

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran,
1971)

41st Meeting of the Standing Committee
Kobuleti, Georgia, 26 April - 1 May 2010

41st Meeting of the Standing Committee

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

The 41st meeting of the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will take place in the town of Kobuleti, near Batumi, the capital city of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, in the western part of Georgia.

Venue

The Government of Georgia is offering the **Georgia Palace Hotel**, an exclusive five-star hotel situated in Kobuleti, Georgia's famed summer resort on the coast of the Black Sea, as the venue of the 41st Meeting of Standing Committee. Please visit the hotel web-site for more information:

www.gph.ge

275 Agmashenebeli str. Kobuleti, Georgia

Tel.: (+995 32) 24 24 00

Fax.: (+995 32) 24 24 02/03

E-mail.: info@gph.ge

Please see the attached maps showing location of Kobuleti and Georgia Palace Hotel.

How to get there -Transfers and transport

Two international airports operate in Georgia: Tbilisi International Airport (<http://www.tbilisiairport.com>) and Batumi International Airport (<http://www.batumiairport.com/>) situated 30 km from Kobuleti.

The following International and Georgian National Air Companies operate in Georgia:

[Air Baltic](#)

[Airzena - Georgian Airways](#)

[Aerosvit](#)

[Austrian Airlines](#)

[Azal - Azerbaijan Airlines](#)

British Airways

[Belavia - Belarusian Airlines](#)

[Czech Airlines](#)

[Lufthansa](#)

[Turkish Airlines](#)

For participants who arrive at Tbilisi International Airport, the Ministry of Environment will organize transfer from Tbilisi International Airport to Kobuleti and back, by train or minibus (the trip takes approximately 5 hours)

Arrangements for transportation from Batumi airport and back will be arranged by the Government of Adjara (the transfer takes approximately 50 minutes).

You will be met at Kobuleti or Tbilisi airport by staff from Administrative Departments of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia and Government of Adjara who will assist you with the transfer. Watch out for a “Ramsar” sign.

Please complete the relevant section of the registration form. If you are unable to do so at the time of registration, please send your travel details to the meeting organizers in Georgia (indicated below) with a copy to the Secretariat the following information for pick-up at the airport before **12 April 2010**:

Name

Arrival Date and time,

Departure Date and time

Airport at arrival: Batumi or Tbilisi

Airport at departure Batumi or Tbilisi

Flight N° at arrival

Flight N° at departure

In order to benefit from these transfer arrangements, please make sure this information is provided in good time.

Information about Georgia and Adjara Autonomous Republic

Georgia is a country in the Caucasus region of Eurasia. Situated at the juncture of Western Asia and Eastern Europe, it is bounded to the west by the Black Sea, to the north by Russia, to the south by Turkey and Armenia, and to the east by Azerbaijan. Georgia covers a territory of 69,700 km² and its population is 4.7 million. Being a part of the Caucasian eco-region, Georgia is recognized as one of the “Hot Spots” of biodiversity (Conservation International). The Caucasus is among the 200 global eco-regions distinguished by WWF. The topographical complexity and climatic differences condition the diversity of landscapes and ecosystems of Eastern and Western Georgia.

Wetlands are one of the most common habitat types in Georgia. There are over 850 lakes, 25 075 River. Mires and peat lands are represented at various altitudes throughout the country. There are two main bird migratory routes crossing the Georgia. One of them goes through Kolkheti wetlands, another one through Javakheti Plateau. Kolkheti and Javakheti wetlands receive thousands of

migratory birds every year in addition to numerous nesting water birds. Unique Kolkheti wetlands (The Anaklia-Churia, Nabada, Imnati mires, Ispani peat lands, swamp forests, dunes, lake Paliastomi and marine area) were designated as Ramsar sites in 1996. They are protected by Kolkheti National park (IUCN category II, total area 45 447,4 ha including marine area 15 743 ha), Kobuleti National Reserve (IUCN category I, total area 331,25 ha) and managed area (IUCN category IV, total area 438,75 ha).

Georgia has a very rich history reflected in its cultural heritage which the country is so proud of. There are 12 000 historical monuments in Georgia, 5 000 of them are protected by the Government and 4 of them are on the list of UNESCO World Heritage. These monuments are Mtskheta - ancient capital of Georgia, Gelati - architectural complex and Bagrati - cathedral in Kutaisi, and village Ushguli in Svaneti.

Kobuleti is a sea resort situated at the eastern coast of the Black Sea, 25 km from Batumi, the administrative centre of Adjara Autonomous Republic. Kobuleti is an important tourist centre on the Georgian Black Sea coast. The holiday-makers are particularly attracted by its famous long beach which is very convenient for sunbathing. Kobuleti has a beautiful seaside park, a lot of cafe-bars, bungalows and disco-clubs.

Batumi is a small, white city, with mostly 2-3-storey buildings, possessing a certain unique charm. The part of the city called “Old Batumi” is nearly 150 years old. This pretty city, permeated with the aroma of the sea, magnolias and acacias, is attractive and fascinating all year round.

Please visit the following web-sites to find more information on Georgia and Adjara.

<http://adjara.gov.ge>

<http://www.tourismadjara.ge/en/>

<http://www.georgia.travel/>

The official language in Georgia is Georgian; other languages spoken in Georgia are English, Russian.

The currency in Georgia is the Georgian Lari (GEL).

