



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 971  
Vienna, 14 November 2013**

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**EU Statement in response to the Co-Chairs of the Geneva  
Discussions**

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The European Union warmly welcomes the Co-Chairs of the Geneva Discussions, Ambassadors Deshchytsia, Lefort and Turunen, and thanks them for their address. The EU reiterates its strong support for the Geneva Discussions, the latest round of which took place on 5-6 November. We continue to support the OSCE's active participation in the meetings, and believe that its extensive cross dimensional-experience can be useful.

We firmly believe that the Geneva Discussions is the essential forum for discussing and resolving the challenges stemming from the conflict in Georgia. We welcome the focus on substantial discussions shown during the 25th round of the Geneva Discussions and the conclusion of both Working Group agendas. In this context we appreciate the flexibility and pragmatism shown during the discussions, and we call on all stakeholders to remain committed to the process and to continue working together constructively.

Referring to the First Working Group, the European Union notes with profound concern the effect on the freedom of movement and the livelihood of the local population as a result of the continued deployment of fences and other obstacles at different locations along and beyond the Administrative Boundary Lines. Such activities contravene Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Therefore, we call upon all participants to ensure that those unacceptable developments continue to be addressed within the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms with the aim to find tailored solution to problems arising. In this

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context we stress the importance of resuming the effective functioning of the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) meetings.

With regard to the issues related to security, the issue of the non-use of force and international security arrangements continue to be core subjects of the Geneva Discussions. Participants continued to exchange views on the draft statement on the non-use of force. While the perceptions on the non-use of force commitment continue to differ significantly, the EU calls on all participants to continue to work together towards sustainable security arrangements. In this regard a clear non-use of force commitment by Russia would be necessary.

Referring to Working Group Two, the EU reiterates its deep concern about the humanitarian implication of the restrictions on freedom of movement due to the installation of fences and other physical obstacles along the Administrative Boundary Lines. 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 full exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of movement across the Administrative Boundary Lines. Additionally, we would like to express our hope that relevant participants will reach an agreement on the Tiriphoni irrigation water project which could become one of the most visible CBMs projects implemented by the OSCE in the conflict affected area.

We took note of participants' exchange of views on issues related to missing persons. We particularly welcome the reinvigorated approach of the Georgian side, which resulted in the reopening of the investigation in the case of three young South Ossetians missing since 2008. The EU reiterates its commitment to help improve the situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia and refugees from the conflicts and their unconditional right to a safe and dignified return.

The EU once more recalls its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised 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 its subsequent implementing measures of 8 September 2008, including providing the EUMM with access to the breakaway regions. The EUMM plays a leading role in the IPRMs within its stabilisation, normalisation and confidence-building mandate. We also reiterate our call for unhindered access for humanitarian organisations.

Mr. Chairperson,

The comprehensive address of the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva discussions has once again demonstrated that there is an urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia, in particular for the benefit of the civilian population, including robust monitoring capacity able to operate unhindered across the Administrative Boundary Lines.

In the meantime we call on all actors concerned to show their commitment to the process of the Geneva discussions under the agreed format and to engage constructively in it. We look forward to the next round scheduled for 17-18 December 2013.

Thank you.

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 align themselves with this statement.

\* 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.

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