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## **Présidence française du Conseil de l'Union Européenne**

**Conseil Permanent No. 720  
10 juillet 2008**

### **EU Statement regarding recent developments in Georgia**

The European Union is deeply concerned about the increasing number of violent incidents in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which resulted in loss of life and serious injuries. We particularly deplore the death of an interpreter working to further peace on behalf of UNOMIG. Such violent acts are unacceptable, risk escalating the already tense situation in both regions and undermine efforts to reach a peaceful resolution to the conflicts. We urge all parties to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from provocative actions. The incidents demonstrate once again the urgent need for confidence building measures, constructive dialogue and a speedy resumption of the negotiating process.

Regarding South Ossetia, we are also concerned about reported announcements by the de-facto authorities regarding a possible mobilization of forces. These circumstances highlight the need for implementation of the agreed demilitarisation measures, and the immediate deployment of additional Mission Monitoring Officers. We reiterate our call on parties to resume talks without further delay, and use all negotiating formats - including the JCC and Authorised Delegations, or any other agreed format - in a constructive manner

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to explore ways of increasing the effectiveness of the conflict resolution process.

Regarding Abkhazia, the EU would like to recall the General Affairs and External Relations Council conclusions on Georgia adopted on 26 May 2008, presented during the joint FSC/PC meeting on 11 June. We remain concerned by a series of events that have raised tensions between Russia and Georgia. We also note with concern the recent decision of the Abkhaz de-facto authorities to close down the de-facto boundary within Georgia. We encourage direct talks by the parties, hoping that they will contribute to a constructive dialogue on the issue. We underline our call for the reinforcement of UNOMIG's observation capacity, including by the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles and artillery radar, as recommended in the UN Secretary General's report S/2007/588 of 4 October 2007 and supported in UNSC Resolution 1808 of 15 April 2008.

The EU remains ready to provide assistance to the conflict settlement process, by promoting dialogue and by contributing further to confidence-building measures agreed between the parties, both through financial assistance to the economic rehabilitation programme for South Ossetia and through the work of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, who is currently in the region. This support was further complemented last month, when the EU agreed to offer additional financial assistance to the conflict settlement process in Georgia/South Ossetia.

In conclusion, the EU once again reaffirms its commitment to Georgia's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders, and advocates a rapid resumption of negotiations leading to a peaceful, viable and long-term solution to the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We are confident that the visit to the region by the OSCE

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Permanent Representatives will also contribute to a better understanding of the situation.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Iceland, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

\*Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

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