

Prohlášení
Statement
Déclaration

Vienna 22 January 2009

Permanent Council No. 747

**EU Statement in response to Ambassador Charalampos
Christopoulos, Special representative of the CiO for the protracted
conflicts**

The European Union warmly welcomes the Special Representative of the CiO for the protracted conflicts, Ambassador Charalampos Christopoulos, to the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his report.

The EU commends the Greek Chairmanship and Ambassador Christopoulos for their endeavors to help find a solution that will guarantee stability and security in Georgia to the benefit of all. We reiterate our commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. We strongly support the ongoing efforts of the Greek Chairmanship aimed at preserving the valuable OSCE presence in Georgia, including South Ossetia. Like the CiO, we are convinced that if there is genuine political will on all sides, a workable and meaningful compromise solution can be found.

We highly appreciate the CiO's engagement in the urgent issue of gas supply to South Ossetia. We welcome Mr. Johannides' final report dated 18 January 2009, which is another good example of the useful role the

OSCE can play on both sides of the administrative boundary. The EU appreciates the Chairmanship's intention to devote similar attention to water supply.

The EU remains deeply concerned about the security and human rights situation in the areas within and around the administrative boundary lines with South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We urge all sides to respect the ceasefire agreements. We condemn the shooting on 16 January 2009 in Knolevi of a Georgian policeman, the eleventh officer killed on duty since ceasefire began, and refer to the EUMM statement of the same day. The EU calls for a full investigation of this incident on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Line. The detailed 16 January Spot Report of the Mission to Georgia illustrates the special value of the OSCE in such cases. Violent incidents like this are unacceptable. They risk escalating the tense situation in the region. They show once more the urgent need to establish an incident prevention mechanism between the sides, to grant full access of the MMOs and to implement confidence building measures across the administrative boundary lines, such as foreseen by the Economic Rehabilitation Programme.

With regard to the ODIHR's report on the worrying human rights situation in the war-affected areas in Georgia, we again encourage all sides to implement its recommendations, and are looking forward to proposals for an OSCE follow-up to the report.

The EU remains committed to the Geneva Talks and is looking forward to a fruitful continuation on 17-18 February.

In concluding, we would like to wish Ambassador Christopoulos success in his further endeavors. You can be assured of our full support.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA* and FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and MONTENEGRO, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area ICELAND, as well as UKRAINE and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

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