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EU STATEMENT ON THE SHOOTING INCIDENT IN SOUTH OSSETIA

The EU is very concerned about the shooting incident on 29 May in the zone of conflict in South Ossetia, Georgia, as reported by the OSCE Mission to Georgia. The EU calls on all sides to exercise maximum restraint. All efforts should be aimed at the prevention of any further escalation of the situation. In this respect, the EU welcomes the decision of the sides to set up a joint investigation team, which will report on the incident.

The EU again underlines the importance of full implementation of the demilitarisation agreements in order to improve the overall security situation in the area. Furthermore, the presence of unauthorized armed formations in the zone of conflict is totally unacceptable and should be solved in the earliest possible timeframe. The EU calls on all sides to address these issues with the utmost urgency and welcomes the work carried out in the context of the recent meetings of the Joint Control Commission in this respect.

The EU continues to support the role of the Mission as a facilitator of dialogue between the parties. The EU urges all sides to keep up this dialogue as negotiations and confidence building are the only means towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict. In this context, the EU would support the early holding of a meeting between Georgian Prime Minister Noghaideli and South Ossetian leader Kokoity.

The EU welcomes the determination, expressed in the joint declaration by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Georgia of 30 May, to continue active cooperation in the interest of political settlement of the conflict exclusively by peaceful means, based on respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania and the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia¹ align themselves with this statement.

¹Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process