

中国建筑集团有限公司

# China Watch

REPORT 10

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2022

# CSCEC IN GEORGIA

China State Construction Engineering Corporation Limited

中国建筑集团有限公司

CIVIC **IDEA**



## Table of Contents

<i>China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Timeline of CSCEC scandals .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>China State Construction Engineering Corporation Limited in Georgia .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>CSCEC in the Philippines .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Baha Mar Case and the CSCEC as a Chinese Contractor ...</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Corruption charges denied by the CSCEC in Pakistan.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Fudan University in Hungary .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Bibliography.....</i>	<i>12</i>



中國建築

## China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd.

<https://english.cscec.com/AboutCSCEC/Companyprofile/>

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2328894/dod-releases-list-of-additional-companies-in-accordance-with-section-1237-of-fy/>

<https://www.direkt36.hu/en/kinai-hitelbol-keszul-a-magyar-felsooktatas-oriasberuhazasa-a-kormany-mar-oda-is-igerte-egy-kinai-cegnek/>

<https://theindependent.sg/lta-awards-mrt-tunnel-contract-to-chinese-firm-previously-blacklisted-by-world-bank/>

China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd., also known as China State Construction or CSCEC, is one of the largest Chinese state construction companies **founded in 1982**. Since then, it has operated in more than 100 countries worldwide. The company's main activities comprise real estate, construction financing, operation and engineering (housing and infrastructure), as well as design and survey. This company has been embroiled in numerous scandals in the past two decades. More precisely, the CSCEC and its subsidiaries have been exposed to corruption and fraud schemes in the US, Philippines, Pakistan, Hungary, and several other countries and have been blacklisted by different state and international institutions. For instance, in August 2020, the United States Department of Defense released a list of Chinese companies having **close ties with the People's Liberation Army (PLA)**, and the CSCEC was among them. The Trump Administration accused the Chinese firm of cyber espionage and **prohibited the US entities from becoming the shareholders of the CSCEC**. Earlier in 2013, the CSCEC experienced problems in the Chinese mainland. It was accused of using low-quality sea sand for building several skyscrapers in Shenzhen, China. These constructions, **including the Ping An Finance Centre, were halted by Shenzhen's Housing and Construction Bureau** due to the poor-quality building materials. Foreign media warned that these structures would become dangerous and jeopardize the life of people after several years.

## Timeline of CSCEC scandals

**2004**

The Department of Public Works and Highways of the Republic of the Philippines blocked the company for a period of one year due to violations of national law.

**2013**

CSCEC was accused of using low-quality sea sand for building several skyscrapers in Shenzhen, China.

**2017**

The dispute between the BML and the CSCEC raged on in the [Supreme Court of New York](#).

**2019** (August)

A contract was signed between The Roads Department of Georgia and China State Construction Engineering Corporation Limited on the construction works of the road "Ubisa-Shorapani section of the E-60 highway (F3)".

**2020**

The Trump Administration accused the CSCEC of cyber espionage and [prohibited US entities from becoming shareholders of the CSCEC](#).

**2009**

The World Bank blacklisted China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd. due to its involvement in collusive practices and corruption scandals in the Philippines, concerning the [Philippines National Roads Improvement and Management Program](#).

**2015**

In the Bahamas, the local company Baha Mar Ltd. (BML) sued the CSCEC in the courts in Delaware, the U.S., and London, UK, over massive fraud and several other misconducts, such as [being behind the project deadlines, causing revenue loss, and lack of experience in building the enormous complex \(particularly "in managing the shipping of materials and a labor force delayed work"\)](#), and [stealing documents from the construction](#).

**2019**

The Communication Minister of Pakistan, Murad Saeed, claimed that the [National Highway Authority \(NHA\) violated the procurement rules](#) as it signed the MoU worth Rs259bn (3343746980,00 USD) with the CSCEC.

**2021**

CSCEC has been granted to lead the works of the Fudan University campus in Hungary. [China Development Bank is ready to cover 80% of the costs](#). The government has not made the official decision yet, but their covert meetings justify that they have no other choice but to agree to the PRC's terms.



