



**CCI FRANÇAISE
EN GEORGIE**



FRENCH GEORGIAN- RELATIONS

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1. CULTURAL RELATIONS

1.a. A shared history

Franco-Georgian relations date back to the time of the Crusades. Georgia is said to have participated, alongside the French, in the liberation of the Holy Land of Jerusalem. A message from a crusader to the Archbishop of Besançon, Amadeo, who was in office from 1195 to 1220, attests to this collaboration. He wrote: "...the Christians of Iberia, known as the Georgians, have marched against the pagans with all the weight of their military might, with countless horsemen and foot soldiers, with the help of God, and, having already seized 300 fortresses and 9 large towns, they have occupied the most important ones and reduced the others to ruins... These Georgians have come to deliver the Holy Land from Jerusalem and to subdue all the territories of the pagans...".



Source: King David IV of Georgia (in purple robe on the right, wearing crown-helmet), Roman de Troie by Benoît de Sainte-Maure

Furthermore, a piece of the true cross, given to the French crusaders in 1121, can be found in Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. In a letter to the archbishop of Paris, it is written that the cross was found in the land of the "builder" king, David IV (in Georgian: დავით აღმაშენებელი), the fifth king of unified Georgia. This followed the battle of Didgori, in present-day Georgia, against the Turkish Seljuq dynasty.²



Source: Le Parisien, Leuville-sur-Orge. The Château de Leuville hosted the first Georgian government in exile in 1921. LP/N.C

1.b. Exile and the Georgian diaspora in France

These historical interactions have cemented a solid relationship that has continued to evolve over the centuries. In February 1921, the Red Army invaded Georgia, forcing the Georgian government into exile in Leuville-sur-Orge, France, where they bought a hunting lodge. It was here that the first Georgian Republic was created and the country's independence was signed.³ For a long time, this site remained the private property of the descendants of the first leaders of the Georgian Republic. It was not until 2016 that it was handed back to the Georgian government, enabling the establishment of a genuine cultural centre for the Georgian diaspora in the Île-de-France⁴ region, testifying to the trust and importance of France for Georgians.

1. Salia, K. (1980). "Histoire de la nation géorgienne". Paris: Nino Salia.

2. Avalishvili, Z. (1936). "The cross from Overseas". Londres: Revue Georgica.

3. Archive départementale de l'Essonne. Immigration et société française au XXème siècle, les Géorgiens de Leuville-sur-Orge. Direction des archives et du patrimoine mobilier de l'Essonne.

4. Agenda.ge. (2016, 21 septembre). Historic agreement signed: France's Leuville Estate returned to Georgia after 89 years (MAP). <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2016/2280#gsc.tab=0>

1.c. Emblematic figures

Another strong cultural link is the figure of the soldier Dimitri Amilakvari. Born in Georgia, he was forced into exile when the Soviet Union invaded in 1921. In 1924, he entered the Saint-Cyr military academy and fought in the Foreign Legion. After the 1940 armistice, he chose to join the Free French Forces, fighting in Dakar with the Orient Brigade, in Syria and Libya, and at Bir Hakeim as deputy to General Koenig, commander of the 1st Free French Brigade. He was awarded the Liberation Cross by General de Gaulle at the El Tahag camp (Egypt) on 10 August 1942. Unfortunately, seven weeks later, he was killed at El Alamein in Egypt. A legendary figure in the Foreign Legion, he represents the strong, age-old ties between France and Georgia.⁵ His legacy continues to embody the universal imperative of defending the freedom and integrity of every individual, underlining the importance of the unbreakable ties between France and Georgia.



