



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY on Georgia

**As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council,
30 July 2009**

Madame Chairperson,

Having listened to the statements just made by the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation, I have to recall some of our previously stated positions and perceptions in this tragic matter, which differ from those that we once again heard from the Russian Federation.

The open conflict between two participating states in Georgia nearly a year ago was indeed a setback for all who believe in dialogue and seeking peaceful solutions to disputes. The conflict also had serious repercussions for relations between several participating States. The conflict in Georgia clearly demonstrated the danger of leaving protracted conflicts unresolved, and we have to redouble our efforts in this regard.

Norway remains deeply worried about the humanitarian situation in Georgia, especially in her breakaway regions. We will continue to urge unhindered access for humanitarian organisations and respect for the human rights of all individuals in the conflict areas, and to call for the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

Madame Chairperson,

I must also take this opportunity to reiterate Norway's unwavering commitment to Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and also recall our previously expressed regrets over Russia's unilateral recognition of the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and

Abkhazia as independent states, which was without basis in international law and contrary to the principles of the August 12 six points agreement. This was not a constructive contribution to the efforts to find a peaceful and lasting resolution to the conflict in Georgia, and neither was the subsequent signing of agreements on joint protection of borders, or the holding of so-called “parliamentary elections” in the South Ossetian region of Georgia on 31 May. These were all in steps in the wrong direction.

Madame Chairperson,

It was most regrettable that we failed to agree on a continued OSCE presence in Georgia, at a time when such a presence is more needed than ever. Norway, together with the overwhelming majority of participating States, strongly supported all the efforts of the former Finnish and the present Greek Chairmanships in this regard. We firmly believe that a continued and strengthened presence of OSCE military observers, operating on both sides of the administrative boundary line, would have made a significant contribution to overseeing the adherence to the 12 August six-point agreement by all parties to the conflict, to easing tensions and preventing unfortunate incidents, and to providing reliable and unbiased information. We therefore once again urge Russia to join the other participating States in order to reach consensus on the only viable solution, namely the 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 six-point cease-fire agreement.

Madam Chairperson,

Norway welcomes the European Council’s decision to extend the mandate of the EU Monitoring Mission to Georgia for another 12 months. We continue to be strong supporters of a robust EU presence throughout Georgia, as it remains a vital stabilising factor and is even more important now when, unfortunately, for the time being, neither the UN nor the OSCE are operating in the country. Let me also once more join the EU in urging free and undindered access for the EU observers also to the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Finally, Madam Chairperson,

Norway reaffirms her full commitment to the Geneva talks and the continued co-chairmanship of this forum by the EU, UN and OSCE.

Thank you Madam Chairperson.