## China State Construction Engineering Corporation Limited in Georgia

<https://civicidea.ge/?s=China+Watch>

<https://www.georoad.ge/?lang=geo&act=tenders&func=menu&uid=1545739194>

<http://www.georoad.ge/?lang=geo&act=project&func=menu&uid=1392986222>

Before that, in September 2021, the Chinese state-owned company "China Road and Bridge Corporation" became the main research object of Civic IDEA's 7th China Watch report. The company attracted our attention for the first time by winning the tender announced within the "Construction of the Ubisa-Shorapani section of the E-60 highway (F3)" project. The abovementioned section of the road is part of the 51.6 km long highway connecting the East and West parts of Georgia. As we've already mentioned in the previous report, the construction of all four sections of the highway above is carried out by state-owned Chinese companies. Among them is China State Construction Engineering Corporation Limited (CSCEC), which operates in Georgia under the name of "Georgian Branch of China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd."

China State Construction Engineering Corporation Limited was registered as a supplier in the Georgian electronic Government Procurement (Ge-GP) system for the first time in November 2018. On September 11, 2019, it officially registered its branch in Georgia. The director of the Branch is Mr. Chang King.

On November 8, 2018, the Roads Department of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia (hereinafter "the Roads Department") announced the tender DEP180000085<sup>1</sup> regarding the state procurement of construction works of the Chumateleti-Khevi section of the E-60 highway (km 0.0 - km 11.6). A total of nine bidders took part in the tender. The project is financed with the joint funding of the World Bank (WB) and the European Investment Bank (EIB)<sup>2</sup>. China State Construction Engineering Corporation won the tender by submitting the best offer - 329,882,770.00 GEL.

Unfortunately, there is no additional information about the selection process and compliance issue of the documents submitted by the company in the Georgian electronic Government Procurement (Ge-GP) system. The Department of Roads also refuses to provide this information for the reason that only the entity

<sup>1</sup> საავტომობილო გზების დეპარტამენტის პროექტები; რიკოტის საუბელტეხილო მონაკვეთი/ Projects of the Roads Department of Georgia; Rikoti Pass Section:

<http://www.georoad.ge/?lang=geo&act=project&func=menu&uid=1392986222>

<sup>2</sup> იხილეთ სახელმწიფო შესყიდვა/ see public procurement DEP180000085  
<http://tenders.procurement.gov.ge/public/?go=283346&lang=ge>

<http://tenders.procurement.gov.ge/public/?go=283346&lang=ge>

participating in the tender can request additional information and clarifications regarding the selection process.<sup>3</sup>

On August 21, 2019, the Roads Department signed a contract with China State Construction Engineering Corporation Limited. Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia noted in an official statement that "[according to the ratings of S&P, Moody's and Fitch, CSCEC has received the best 'A' rating, which is the highest credit rating in the global construction industry.](#)"<sup>4</sup> While listing the company's regalia, the Ministry "forgot" to mention a number of scandals associated with the CSCEC's name and sanctions issued against it on a global scale, which we will tell you about in later chapters of this report.

According to the contract signed with China State Construction Engineering Corporation Limited, [the period of implementation of the works is 3 years; therefore](#), the construction of the road should be completed by the end of 2022.

In September 2020, a citizen reported to the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture of Georgia through a Facebook post that the Chinese company CECSC had installed a concrete-making plant on the river bank and it was causing pollution of the river. [As the local media later found out](#)<sup>5</sup>, a fine of 3000 GEL was imposed on the Georgian branch of China State Construction Engineering Corporation LLC for [Environmental pollution with construction waste or other inert waste in the volume of 1 m3 to 10 m3](#)".<sup>6</sup> In addition, it was revealed that the company is located on an agricultural plot of land, for which it was additionally fined 750 GEL in [accordance with Article 53 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of Georgia](#).<sup>7</sup>

In conclusion, we can say that the factual circumstances cited by us and the negative international experience related to China State Construction Engineering Corporation Limited indicate that the Roads Department did not show the utmost care and good faith in the selection of the supplier, and also raises reasonable suspicion of the existence of corrupt deals.

To better understand what complications this company can cause during the implementation of critical infrastructural projects in Georgia, we need to first look at its international reputation and compare the various cases.