Le Colonel AMILAKVARI, commandant la Légion Etrangère et le Commandant PUCHOIS

Source: Ghémard, J, Dimitri Amilakvari - Les Français libres.
<http://www.francaislibres.net/liste/fiche.php?index=51376>

1.d. Education and cultural exchanges

France stands out not only for its historical and military links with Georgia, but also for its important role in the cultural sphere. Cultural cooperation between the two countries is thriving. There are 17 joint Masters scholarships and 3 Franco-Georgian double degrees. According to the French Institute, nearly 14,000 pupils are learning French at primary and secondary level, and 1,160 students are taking French courses at university. These opportunities are enhanced by the presence of the French School of the Caucasus. In addition, the twinning arrangement between Nantes and Tbilisi promotes the cultural wealth of each country. These educational and cultural initiatives not only enrich the skills and knowledge of Georgian students, but also strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two nations.

2. POLITICAL RELATIONS

2.a. French support to European integration

Political relations between France and Georgia have intensified in recent decades, marked by significant French support for Georgia's progress towards the West. This interest is illustrated by the country's application for membership of the European Union in March 2022. In December 2023, Georgia was granted candidate status for membership of the European Union.⁷



Source: Tsertsvadze, Z. T.. Thousands of demonstrators marched in Tbilisi, the Georgian capital, after a law on "foreign agents" was passed. Le Point.

5. Musée de l'Ordre de la Libération. Dimitri Amilakvari. <https://www.ordredelaliberation.fr/fr/compagnons/dimitri-amilakvari>

6. Campus France. (2017, mars). *Focus Pays, Géorgie* (n°18). https://www.campusfrance.org/fr/system/files/medias/documents/2019-02/focus_georgie_fr.pdf

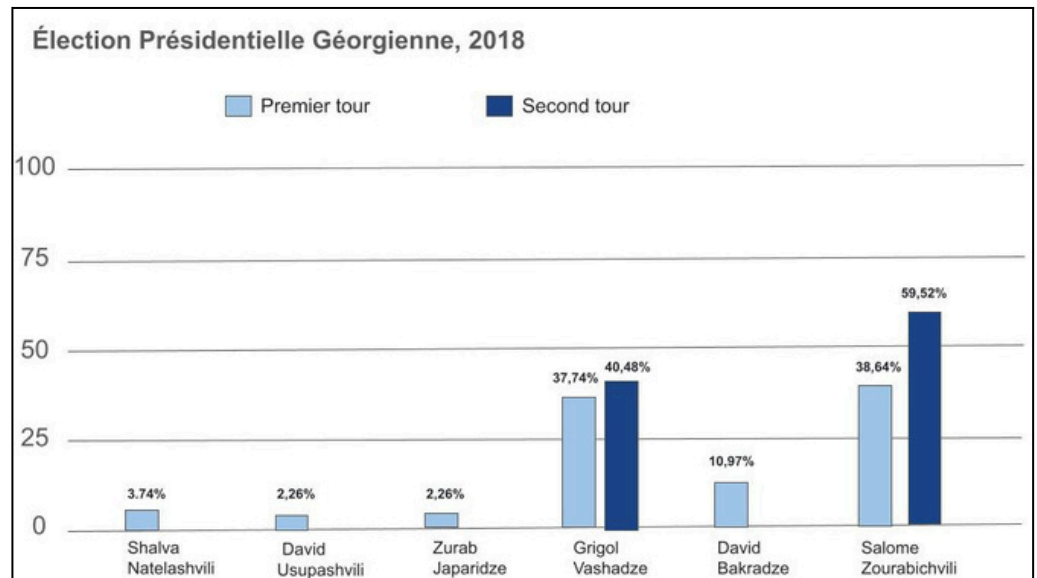
7. Conseil de l'Union Européenne. (2024, 30 avril). Relations de l'UE avec la Géorgie. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/policies/eastern-partnership/georgia/#:~:text=Le%201er%20juillet%202016,le%201er%20septembre%202014>

2.b. Salome Zourabichvili's presidency

The accession to office of Salome Zourabichvili, a former diplomat and French ambassador, on 29 November 2018, with almost 60% of the vote⁸, also demonstrates the closeness of the two countries. In 2022, 520 French nationals were living in Georgia and the Georgian community in France numbered 14,942 according to the Ministry of the Interior. This growing closeness is bound to open up a new chapter of Franco-Georgian relations.



