



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1451 Vienna, 16 November 2023

#### **EU Statement in response to the address by the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions**

1. The European Union welcomes the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) at the Permanent Council and thanks them for their address. We also wish to thank the Co-Chairs for their consistent efforts in keeping the GID format operational.
2. The GID process continues to serve as the only platform where the consequences of the conflict, including issues related to the implementation of the EU-mediated Six-point Agreement of 12 August 2008 and its Implementing Measures of 8 September 2008, are addressed. This includes discussions on core issues, such as the non-use of force and international security arrangements, as well as internally displaced persons and refugees.
3. We urge Russia to make a clear non-use of force statement as we continue to believe that such a commitment, together with the establishment of a verification mechanism, are essential to enhance security, help build confidence and provide space for further political dialogue. We recall that such a statement was already made on numerous occasions by Georgia.
4. While the discussions on the international security arrangements have not brought any results so far, we encourage further efforts in this direction.
5. We regret that much needed discussions on IDPs and refugees in Working Group 2 on humanitarian issues continue not to be possible due to the walkout by the

Russian, Abkhaz and South Ossetian participants from the meetings of the Working Group. We urge Russia to end this obstructionist practice as it has a damaging effect.

6. The European Union expresses its concern with regard to the severe and lasting impact this conflict has on the overall security situation in Georgia and the wider region, as well as on the well-being of the conflict-affected populations. The EU condemns the continued illegal Russian military presence and activities in Georgia. We are also concerned about Russia's attempts to de-facto integrate Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia into Russia's regulatory and security space, as well as the ongoing "borderisation" activities, the restrictions on the movement of civilians across the administrative boundary lines and the arbitrary detentions of Georgian citizens. Additionally, we condemn Russia's reported plans to establish a permanent naval base of its Black Sea Fleet in the Georgian breakaway region of Abkhazia.
7. The EU reiterates its call on Russia to enable immediate and unimpeded access to Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia for international and regional human rights mechanisms to fully implement their respective mandates. We are seriously concerned about the lasting human rights violations committed therein, as reported by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and we echo his calls for accountability. In this context, we condemn the killing of a Georgian citizen by the Russian border guards in a deadly shooting incident and the illegal arrest of another Georgian citizen on November 6. We condemn in the strongest terms the use of force in any form as well as the continuous practice of illegal detentions of Georgian citizens. It is imperative that such incidents as well as any further escalation are prevented, and perpetrators brought to justice.
8. The EU calls on Russia, as a party to this conflict, to recommit itself to respecting Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and to fulfil its obligations under the Six-point Agreement and its subsequent Implementing Measures in full and without further delay. The EU also urges Russia to ensure the proper follow-up of the landmark judgement of 21 January 2021 of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Georgia vs Russia.

9. The EU notes positively that the 114<sup>th</sup> and 115<sup>th</sup> Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) meetings took place in Ergneti on 12 September and 1 November respectively, and expresses its hope for a fruitful next meeting, planned for 13 December. The EU once again calls for the earliest possible resumption of the IPRM in Gali, which should be held in accordance with the established practices and without any preconditions.
10. Since October 2008, the European Union has been fully engaged in conflict resolution efforts, including as co-chair in the GID and through the efforts of the EU Special Representative. The EU's commitment to Georgia's security is also proven through the continued activities of the EUMM – the only legitimate international presence on the ground. At the same time, we emphasise the importance of enabling the EUMM's access to both sides of the Administrative Boundary Lines.
11. The EU looks forward to the next GID meeting, which has been agreed to take place on 5-6 December 2023.
12. As the EU stands united in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, we also reiterate our condemnation of the blatant breach of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation since August 2008. The EU remains unwavering in its support to Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.