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## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 735th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 October 2008

### **Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council on Georgia/Russia**

The European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 13 October 2008 on Georgia/Russia.

“1. The Council notes with satisfaction that, following the deployment by the European Union, under the Security and Defence Policy, of an independent civilian observer mission in Georgia, comprising more than 200 observers, Russian troops have withdrawn from the zones adjacent to South Ossetia and Abkhazia as an essential additional step in the implementation of the agreements of 12 August and 8 September, which were concluded with the mediation of the European Union. With reference to the conclusions of the European Council of 1 September and its own conclusions of 15 September, the Council calls on the parties to continue to implement their commitments, including with regard to the role of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and OSCE observers. It notes with satisfaction United Nations Security Council resolution 1839, which has extended the UNOMIG mandate by four months.

2. The Council reaffirms the willingness of the European Union to take an active part, in particular through its Special Representative for the crisis in Georgia, in the international discussions provided for in the agreements of 12 August and 8 September, which are set to commence on 15 October under the auspices of the EU, the United Nations and the OSCE. These discussions must focus on all the remaining problems, in particular that concerning arrangements for stability and security in the region and the urgent question of displaced persons, including the question of the upper Kodori valley and the Akhagori region. In this context, the Council reiterates its support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

3. The Council thanks the Commission for convening the high level conference of donors in Brussels on 22 October, with the aim, in particular, of assisting displaced persons and restarting the Georgian economy. The European Union will contribute substantially via the contributions of the Community and those of the Member States, based on an overall needs assessment carried out by the World Bank in co-operation with the European Commission and other institutions. To strengthen relations between the European Union and Georgia, the Council is preparing to begin negotiations with Georgia in the near future on

visa facilitation and readmission, and invites the Commission to continue preparatory work on the possible establishment of a deep and comprehensive free trade area, as soon as conditions permit.”