Source: Salomé Zourabichvili, Facebook profile photo



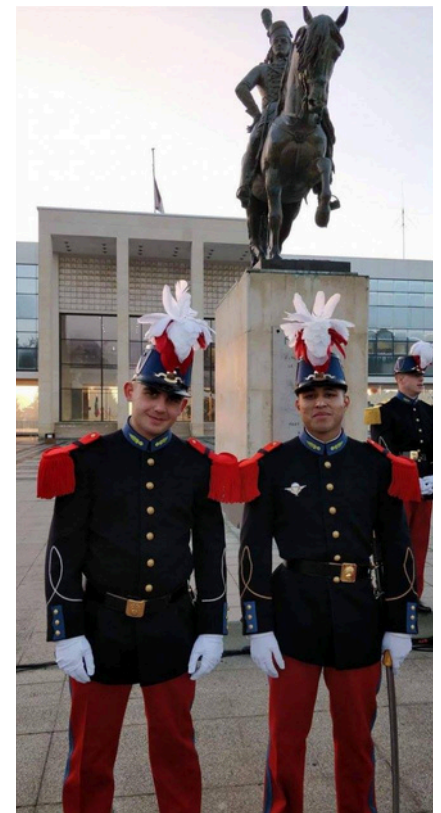
2.c. Amilakhvari Dialogue

In 2019 was created the annual structured dialogue between the two countries, known as the "Amilakhvari Dialogue". It aims to further develop cooperation in the political and parliamentary fields, defence, security, etc. This format enables Georgia to obtain greater political support from Paris for Georgia's de-occupation and its European and Euro-Atlantic integration. This includes military contributions and sharing French expertise to help Georgia gain experience.

Since May 2018, tactical training courses have been organised by French military personnel in Satchkhere.

During the Georgian contingent in Afghanistan, Georgian personnel were placed under French command on several occasions, with prior training in France for Georgian infantry and artillery. Since 2014, the European forces in the Central African Republic (EUFOR CAR) have hosted a detachment of 150 men from the Georgian national army. Since 2017, cadet exchanges have been taking place between the Georgian National Army's National Defence Academy and the Saint-Cyr Special Military School.

In early 2019, French cadets from the Saint-Cyr Special Military School spent time at the Gori National Defence Academy.⁹



Source: Facebook of the French Embassy in Georgia, First Georgian cadet to join Saint Cyr in 100 years, 20 December 2017

8. Euronews. (2018, 29 novembre). Présidentielle en Géorgie : victoire de Salomé Zourabichvili. Euronews. <https://fr.euronews.com/2018/11/29/presidentielle-en-georgie-victoire-de-salome-zourabichvili>

9. Mission de défense. Ambassade de France En Géorgie. <https://ge.ambafrance.org/Mission-militaire-en-Georgie>

2.d. Partnership in the healthcare sector

This close co-operation also extends to the field of healthcare, where joint initiatives aim to address the challenges faced by the Georgian healthcare system. In Georgia, the transition to a market economy in the 1990s led to a fall in public spending on health, exacerbated by conflict and population displacement, depriving many Georgians of access to quality care. To remedy this situation, the Kakhétie-Yonne medical centre opened its doors in 2008¹⁰. Initiated by doctors from the Yonne region with the support of the Icaunais Departmental Council, the centre aims to offer comprehensive examinations to detect and treat diseases such as hepatitis B, C and tuberculosis.

This marks a first step towards better health preparation and training in Georgia. Today, various meetings and associations are organised in the health field, bringing together Georgian and French doctors to share their skills and contribute to major technical and technological advances. The aim of these partnerships is to introduce Georgian doctors to new approaches to healthcare in order to better protect the population and, for example, combat the widespread problem of antibiotic resistance in the country.



