

„Georgia's Christmas Spending Surpasses European Countries” -GMS reports.

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Liza Qoridze, by Mariam Zamtaradze.

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The Governance Monitoring Center (GMC) reports that the budget allocated for New Year's decorations in Georgia surpasses 8 million lari, outstripping leading European countries. Liza Qoridze, a researcher at GMC, shared insights into the annual research conducted on Christmas and New Year celebrations in Georgia.

"Every year, we delve into the festivities in Georgia because it costs Tbilisi City Hall more than a million laris annually," stated Qoridze during our interview.

She highlighted the challenges in researching this process, pointing out that the City Hall engages with various companies for celebrations, often involving simplified documents that increase the risk of corruption. The festivities typically kick off from December 15th to January 7th, with Tbilisi City Hall and Tbilisi City Company spending over 7 million lari together last year. This year, their budget is set at approximately 10.5 million lari.

"City companies announce tenders for various aspects, such as electricity, decorations, and more, a few months before the New Year. Last year, they spent more than 7 million lari, and this year, the plan is to exceed 10.5 million lari," Qoridze explained.

She went on to detail some of the expenditures, such as the 2 million lari allocated for fireworks, stages, screens, and other equipment. Additionally, six electricity tenders were announced, totaling 2.5 million lari, including funds for a new Christmas tree after the previous ones were burned in 2022.

The GMC researcher also highlighted their investigation into spending by other Georgian municipalities, revealing that Kharagauli, Borjomi, and Ozurgeti topped the list, collectively spending over 4.5 million lari. Seeking a broader perspective, GMC requested information from three European capitals: Prague, Helsinki, and Vilnius. The responses showed that these cities spent considerably less on Christmas and New Year celebrations. Prague allocated 301,000 euros, Helsinki's budget was 130,000 euros last year and increased to 150,000 euros this year, while Vilnius exceeded 200,000 euros.