Georgia EU Trade Relations

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OVERVIEW

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia has developed strong trade relations with several countries. Through the free trade regimes, Georgian products have access to one-third of the world consumer market, reaching more than 2.3 billion consumers.

Georgia currently has free trade regimes with the European Union, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Turkey (2008), China (2018), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, and Hong Kong. Georgia also has bilateral free trade agreements with Russia, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.

The European Union recognised Georgia as an independent sovereign state in 1992, marking the start of extensive collaboration. The European Union and Georgia signed the partnership and cooperation agreement in 1996, which entered into force in 1999. The agreement's goals were to support trade relations between the countries and ensure stable economic cooperation.

Georgia has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 2000.

GEORGIA'S FOREGIN TRADE

Georgia's major trading partner countries for exports are CIS countries, including Azerbaijan, Russian Federation, Armenia, Bulgaria and Ukraine, as well as the European Union, the United States, and Canada. Georgia imports products from Turkey, Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, China, the United States, and the European Union.



Source: Geostat

Turkey remains Georgia's largest trading partner with \$1.6bn in 2020 and \$2.1bn in 2021, followed by Russia with \$1.3bn in 2020 and \$1.6bn in 2021, China \$1.2bn in 2020 and \$1.5bn in 2021, Azerbaijan \$934.5M in 2020 and \$1.1bn in 2021, and the U.S. \$620.9M in 2020 and \$819.9 in 2021. They are followed by Armenia with a trade turnover of \$610M in 2020 and \$675M in 2021; Ukraine – \$607.2M and \$758.9 in 2021; Germany – \$466.9M in 2020 and \$553.2 in 2021; Bulgaria – \$422.7M in 2020 and \$432.6 in 2021; and Italy– \$216M in 2020 and \$306.6 in 2021.

In 2021, Georgia's foreign trade turnover increased by 25.6% YoY, equaling \$14.3bn, according to the 2021 express data of the National Statistics Office (Geostat).

Exports from Georgia increased by 26.9% annually to \$4.2bn, while imports rose by 25.1% to \$10.1bn. Meanwhile, the trade deficit was \$5.8bn, 40.7% of total turnover.

Georgia's 2020 trade turnover had decreased by 14.8% compared to 2019.

China tops the list of largest trading partners by exports with \$476.3M in 2020 and \$615.5 in 2021, followed by Azerbaijan with \$441.3M in 2020 and \$531.7 in 2021, Russia \$441M in 2020 and \$610M in 2021, Bulgaria \$312.4M in 2020 and \$254M in 2021, and Ukraine \$217.4M in 2020 and \$307.3M in 2021.

Turkey, Russia, China, the U.S. and Azerbaijan are the top trading partners of Georgia in terms of imports: Turkey: \$1.4bn in 2020 and \$1.8bn in 2021; Russia: \$887.2M in 2020 and \$1.02bn in 2021, China \$708.7M in 2020 and \$864.8M in 2021, the U.S.: \$540.9M in 2020 and \$625M in 2021, and Azerbaijan: \$493.2M in 2020 and \$604.3M in 2021.



Source: Geostat

Georgia's exports rely mainly on low value-added agriculture and mineral products, with the main exports being metals, motor cars, fertilisers, nuts, wine, and mineral water to Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Canada, and the United States. Georgia mainly exports mineral products, chemical products, and vegetables to the European Union.



Source: Geostat

In 2021, Georgian external trade turnover amounted to \$14.31bn, which is an increase of 25.6% year-on-year, according to the express data from the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat).

The value of exports grew by 26.9% and equalled \$4.24bn, while imports also increased 25.1%, reaching \$10bn. The trade deficit, a measure of the negative balance of trade in which a country's imports exceed its exports, totalled \$5.83bn, and its share in trade turnover was 40.7%.

See APPENDIX 1 for the 2021 Georgian exports by category.

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Georgian exports volume May 2021 - May 2022:

Source: Trading Economics, data from the National Bank of Georgia

According to the January edition of the World Bank's report <u>Global Economic Prospects 2022</u>, the Georgian economy is projected to grow 5.5% in 2022 and 5% in 2023.