<sup>3</sup> იხილეთ სამოქალაქო იდეას მიერ გამოქვეყნებული მე-7 ანგარიში პროექტ „China Watch“-ის ფარგლებში/ See Report N7 by Civic Idea within the project „China Watch“: <https://civicidea.ge/en/3306-2/>

<sup>4</sup> რიკოტის გზის შემადგენელი ჩუმათელეთი-ხევის მონაკვეთის მშენებლობა იწყება / onstruction of Chumateleti-Khevi section, which is a part of Rikoti road, is about to start: <https://mrdi.gov.ge/ka/press-center/97.html>

<https://mrdi.gov.ge/ka/press-center/>

<sup>5</sup> მოახდინეს თუ არა რეაგირება მდ. ჩუმათელეთის კალაპოტის მიმდებარედ ტერიტორიის დაბინძურების ფაქტის აღმოჩენის შემდეგ - გარემოსდაცვითი ზედამხედველობის დეპარტამენტის პასუხი/ the response of the Department of Environmental Supervision: [https://xashurineews.ge/open\\_post/283](https://xashurineews.ge/open_post/283)

<sup>6</sup> იხილეთ საქართველოს კანონი „ნარჩენების მართვის კოდექსი“ 32(2) მუხლი/see LAW OF GEORGIA ON WASTE MANAGEMENT CODE Article 32(2) <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2676416>

<sup>7</sup> იხილეთ საქართველოს ადმინისტრაციულ სამართალდარღვევათა კოდექსის 53-ე სექუნდა მუხლი / See ADMINISTRATIVE OFFENCES CODE OF GEORGIA Article 53<sup>2</sup>

## CSCEC in the Philippines

The World Bank blacklisted China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd. in 2009 due to its involvement in collusive practices and corruption scandals in the Philippines. The case is similar to the one of “[China Road and Bridge Corporation](#)” (CRBC), a Chinese company already being researched by Civic IDEA. [Debarment lasted for six years and restricted the CSCEC](#) from participating in the projects financed by the World Bank. Prior to its banning and as in the case of the CRBC, the CSCEC participated in the [Philippines National Roads Improvement and Management Program](#), which the WB partly funded. Total WB funding equaled 150 million US dollars. According to [the 2009 Annual Report of the World Bank](#): “Under the cartel’s system, bid prices were dictated by the cartel leadership; uncooperative bidders were forced out of the process before bids were submitted; winners were prearranged; and losing bidders, which in some cases participated to avoid displeasing influential members of the cartel, were compensated for their participation.” Apparently, it was not the first case when the CSCEC violated the procurement law. Earlier in 2004, the Department of Public Works and Highways of the Republic of the Philippines blocked the company for a period of one year due to the [violation of Section 69.1.9](#) of the implementing rules and regulations concerning “the acts that tend to defeat the purpose of the competitive bidding, such as habitually withdrawing from bidding, submitting late bids or patently insufficient bid”. Consequently, the debarment was reduced to six months after the Chinese company appealed for consideration.

