


NOTE TO THE GEORGIA – CHINA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

By **TINATIN KHIDASHELI**
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Following the Georgian PM Gharibashvili's visit to the PRC and meeting with the Chinese leader Xi Jinping and PM Li Qiang, Sino-Georgian relations have been upgraded to a strategic partnership prioritizing the deepening of bilateral relations in foreign affairs. The document, released on July 31, consists of four dimensions where cooperation will be strengthened and intensified. Those are


- Political
- Economic
- People to people and cultural cooperation, and
- International.

The [document](#)¹, released by the government of Georgia, contains several alarming narratives that tremendously influence not only the political but economic and soft power nature of the already established ties, making Georgia even more dependent on the PRC, strategically attached and shifting the country's foreign policy direction from the West to the East. It is significant that all this is happening to cause a sharp delay with regards to Georgia's integration to Euro-Atlantic alliances by making urgent and necessary decisions and the daily growth of anti-Western rhetoric. It is noteworthy that even the formal expectation of receiving the EU candidate status did not become a motivator for the authorities to postpone such a decision. In addition, **Sino-Georgian bilateral relations are being transformed into a strategic partnership format in the context of the current Great Power Competition in global politics, i.e., at a time when the ability of small states to cooperate equally successfully with large countries in competition mode is decreasing.**



Considering the specific model of the PRC's development and the mentioned context, the Georgian government risks undermining the country's democratic development and Euro-Atlantic perspective by deepening cooperation with China, all while seeking to extend its own power indefinitely.

It is symbolic that Georgia's interests are neglected in the very first paragraph of the document under the **political domain**, where it is stated that the parties confirm their respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of all countries. However, it is also mentioned that Georgia supports the principle of a united China, **while the strategic cooperation agreement does not address China's support for Georgia's territorial integrity**. This creates a situation in which Georgia, with 20% of its territory occupied, describes its cooperation with the state as strategic, even though the agreement's preamble does not even symbolically acknowledge the country's need for support in this matter.



The fact is that the People's Republic of China typically **abstains**² or **votes against**³ UN resolutions calling for the unconditional return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the occupied territories of Georgia.

¹ See the Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and Georgia on Establishing a Strategic Partnership: http://ge.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/202308/t20230807_11123383.htm

² See UNGA Adopting Georgia's IDP resolution: https://civil.ge/archives/547105?fbclid=IwAR11qQZ8v38IDYCF08gUgS_hRxyBVu4I7ZcK6SJVpvQyJUulgbUFjRth920

³ See UNGA's 2022 resolution on Georgia's IDPs: <https://twitter.com/LithuaniaUNNY/status/1534631491317153793?s=20&t=APZO4tCn9KAsR708uHdH-Q&fbclid=IwAR3afdJIIEOu1xts0NjInxgsbszXk5h3bIYTWvDcBOfpLsKg1JijUiZUY6M>

UNGA 2023 Resolution on Georgia's IDPs:

Voting Started		6/7/2023		3:48:20 PM	
Item 31 - A/77/L.73					
Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AFGHANISTAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAMEROON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FINLAND	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KUWAIT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEPAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAUDI ARABIA
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALGERIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CENTRAL AF...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GABON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAO PDR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW ZEALAND	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SERBIA
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ANTIGUA-BA...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CHINA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GERMANY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LESOTHO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NIGERIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SINGAPORE
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARMENIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMOROS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GREECE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIBYA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NORWAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLOVENIA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AUSTRALIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONGO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GRENADA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIECHTENSTEIN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OMAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOLOMON IS...
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AUSTRIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COSTA RICA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GUATEMALA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITHUANIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PAKISTAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOMALIA
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BAHAMAS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CROATIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GUINEA-BISS...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MADAGASCAR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PANAMA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOUTH SUDAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BAHRAIN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CUBA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GUYANA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MALAWI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PAPUA NEW ...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SPAIN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BANGLADESH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CYPRUS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HAITI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MALAYSIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARAGUAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SRI LANKA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BARBADOS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CZECHIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HONDURAS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MALDIVES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PERU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SUDAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BELARUS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DEM PR OF K...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HUNGARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MALI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PHILIPPINES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SURINAME
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BELIZE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DENMARK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MARSHALL IS...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PORTUGAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SWITZERLAND
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BENIN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DJIBOUTI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDONESIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MAURITANIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> QATAR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SYRIAN ARA...
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BHUTAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DOMINICA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRAN (ISLAMI...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MAURITIUS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REP OF KOREA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TAJIKISTAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOLIVIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DOMINICAN ...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRAQ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEXICO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REP OF MOL...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THAILAND
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOSNIA-HER...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECUADOR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRELAND	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MICRONESIA...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ROMANIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TIMOR-LESTE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTSWANA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EGYPT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ISRAEL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MONACO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUSSIAN FED...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TOGO
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BRAZIL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EL SALVADOR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ITALY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MONGOLIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RWANDA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TONGA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BRUNEI DAR...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EQUATORIAL...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JAMAICA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MONTENEGRO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAINT KITTS...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRINIDAD-TO...
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BULGARIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ERITREA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JAPAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOROCCO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAINT LUCIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TUNISIA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BURKINA FASO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ESTONIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JORDAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOZAMBIQUE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAINT VINCE...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TURKMENIST...
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BURUNDI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ESWATINI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KAZAKHSTAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MYANMAR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAMOA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TUVALU
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CABO VERDE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHIOPIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KENYA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAMIBIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAN MARINO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TÜRKIYE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAMBODIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FIJI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KIRIBATI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAURU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAO TOME-P...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UGANDA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN FAVOUR: 100		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGAINST: 9		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ABSTENTION: 59	

UNGA 2022 Resolution on Georgia's IDPs:

Templates: GA (General Assembly)
General Assembly: 78th Plenary meeting

Vote Name:

Item 36 - Draft resolution A/76/L.62
Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the
Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia

Yes

95

No

12

Abstain

56

Vote Time: 6/8/2022 3:54:56 PM

Y AFGHANISTAN	Y DOMINICA	Y LIECHTENSTEIN	Y SAMOA
Y ALBANIA	Y DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Y LITHUANIA	Y SAN MARINO
A ALGERIA	Y ECUADOR	Y LUXEMBOURG	SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE
Y ANDORRA	A EGYPT	A MADAGASCAR	A SAUDI ARABIA
A ANGOLA	A EL SALVADOR	Y MALAWI	A SENEGAL
Y ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	A MALAYSIA	A SERBIA
A ARGENTINA	A ERITREA	Y MALDIVES	SEYCHELLES
ARMENIA	Y ESTONIA	MALI	Y SIERRA LEONE
Y AUSTRALIA	Y ESWATINI	Y MALTA	Y SINGAPORE
Y AUSTRIA	A ETHIOPIA	Y MARSHALL ISLANDS	Y SLOVAKIA
Y AZERBAIJAN	A FUJI	A MAURITANIA	Y SLOVENIA
Y BAHAMAS	Y FINLAND	Y MAURITIUS	Y SOLOMON ISLANDS
A BAHRAIN	Y FRANCE	Y MEXICO	SOMALIA
A BANGLADESH	GABON	Y MICRONESIA (FEDERATED STATES OF)	A SOUTH AFRICA
Y BARBADOS	Y GAMBIA	Y MONACO	SOUTH SUDAN
N BELARUS	Y GEORGIA	A MONGOLIA	Y SPAIN
Y BELGIUM	Y GERMANY	Y MONTENEGRO	A SRI LANKA
Y BELIZE	Y GHANA	A MOROCCO	N SUDAN
Y BENIN	Y GREECE	A MOZAMBIQUE	Y SURINAME
A BHUTAN	Y GRENADA	Y MYANMAR	Y SWEDEN
A BOLIVIA	Y GUATEMALA	NAMBIA	A SWITZERLAND
Y BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	Y GUINEA	NAURU	N SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
A BOTSWANA	Y GUINEA-BISSAU	A NEPAL	A TAJIKISTAN
A BRAZIL	Y GUYANA	Y NETHERLANDS	A THAILAND
A BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	Y HAITI	Y NEW ZEALAND	Y TIMOR-LESTE
Y BULGARIA	Y HONDURAS	N NICARAGUA	A TOGO
BURKINA FASO	Y HUNGARY	NIGER	Y TONGA
N BURUNDI	Y ICELAND	NIGERIA	Y TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
CABO VERDE	A INDIA	Y NORTH MACEDONIA	A TUNISIA
A CAMBODIA	A INDONESIA	Y NORWAY	TURKMENISTAN
A CAMEROON	A IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)	A OMAN	Y TUVALU
Y CANADA	A IRAQ	A PAKISTAN	Y TÜRKIYE
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	Y IRELAND	Y PALAU	A UGANDA
CHAD	A ISRAEL	Y PANAMA	Y UKRAINE
Y CHILE	Y ITALY	Y PAPUA NEW GUINEA	A UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
N CHINA	Y JAMAICA	A PARAGUAY	Y UNITED KINGDOM
Y COLOMBIA	Y JAPAN	Y PERU	UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
COMOROS	A JORDAN	Y PHILIPPINES	Y UNITED STATES
A CONGO	A KAZAKHSTAN	Y POLAND	Y URUGUAY
Y COSTA RICA	A KENYA	Y PORTUGAL	A UZBEKISTAN
Y COTE D'IVOIRE	Y KIRIBATI	A QATAR	Y VANUATU
Y CROATIA	A KUWAIT	A REPUBLIC OF KOREA	VENEZUELA
N CUBA	A KYRGYZSTAN	Y REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	N VIET NAM
Y CYPRUS	N LAO PDR	Y ROMANIA	A YEMEN
Y CZECH REPUBLIC	Y LATVIA	N RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Y ZAMBIA
N DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA	A LEBANON	RWANDA	N ZIMBABWE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	LESOTHO	Y SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS	
Y DENMARK	Y LIBERIA	Y SAINT LUCIA	
Y DJIBOUTI	A LIBYA	Y SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	

Other than already mentioned, under the political domain

- The parties express their readiness to **exchange experience in the field of governance** to ensure common development and prosperity.
- The parties point out the need to expand connections between central and local government bodies, as well as **political groups and parties, to share experiences and strengthen relations in different directions**.
- Two sides acknowledge the importance of strengthening relations and cooperation between the legislative bodies in many directions and at different levels, **as well as the importance of communication and consultation in relevant regional and international organizations**.



The Chinese development model combines authoritarianism and a one-party political system with the principles of a modern market economy. This model is fundamentally incompatible with Georgia's choice of the European model of democratic development, as enshrined in the country's constitution.

Priorities under the **economic domain** contain another set of concerns. In particular, Georgia got a promise of **preferential lending from Chinese banks for the implementation of social and infrastructure projects**, as well as more cooperation “in the areas of transportation, communications, infrastructure modernization, development and strengthening of the Middle Corridor, digital technologies, manufacturing, upgrading and expansion of railway networks, agriculture and food safety, water resources, environment protection, fighting desertification, water desalination, conformity assessment, usage of Georgia’s transit infrastructure for smooth export of Chinese products to Western markets, the exchange of know-how and technology as well as human resource training.”

This particular agreement over a “preferential” lending from Chinese Banks was elaborated right before **the visit**⁴ of the Georgian delegation to China at the multiple **meetings**⁵ between AIIB and Georgian government representatives in Tbilisi on July 27, 2023. You can see previous cooperation between the two in our **report**⁶.

