

PC.DEL/8/15  
15 January 2015

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1031st MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 December 2014

**Regarding the results of the 30th round of the Geneva Discussions on the  
Trans-Caucasus**

Mr. Chairperson,

We note the detailed deliberations during the 30th round of the Geneva International Discussions on security and stability in the Trans-Caucasus on 9 and 10 December 2014 with the participation of representatives of the republics of Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia as well as the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the European Union under the co-chairmanship of the United Nations and the OSCE.

It is significant that all participants advocated a systematic reduction in tension, restoration of trust and maintenance of security in the region, which will ultimately lead to an improvement in the living and working conditions of the people living on both sides of the border. In that connection, they confirmed that the situation on the borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Georgia remains peaceful without any serious incidents. This is in many respects attributable to the joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) on the Georgian-South Ossetian border and the hotlines, including those on the Georgian-Abkhazian border. We hope that the work of the Gali IPRM will resume soon.

Statistics also confirm the stability of the situation on the borders. For example, in the first 11 months of this year over one million people and 34,000 vehicles crossed the Abkhazian-Georgian border. Around 200,000 people and 50,000 vehicles crossed the border between South Ossetia and Georgia during the same period. It is clear that many inhabitants cross the border on a regular basis. In our view, these figures are an eloquent reflection of the absence of any serious problems regarding the lawful and orderly crossing of the borders by local residents, including the Georgian population in the Leningor district of South Ossetia and the Gali district of Abkhazia. Consideration of questions relating to freedom of movement, the search for missing persons, the exchange of detainees and minor border violations should continue to take place in as depoliticized a framework as possible.

Discussion of the key topic of the Geneva Discussions – ensuring lasting security in Abkhazia and South Ossetia – continued in the working group on security issues. There has

been some progress in the exchange of views by experts on a draft joint statement by the participants in the Geneva Discussions on the non-use of force. We are pleased that most delegations and the Co-Chairmen advocated a continued search for mutually acceptable wording in view of the particular importance of that document for the security of all the countries in the Trans-Caucasus. In that connection, the unreasonable demands once again made of Russia regarding the adoption of some kind of unilateral commitments on the non-use of force 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.

The representatives of Sukhum and Tskhinval once again advocated expediting the work on legally binding agreements with Tbilisi on the non-use of force. Russia is willing to act as a guarantor for such agreements. We believe that in the light of increasing co-operation between Georgia and NATO, plans to establish a military infrastructure of that organization on Georgian territory and the intention of some Western countries to supply Georgia with new weapons, security issues in the Trans-Caucasus are of particular relevance.

We should also like to add that at the Geneva meeting the Russian and Abkhazian delegations once again provided detailed clarification regarding the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on Alliance and Strategic Partnership concluded on 24 November 2014. Explanations regarding this matter were also given to the Permanent Council. We shall not repeat them and shall merely note that the Treaty is fully in keeping with the task set in the Medvedev-Sarkozy agreements of “ensuring lasting stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia”. We urge our colleagues once again to read this document carefully so that they can see for themselves that it does not contain any provisions posing a threat to the three countries, including Georgia.

The scheduled exercises on 5 December 2014 involving units of the 58th army of the Southern Military District of the Russian Federation at six firing ranges in the North Caucasus region of Russia and the routine firing exercises at the Russian military firing range in the Republic of South Ossetia mentioned today by some delegations also have no impact on their security. The agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia of 15 September 2009 on military co-operation provides for operational and combat training exercises by the armed forces of the two countries.

The professional exchange of views in the working group on humanitarian issues on the pressing problems of socio-economic development, education and health care for the local population was useful. Unfortunately, consideration of the problem of refugees remains blocked because of Georgia’s desire to move this discussion to the United Nations General Assembly in New York. At the same time, an interesting informal meeting of the participants in the Geneva Discussions with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. António Guterres, once again made it perfectly clear that the refugee issue should be discussed only with the participation of the Abkhazians and South Ossetians.

Thank you for your attention.