

**SPEECH OF H.E. KONSTANTINE KVACHAKIDZE, AMBASSADOR OF
GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS FOR THE CEREMONY OF
PRESENTING CREDENTIALS TO HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. NIKOS
CHRISTODOULIDES, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

Your Excellency, President Nikos Christodoulides,

I have the honor to present to Your Excellency the letter of Credence by which Her Excellency President Salome Zourabichvili appoints me as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Republic of Cyprus, as well as the Letter of Recall of my predecessor, Ambassador Teimuraz Kekelidze. It is an honor and privilege for me to represent my country and people as Ambassador of Georgia to the Republic of Cyprus.

It is with great appreciation that relations between Georgia and the Republic of Cyprus, throughout the years, has transformed into close friendship and partnership. Relations between our countries are based on common values of democracy, rule of law and respect for international law.

Let me assure you, that my main goal during my term will be to further enhance our bilateral relations, including developing fruitful cooperation in various fields by preparing the legal base, exchanging visits and implementing joint projects. I strongly believe that there is indeed real potential to further enhance trade and economic cooperation in various spheres including but not limited to tourism, agriculture, the maritime sector, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Another important goal will be to bring forward the process of establishing a legal framework for circular and temporary labor migration between our countries. This will be mutually beneficial both for overall economic growth, as well as for decreasing the cases of irregular migration and illegal employment.

Culture is one of main dimensions where our states have close ties. The Georgian monasteries in Ghalia, Alaminos and Softades had been functioning in Cyprus for centuries during the medieval times, promoting connection and friendship between our churches and in fact between our nations, thus proving the long history of our ancient nations have had a rich continuous cultural and spiritual interaction.

It is noteworthy, that in 2018 Archbishop Chrysostomos II and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus took an unprecedented decision to gift up to 13000 square meters of land to the Patriarchate of Georgia for the purpose of building a monastery. The project of the monastery is already elaborated and in near future construction works will commence. Once again, we highly appreciate this commendable act of good will and friendship, which demonstrates that we have preserved our bonds throughout centuries and so provides new incentive for intensified religious and people to people interaction.

The European Union membership remains Georgia's key foreign policy goal and our commitment to continue the necessary reforms is firm. The European Council's decision to grant Georgia candidate status took our relations with the EU to a new strategic level, thus firmly anchored Georgia's future with the EU. Let me express our sincere gratitude for Cyprus's longstanding support towards Georgia's European path. We hope that Cyprus will continue standing by Georgia in its endeavors to move forward successfully to the next phase of EU accession.

Our countries are guided by strong adherence to international law, particularly to the principle of territorial integrity and sovereignty of states. I would like to thank the Cypriot side for its support of Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, including support of United Nations General Assembly resolution on "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia" (IDP resolution) and its contribution to the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia.

In a similar manner, Georgia expresses firm support for a political settlement of the Cyprus problem and restoring the process of negotiations, which will achieve a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement for the Cyprus problem within the UN framework, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and the EU principles.

Your Excellency, I look forward to working with the Government and the People of Cyprus to continue to further strengthen this tradition of partnership in order to benefit welfare of our nations.