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EU statement in response to the Co-Chairs of the Geneva discussions

The European Union warmly welcomes the Co-chairs of the Geneva Discussions, Ambassadors Nurgaliyev, Morel and Turunen, to the Permanent Council, and thanks them for their presentations.

The EU reiterates its strong support for the Geneva discussions. Despite the persistence of difficulties and differences amongst participants, we consider the continuation of the Geneva discussions to be of utmost importance. They provide the only forum in which all sides are represented and three major international actors – the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations – work in close cooperation for the security and stability in the region. We support the OSCE's active participation in the meetings, in which good use can be made of its extensive cross-dimensional experience, of which the gas and water issues are an example.

The EU commends the Co-chairs for their tremendous and continuous efforts towards steady progress in both working groups.

The EU has welcomed the establishment of Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms, as an important confidence building measure

and a first result of the Geneva Discussions. We are pleased to see that one of the IPRMs has been meeting regularly in Gali. Like the Co-chairs, we hope that the other IPRM can be resumed in full shortly.

With regard to the second working group, we regret that during the latest round of talks on 8 June – despite the efforts made by the Co-chairs - not all participants attended the full session. We would like to see progress in this field.

We are looking forward to the next round of consultations set for 27 July 2010 and expect all participants to engage fully and constructively. In this context, we strongly support the Co-chairs statement of 25 June.

The situation in Georgia, including its Abkhaz and South Ossetian regions, remains of concern to the EU. We reiterate our firm support for the security and stability of Georgia, based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognized by international law. We call once again for full implementation of the 12 August and 8 September 2008 agreements, including the withdrawal of all military forces to the positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities.

We remain convinced of the urgent need for a meaningful crossdimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia, in particular for the benefit of the civilian population, including a robust monitoring capacity able to operate unhindered across the administrative boundary lines. We reiterate our call to the Chairmanship-in-Office to intensify its efforts to bring the OSCE back to Georgia as soon as possible. We hope

that in the spirit of the Corfu Process some tangible progress can be made.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the Geneva Co-chairs for their address, and wish them success with the continuation of their important and challenging work.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, ICELAND, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area , LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and AZERBAIJAN align themselves with this statement.

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