



The President of Georgia, H.E. Giorgi Margvelashvili and the President of Ukraine, H.E. Petro Poroshenko, together with the Chairman of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Mr. Zurab Pataradze, have opened Adjara Investment Forum. President Margvelashvili has addressed President Poroshenko and about 250 business representatives working in the areas of logistics, tourism and agriculture in Georgia and Ukraine. He has thanked his Ukrainian counterpart for the visit and noted that today's occasion is one of the most important foundations for the unity, agreement and companionship of Georgian and Ukrainian people. "Yesterday we signed the Declaration on the Establishment of the Strategic Partnership between Georgia and Ukraine and today's occasion is an emotional illustration of our countries' united vision of the future. Today, at the occupation line, President Poroshenko has made a statement which simultaneously reflects the current tragedy that takes place in the occupied territories of Georgia and the most realistic and optimistic vision of the future that unites our nations. President Poroshenko has noted that beyond the occupation line lies the country's past, tears and hopelessness, while the rest of the Georgia exemplifies development of a free country, which has made a European choice. Our business meeting in Batumi is indeed one of the most beautiful endings of this day. We have gathered here, in the city which is full of ideas, initiatives, visions and perspectives; the presence of President Poroshenko and these business representatives from different countries is perhaps the most vivid illustration of our future cooperation", - stated President Margvelashvili. President Margvelashvili has thanked Mr. Pataradze for his fruitful efforts in implementing new projects in Batumi. He has addressed the businessmen, attending the Forum and encouraged them to examine the potential of Georgia and Adjara. Georgian and Ukrainian governments recognize business as the power which manages the state that creates future opportunities. Business determines employment and economic growth, solves social problems and creates the precondition for the development of Georgian and Ukrainian states. "In terms of business, both Georgia and Ukraine are Europe-oriented countries. Therefore, both countries are signatories of the Association Agreement, both countries have free trade with Europe and both countries have a visa-free regime in the Schengen area. Thus, business environment in Georgia is predictable, attractive and interesting and for the Ukrainian businessmen and vice versa. Today, our presence here underlines the importance that we attach to your activities, innovative ideas and cooperation

opportunities. I am certain that various forms of business relations will be established among you", - added President Margvelashvili. President Poroshenko has welcomed the Forum participants in Georgian and noted that this visit has made it clear that no one has closer relations than Georgians and Ukrainians. "This three-day visit has been the most remarkable in my life. We have seen not only the unconditional confirmation of the friendship between our countries, presidents and governments, but also the assurance of the strategic cooperation between our nations. Both of our nations are fighters and builders. Today Georgia and Ukraine are the leaders of the Eastern Partnership. We have carried out many reforms and entirely changed the country. Ukrainians and Georgians are granted a visa-free travel regime. Please, dear friends, do not undermine the importance of a visa-free travel regime – this is not just an opportunity to cross the EU borders with biometric passports, but it is the ultimate farewell to the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire and a return to the family of European nations", - stated President Poroshenko. The President of Ukraine has also spoken about the prospects of developing Georgia-Ukraine economic cooperation and encouraged the Ukrainian investors to discover Georgia's opportunities. The Ministry of Finance and Economy of Adjara has held a special presentation at the Forum and provided the participants with detailed information about the region's investment potential, privatization facilities in Adjara, business startup regulations and key economic parameters of the region. The participants also had an opportunity to study the touristic and agricultural potential of Adjara. As a part of the Forum, the Chairman of the Government of Adjara and the Head of Executive Branch for the Odessa Oblast have signed the plan for the development of cooperation between the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (Georgia) and the Odessa Oblast (Ukraine) in the period from 2017 to 2019, which aims at further deepening cooperation between the two parties. Representatives of Georgian and Ukrainian companies will also hold face-to-face meetings as a part of the Forum, to discuss the issues of future cooperation. Adjara Investment Forum also attended International Investors Association of Georgia with its member companies.