



EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE OSCE AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

ENGLISH only

S T A T E M E N T

of the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the OSCE
Mr. Paata Gaprindashvili

In response to the address of the SG of the Council of Europe Mr. T. Jagland
to the OSCE Permanent Council

Delivered at the 820th Meeting of the Permanent Council

Vienna, July 1st, 2010

Mr. Chairman,

I also would like to welcome the Secretary General of the Council of Europe HE Mr. Jagland and thank him for his comprehensive address. It is very important to continue forging the relationship between the OSCE and the Council of Europe and your visit, Mr. Secretary General, to the OSCE will hopefully contribute to enhancing of such inter-institutional partnership.

Georgia aligns itself to the statement of the European Union, however I would like to add few words on the importance of the Council of Europe for Georgia. It is especially relevant and noteworthy today, since the Secretary General will be visiting Tbilisi tomorrow and meeting with the political leadership of my country. We attribute great importance to these meetings as it is for the first time that Secretary Jagland is visiting Georgia. In your statement, Mr. Secretary General, you have made some concrete remarks on the Georgian issue which we agree to and welcome.

We believe that the Council of Europe has a great part to play in the protection of human rights and our common values in Georgia, including the occupied regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. Moreover, Council of Europe, through its various instruments and mechanisms can be an active promoter of European values, reified in the European Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Helsinki Final Act, throughout the whole territory of Georgia.

We hope that the Council of Europe will continue playing active role with regard to the alleviation of the consequences of the Russia-Georgia war. Role of the Secretary General in this respect is particularly important. We are looking forward to the next report of the Secretary General on the Russian-Georgian conflict, with the focus on the human rights situation in the occupied regions, concrete activities of the Council of Europe in support of the Georgian Government's Engagement Strategy and the continuation of the scrutiny of the accession commitments of Russia and Georgia related to the August 2008 war.

In this respect it is of paramount importance to us that the Secretary General looks into such obligations of the Russian Federation as the obligation to settle all border disputes with the neighboring states in a peaceful manner and abandon the concept of the privileged zones of interest, as undertaken when joining the Council of Europe. In a similar manner, we will be looking forward for the assessment of the current status of implementation of these commitments by the Secretary General, something that was missing in his recent report.

It is also important that the Council of Europe, together with the OSCE finds ways how to implement concrete activities on the ground with an aim of contributing to the Engagement Strategy of the Georgian Government with concrete actions. In the same vein, we are looking forward to the proposals on the ways of expanding the CoE presence to Georgia to the occupied territories of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region. We hope that unlike in the OSCE, Russia will be more reasonable within the Council of Europe and will allow this institution to establish robust human rights monitoring in those areas, where the local residents of the occupied regions suffer immensely from the total lack of protection of their dignity and fundamental freedoms. It will be extremely unfortunate if the Council of Europe falls in the same trap that the OSCE Mission to Georgia and UNOMIG fell in, as a result of Moscow's extremely politicized and totally unjustified position.

We believe that the Council of Europe has a political relevance at the wider European level as long as it continues using its instruments and mechanisms effectively. The aim of these mechanisms is to make sure that all member states effectively implement their statutory and accession specific commitments and obligations. As a result, each member state achieves higher level in defending human rights, ensuring the rule of law and promoting democracy. We hope that these instruments will continue to be effectively employed with regard to Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region, thus making the lives of the residents of these regions more dignified and their human rights more protected.

Here we would like to stress once again that the OSCE can learn from the Council of Europe few things when it comes to the monitoring of the commitments of the member states. Some of these ideas have been distributed by Georgia in the food-for-thought paper under the Corfu Process and we hope that these ideas are discussed in a greater detail during the course of our future deliberations.

In the end allow me to once again welcome Secretary General and wish him successful trip to Georgia and all the best in his future activities and particularly in his reform agenda in the Council of Europe.

Thank You.