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GEORGIA – EU TRADE RELATIONS

Currently, Georgia and the European Union's cooperation is within the scope of the <u>European</u> <u>Neighborhood Policy</u> and its eastern dimension, the <u>Eastern Partnership</u>.

On 27 June 2014, Georgian and the European Union signed an Association Agreement that entered into force on 1 July 2016. According to the Association Agreement, Georgia received a preferential trade regime under the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) provisions, which offered Georgia access to the European Single Market and stimulated an easy flow of goods and services between Georgia and the EU.

Before the DCFTA, Georgia benefited from the unilateral Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) with the European Union, which lasted until 31 December 2016 to allow a transition period for businesses to adjust to the new preferential trade regime of DCFTA. Under the current Generalised Scheme of Preferences, Georgia qualified for a special incentive rewarding sustainable development and good governance (GSP+) with better access to the European market.

In September 2017, entered into force free trade regime with Norway and Iceland and in May 2018 with Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement (DCFTA) with the European Union

The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement (DCFTA) with the European Union is integral to the Association Agreement (Chapter IV - Trade and Trade Issues). It includes the mechanism of economic integration with the EU and opens the EU internal market for Georgia.

Unlike other free trade agreements signed by Georgia, the DCFTA provides for the liberalization of trade in both goods and services. In addition, the DCFTA covers a wide range of trade-related issues such as food safety, competition policy, intellectual property protection, financial services, etc. The DCFTA also allows the gradual approximation of Georgian trade legislation to the EU legislation.

The DCFTA allows Georgia to gradually receive three of the four freedoms of the EU internal market: the free movement of goods, services and capital. The fourth freedom, the free movement of people, is facilitated by the visa liberalisation process.

With the entry into force of the DCFTA, goods and services produced in Georgia can enter the European market. Free movement of goods and services increases Georgia's export potential making Georgia an attractive country for investors, which will lead to an increase in investment flows and the creation of new jobs.

The full implementation of the DCFTA has facilitated the emergence of new enterprises and



export products, the provision of safe and harmless products to Georgian consumers, and the development of public administration bodies under European best practices. This ultimately had a positive impact on the country's economic growth and development.

It should be noted that during the DCFTA negotiations, the Georgian side reached an unprecedented agreement with the EU on tariff liberalization, as all products of Georgian origin that meet certain conditions of food and product safety standards can enter the EU market at zero customs tariffs.

Trade-in goods rules

According to the Agreement, the customs duty on imports of goods originating in the EU is abolished in Georgia.

The following measures are defined for the products imported from Georgia to the EU:

1. "Entry Price" - Ad Valorem Free

At the same time, an ad hoc customs duty is abolished on products of Georgian origin, which is added to the above-mentioned group of 28 goods in the normal trade mode.

2. Anti-Circumvention Mechanism

Two hundred seventy-seven tariff lines for agricultural and food processing products (3% of the total tariff list (nomenclature)) are subject to an anti-counterfeiting mechanism. The mechanism is as follows, namely:

When the import of one or more products subject to the anti-counterfeiting mechanism reaches 70% of the fixed quantity from the beginning of the calendar year, the EU shall notify Georgia of the volume of imports of a specific product. Georgia has the opportunity to provide the EU with a substantiated (e.g., increase in production volume, low productivity, etc.) justification for possible import overruns. In such a case, Georgia may import more than the number of products provided for in the mechanism into the EU without customs duties.

3. Tariff Quota

The Agreement prohibits using tariff-rate quotas (TRQ) on imports and exports. However, there are a few exceptions for certain sensitive agricultural goods on imports into the European Union.

TRQ on garlic

An annual TRQ is applied to the import of garlic into the EU. Under the Agreement, the EU accepts imports from Georgia, amounting to 220 tonnes of garlic per year. Imports included in the total are determined on a first-come, first-served basis.

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Rules of origin of goods

For the goods to enjoy a free trade regime, they must meet the criteria for the origin of the goods, which are defined by the relevant protocol.

These criteria include the minimum requirements for the processing of goods and the maximum quantity of material required to produce goods that must be met for the goods to have the status of products made in the country.