As for the more trade and more economic cooperation promise of the agreement, we have **watched** the Georgian PM’s long speech and propositions to the Chinese business community in building a **new international airport in Tbilisi**⁷, **the long-awaited Anaklia Deep-Sea port, and several Hydroelectric power stations**. The speech at the Georgian-Chinese business **forum**⁸ was preceded by another **decision** of the Georgian government⁹. July 27, 2023, the preselection of the candidates for the Anaklia Deep-Sea port tender was postponed for another two months, right before the visit to China. It is no secret that all the postponements and “adjustments” to the bid are predetermined by the Georgian government’s and, in particular, PM’s commitments to Chinese companies, and a high-level visit to China affected the decision-making schedule.

Judging from the developments and statements, we expect the winner to be selected and revealed during the already announced IVth Silk Road **Forum** in Georgia¹⁰ at the end of October in the presence of

⁴ See information regarding PM Gharibashvili’s visit to China: <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2023/2910>

⁵ See article “AIIB and Georgian Government agree to strengthen and deepen cooperation seeking opportunities to expand infrastructure investment portfolio of AIIB in Georgia”: <https://commerzant.ge/en/news/business/aiib-and-georgian-government-agree-to-strengthen-and-deepen-cooperation-seeking-opportunities-to-expand-infrastructure-investment-portfolio-of-aiib-in-georgia>

⁶ See Civic IDEA’s report “Georgia’s Foreign Debt Policies: PRC’s bank among Georgia’s top creditors”: <https://civicidea.ge/en/georgias-foreign-debt-policies-prcs-bank-among-georgias-top-creditors/new/>

⁷ See Georgia’s Prime Minister’s speech at the China-Georgia Business Forum: <https://www.gov.ge/news/363278>

⁸ See information regarding Georgia-China business forum at: <https://www.gov.ge/news/363224>

⁹ See the Georgian government’s decision on The public-private cooperation project of the new deep-sea port of Anaklia: https://www.economy.ge/uploads/files/2017/anaklia_deep_sea_port_development_agency/notice_of_amendment_to_soi_2_geo.pdf

¹⁰ See information about the IVth Silk Road Forum at: <https://www.businessinsider.ge/ka/oktombershi-tbilisis-abreshumis-gzis-forumi-gaimarteba>

high-level Chinese dignitaries and around 2,000 delegates. The event will be used as an occasion for overshadowing developments related to the European Union Commission's opinion about Georgia's candidate status expected for October as well.

Another interesting part of the agreement is **the people-to-people and cultural cooperation Domain**. Here, one can read the whole spectrum of soft power operations used and exercised by the Chinese worldwide. Starting with cooperation in the press and media, establishing cultural centers, and finishing with the effective operation of Confucius Institutes. It is to be underlined that we already have four official Confucius Institutes in Georgia and several cultural and educational centers. *(For more information about this issue, see [reports](#) by Civic IDEA.¹¹)*

The agreement continues two of the following articles:

- The parties will help universities to implement [practical cooperation similar to joint training programs](#). Universities will be encouraged to fully use high-quality digital educational resources and consider them in collaborative online and offline formats. China and Georgia will promote the mutual exchange of students and joint development using government scholarship instruments and other means.
- The parties attach importance to exchange and cooperation programs for language learning, encourage schools of both countries to study Chinese and Georgian languages and implement and retrain exchange programs for language teachers. [They will also further support the development of Confucius Institutes \(classrooms\)](#).



When we read these seemingly harmless provisions, we must remember that we are talking about the People's Republic of China, ruled by the Communist Party, where academic freedom is limited, and the mentioned educational programs are subject to official censorship.

Civic IDEA has written much about the Chinese influence operations in Georgia in Academia, whether universities or the [Academy of Science](#).¹² All our reports are available for all interested at www.civicidea.ge

Finally, the last part of the agreement deals with the **international domain**. In a multifaceted statement over mutually beneficial cooperation under the UN, one can quickly identify the main trajectory of Chinese diplomacy. Article 4.1. reads as follows:

“strengthen coordination and collaboration in regional and international affairs, jointly uphold true multilateralism, firmly uphold the UN-centered international system, the international order based on international law, and the basic norms governing international relations underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and promote the establishment of a new type of international relations.”