Source: Site de la CCIFG, Kakhetie-Yonne - 10th anniversary, celebrated on 15 June 2018, with the inauguration of its renovation works. The governor of the region, Irakli Kadagishvili, Eric Gentis, president of the centre, Jacques Simart, vice-president, Nargizi Zibzibadze, general manager, Henri de Raincourt, former minister, Pierre Bordier, former senator and French and Georgian doctors.

2.e. The central role of AFD and the CCIFG

France's commitment to Franco-Georgian cooperation is not limited to the health sector. In 2014, France and Georgia signed an agreement authorising the French Development Agency (AFD) to set up in Georgia¹¹. An office was opened in Tbilisi in 2016, which has since supported the Georgian government in setting up the Georgian Pensions Agency and modernising mental health policy. In addition, this bilateral agreement highlights the promotion of economic cooperation between the two countries.



The French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Georgia plays a crucial role in this respect. Set up in 2011, it supports French companies in their activities in Georgia, assists its members in their commercial endeavours and liaises with other French organisations. This institution illustrates the economic attractiveness of Georgia for French companies



10. CCI France Géorgie. (2018, 15 juin). Kakhetie-Yonne - 10ème anniversaire. <https://www.ccifg.ge/fr/actualites/n/news/kakhetie-yonne-10eme-anniversaire.html>

11. Légifrance. Décret n° 2015-230 du 25 février 2015 portant publication de l'accord entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de Géorgie relatif à l'établissement et aux activités de l'Agence française de développement et de la Société de promotion et de participation pour la coopération économique en Géorgie, signé à Tbilissi le 13 mai 2014 (1). <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000030296296?r=Fs2gjpVJWt>

3. ECONOMIC RELATIONS

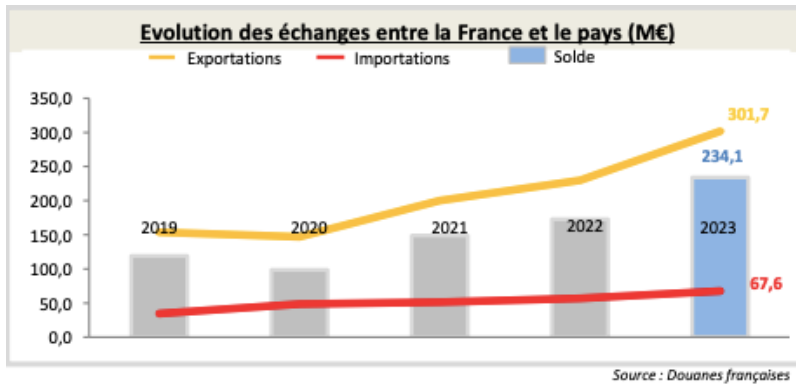
3.a. Integration into international markets

The Georgian economy is highly integrated into international markets. Since 2003, the country has implemented 51 institutional and regulatory reforms to regularise the business environment.

As a result, it has one of the most liberal foreign trade policies in the world, with simplified foreign trade and customs procedures, low import tariffs and minimal non-tariff regulations. This has led to a similar trend in its relations with France.

3.b. Bilateral trade with France

In 2023, France was Georgia's 14th largest supplier in terms of exports, an increase of 31% on 2022, taking exports to \$301.7 million. This mainly concerns processed and ultra-processed products (chemicals, agri-foodstuffs, pharmaceuticals), transport vehicles, etc. As a customer, France is Georgia's 20th partner, with an increase of 18% compared with 2022, for a total of 67.6 million euros. This includes agri-food products, cosmetics, textiles, footwear and household appliances. This will bring total trade between the two countries to €369.2 million.¹²



Source: France renews its support for Georgia's development projects through a cooperation programme for 2021-2023, AFD - Agence Française de Développement.

