

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 616**  
**29 June 2006**

**EU Statement on South Ossetia, Georgia**

1. The European Union welcomes the fact that the meeting of the Joint Control Commission in Tskhinvali on 22 June proved fruitful in solving some pressing security issues and resulted in an agreement to step up law enforcement co-operation. The European Union particularly welcomes the meeting between the Georgian Minister of Internal Affairs and his South Ossetian interlocutor, as well as their intention to meet regularly in the future. The European Union agrees with the Mission that this has the potential to significantly improve the security situation in the zone of conflict and thus constitutes a momentum that should not be lost.
2. At the same time, the European Union notes with concern the Spot Report of the OSCE Mission to Georgia of 26 June 2006. It describes how the OSCE Tskhinvali Field Office was under siege by a partly hostile crowd of up to 100 persons from 22 to 23 June 2006, protesting against the relocation of a Georgian police post and demanding that this is not done. The crowd blocked access to and from the Field Office for most of the time, while tyres of the Mission and European Commission Delegation vehicles were punctured. Some of these incidents occurred within the view of the South Ossetian security guards at the Field Office, who only reappeared after they had been absent for most of the evening.
3. During his visit to Georgia on 22 and 23 June, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, stressed the importance of co-operation between the sides on security issues, including those related to the implementation of the rehabilitation programme. He told the South Ossetian side that he was aware of unconstructive actions and protests aimed at disrupting the work of the OSCE and urged the South Ossetian side to act responsibly on this and all aspects of security.

4. Along the same lines, the European Union calls on all relevant law enforcement structures to ensure the safety and freedom of movement of the OSCE Mission members at all times.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

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\*Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process