism services, in which medical

tourism, insurance companies etc.). Radiation Medicine Center for took an active part in the event. The Director of the Center Besik Surguladze and the

Head of Marketing Service Nana Ubilava introduced to the buyers the services and advantages presented in the Radiation Medicine Center. Having an experience experience of buying medical

service they expressed great interest and willingness to cooperate with the \"Radiation Medicine Center\". The meeting of this form allowed us to take the first steps in the field of medical tourism for Georgia. A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between Radiation

Medicine Center and the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia at the Center of Radiation Medicine. The memorandum was signed by the director of Radiation Medicine Center Besik Surguladze and the Acting Chairman of the Government of

the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia Vakhtang Kolbaia. The memorandum of mutual cooperation envisages free outpatient and consultative assistance to IDPs until December 30, 2018. Gift vouchers will be distributed to the citizens based on which the clinic will conduct free medical examination with IDs from Abkhazia prior to sched-

On November 27, the Memorandum of Mutual Agreement was signed between the South Ossetian Administration and the Radiation Medicine Center. The Director of the Center Besik Surguladze introduced the services provided at the Center to the Head of the South Ossetian administration Dimitri Sanakoev and the Chief of the Health and Social Services Tamaz Bestaev. They looked through the clinic and agreed on the issues of mutual cooperation.



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BCN Hispania

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# Professionalism Experience Quality















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The Georgian Times





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