Structure des échanges (hors matériel militaire)

Premiers postes d'exportations vers le pays (2023, M€, % du total)

Poste 1	Produits pharmaceutiques	81 (27,0%)
Poste 2	Produits chimiques, parfums et cosmétiques	71 (23,6%)
Poste 3	Produits des industries agroalimentaires (IAA)	48,2 (16,0%)
Poste 4	Matériels de transport	27,6 (9,2%)

Premiers postes d'importations à partir du pays (2023, M€, % du total)

Poste 1	Produits des industries agroalimentaires (IAA)	28 (42,1%)
Poste 2	Textiles, habillement, cuir et chaussures	15,3 (22,7%)
Poste 3	Équipements électriques et ménagers	8,8 (13,0%)
Poste 4	Produits chimiques, parfums et cosmétiques	3,8 (5,7%)

Source: Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Economic Diplomacy Directorate, "Fiche Pays - Repères économiques Indicateurs macro-économiques- Relations économiques bilatérales Soutien aux entreprises françaises, Géorgie".

12. Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères - Fiche Pays - Repères économiques Indicateurs macro-économiques- Relations économiques bilatérales Soutien aux entreprises françaises, Géorgie" <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/diplomatie-economique-et-commerce-exterieur/la-france-et-ses-partenaires-economiques-pays-par-pays/europe/article/georgie>

3.c. Bilateral economic agreements

As part of the economic relations between France and Georgia, various agreements have been signed to facilitate and encourage investment and trade between the two countries. For example, the agreement between the Government of the French Republic and the Government of Georgia, which was signed in 2007 and came into force in 2010, aims to avoid double taxation and prevent tax evasion with regard to taxes on income and capital. The agreement aims to eliminate situations where the same income or assets are taxed in both countries, which could discourage economic trade and investment between the two nations. It also includes measures to combat tax evasion, by facilitating the exchange of tax information between the administrations of the two countries.¹³

Another agreement between the Government of the French Republic and the Government of Georgia was signed in 1997 concerning the reciprocal encouragement and protection of investments. This agreement aims to create favourable conditions for French investments in Georgia, with the result that the stock of French investments in the country will amount to 248 million euros in 2022 (Banque de France data, 2022).



Source: Embassy of France in Georgia - A new intergovernmental agreement signed between France and Georgia. (2024, 5 July)
<https://ge.ambafrance.org/Un-nouvel-accord-intergouvernemental-conclu-entre-la-France-et-la-Georgie#:~:text=La%20France%20et%20la%20G%C3%A9orgie%20ont%20conclu%20un%20nouvel%20accord,environment%20ou%20de%20>

In short, the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Georgia plays a key role in supporting French and Georgian companies, facilitating business relations and offering valuable assistance. Faced with a liberal economic environment and growing opportunities, contacting the CCIFG becomes an essential step for any company wishing to set up in Georgia and take full advantage of this fruitful collaboration.

13. Légifrance. Décret n° 2010-582 du 1er juin 2010 portant publication de la convention entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la Géorgie en vue d'éviter les doubles impositions et de prévenir l'évasion fiscale en matière d'impôts sur le revenu et sur la fortune, signée à Paris le 7 mars 2007 (1).
https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000022293209?init=true&page=1&query=D%C3%A9cret+n%C2%B0+2010-582+&searchField=ALL&tab_selection=all

4. FRENCH COMPANIES IN GEORGIA

4.a. Why registering to the CCIFG is essential

French investment in Georgia began in earnest in 2008 with the creation of the "French Businessmen's Club". In 2011, the France-Georgia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIFG) was founded to structure these economic relations. Joining it is a strategic opportunity for any company wishing to set up and prosper in the Georgian market. The CCIFG has in-depth, up-to-date knowledge of local business practices thanks to a vast network of contacts in various sectors of activity.

