



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO
Ambassador Hansjörg Haber
Head of the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia, and
Ambassador Herbert Salber
Head of the Conflict Prevention Centre

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Joint PC-FSC Meeting, Vienna
11 February 2009

Madame Chairwoman, Mr. Chairman,

Let me first join previous speakers in warmly welcoming Ambassador Hansjörg Haber to this Joint PC-FSC meeting and thanking him for his very informative report on the EU Monitoring Mission's important contribution to security and stability in Georgia. Unfortunately, the report confirmed many of the concerns we have been harbouring, e.g. as regards the situation of the many Displaced Persons.

Let me in the same vein thank Ambassador Herbert Salber for his thorough review and well documented evaluation of the very useful complementary role played by the OSCE's Military Monitoring Officers (MMOs), in difficult circumstances and under severe limitations. As a contributing country to this effort, we are particularly pleased to note his positive assessment of the performance of the MMOs, which tallies very well with our own impression. Let me in particular highlight the value of the unbiased and reliable reporting provided on a daily basis by the MMOs.

Madame Chairwoman, Mr. Chairman,

Norway has from the outset welcomed the European Union's and the French President's positive involvement in helping to bring about a ceasefire in Georgia and the withdrawal of Russian forces from undisputed Georgian territory, which was the most urgent task in mid-August last year. The strengthened EU presence in Georgia, in the form of 200 monitors along the lines of conflict, was part and parcel of the ceasefire agreement. We commend the EU monitors for their professional conduct and their important contribution to monitoring the ceasefire and preventing renewed hostilities. We believe that a continued robust EU presence in Georgia will remain necessary in the foreseeable future to maintain peace and increase stability in the region. The EUMM has, in close cooperation with our own OSCE military observers, shown that they constitute an important component of the international mechanisms we need to promote peace and security in Georgia. At the same time, it is clear that full adherence to all the provisions of the 12 August cease-fire agreement will constitute a precondition for our ultimate goal of a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict, which fully respects Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We call on the parties to be

constructive and show a maximum of good will in the next round of talks in Geneva scheduled for 17 and 18 February.

Madame Chairwoman, Mr. Chairman,

Several unfortunate incidents on the ground, inter alia in the form of shooting of policemen and border violations by helicopters, have provided powerful illustrations that we still need international monitors to follow up the implementation of the ceasefire agreement. The recent detainment of two MMOs was an unfortunate illustration of the difficult situation facing the MMOs in the discharge of their important mission.

We also need international observers to provide reliable information on the humanitarian situation, not least with regard to the ethnic Georgians who still reside in South Ossetia. In our view, it is essential that the monitors from the OSCE continue their work and are given access to the whole of Georgia. This should also apply for the EUMM.

Let me echo the remarks of several previous speakers to the effect that we urgently need a strengthened, not a weakened, international presence in Georgia.

Norway strongly supports the ongoing efforts of the Greek Chairmanship aimed at preserving and strengthening the valuable OSCE presence throughout Georgia, including in South Ossetia, and we call on all involved to engage constructively in these discussions.

Finally, Madame Chairwoman, Mr. Chairman I would like to thank Ambassador Haber and all those who are performing in the EUMM, as well as CPC under Ambassador Salber and our own MMOs for their dedicated service, and wish them all the best of luck in their future endeavours.

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman, Mr. Chairman