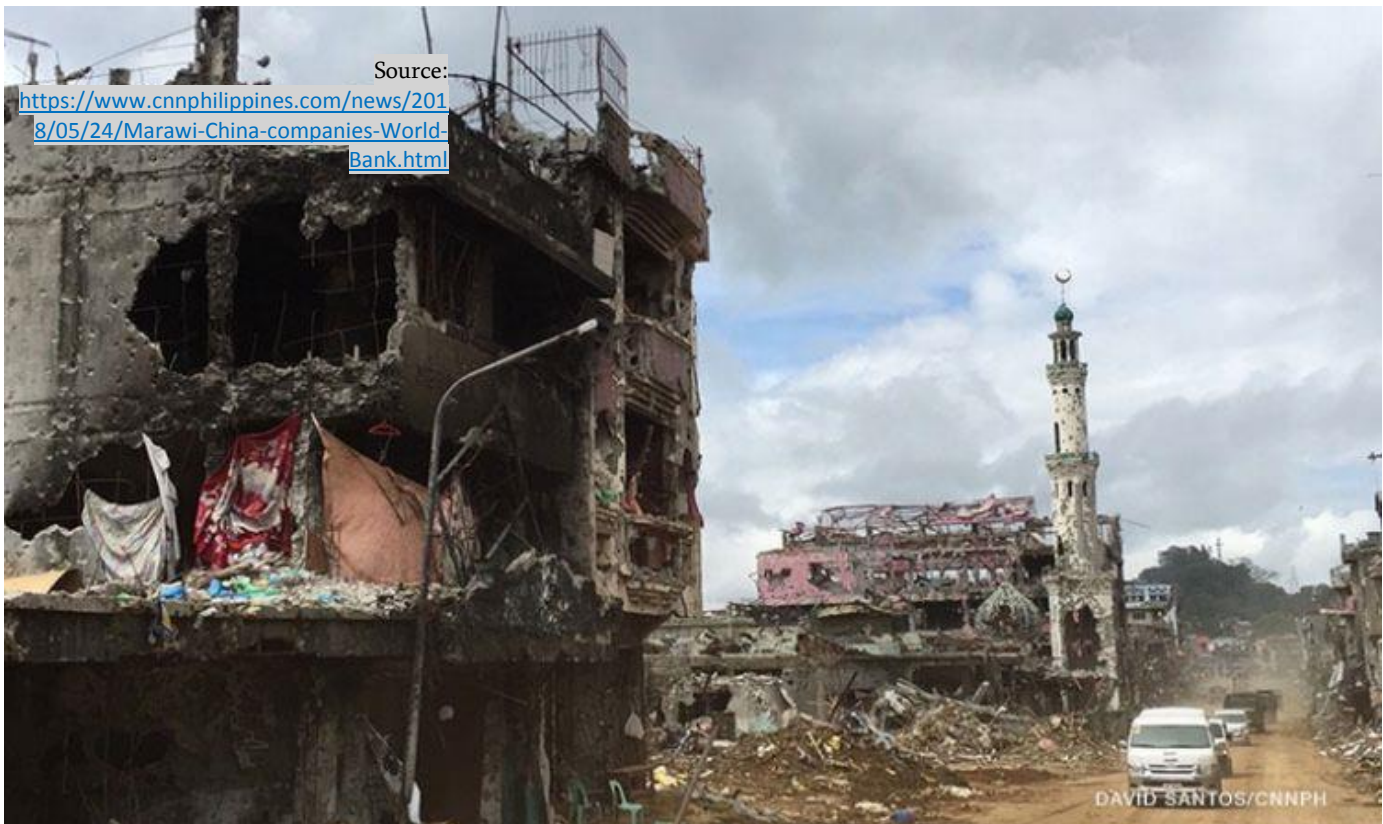
<https://civicidea.ge/en/3306-2/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/oukwd-uk-worldbank-corruption-idAFTRE50E0GX20090115>

[http://www.china.org.cn/business/news/2009-01/16/content\\_17143299.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/business/news/2009-01/16/content_17143299.htm)

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4354>

[https://www.dpwh.gov.ph/dpwh/sites/default/files/issuances/DO\\_236\\_S2004.pdf](https://www.dpwh.gov.ph/dpwh/sites/default/files/issuances/DO_236_S2004.pdf)



Despite its disputed character, the Chinese company was rehabilitated by the government of the Philippines, claiming that [the CSCEC was given a new chance](#) to rebuild Marawi, which was utterly destroyed during the battles against the pro-ISIS extremists. Therefore, in 2018, the China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd [was given a lead in the Bagong Marawi Consortium](#) consisting of [5 Chinese and 4 Filipino companies](#) selected by the government and granted the abovementioned project without any bidding procedures. It is noteworthy to mention that many of these companies have been previously blamed for corruption, fraud, and violating the procurement regulations. Nevertheless, the government turned a blind eye to these accusations and chose the most notorious firms to reconstruct the destroyed city. It is unlikely that this opportunity genuinely represents a second chance for disreputable companies. One can assume that there may also be a lack of due diligence within the Philippine government agencies or personal interests involved in this situation.

