



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1062 Vienna, 16 July 2015

EU statement on the 32nd round of the Geneva International Discussions

The European Union welcomes that the latest round of Geneva International Discussions held on 30 June and 1 July 2015 did not only go undisrupted, but also saw a more lively and engaged exchange than in recent months.

In Working Group I, no serious incidents that could have a destabilising impact on the situation were noted. In this regard, we emphasise the pragmatic cooperation of the Incident Prevention Response Mechanism in Ergneti and the use of the hotline, to ensuring stability and avoiding escalation of small scale incidents. We strongly support the resumption of the effective functioning of the Gali IPRM meetings without preconditions.

We believe that the issue of non-use of force and international security arrangements continue to be core subjects of the Geneva International Discussions. We therefore regret that only little progress was made in moving forward with this issue. We continue to believe that a clear commitment by Russia on non-use of force is essential.

We commend that debates in Working Group II were held in a generally constructive atmosphere, allowing discussions on practical steps in the field of cultural heritage, health, education, residence and crossing permits and regimes, and water-related issues.

The EU calls on all the concerned parties to facilitate and grant unrestricted access to the international humanitarian organisations for the benefit of all persons affected by the conflict and in need of human rights protection, and expresses its concern at the human rights situation in the Georgian breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The EU also wishes to underline that the issue of refugees and IDPs, and their safe, dignified and voluntary return, continues to constitute a key agenda item in the Geneva International Discussions. We therefore call on all participants to engage in a pragmatic and open exchange of views on this subject. We welcome the efforts by the Georgian government to provide durable and sustainable housing solutions, access to livelihoods and financial assistance to the IDPs, and the new Action Plan on IDPs for the period 2015-2016 approved in January to ensure harmonisation of government's policy with the revised Law on IDPs.

We welcome the recently launched confidence building measure projects by the OSCE secretariat - "The OSCE Summer School", which aims at promoting people-to-people contacts and supports restoration of trust and confidence among young people on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Line; and the provision of potable water in the villages of Zemo Sobisi and Kvemo Sobisi, situated near the Administrative Boundary Line with South Ossetia.

We remain convinced, that there is an urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia, in particular for the benefit of the civilian population, including robust monitoring capacity able to operate unhindered across the Administrative Boundary Lines. We encourage the current Serbia OSCE Chairmanship to continue exploring possibilities to this end.

The EU reiterates its firm support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognised borders and reiterates its concern about the continuing Russian military and security related presence and infrastructure reinforcements in the Georgian breakaway regions. We once again call on the Russian Federation to fulfil its obligations under the 12 August agreement and its subsequent implementing measures of 8 September 2008, including providing the EUMM access to the breakaway regions.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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