



Statement as delivered by the delegation of Georgia at the 2015 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

In response to the address by the OSCE HCNM
Working Session 17, Warsaw, October 1, 2015

- While Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Netherlands on behalf of the EU, allow me to make the following statement in my national capacity.
- I would like to join previous speakers in warmly welcoming the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ms. Astrid Thors and thank her for the insightful address.
- Georgia highly values HCNM's activities and its mandate which is essential for conflict prevention and early warning throughout the OSCE area. We regard the onsite missions and follow-up reports of the HCNM as very important for adequately assessing the situation on the ground and stimulating debate on state of national minorities.
- We would like to take this opportunity and thank the HCNM for her visit to Georgia in April this year. High Commissioner's visits to the occupation lines of both Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions were crucially important in conveying the sense of the grave humanitarian situation. However, we note with concern that similar to Commissioner's previous visit in February 2014, Commissioner was denied access to the occupied regions of Georgia due to refusal of the occupation regimes.
- Considering the abovementioned, Georgia continues to underline the importance of achieving progress with respect to follow-up on the ODIHR/HCNM 2008 report on human rights in the war affected areas following the conflict in Georgia. Ways must be found for the HCNM and ODIHR to monitor the human rights situation in the Georgia's occupied regions.
- It should be emphasized that it is irrelevant to speak about the rights of ethnic Georgians in the context of national minorities on the territories of Georgia, including on the occupied territories.
- We highly appreciate HCNM's assistance in elaboration of the new Civic Equality and Integration Strategy and relevant Action Plan that was adopted by the Government of Georgia on 17 August 2015. We are hopeful that with the valuable input and expertise of

the Office we will create a sound basis for more effective government policy aimed at integration of national minorities in cultural, social and political life of our country.

- The HCNM has provided valuable suggestions on the draft law on State Language. Great majority of Ms. Thors's recommendations were taken into account during the law-making process and the Parliament of Georgia adopted the law on the State Language in July 2015.
- We appreciate HCNM's hard work in supporting the multilingual reform in Georgia as well as her continued interest in the process of Repatriation of Forcefully Displaced Persons from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia in 1940s. Georgia attaches great importance to the fulfilment of its remaining commitments to the Council of Europe. Substantial progress has been achieved in the context of Repatriation of Forcefully Displaced Persons. The elaboration of the relevant Action Plan will be finalized in the nearest future.
- In closing, we would like to thank the High Commissioner, for her valuable work.

Thank you.