The current (January 2010) exchange rate is US \$1 = GEL 1.693 and € 1 = GEL 2.44.

In April/early May, temperatures in Kobuleti usually range between a maximum of +20°C in the daytime and a minimum of 9°C at night. April and May are the driest months, with average precipitation of 122 mm. Current weather conditions can be found at:

<http://weather.boom.ge/?lang=eng>

The standard time zone will be GMT + 4 hours.

Accommodation and catering

The Georgia Palace Hotel has 157 Rooms including 5 Single rooms, 5 Rooms for the Disabled, 108 Superior Double rooms, 34 Executive DE LUXE rooms and 5 Suites.

The hotel has two restaurants, a lobby bar, a Spa & Beauty Center, a swimming pool and gym.

The Georgia Palace Hotel offers for Standing Committee meeting 100 rooms (for single use) at a discount price for the period of SC41:

Superior Double Room 80 USD per room
Single Room 80 USD

These rates include breakfast and VAT.

The Georgia Palace Hotel offers free access to Wi Fi in the public areas, cable connections in the rooms and free access to the outdoor swimming pool and the fitness center.

Lunch and Dinner will be provided upon request. Lunch costs 20 USD per person and Dinner, 20 USD per person. Lunch and dinner do not include drinks. The average cost of a meal at nearby restaurants ranges between GEL 30 (approx. USD18) and GEL 50 (approx. USD29.50).

Information on traditional Georgian food can be found at: <http://www.aboutgeorgia.ge/cuisine/>

Vegetarian food and any other special food requests are available upon advanced notice. Please make sure you fill in the relevant section of the Registration Form.

Visas for Georgia

A passport valid for at least 6 months is required for all nationalities.

Please find in the Annex 1 the list of countries with no visa requirement to entry Georgia.

For holders of passports from other countries, you may find the list of Georgian missions abroad on the Web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=38

Should it not prove feasible to get a visa in advance, you will be able to obtain a Georgian visa upon arrival at the international airports. The visa fee is 100 GEL. In order for you to benefit from this opportunity, please fill in the relevant section of the registration material, so that our hosts have all necessary information. You will then receive a letter from the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia indicating that you will receive a visa upon arrival.

Should you have any question or problem please contact the meeting organizer in Georgia (contact information is given below).

Visas for Turkey

A number of participants may need to spend a night in Istanbul on their way to or from Batumi. Please check if you need a visa for Turkey on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' web site:

<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/visa-information-for-foreigners.en.mfa>. You will find the list of Turkish representations abroad: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-representations.en.mfa>, or you may be able

to obtain a visa online through the e-consulate at: http://www.e-konsolosluk.net/Visa/Visa_Welcome.aspx.

Banking facilities

The Georgia Palace Hotel cooperates with the Bank of Georgia and there is an ATM machine of the Bank of Georgia in the Hotel Lobby. The maximum amount which could be taken from an ATM machine during 24 hours is 1500 GEL. 2,5% will be charged by Bank of Georgia.

VISA, MASTER and American Express cards are commonly accepted in Georgia.

Medical assistance and insurance

There is 24-hour first-aid service available in Kobuleti and Batumi. Emergency hospitals are located in Kobuleti and Batumi as well.

The Georgia Palace Hotel can also provide medical consultation upon request.

Participants are requested to have valid health (travel) insurance during their stay in Georgia.

Electric supply and sockets

220 volts, 50 Hertz



Please bring an adaptor.

SC41 Official Excursion

On Wednesday 28 April, the Protected Areas Agency of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia is offering to the SC41 participants a one-day boat tour in Kolkheti National Park. The itinerary/destination may be changed dependent on the weather conditions.

The length of tour is 18 km. Direction: Paliastomi entrance boating along South, East, North banks of Lake Paliastomi and return to Paliastomi entrance. Participants will be able to observe: the magnificent scenery of Lake Paliastomi and its swampy banks, a scenic view of the Pichori mouth area, the wet meadows on the east bank of the lake. From the east bank of the lake and the mooring and resting place designed at the mouth of Pichori visitors can observe the sphagnum surface of the Imnati peat bog developed along the bank of the lake and swamp alder-tree forests spread in the north part of the bog.

Kolkheti National Park is located in West Georgia. It covers the eastern zone of the Black Sea coast and the basin of the Paliastomi Lake. Kolkheti National Park covers an area with extensive and unique mires that form a structural and functional transition between the mires of the boreal and those of the tropical zones. Due to its refuge function for European flora during the last Ice Ages, Kolkheti harbors – next to Tertiary relicts – Mediterranean and boreal plant species. With its endemic wetland species and the globally unique Sphagnum percolation bogs, Kolkheti is a hotspot of mire biodiversity.

The world-wide significance of the Kolkheti wetlands was acknowledged in 1996 when Georgia joined the Convention on Wetlands and Central Kolkheti was designated as a Wetland of International Importance.

The Kolkheti lowlands have supported humans for thousands of years. The ancient Greeks established trading posts here more than 300 years ago. The famous story of Jason and his crew of Argonauts seeking a golden fleece comes from this area at that time.

Lunch will be provided during the excursion.

Pre- and post-conference excursions

The Tourism Department of Adjara will provide an information desk at the meeting venue and will assist participants organize excursions.

Participants can also organize tours in Georgia themselves. Please find information about Georgian tour-operators in annex 2.

Meeting organizers in Georgia:

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