<https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2018/05/24/Marawi-China-companies-World-Bank.html>

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/202300-chinese-firms-marawi-consortium-blacklisted-world-bank-arroyo/>

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/199388-companies-bagon-marawi-consortium-china-philippines/>

## Baha Mar Case and the CSCEC as a Chinese Contractor

The case of the Baha Mar resort has become a turning point in the CSCEC's reputation. A subsidiary of China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd., China Construction America, also named CAA Bahamas, was responsible for constructing a 3.5 billion US dollars project concerning the luxurious casino resort in the Bahamas. The latter [won the bidding in February 2008](#) and became the main contractor in March 2009, after the American Harrah's Entertainment left the project due to the financial crisis. The CSCEC assisted the local company Baha Mar Ltd. (BML) in receiving 2.5 billion US dollars worth of loan from the notorious Chinese Exim Bank. Initial works started only in 2011 and were supposed to end by December 2014. The project was considered the largest overseas and included four luxurious hotels with 2200 rooms in total, a convention center, a casino, a private beach, and a golf course. However, the construction company could not meet the deadline, and [the problems with the court started in June 2015](#). More precisely, Baha Mar Ltd. has sued the Chinese contractor in a court in Delaware, the U.S., over massive fraud and several other misconducts, such as [being behind the project deadlines, causing revenue loss](#), and lack of experience in building the enormous

<https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/caixin-media/chinese-contractor-finds-project-bahamas-no-day-beach>

<https://www.caixinglobal.com/2017-12-27/chinese-contractor-sued-for-massive-fraud-over-bahamas-resort-101190370.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/22/business/a-complex-bankruptcy-case-with-baha-mar-and-a-chinese-contractor-lands-in-delaware.html>



<https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/caixin-media/chinese-contractor-finds-project-bahamas-no-day-beach>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/baha-mar-says-it-is-still-being-blocked-from-accessing-documents-143653518>

[https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/trending/\\_uhzfvszq0jmvxfrie30ea2](https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/trending/_uhzfvszq0jmvxfrie30ea2)

<https://fhnylaw.com/first-department-unanimously-affirms-denial-of-motion-to-compel-arbitration-and-motion-to-dismiss-fraud-claims/>

