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Programme of the Pope's apostolic trip to Georgia and Azerbaijan

Vatican City, 11 July 2016 – The Holy See Press Office today published the programme for the Holy Father's apostolic trip to Georgia and Azerbaijan, to take place from 30 September to 2 October.

The Pope will leave from Rome's Fiumicino airport at 9 a.m., and is scheduled to arrive at Tbilisi international airport at 3 p.m., where the welcome ceremony will be held. Following a courtesy visit to the the president of the Republic in the presidential palace, and an encounter with the civil authorities and diplomatic corps in the courtyard, the Holy Father will meet with His Holiness and Beatitude Ilia II, Catholicos and Patriarch of all Georgia, in the Palace of the Patriarchate. His first day in Georgia will conclude with a meeting with the Assyrian-Chaldean community in the Chaldean Catholic Church of St. Simon the Tanner.

On Saturday, 1 October, the Pope will celebrate holy Mass in the M. Meskhi stadium, followed by a meeting with priests and men and women religious in the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin. He will then meet with the Church's charity workers and those they assist outside the Camillian aid centre, followed by a visit to the Svietyshoveli Patriarchal Cathedral of Mskheta.

In the morning of Sunday, 2 October, after the farewell ceremony at the airport in Tbilisi, the Holy Father will depart by air for Baku, Azerbaijan, where he is scheduled to arrive at the Heydar Aliyev international airport at 9.30 a.m. Following the official welcome, he will celebrate Holy Mass in the Salesian centre in Baku. After lunch with the Salesian community, he will attend the protocol welcome ceremony in the presidential palace of Genclik, and pay a courtesy visit to the president of the Republic. In the afternoon he will meet with the authorities in the Heydar Aliyev Centre, to be followed by a private meeting with the Sheikh of the Muslims of the Caucasus in the Heydar Aliyev Mosque, and a private meeting with the Orthodox bishop of Baku and the president of the Jewish community. At 7.15 p.m., after the farewell ceremony, the Pope will depart by air for Rome's Ciampino airport, where he is expected to arrive at 10 p.m.