It is able to provide detailed, tailored analyses, taking into account the specific cultural characteristics essential to the success of any project in Georgia. The CCIFG offers comprehensive assistance in setting up a business, including legal and accounting advice, management of administrative procedures and translation services.¹⁴

Companies save time thanks to a multilingual team with a good command of Georgian and familiar with local processes. By joining the CCIFG, companies increase their visibility within the Georgian-French business community, gain access to exclusive privileges and special discounts, and benefit from valuable networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities. The Chamber is committed to promoting economic and commercial relations between France and Georgia, supporting French companies, maintaining an active network and facilitating relations.



Source: 15 February - Annual meeting of business representatives. (2023, 15 February). CCI France Georgia. <https://www.ccifg.ge/fr/evenements/photos/2023/15-fevrier-reunion-annuelle-des-representants-des-entreprises.html>



Source: Europe 2024 Zone Meeting. (2024, 2 June). CCI France Georgia. "From 31 January to 3 February 2024, the 22 CCI FI Managers of the Europe zone met for the Europe Zone Meeting in Madrid" <https://www.ccifg.ge/fr/actualites/n/news/reunion-zone-europe-2024.html>

Lastly, it offers ongoing assistance and networking opportunities. With rapid registration and low registration costs, the CCIFG is an essential partner for any company wishing to expand in Georgia, providing ongoing support and opening doors to a promising market. By taking advantage of the CCIFG's services, you can be sure of personalised support and successful integration into the Georgian economic fabric.

4.b. Booming sectors

It is therefore the role of the CCIFG to have knowledge of the Georgian market and to be able to advise any company wishing to invest in the country. For several years now, there have been a number of sectors with strong investment potential in Tbilisi. The pharmaceutical sector is booming in Georgia, with more than 80 pharmaceutical companies represented in Tbilisi and sales of pharmaceutical products rising steadily. The country's experienced, skilled workforce and access to GMP certification open up new markets, boosting the sector's investment potential. Medical tourism also represents a surprising opportunity for Georgia in the health sector, with medical tourists from the Middle East coming for plastic surgery and fertility treatments.¹⁵

NUMBER OF THE TRAVELS MADE BY INTERNATIONAL NON-RESIDENT TRAVELLERS AND VISITS MADE BY INTERNATIONAL VISITORS IN I QUARTERS OF 2023-2024 YEARS



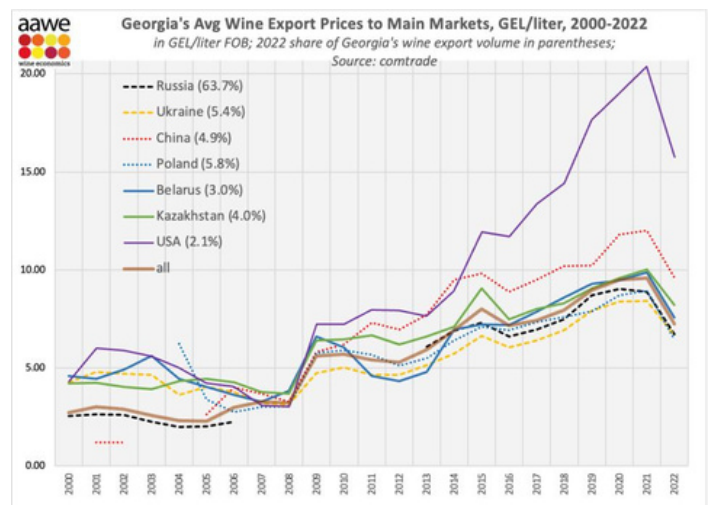
Source: Geostat, Inbound Tourism Statistics - (I Quarter, 2024 year).
<https://www.geostat.ge/en/single-news/3135/inbound-tourism-statistics-i-quarter-2024-year>

There is also the wine sector, a pillar of the Georgian economy. Georgian winegrowing is expanding rapidly on international markets. In 2020, the country will have 1,575 wineries. Taking into account the average annual increase, it can be estimated that by 2023, Georgia will have around 2,400 registered wineries. This industry offers investment opportunities in production, wine tourism and exports to foreign markets. Being one of the oldest cradles of viticulture, records dating back more than 8,000 years have been found.

