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Georgia, Russia Agree to Re-Allow Cross-Border Automobile Traffic

By The Moscow Times

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TBILISI — Russia and Georgia have agreed to resume cross-border passenger and cargo road transportation after suspending it over an array of disagreements between the two countries in 2006.

The only border checkpoint between Russia and Georgia was reopened in March of 2010, but there was no regular automobile traffic allowed between the countries.

Georgia's economics ministry said Thursday in a statement that the agreement to resume road transportation was reached following a meeting of delegations from the Russian Transportation Ministry and the Georgian Economic and Sustainable Development Ministry on Aug. 6-7 in Moscow.

The Russian Transportation Ministry confirmed that the agreement was reached, but added that such cross-border road transportation had not yet resumed.

In 2006, the Russian Transportation Ministry announced that it was suspending air, railway, waterway and road transportation to Georgia, a move that followed a Russian ban on Georgian mineral water and wine earlier that same year.

Relations between Russia and Georgia deteriorated further when in August 2008 the two countries fought a brief war over the breakaway Georgian republic of South Ossetia.

Georgia's new government, elected in October last year, said at the time that normalizing ties with Russia was among its top priorities. However, Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili said in July that Moscow and Tbilisi were unlikely to completely restore ties by the time Russia holds the 2014 Winter Olympics in the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

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