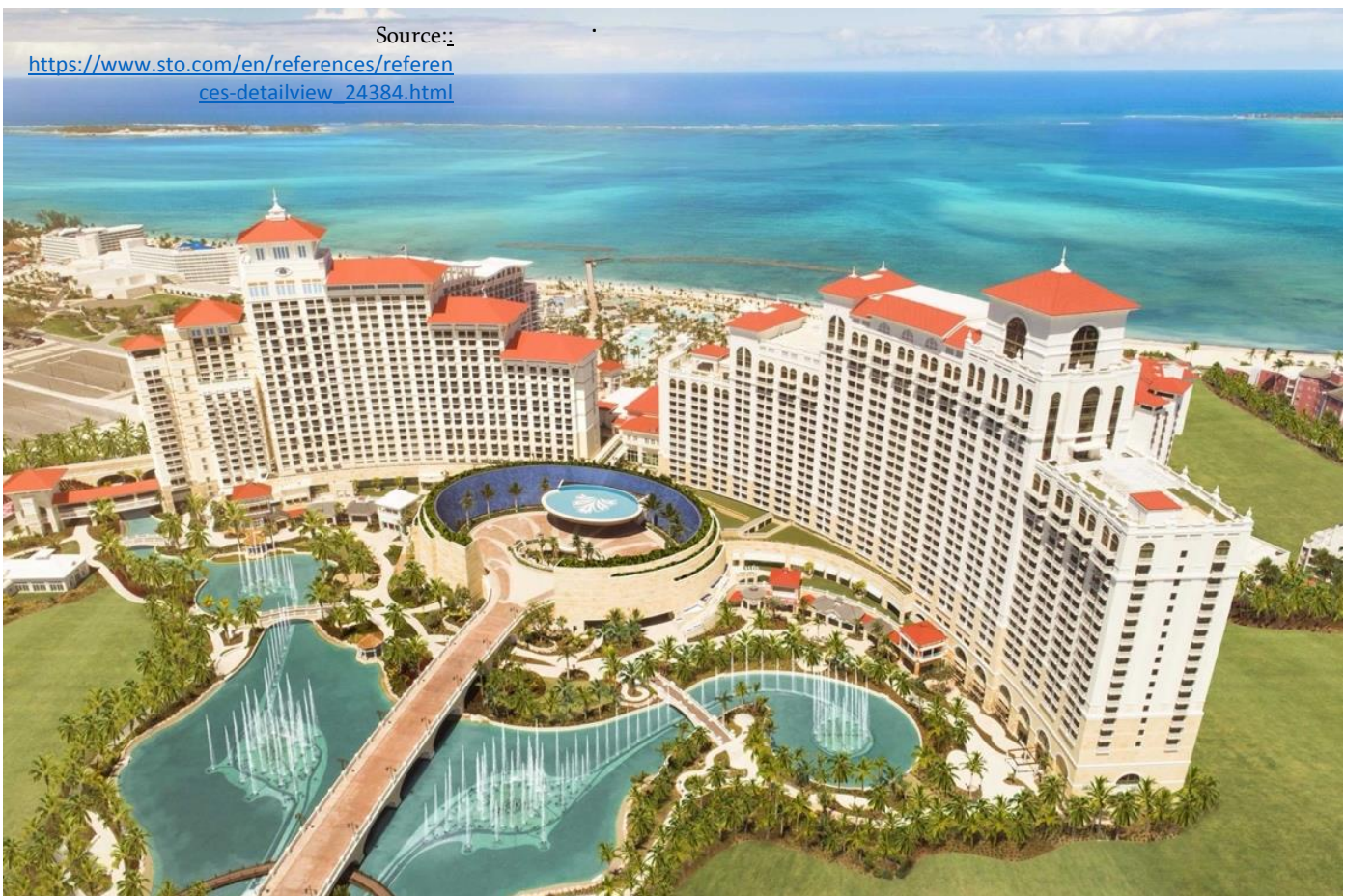
<https://www.ft.com/content/5a70f510-eae2-11e7-bd17-521324c81e23>

<https://www.ft.com/content/5a70f510-eae2-11e7-bd17-521324c81e23>

<https://ewnews.com/sarkis-wins>

complex (particularly “[in managing the shipping of materials and a labor force delayed work](#)”), and [stealing documents from the construction](#).

Later the same month, the BML appealed against the CSCEC also in a London court seeking compensation from the Chinese firm, which kept airing various counterclaims and refusing the amends. The project was eventually granted to [Chow Tai Fook Enterprise](#), based in Hong Kong, finalizing its opening in April 2016. Nevertheless, [the dispute between the BML and the CSCEC raged on in the Supreme Court of New York in 2017](#). Together with the previous accusations of [understaffing and the training of inexperienced workers](#), BML’s filed complaint claimed that [the CSCEC submitted hundreds of millions of dollars in fraudulent bills](#). The CSCEC representatives refused to comment on that and avoided the calls from the famous media outlets. The case is still ongoing in the New York court, [with minor victories of the BML](#).



## Corruption charges denied by the CSCEC in Pakistan

In 2016, China State Construction Engineering Corporation was awarded a new [contract worth 2.89 billion US dollars](#) to build the Karachi-to-Peshawar motorway within the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. The goal of the road construction project was to improve local transportation in the most populous regions in Pakistan. The [CSCEC managed to finish the work in 36 months](#). Despite its successful accomplishment, the project did not go without deficiencies.

