



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1136
Vienna, 9 March 2017**

EU Statement on the “Closure of so-called border crossings in the occupied Abkhazia region in Georgia”

The European Union is deeply concerned about the closure by the de-facto authorities from the breakaway region of Abkhazia of two crossing points along the Administrative Boundary Line of Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia – Nabakevi and Meore Otobaia - which were used daily by hundreds of commuters. The closure is detrimental to the freedom of movement of the population, including school children, on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Line. It will likely increase the risk of incidents, especially detentions.

Such a unilateral decision goes against commitments to work towards enhanced security and improved living conditions for the conflict-affected population. Furthermore, it is contrary to efforts to improve the situation by creating an atmosphere that is not conducive to longer-term conflict resolution and restored respect for OSCE principles and commitments.

The European Union, therefore, calls to reverse these moves and to ensure the freedom of movement, including humanitarian crossings. Furthermore, the participants in the Geneva International Discussions should engage constructively in enhancing security and improving living conditions for the conflict-affected population.

The European Union calls on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and its subsequent implementing measures of 8 September 2008, and to grant the EU Monitoring Mission access to the breakaway regions.

The European Union reaffirms its firm support to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally-recognised borders. It will continue to closely follow the situation along the Administrative Boundary Line, including through the enhanced presence of its monitoring mission.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.