

MC.DEL/34/08  
4 December 2008

ENGLISH  
Original: FRENCH

**STATEMENT BY MS. MICHELINE CALMY-REY,  
FEDERAL COUNCILLOR AND HEAD OF THE SWISS FEDERAL  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AT THE SIXTEENTH  
MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Helsinki, 4 and 5 December 2008

Mr. Chairman,  
Dear Colleagues,

For the first time since 1999, an open conflict erupted between two participating States of the OSCE. Our Organization must draw lessons from this. As far as South Ossetia and Abkhazia are concerned, a political solution in conformity with the principles of the United Nations and the OSCE respecting both the sovereignty of Georgia and the democratic will of the population must be obtained by peaceful means. The OSCE has all the resources needed to contribute in a decisive manner to the elaboration of a solution of this kind.

Could the OSCE have prevented the armed conflict? Without returning to the origins of the conflict, which must also be examined, it still needs to be determined whether the OSCE's early-warning system worked properly. We note that the information and consultation mechanisms provided for these conflict situations were used and the danger of an escalation was therefore not unknown. And yet, it was not possible to prevent the eruption of the conflict.

At all events, the OSCE is all the same the last common platform still available to the States that are party to a conflict in the European region. Its responsibility after the conflict is to restore dialogue and to establish effective management of the consequences of the crisis.

In this context, Switzerland believes that it is very important to extend the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. Close collaboration with the United Nations observer mission must be maintained because the two missions complement one another. The OSCE should also take advantage of the new dimension of commitment on the part of the European Union.

Drawing lessons in particular from the inability to prevent a situation like the one that arose in Georgia, various eminent persons have pleaded in favour of a new European security architecture. Indeed, we need to adapt the framework and existing instruments to the recognized needs. In Switzerland's view, there is no need for a radically new security order, but fundamental work must be carried out to re-establish confidence in these instruments and revise their scope. We particularly believe in the future role of the OSCE. Our Organization covers the trans-Atlantic space as well as the Eurasian space, which gives it a comparative advantage. Its concept of security, being multidimensional, is perfectly adapted to the

complexity of the risks facing the participating States today. And for this reason, the OSCE is tailor-made for the elaboration of new formats of pan-European security.

Above all, it is clear that the OSCE must be provided with its own legal personality to facilitate the work of its field missions. Switzerland believes that the capacity for action of the Secretariat should also be increased and co-operation with the United Nations and the Council of Europe improved.

The question remains however: Does it still make sense to be restricted to decisions adopted on the basis of unanimity when there is a crisis threatening? In other words, are the OSCE's instruments effective enough? These questions raised at the level of Heads of State or Government should give us fresh impetus.

While the war in Georgia has greatly preoccupied us all, we should not forget the good work accomplished by the OSCE in its different areas and also in the field in the participating States. We should therefore like to pay tribute here to the efforts that have been made to implement and adapt the Code of Conduct on the Politico-Military Aspects of Security. We also pay tribute to the progress made in the dialogue within the Forum for Security Co-operation.

The importance of the human dimension should not be underestimated, whether it is a matter of election observers, their support for participating States in holding free and fair elections or the decisions submitted here for adoption concerning trafficking in human beings, Roma and Sinti, tolerance and non-discrimination. These decisions are entirely in keeping with the tradition of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the United Nations is celebrating this year with commemorative events in Geneva and New York.

I would not want to conclude without thanking the Finnish Chairmanship for all the efforts it has made this year to affirm the role of the OSCE and wishing the incoming Greek Chairmanship every success in the many tasks that await it next year.