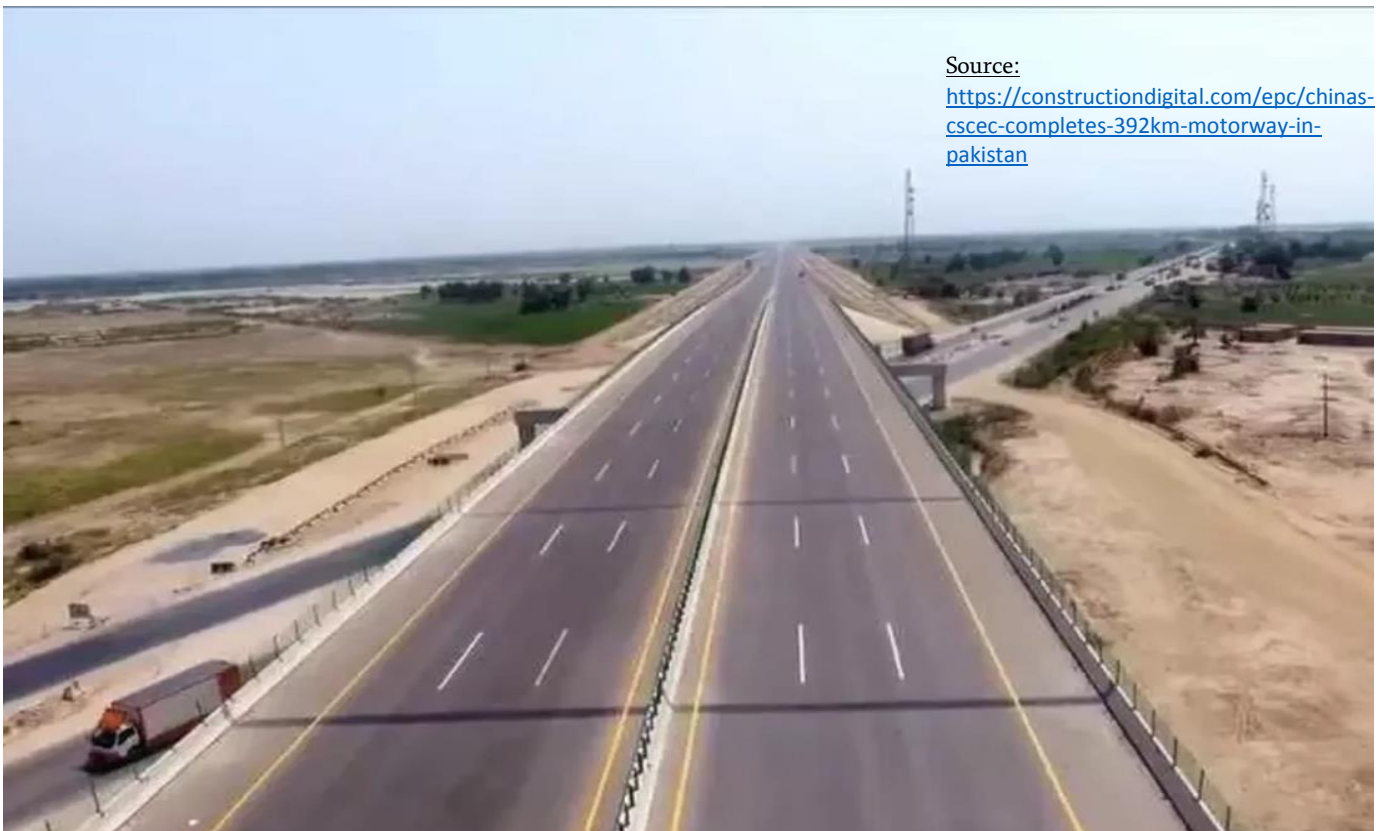
Pakistan's tender system is soaked with numerous examples of corruption. The CPEC is also a victim of these circumstances, as there is no fair competition ensured in the bid procedures within its small construction projects. Usually, the local government agencies favor shady deals with lucrative companies, and the CSCEC was not an exception. [Pakistani authorities exempted the company from the income taxes on all kinds of imports](#). Moreover, the Communication Minister, Murad Saeed, claimed that the [National Highway Authority \(NHA\) violated the procurement rules](#) as it signed the MoU worth Rs259bn (3343746980,00 USD) with the aforementioned Chinese company, making it the lowest bidder.

<https://www.globalconstructionreview.com/chinas-cscec-build-29bn-motorway-pakistan/>

<https://constructiondigital.com/epc/chinas-cscec-completes-392km-motorway-in-pakistan>

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1657399/uneasiness-scandals-bumpy-ride-cpec-road-people-cry-transparency>

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1464816>



Source:

<https://constructiondigital.com/epc/chinas-cscec-completes-392km-motorway-in-pakistan>

Later, the project costs increased to Rs292bn (3769784240,00 USD), causing enormous financial losses. He blamed the two Sharif brothers, one serving as a former development minister and the second working as the CSCEC director in Pakistan, for being involved in these fraudulent activities.

