

PC.DEL/712/08
28 August 2008

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

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Regarding the situation in Georgia

The European Union warmly welcomes Ms. Ekaterine Tkeshelashvili, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Georgia, to today's meeting of the Permanent Council and expresses to her all its sympathy at the trials currently confronting her country.

The situation in Georgia is under examination by the European Union, and the European Council will meet on Monday, 1 September, in order to continue its discussions on that subject. The Presidency of the Council of the European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the following statement, which it issued on 26 August:

“The Presidency of the Council of the European Union takes note of the decision taken by the Russian authorities to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

“The Presidency strongly condemns this decision, which is contrary to the principles of Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, recognized by the Charter of the United Nations, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

“In this context, the Presidency strongly recalls its commitment to the principle of Georgia's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

“The Presidency calls for a political solution to the conflicts in Georgia and will examine from this viewpoint the consequences of the Russian decision.”

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro; the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein; 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.