

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1062nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 July 2015

**Regarding the results of the 32nd round of the Geneva International
Discussions on security and stability in the Trans-Caucasus**

Mr. Chairperson,

We note the objective nature of the deliberations during the latest round of the Geneva International Discussions on security and stability in the Trans-Caucasus on 30 June and 1 July with the participation of representatives of the Republic of Abkhazia, Georgia, the Russian Federation, the Republic of South Ossetia and the United States of America under the co-chairmanship of the United Nations, the OSCE and the European Union (EU). The talks were heated but substantive.

The importance of concluding legally binding agreements on the non-use of force between Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia for maintaining peace and stability in the Trans-Caucasus was confirmed in the working group on security issues. The Abkhazian and South Ossetian delegations confirmed their willingness to work constructively on preparing and signing these documents, especially in the light of Tbilisi's plans for further integration with NATO which are causing justified concern to Sukhum and Tskhinval. We are pleased that the working group on security issues continued its work on the text of a joint statement by the participants in the Geneva International Discussions on the non-use of force, including on behalf of the Co-Chairs. However, once again no progress was made in this regard. The unreasonable demands once again made of Russia regarding the adoption of some kind of unilateral commitments as well as arguments about the so-called "international security measures" in the region are futile and merely complicate the process of reaching agreement on such a statement.

We note the discussion of further ways of normalizing the border situation in the region, restoring trust and improving the living conditions of the local population. It is important that all the participants in the meeting noted a positive trend towards the stabilization of the situation on the borders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia with Georgia. The number of persons detained for crossing the border illegally went down in June, as did the number of incidents at the border. The local population has got used to the idea of a real inter-State border, which has its own regime and requires respect. This is clearly confirmed

by the statistics available. Since the beginning of 2015, more than half a million people have crossed the Abkhazian-Georgian border, and more than 87,000 the South Ossetian-Georgian border. No serious incidents have been recorded on either border. The calm situation is maintained largely thanks to the smooth functioning of the hotlines and the work on the Georgian-South Ossetian border of the joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) in Ergneti. We look forward to the resumption of the work of the Gali IPRM on the Abkhazian-Georgian border. We expect the required compromise solutions to be found quickly.

In connection with the statements by the representatives of Georgia in Geneva, we should point out that during this round of talks explanations were once again given regarding the essence and objectives of the ratified Treaty on Alliance and Integration between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia. Clarifications in this regard had also been given earlier here in the Permanent Council. We regard this matter as closed.

There was an exchange of views on the pressing problems of socio-economic development, education and health care for the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the working group on humanitarian issues. The search for missing persons and the problems of prisoners in Georgian prisons, the return of cultural property, the protection of memorials and ensuring access to cultural and religious sites warrant further discussion. During the meeting, attention was called to instances involving the politically motivated refusal by a number of EU countries to issue entry visas to citizens of these republics for purely humanitarian purposes. The representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia reaffirmed their steadfast position of not participating in talks on the problems of refugees within the framework of the Geneva International Discussions until Georgia ceases its artificial politicization of this humanitarian issue at the United Nations General Assembly. Russia considers this approach to be justified. We recall that the representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been deprived of the possibility of presenting their point of view in New York, which is where the Georgian side is in fact attempting to move the discussion of the problems of refugees to.

As for the latest calls today to restore the OSCE presence in Georgia, we reaffirm that we are willing together with the other participating States to give constructive consideration to this matter. It goes without saying that this is on the understanding that the mission mandate will not be extended to the neighbouring independent States of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are not yet OSCE participating States. The question regarding the establishment of field presences of our Organization in those States should be discussed directly with the representatives of Sukhum and Tskhinval.

Thank you for your attention.