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EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 635
Vienna, 9 February 2011**

EU statement in response to the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia, H.E. Mr. Nikoloz Vashakidze

Mr. Chairman

The European Union welcomes Deputy Minister Vashakidze to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thanks him for his address.

The situation in Georgia, including its Abkhaz and South Ossetian regions, remains of great concern to the EU, and has direct implications for the security and stability situation in the whole region. The EU considers that the lack of military transparency and the denial of international access to the Abkhaz and South Ossetian regions, add to tensions in the region.

We have taken note with concern of reports and statements indicating increased militarization activities in the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, without the consent of the Government of Georgia; the fact that such reports cannot be properly assessed in the current situation, underlines once more the urgent need for a meaningful OSCE monitoring presence, able to operate unhindered across the administrative boundary lines, as well as

unhindered access of EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) to the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The EU has welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding between the EUMM and the Ministry of Defence of Georgia which promotes military transparency around the administrative boundary lines. While acknowledging that this is a unilateral confidence building measure by Georgia, we encourage the Russian Federation to consider a similar step in order to further enhance stability on the ground.

The EU calls once again for the full implementation of the August 2008 Six-point agreement, as well as its implementing measures, and reiterates its firm support for the security and stability of Georgia, based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, recognised by international law. In this context, EU reiterates its full support for the Geneva discussions, as the only forum in which all sides are represented and three international actors – the EU, the OSCE and the United Nations – work in close cooperation for the security and stability in the region.

Mr. Deputy Minister, we thank you again for your address.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Alignments

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, ICELAND** and MONTENEGRO, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country ALBANIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, AZERBAIJAN and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

** Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.