<https://www.globalconstructionreview.com/china-state-construction-rejects-pakistan-motorway/>

Minister's statements were challenged by the Chinese company, claiming that the [MoU was signed in 2013 and expired in 2014](#), a year prior to the launch of the bidding procedure of the CPEC project. Moreover, the CSCEC stated to be the lowest bidder after reducing the bid price following the Pakistani government's requirement. Overall, this scheme of corruption has not yet been deciphered and investigated.

## Fudan University in Hungary

Hungary is about to become the victim of the PRC's "debt trap" diplomacy thanks to the university project granted to China State Construction Engineering Corporation. The Hungarian government tried to maintain a close relationship with China on various economic, political, and academic levels. As a result, it invited the famous Chinese Fudan University to build a new local campus in the capital city of Budapest. The latter initially was planned to be constructed with financial assistance coming from [the Central Bank of Hungary](#). However, according to the documents leaked by the Direkt36, a Hungarian investigative journalism center, the university's building works are fully granted to the Chinese government, and the construction must be carried out as a Chinese project, meaning that the corrupted CSCEC has been granted to lead the works and Hungarian side has no right to retreat further. Moreover, the project was given to this particular company without proper public bidding procedures and in violation of EU regulations. Meanwhile, [China Development Bank is ready to cover 80% of the costs](#). The government has not made the official decision yet, but their covert meetings justify that they have no other choice but to agree to the PRC's terms.

<https://dailynewshungary.com/fudan-universitys-budapest-campus-to-be-constructed-by-chinese-company-with-chinese-loan/>

<https://chinaobservers.eu/the-fight-over-fudan-a-chinese-university-in-budapest-sparks-reckoning-for-sino-hungarian-relations/>

The total costs of the project amount to 1 billion Euros, while initially, the government of Hungary expected it to be 1.48 billion Euros..





Hungary was not financially capable of coping with [the expensive undertaking](#). Therefore, the government decided to take [the Chinese loan worth 1.5 billion Euros](#), which it will be repaying for 10-15 years. This occasion has stirred large protests in Budapest. Thousands of people rallied in the streets as they were concerned about the national security and corruption risks related to this construction. Moreover, they are worried about the enormous taxes they will have to pay to cover the Chinese loan released for the building of Fudan Budapest University.

<https://hungarianspectrum.org/tag/china-state-construction-engineering-corporation-ltd/?fbclid=IwAR1yqaVE4d188L5eVeitwrieTmXmVc2HgEyq1yLpIfG18H9THJDb4DATf4>

<https://thepienews.com/analysis/the-battle-over-hungarys-e1-5-billion-chinese-university-campus/>



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- იხილეთ სახელმწიფო შესყიდვა/ see public procurement DEP180000085 <http://tenders.procurement.gov.ge/public/?go=283346&lang=ge>
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## About Civic IDEA

Civic Initiative for Democratic and EuroAtlantic Choice – Civic IDEA is a nongovernmental organization based in Georgia, covering global issues.

The mandate of the organization serves the realization of Democratic and Euro-Atlantic choice, institutionalizing it and bringing to every citizen.

Democratic and Euro-Atlantic choice means the formation of free and fair state based on equality, where citizens equipped with the rule of law feel safe and secure.

Civic IDEA has been actively monitoring China's growing influence in Georgia.

Civic IDEA case studies Georgia, however, the reports are written with a comparative perspective of similar practices in other countries.

Today, China's activities in Georgia do not pose a direct, visible and immediate threat, but the ignorance of respectable and authoritative organizations, security services of our partner countries, numerous EU studies, recommendations and decisions by the Georgian government is another clear example of the disruption of foreign policy incentives and a vague vision concerning Georgia's long-term success and the development.



## Our Team

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Responsible for the report  
ANI KINTSURASHVILI,  
MARIAM USENASHVILI

<https://civiciidea.ge/en/about-us/>

