



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO Ambassador Christopoulos
C-i-O's Special Representative for the Protracted Conflicts

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
22 January 2009

Madam Chairperson,

The Norwegian delegation joins previous speakers in warmly welcoming the Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador Christopoulos, to the Permanent Council. We thank him for his concise and interesting report, and even more for the efforts already undertaken.

The aftermath of the conflict in Georgia will continue to figure prominently on our agenda in 2009, and be something of a test case for the OSCE. Norway salutes the determined efforts of the Greek Chairmanship to help alleviate the most dire consequences of the conflict, and to gradually get back to a situation where we can aim at finding lasting solutions to this and other protracted conflicts in the OSCE area.

Madam Chairperson,

As you will know, Norway, along with the vast majority of the participating States, supported the Finnish Chairmanship's compromise package for a continued OSCE presence in Georgia that was launched shortly before the winter recess. We are equally supportive of the present Chairmanship in your endeavours to preserve a robust OSCE presence in the whole country, which must fully respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

The deplorable outcome of a shooting incident in the village of Knolevi on 16 January, where a Georgian policeman was killed, is a further demonstration that a stronger - not a weaker OSCE - presence is needed.

Madam Chairperson,

The OSCE and its institutions have important roles to play in Georgia, through the participation of the CiO in the negotiations in Geneva, the efforts of ODIHR and HCNM to promote respect for human rights and the rights of minorities, and the continued work of the OSCE Mission in Georgia, promoting further positive development of Georgian society and institutions.

A continued and strengthened presence of military monitors from the OSCE is also needed, to follow up the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, and also to provide reliable

information on the humanitarian situation, not least with regard to the ethnic Georgians who still reside in South Ossetia. We call on all parties to the conflict to fully comply with the cease-fire agreement of 12 August.

Madam Chairperson,

We are aware of certain ideas and concepts presently being discussed with the most directly concerned parties. These ideas could in our view form a very good basis for a compromise solution. We must now make the best use of the grace period required for the possible closing of the Mission to find common ground for a continued, much needed OSCE presence in Georgia, which we firmly believe would be in everybody's best interest, and which should be obtainable if good will is demonstrated.

Finally, Madam Chairperson,

We have noted with satisfaction the successful inspection undertaken by the Special Representative and the Chair's appointed expert on the technical status of the whole length of the Agara-Tskhinvali gas pipeline, with full cooperation from all sides. We also welcome the content of the report, to the effect that the pipeline is now in such a condition that gas deliveries through the pipeline can be resumed. We call upon the parties concerned to speedily resolve the remaining issues regarding gas supply to the South Ossetian region. Norway is also encouraged by the Chairmanship's readiness to facilitate a solution to the water supply issue and assist both sides in the rehabilitation works.

You can count on our full support in all your further efforts.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.