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

**S T A T E M E N T**

*Delivered by Ambassador Paata Gaprindashvili  
at the 764<sup>th</sup> Permanent Council Meeting  
Vienna 11 June, 2009*

Madam Chairperson,  
Ambassador Hakala,

Let me welcome you today very warmly at the last Permanent Council meeting that you will attend in your current capacity.

Your comprehensive report, Ambassador Hakala, once again clearly highlighted the importance and magnitude of the activities of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. Indeed, the Mission's work went far beyond mere words about conducting its activities in all three dimensions of the OSCE; the Mission succeeded in reaching out to people throughout Georgia; it gained confidence and respect among a great variety of local communities down to the grass-roots level, including in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, by building constructive, goal-oriented and friendly relations with them. As a representative of a host nation and on behalf of my Government, let me thank the Mission, its international and local staff and you personally, Ambassador Hakala, for the professionalism and dedication with which you all have fulfilled your duties and tasks in the challenging and difficult circumstances.

Farewells always are accompanied by emotions. I am sure that this particular one does not awaken any positive emotions in anybody in this hall, with the exception of one delegation which has chosen to pursue its traditional way of turning a blind eye and looking the other way.

What has brought this Organization to this unfortunate pass is more than clear to everybody. Russia executed its pre-planned and deliberate sequence of actions against the principles of transparency and accountability before and after the August war against Georgia.

In 2004, against the will of the overwhelming majority of the OSCE participating States, Russia vetoed the continuation of the Border Monitoring Operation in Georgia. In subsequent years, Russia blocked an increase in the number of the OSCE monitors in the Tskhinvali region, and it also opposed and bluntly rejected a proposal supported again by the overwhelming majority of the OSCE participating States to permit an OSCE checkpoint to be set up in Didi Gupta and to establish joint Russian-OSCE-Georgian monitoring of the Roki tunnel. In 2008, again against the will of the international community, Russia vetoed the deployment of the additional OSCE monitors in South Ossetia. The subsequent implementing measures of 8 September, signed by the Russian President, stated that the OSCE monitors should continue to carry out their responsibilities in conformity with their personnel and deployment scheme, as it had been on 7 August, and again the Russian Federation continued to stand isolated in this forum in opposing the adoption and implementation of the decisions which would have had a positive impact on peace and security in the OSCE area.

In defiance of the OSCE community, Russia opposed the continuation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia on two occasions during the past seven months. The Russian rejection on 22 December and on 13 May caused the OSCE presence in Georgia to be discontinued. Both proposals were the result of long discussions and negotiations and were supported by the overwhelming majority of this Organization's participating States. Last week, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister's statement and his miserable performance over this issue destroyed even the last hopes for a consensus to be reached on the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia.

This said, nevertheless, I would like to agree with Ambassador Hakala that "... this might be the right departure point for a renewal of a presence – whatever shape or form it might take, and recall the success of a rich range of activities over the last years of its existence". Madam Ambassador, I think you could agree with my approach that, whether one chooses to be on the common wavelength or not, this Organization should be able to prove that there are relevant and meaningful options for it to continue its activities in Georgia, including the occupied regions. What is required is a greater flexibility and imagination on the part of the OSCE participating States, the Secretariat and the institutions. That would be the best response to Russia's attempts to close this case and send it to the archives and to undermine the credibility of the Organization, and the best way to contribute to security and stability in the OSCE area.

Dear Terhi,

Let me thank you once again for your service in Georgia; I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Thank you.