Sanitary and phytosanitary measures

The Agreement provided the promotion of trade in products subject to sanitary and phytosanitary measures. At the same time, protect the health of humans, animals and plants through the following measures:

- Full transparency of trade-related sanitary and phytosanitary measures;
- Approximation of Georgian legislation with the relevant EU legislation;
- Recognition of animal and plant health status and introduction of a regional principle;
- Enhanced cooperation between Georgia and the European Union in the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

The Agreement also aims to establish a common approach to animal welfare between Georgia and the EU.

Customs and trade

The DCFTA agreement deals with cooperation in customs matters and transparency of procedures.

The goal of DCFTA is to bring the Georgian legal framework closer to the Council of the European Union Regulation of 12 October 1992 (EU Customs Code). This implies the introduction of similar customs procedures in force in the Georgian customs system of the European Union, which aims to create a common customs regulation environment for Georgian and EU business representatives.

Since the implementation of DCFTA, Georgia's customs regulations have become closer to the EU's progressive regulations. Close cooperation between the Georgian and EU customs administrations will facilitate export/import procedures between Georgia and the EU. Georgia also gradually brought the rules governing intellectual property protection at the border in line with the relevant European regulations and directives to create more favourable conditions in the Georgian market, both for local consumers of intellectual property goods and owners of intellectual property rights.

Service trade and e-commerce

The Agreement covers financial, postal and courier, electronic communications and maritime



transport services and defines the terms of provision of these services.

The Financial Directives cover the banking and insurance sectors, the securities market, market infrastructure, payment systems and anti-money laundering measures.

The Telecommunications Directives cover the framework legislation governing electronic communications networks and providers, the regulation of access to and interconnection in electronic communications, the terms of universal service, the conditions for the protection of personal information, and the regulation of radiofrequency policies.

The Postal and Courier Services Directives cover regulations for the development of the postal market and the strengthening of competition in it.

International Maritime Transport Directives cover maritime safety, flag usage conditions, port regulation, ship monitoring, accident investigation, passenger transport liabilities, technical and operational rules, and maritime safety.

The Agreement stipulates that in case of successful implementation of the legislative approximation in the field of financial, postal, telecommunication and maritime transport by Georgia, it is possible to liberalise further the relevant EU market for Georgian service providers.

According to the Annex to the Agreement on Liberalization of the Service Market, Georgia receives better access to the EU market than specified in the World Trade Organization (WTO +).

As a result, exporting services from Georgia to the EU has become much more manageable.

Intellectual property rights

The Agreement sets out the commitment to the adequate and effective implementation of international agreements in intellectual property. Georgia and the European Union are signatories, including the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). In addition, the requirements of the agreement supplement and further specify the rights and obligations of the parties to the TRIPS Agreement.

The Parties also reaffirm their commitment to effectively implement the international agreements administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO / ISMO), to which Georgia has already acceded.

The Agreement sets out the mandatory standards related to intellectual property rights that must be met by all categories of intellectual property under the articles of the Agreement, such as copyright and related rights, trademarks, and geographical indications. , Norms related to data protection related to the marketing authorisation for medicinal and plant protection products.

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The Agreement also regulates the procedural norms related to the enforcement of intellectual property rights. It defines the judiciary's powers in this regard and the measures to be taken by them.

The Agreement also briefly sets out customs cooperation related to protecting intellectual property rights and the effective exchange of information. The obligation to approximate EU legislation in terms of customs is given in the Customs Chapter and the relevant Annex.

Georgian legislation has been finally set in full compliance with EU legislation, which provides high-quality protection for intellectual property rights holders. The existence of an effective system of protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in the Agreement will facilitate the production and commercialization of innovative and creative products.

Trade-related provisions in the energy field

The Agreement includes commitments to free trade in energy resources and free transit between the parties.

As energy trading, unlike other sectors, involves the transfer of energy through a defined transmission transport infrastructure from the supplier to the destination and is a naturally monopolistic activity, free transit is a key prerequisite for energy security.

For energy transmission (transit) activities to be transparent and non-discriminatory and for all interested parties to be able to use these services in the face of competition, this Agreement obliges the parties to protect and ensure the free flow of energy products into their territories, take all appropriate measures to prevent any form of misappropriation of energy products during the transit process, strengthen the role of an independent regulatory body, which ensures the regulation of these activities by creating a transparent tariff methodology necessary for the implementation of the service.

