



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 908 Vienna, 19 April 2012

EU statement on the 19th round of Geneva discussions

The European Union reiterates its strong support for the Geneva discussions, the latest round of which took place on 29 March. We continue to support the OSCE's active participation in the meetings, in which good use can be made of its extensive cross-dimensional experience.

With regard to the first working group, we note that the security situation on the ground remains relatively stable, despite an increase of the number of violent incidents along the Inguri River. We reiterate the importance of the two Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) in ensuring continued stability. We call upon all stakeholders to engage without delay in the development of additional confidence and security building measures with the aim to increase military transparency, based on the positive experience of the IPRMs. The issue of non-use of force and international security arrangements continues to be the main stumbling block in the Geneva discussions. In this regard, it is especially important that the commitment to the non-use of force should be made by all sides and we look forward to further discussion on the issues in the next rounds. We welcome the proactive attitude by the participants and encourage further constructive efforts on this matter.

Regarding the second working group on humanitarian issues, we continue to call on all parties to urgently improve living conditions for people affected by the August 2008 conflict. The EU takes note that discussions took place on the issues of missing persons, education and cultural heritage preservation. The EU welcomes the successful completion of water supply projects along the South Ossetian administrative boundary line, which are benefitting both communities, and looks forward to a new set of projects. The EU will continue to co-operate closely with the OSCE on this issue. We reiterate our call on all stakeholders to engage constructively in order to restore basic utilities and services to the affected communities and to ensure freedom of movement across the administrative boundary line.

The EU is looking forward to the next round of Geneva discussions scheduled for 7 and 8 June 2012.

The EU once more recalls its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders and reiterates its concern about the continuing Russian military and security-related presence and infrastructure reinforcements in the Georgian breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The EU calls on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and the Implementing Measures of 8 September 2008, including by providing access to EUMM to the breakaway regions. We also reiterate our call for unhindered access for humanitarian organisations.

The EU remains convinced of the urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia, in particular for the benefit of the civilian population, including a robust monitoring capacity able to operate unhindered across the administrative boundary lines.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.