



Medical tourism is a relatively new but rapidly evolving field. Its growth rate is the highest among other segments of tourism. The growing importance of medical tourism is indicated by the fact that more than 50 countries in the world have developed medical tourism at the level of state policy. Medical tourism has introduced a new concept of modern healthcare: when a patient can not solve a health problem in his country, he chooses the doctor of the country of his choice, a clinic, where he will be offered the most modern medical diagnostic methods at an affordable price. For their part, in the face of global economic competition, medical tourism is contributing to the faster development of medicine and possibly significantly changing the face of national health systems. It is interesting what potential Georgia has today in terms of medical tourism, whether there is a demand for it and what is planned to develop and refine this potential. One of the reasons for the development of medical tourism is the lack or low quality of services needed in your own country. In such cases, patients prefer to seek medical help in countries where, despite the high cost, it is more profitable because the quality is relatively high. Naturally, a host of medical tourism can become a highly developed country. Unfortunately, in many cases, this type of tourism is practically the only opportunity for Georgian citizens to receive high quality and quality medical services, as it is impossible in their own country. Georgian patients often turn to other countries for treatment, especially to neighboring Turkey. What are the challenges facing the development of medical tourism in Georgia today and what prevents us from arriving in the Republic of Turkey for medical treatment? Osman Chalishkan Mzhavanadze, Chairman of the Turkish-Georgian Business Council and Founder of the International Exhibition Company Geonet Expo (including the International Medical Exhibition) speaks on this issue. Mr. Osman, statistics show that Georgia and Turkey are actively cooperating in the field of tourism. Our citizens often go to Turkey for treatment. In your opinion, what is the potential of Georgian citizens to receive effective services here and not go to another country for treatment? Georgia has really great potential in terms of medical tourism. So far this field is developing and now it is gathering strength, I think it is good to take an example from neighboring countries to succeed, because Turkey is one of the most developed countries in terms of medicine. Why do Georgians choose Turkey? There really offer quality service. It is also gratifying that the import of medicines from Turkey to Georgia was signed last week, which

is important for both countries. Turkey produces quality medicine, it is possible to get cheaper medicine. But profit seekers should not think about profit from the side because it is not just a business, it is a big responsibility taken towards the people. A memorandum of cooperation was signed between the Ministry of Health of Georgia and the Turkish International Medical Agency. Which the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Turkey Mr. Giorgi Janjagava actively worked on and the result is for which I would like to thank him. As well as our Ministry of Health and diplomatic representatives of both countries for their active work. The main purpose of the document is cooperation in the field of health, development of medical tourism, joint project planning and sharing of information on medical technologies. Turkey has extensive experience in the field of health tourism. How was this achieved? What path has the sector taken to develop and at what stage is it now? People want to get high quality services at an affordable price which is a very important factor from a medical point of view. About one million people visit Turkey every year for treatment because they really have good equipment and quality service. Turkish clinics also have experienced and successful doctors which is an important factor for the people who come there. Medical tourism is associated with health and trust, so more responsibility is needed. The quality of services and equipment in Turkey has led to patient confidence. People who come to Turkish clinics have a high standard of translation services and do not face communication problems, which is very important. The success of medical tourism in Turkey is also due to the fact that the state has strong doctors, for whose quality education the state does everything. How do you see the prospects for the development of medical tourism in Georgia? If you see a resource for this and if it is expected in the near future in this direction foreign including from Turkey, investors are interested? Georgia is a rich country and has great potential, with its nature, mineral water richness and variety of resorts, but for development we need to attract local and foreign investment with the support of the government. Medical tourism in Georgia is developing slowly and I hope the number of tourists will increase in this regard in a few years. Georgia has great potential in terms of medical services and medical direction. Georgia really has the prospect of making medical tourism successful in the region, so it is necessary to work with the government to attract more investment.