Transparency

The Agreement ensures the transparency of the trade regulatory system by ensuring public access to legislation and regulations and their drafts. It also establishes a mechanism to ensure effective communication between the parties and provides for the existence of judicial, arbitral or administrative bodies where it will be possible to appeal the measures taken.

Trade and sustainable development

The Agreement aims to develop international trade in such a way as to fulfil the key objectives of sustainable development. Basic labour principles and rights must be respected, such as achieving decent working conditions.

Overall assessment of the DCFTA

Since 2014, the European Union has in place Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, establishing DCFTAs as economic and trade pillars of the EU Association Agreements of the European Union with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

As small open economies, all three DCFTA countries are critically dependent on foreign trade for economic growth and development. The launching of DCFTA with the European Union has positively impacted the further development of the Georgian trade relationships with the EU. Both imports and exports have grown, even though the export and import growth rate is lower than that of CIS countries.

The Georgian DCFTA laid the foundation for the modernization of the economy of Georgia, including systemic reforms that are necessary for the complete integration of Georgia into the EU. In the long term, DCFTAs can be expected to help modernize the Georgian economy and help it become more competitive, provided the envisioned reforms are successfully implemented.

Georgia – EU trade in goods and services

The European Union is Georgia's leading trading partner, taking up a 21.5% share of Georgia's total trade, and the EU continuously opens its market to more Georgia goods. It is followed by Turkey (15%) and Russia (11.4%).

According to the European Commission, the EU trade with Georgia accounts for 0.1% of its total trade, with a turnover of €2.8 billion in 2021, while the EU exports to Georgia amounted to €2 billion in the same year.

The key export products are chemical, mineral products, machinery and appliances, and agricultural products (hazelnuts, dried and fresh fruit, wine) and raw materials (copper ore, ferroalloys), as reported by the 2021 data of the National Statistics Office of Georgia. The key EU imports from Georgia include mineral products, chemical products, and vegetables. The EU imported goods to the value of €812 million from Georgia in 2021.



Georgia – EU trade in goods, source: European Commission

2019 – EU imports – €0.7bn 2019 – EU exports - €2bn 2019 – balance - €1.4bn 2020 – EU imports - €0.8bn 2020 – EU exports - €1.6bn 2020 – balance - €0.8bn

2021 – EU imports - €0.8bn 2021 – EU exports - €2bn 2021 – balance - €1.2bn



Trade in services, € billions

Georgia - EU trade in services, source: European Commission

2018 – EU imports – €0.5bn 2018 – EU exports - €0.8bn 2018 – balance - €0.3bn

2019 – EU imports - €0.6bn 2019 – EU exports - €0.8bn 2019 – balance - €0.2bn

2020 – EU imports - €0.3bn 2020 – EU exports - €0.6bn 2020 – balance - €0.3bn



Foreign direct investment, € billions

Foreign Direct Investment, source - European Commission

2020 – Inward stocks - €0.2bn 2020 – Outward stocks – €1.8bn 2020 – Balance - €1.6bn

In 2020, EU exports to Georgia amounted to €1.587bn. The key export products are mainly non-agricultural products such as products of the chemical or allied industries, machinery, appliances, and mineral products.

The key EU imports from Georgia included mainly industrial products such as mineral products. Additionally, agricultural products, especially vegetable products, foodstuffs, beverages, tobacco, textiles and textile articles, and chemical or allied industries products. According to Eurostat, the EU imported goods to the value of €763M from Georgia in 2020.

In December 2021, the European Commission added Georgia to the list of approved countries to export snails to the European Market. This decision was taken within the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) framework between Georgia and the European Union, allowing Georgia to export snails and frog's legs to the European Union, among other food products.