The interest of France in this area was showcased in 2017 at the Cité du Vin de Bordeaux with a new cycle featuring Georgian vineyards, which demonstrated a unique potential for winegrowers.¹⁷

The hospitality sector also offers interesting prospects, particularly in the development of MICE tourism and wellness resorts. In line with this idea, the tourism sector has been booming for several years now. Georgia boasts a number of absolutely magnificent resorts, both by the sea and in the mountains.

With the possibility of enjoying top quality international hotels in Georgia, the development of the two sectors is correlated. As a result, there is enormous investment potential in the tourist and hotel districts.¹⁶



Source: Average export prices of Georgian wine to the main markets, in GEL per litre, 2000-2022

15. Recherche sectorielle du potentiel d'investissement à Tbilissi. (2019, 6 novembre). CCI France Géorgie. <https://www.ccifg.ge/fr/actualites/n/news/recherche-sectorielle-du-potentiel-dinvestissement-a-tbilissi.html>

16. Wideestate. (2022, 4 septembre). Invest in Georgia • Wideestate. <https://wideestate.com/invest-in-georgia/#:~:text=Sectors%20such%20as%20energy%2C%20real,and%20get%20a%20real%20profit>

17. Nekipelov, S. (2024, 22 février). Uncorking Success : Le boom du vin en Géorgie en chiffres. 8wines. <https://8wines.fr/blog/deboucher-le-boom-du-vin-en-georgie>

4.c. French success stories in Georgia

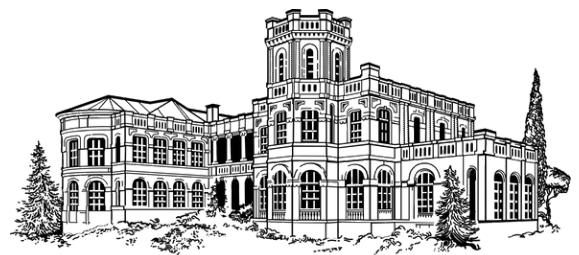
The 65 members of the CCIFG, including both French and Georgian companies, operate in these booming sectors, helping to boost the local economy. French companies established in Georgia include Accord Hotels Group, Carrefour, Lactalis Georgia, Orange, Atlantic Georgia, CMA CGM, etc., which have made major investments and played a significant role in the country's economic development. Many of them are now highlighting their success stories within the country. The ACCOR Group in Georgia entered the Georgian market in 2015 with its mid-range brand Mercure, followed by Ibis Style in 2017 and the PULLMAN Tbilisi Axis Tower in 2022. The ACCOR Group's gradual entry into the Georgian hospitality market underlines the country's attractiveness to international hotel brands. The creator's decision to invest in several brands reflects a confidence in Georgia's tourism potential and the growing demand for accommodation options.

Entrée was created in December 2008. It is above all a French concept adapted to the Georgian context. With 14 shops in Georgia, the company has achieved significant success, with plans for international expansion in Azerbaijan and the UK. The company's founder highlights the favourable business climate in Georgia, including low taxation and encouraging transparency, encouraging other companies to explore market opportunities.¹⁸



Source: Accor Live Limitless. (s. d.). Swissôtel Tbilisi. [all.accor.com. https://all.accor.com/hotel/B810/index.en.shtml](https://all.accor.com/hotel/B810/index.en.shtml)

Similarly, another example of economic success is illustrated by the renaissance of Château Mukhani in the early 2000s. This winery set itself the goal of producing exceptional wines by blending Georgian and French grape varieties, thus perpetuating the Franco-Georgian heritage. This initiative perfectly represents the union between Georgian winemaking tradition and French expertise, symbolising the harmonious combination of traditional methods and modern technologies. These success stories highlight the many opportunities offered by Georgia's favourable business climate, attracting national and international investment in a variety of sectors.



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MUKHRANI**

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