Under the international domain chapter of the agreement, the government of Georgia committed itself to adhere to the

- one-China principle,
- supports the BRI,
- Global Development Initiative (GDI),
- Global Security Initiative (GSI), and
- the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI).

Such a blank commitment from a country that has constitutionally established foreign policy priorities, joining NATO and EU, is highly irresponsible and largely confusing.

¹¹ See Civic IDEA's reports regarding Chinese influence activities in Georgia's academia: <https://civicidea.ge/en/2-report-on-georgian-chinese-affair/new/>

¹² See Civic IDEA's report "National Academy of Sciences – Another Cause of Concern in Sino-Georgian Relations" at: <https://civicidea.ge/en/national-academy-of-sciences-another-cause-of-concern-in-sino-georgian-relations/new/>

The participation of as many countries as possible, including Georgia, in these three initiatives, holds strategic importance for the People's Republic of China. It's important to remember that **these documents are designed to reduce the foreign political influence of the United States of America and increase China's geopolitical sway**. This particularly concerns Georgia as it threatens its strategic ties with the United States of America, including American security assistance programs.

As an example, one can think of GSI, launched by President Xi Jinping in April 2022. The document represents a set of broad general principles that reiterate China's foreign policy and security statements three months after the Russian Aggression in Ukraine. The document was soon evaluated as China's international proclamation "challenging the Western-led global governance system" and advocating for an exclusivist approach, where the UN is seen and asserted as the only strong and able institution, ignoring the role of all other institutions, including NATO.

As for the BRI, it was on August 1st, 2023, that yet another European country confirmed to drop out from membership. "Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's government confirmed for the first time this week that it's seeking a way out of its four-year-old membership of China's Belt and Road Initiative. The confirmation comes in the form of a newspaper interview with Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto, shortly after Meloni's meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden in the White House." reports [politico](#) from Brussels¹³. In the same article, Georgia's strategic decision on allying with China is called a "blow to the EU." This is exactly how we see the move. Three short months ahead of the EU Commission review of Georgia's performance towards 12 point reform plan for gaining EU Candidate status, PM Gharibashvili's statements on the exchange of governance practices with authoritarian China and building strong cooperation with the Chinese Communist Party after his ruling Georgian Dream party's split from European Socialists is rather blunt and straight forward move that expressed in the words of one of his admirer philosopher "sends a clear message to Europe. If you are not ready to accept us as we are, there is always China".

 It is also important to note that the signing of the strategic partnership with China and reaffirming commitment to GSI is taking place against the backdrop of the fact that PM Gharibashvili did not attend the NATO Vilnius summit (2 weeks before his one-week-long voyage to the PRC). It was preceded by the appalling statement at the 2023 Globsec forum in Bratislava regarding Russia's decision to launch a full-scale invasion in Ukraine being "partly" motivated by Ukraine's NATO aspirations. In his statement, he was talking in line with the GSI's 4th commitment to taking "legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously," meaning NATO's open-door policy to be the legitimate security concern of Russia to be respected and understood.

A strategic partnership with Communist China, amid the ambiguous and harmful policies pursued by the Georgian government regarding NATO and the West in general, contradicts the country's strategic and foreign policy goals set by the Constitution and threatens national security.

Civic IDEA, as the leading organization in Georgia investigating Chinese influence operations in the region, will actively observe the development of events. Of course, diversification of foreign partners remains a priority for the country; however, at the same time, we are aware of the risks and misconduct related to Georgia's cooperation with China in both infrastructure, economic and educational sectors, which we have been widely investigating for already five years. PM Gharibashvili's and former PM Ivanishvili's personal sentiments towards the PRC, close ties with the Chinese elite, and work experience in a scandalous Chinese company, CEFC, were disclosed by us over the years, along with dozens of other mishandlings and abuse in Georgia-PRC relations, and we will continue monitoring, reporting and building resilience.

¹³ See article, "Georgia wants a way out. Georgia wants in" at: <https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/china-watcher/georgia-wants-a-way-out-georgia-wants-in/>