SOURCES

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- Foreign Trade Up by 25.6% in 2021, Civil.ge
- Georgia starts exporting snails to European Market, EU Neighbours East
- APPENDIX 1: Trading Economics, Georgia, Exports by Category

APPENDIX 1. Georgian exports by category in 2021 (over \$1M):

Georgia exports by category	Value	Year
Ores slag and ash	\$861.31M	2021
Beverages, spirits and vinegar	\$599.04M	2021
Iron and steel	\$555.93M	2021
Vehicles other than railway, tramway	\$496.80M	2021
Edible fruits, nuts, peel of citrus fruit, melons	\$217.24M	2021
Fertilizers	\$119.92M	2021
Pharmaceutical products	\$109.11M	2021
Articles of apparel, knit or crocheted	\$109.07M	2021
Pearls, precious stones, metals, coins	\$102.17M	2021
Machinery, nuclear reactors, boilers	\$99.28M	2021
Electrical, electronic equipment	\$98.88M	2021
Live animals	\$62.48M	2021
Optical, photo, technical, medical apparatus	\$59.67M	2021
Tobacco and manufactures tobacco substitutes	\$56.39M	2021
Plastics	\$44.65M	2021
Wood and articles of wood, wood charcoal	\$42.04M	2021
Residues, wastes of food industry, animal fodder	\$38.62M	2021
Copper	\$38.34M	2021
Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products	\$35.40M	2021
Inorganic chemicals, precious metal compound, isotope	\$35.15M	2021
Aluminum	\$33.63M	2021
Meat and edible meat offal	\$30.55M	2021
Essential oils, perfumes, cosmetics, toileterie	\$29.84M	2021

APPENDIX 1. Georgian exports by category in 2021 (over \$1M):

Georgia exports by category	Value	Year
Vegetable, fruit, nut food preparations	\$28.95M	2021
Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	\$28.56M	2021
Articles of iron or steel	\$27.23M	2021
Paper and paperboard, articles of pulp, paper and board	\$22.13M	2021
Articles of apparel, not knit or crocheted	\$18.89M	2021
Wadding, felt, nonwovens, yarns, twine, cordage	\$17.18M	2021
Rubbers	\$17.15M	2021
Animal, vegetable fats and oils, cleavage products	\$16.95M	2021
Coffee, tea, mate and spices	\$16.30M	2021
Miscellaneous edible preparations	\$13.68M	2021
Other made textile articles, sets, worn clothing	\$13.66M	2021
Commodities not specified according to kind	\$12.17M	2021
Lead	\$10.14M	2021
Miscellaneous chemical products	\$8.75M	2021
Furniture, lighting signs, prefabricated buildings	\$6.76M	2021
Dairy products, eggs, honey, edible products	\$6.72M	2021
Salt, sulphur, earth, stone, plaster, lime and cement	\$5.54M	2021
Glass and glassware	\$5.50M	2021
Tanning, dyeing extracts, tannins, derivatives, pigments	\$5.27M	2021
Oil seed, oleagic fruits, grain, seed, fruits	\$5.26M	2021
Aircraft, spacecraft	\$5.22M	2021
Footwear, gaiters and the like,	\$5.07M	2021
Stone, plaster, cement, asbestos, mica or similar materials	\$5.01M	2021

APPENDIX 1. Georgian exports by category in 2021 (over \$1M):

Georgia exports by category	Value	Year
Milling products, malt, starches, inlin, wheat gluten	\$4.67M	2021
Railway, tramway locomotives, rolling stock, equipment	\$4.28M	2021
Miscellanneous manufactured articles	\$4.05M	2021
Manmade filaments	\$3.67M	2021
Soaps, lubricants, waxes, candles, modelling pastes	\$3.52M	2021
Miscellaneous articles of base metal	\$3.32M	2021
Live trees, plants, bulbs, roots, cut flowers	\$3.07M	2021
Cocoa and cocoa preparations	\$3.01M	2021
Cereals	\$2.90M	2021
Fish, crustaceans, molluscs, aquatics invertebrates	\$2.84M	2021
Toys, games, sports requisites	\$2.78M	2021
Organic chemicals	\$2.32M	2021
Clocks and watches	\$2.28M	2021
Pulp of wood, fibrous cellulosic material, waste	\$2.19M	2021
Cotton	\$2.07M	2021
Tools, implements, cutlery of base metal	\$2.00M	2021
Cereal, flour, starch, milk preparations and products	\$1.95M	2021
Knitted or crocheted fabric	\$1.42M	2021
Sugars and sugar confectionery	\$1.17M	2021
Zinc	\$1.12M	2021
Ceramic products	\$1.11M	2021
Ships, boats, and other floating structures	\$1.02M	2021



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