

PC.DEL/409/09

4 June 2009

ENGLISH only

Prohlášení

Statement

Déclaration

Vienna 4 June 2009

Permanent Council No. 763

EU Statement in response to H.E. Grigory Karasin,

State Secretary / Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the

Russian Federation

The European Union welcomes State Secretary / Deputy Minister Karasin to the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his presentation. In response to it, the EU would like to specify its views on issues regarding Georgia, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The EU's firm commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders is well-known. Having carefully listened to the State Secretary, we cannot but solemnly recall the Conclusions of the Presidency of the Extraordinary European Council of 1 September 2008, in which the European Council strongly condemned Russia's unilateral decision to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This stand remains, Madam Chairperson, unchanged.

We reiterate our call for the full implementation of the 12 August and 8 September 2008 agreements. We therefore remain deeply concerned by the signing of the agreements between Russia and the Georgian separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the joint protection of so called borders. We remain equally concerned about the plans announced by the Russian Federation to build up its military

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presence in these Georgian regions without the consent of the Government of Georgia. Such initiatives are in contradiction with the spirit of the ceasefire agreements and jeopardise stability and security in the region by further increasing tensions.

Regarding South Ossetia, we would like to draw your attention to the 1 June Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the so-called „Parliamentary elections“ in South Ossetia, Georgia, which stated that the EU does not accept the legality of the “elections”, nor its results, and that the holding of such elections is illegitimate and represents a setback in the search for a peaceful and lasting settlement of the situation in Georgia.

Madam Chairperson,

International discussions were launched on 15 October 2008 under the auspices of the EU, the UN and the OSCE in order to deal with the modalities for security and stability in the region and to address the humanitarian issues. Despite difficulties and differences amongst participants, the EU highly values the Geneva talks. We note with satisfaction that the next round of consultations is to be held on 1 July and we look forward to constructive Russian engagement. We also welcome the 29 May’s meeting in Dvani of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism as an essential confidence building measure, and are looking forward to the next meeting tentatively set for 11 June.

We again call on all sides to implement the recommendations made in the ODIHR’s report of 27 November 2008 on the human rights situation in the war-affected areas in Georgia, including unhindered and unconditional

access for humanitarian organizations and aid to South Ossetia, Georgia. We highlight the need for an OSCE follow-up to the report.

Against this background, we remain convinced of the urgent need for a continued cross-dimensional OSCE presence in Georgia, including a meaningful OSCE monitoring capacity able to operate unhindered across the administrative boundary lines, which would contribute to security and stability in the region. Therefore, we regret that – despite the support of an overwhelming majority of participating States, including the EU Member States – no consensus could be reached on the Greek Chairmanship’s Draft Decision of 8 May 2009 on an OSCE Office in Tbilisi and the deployment of OSCE monitors in the framework of the implementation of the six-point agreement of 12 August 2008.

The Draft Decision, a result of many months of consultations, follows a status-neutral approach and aims for practical solutions while avoiding political sensitivities. The EU decided to support the Draft Decision, although it is very close to our red lines, recognising that only a status neutral solution would command consensus. The EU has subsequently supported the decision of the Chairmanship to discontinue the negotiations on the Draft Decision.

We would therefore like to conclude by encouraging the Russian Federation to act in a spirit of compromise and reconsider their position in a constructive manner in order to join consensus, for the sake of security and stability in the region.

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 align themselves with this statement.

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