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Présidence française du Conseil de l'Union européenne

**Conseil permanent No. 737
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EU Statement on Georgia

The European Union would like to share with the Permanent Council its surprise about recent statements by the Russian Federation claiming that the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia is failing to fulfil its mandate. The EU firmly rejects such allegations. The EU observers are performing their duties very well, in an efficient and professional way in full compliance with the 6-point Agreement and, in particular, point 5 establishing an international mechanism. This was confirmed during the visit to Georgia of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bernard Kouchner on 9 and 10 October. Therefore, we see no reason to question the reliability or competence of the EU Monitoring Mission. Its presence contributes to the stabilisation of the situation, which will require all the Parties to commit to a long-term process and act according to their responsibilities.

With reference to the conclusions of the European Council of 1 September and the conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 15 September and 13 October, we reiterate our call on the parties to continue to implement their commitments, including with regard to the role of the OSCE observers. We again urge all parties to allow immediate safe and unhindered access of the OSCE MMOs to South Ossetia in accordance with their mandate.

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As for the OSCE Mission to Georgia, the EU firmly supports its current mandate and encourages all participating States to engage - in good faith - in constructive discussions regarding its extension by the end of this year

The EU reaffirms its willingness to take an active part, in particular through its Special Representative for the crisis in Georgia, in the international discussions provided for in the agreements of 12 August and 8 September, which are set to continue on 18 November under the auspices of the EU, the United Nations and the OSCE. The EU invites all parties to the conflict to participate in the talks in a constructive manner. These discussions must focus on all the remaining problems, in particular concerning arrangements for stability and security in the region, the urgent question of displaced persons and the unresolved issues of the upper Kodori valley and the Akhalkalaki region. In this context, the EU recalls that the European Council on 1st of September strongly condemned Russia's unilateral decision to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and underlined that a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia must be based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

La Turquie, la Croatie* et l'ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine*, pays candidats ; l'Albanie, la Bosnie – Herzégovine et le Monténégro, pays du processus de stabilisation et d'association et candidats potentiels ; l'Islande, pays de l'Association Européenne de libre-échange et membre de l'Espace économique européen ; ainsi que l'Ukraine se rallient à cette déclaration.

*La Croatie et l'ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine continuent à participer au processus de stabilisation et d'association.

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