

**„A drop in the Ocean – Chinese investments in Georgia” –brief by Civic IDEA causes attacks from the ruling party of Georgia**

[“A drop in the Ocean – Chinese investments in Georgia”](#) - a brief issued by the Civic IDEA on January 18, 2024, has raised serious concerns within the ruling Georgian Dream Party. The document, solely relying on statistical data without additional explanations or interpretations, presents information on foreign direct investments coming from the People’s Republic of China. The analysis in the paper, contrary to the government’s propaganda, sheds light on what it perceives as their shortcomings in attracting Chinese investments.

Based on the official data, the paper underscores a noticeable decline in Chinese investments after a peak in 2014, when they doubled and reached 221 million US dollars. However, the trend took a sharp decrease afterward, and the statistics from 2011 to 2022 reveal that China has not featured among the top 10 investors in Georgia since 2015. You can see the paper attached.

This analysis has prompted severe attacks on the work of the Civic IDEA and personally on our Chairperson, Tinatin Khidasheli, from the Georgian government representatives.

The next day, on January 19, the Speaker of Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, [during an interview on the Public Broadcaster program "Actual Topics"](#), emphasized the importance of the recent parliamentary delegation's visit to the People’s Republic of China, while attacking the Chairperson of Civic IDEA. Mr. Papuashvili stated that Tinatin Khidasheli presented herself to the public as a prominent China expert, though with a “hostile rhetoric” towards the PRC, aiming at “fueling anti-Chinese sentiments and serving the interests of the unrecognized state of Taiwan”.

During the interview, he noted that the organization of Tinatin Khidasheli – Civic IDEA is financed by a Taiwanese NGO– “Taiwan Foundation for Democracy”, and stated that there is also “another foundation in Taiwan that receives funding from the organization”. According to Papuashvili, this suggests a deliberate effort on Khidasheli's part to fuel anti-Chinese sentiments in Georgia.

Papuashvili urged members of the media to question Ms. Khidasheli about her stance on the PRC’s territorial integrity and her views on Taiwan, considering that Civic IDEA receives funding from there. He found this noteworthy, particularly because Khidasheli, being a former defense minister of Georgia, with access to classified information, is now involved in “lobbying Taiwan and financing from an unrecognized state”. According to the Speaker of Parliament, “This raises a separate national security concern, and appropriate agencies need to be interested.”

**The most important part of his initial statement was the reference to so-called “foreign agents law”. He mentioned that when they intended to pass a “foreign agents law”, according to which foreign-funded NGOs and media organizations must be registered as “agents of foreign influence” back in February 2023, cases like these involving the non-governmental sector influencing Georgian politics were precisely what they had in mind. The law could’ve prevented those risks and NGO activities - “this is what we meant, how NGOs are used by foreign subjects to influence domestic policies.”**

The next day on the 20th of January, Mr. Papuashvili once again addressed the issue of the importance of Sino-Georgian relations at the special press briefing, solely called for attacking NGOs in Georgia.

Regarding Ms. Khidasheli and her activities, he reiterated that “politicians deeply involved in the NGO sector and actively participating in political propaganda pose a distinct concern”. Simultaneously, he underscored the fact that Civic IDEA is financed by Taiwanese foundations and is trying to disseminate anti-Chinese sentiments in Georgia as their lobbyist.

According to his perspective, framing this issue in a particular way amounts to antinational, anti-state, and anti-Georgian propaganda, as it contradicts the interests of Georgia. *“Georgia's interest is that the Middle Corridor, the Silk Road, ... and we have an opportunity to use this corridor right now. The goods moving between China and Europe should pass through Georgia. The people who oppose it serve the interests of those who are funding and are behind these people. It is a fact that all those who stir up anti-Chinese sentiments in Georgia are directed to disrupt the projects of the strategic importance of Georgia, to turn Georgia into a dead end and not a corridor,”* Papuashvili noted.

Over the course of two days, Mr. Papuashvili was joined by other MPs from the ruling GD party, confirming his words and emphasizing the “anti-state nature of Civic IDEA’s activities.”

Georgian Dream-controlled media outlets devoted lengthy news segments over the course of three days. TV Imedi, as always, was a champion with 14 minutes new in their main news program. Followed by Rustavi 2 and POST TV.

In those lengthy TV programs, there was a lot said about the future engagement of the PRC, including the new international airport and the Anaklia Deep Sea Port.

It is not the first time that we have published and talked about the lack of due diligence on the side of the Georgian government and the lack of competence and professionalism in dealing with the Chinese side, we have been criticizing procurement policies benefiting discredited Chinese companies in Georgia which fail to finish projects in due time or within the budgets approved initially, we have published and talked about the corrupt practices and elite capture cases by the PRC in Georgia for over 7 years now. We were criticized by the government but never to this extent, never with the threats of interest from security services, and never personally.

The question is, why now? We see these three days’ attacks on our activities as prevention before a decision is announced on even larger and more strategic projects by Georgia. The intensity of back-and-forth communication by the government and parliament representatives to Beijing was already suspicious, but now it is becoming more and more convincing. If Anaklia goes to China, it will be no surprise anymore. They aim at discrediting our work now, so once new big contracts are granted to the Chinese, they will refer to all said during these three days, with us lobbying “unrecognized Taiwan’s interests”, being “anti-state elements harming national interests”, etc. and even though we are professional and have deep knowledge as vice speaker Volski Said, we cannot be trusted as there are bigger interests involved that are forced to lobby.