



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council Nr 916 Vienna, 14 June 2012

#### **EU statement on the 20th round of Geneva discussions**

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The European Union reiterates its strong support for the Geneva discussions, the latest round of which took place on 8 June. We continue to support the OSCE's active participation in the meetings, in which good use can be made of its extensive cross-dimensional experience.

With regard to the first working group, we note that the security situation on the ground is relatively stable; however we are concerned about recent serious incidents. These incidents underline the need for the effective functioning of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM) and we share the serious concern of the co-chairs of the Geneva discussions about the postponement of meetings of the Gali IPRM. The issue of non-use of force and international security arrangements continues to be the main stumbling block in the Geneva discussions. In this regard a clear non-use of force commitment by Russia would be necessary. We look forward to continued discussions on the issue.

Regarding the second working group on humanitarian issues, we continue to call on all parties to urgently improve living conditions for people affected by the August 2008 conflict. The EU takes note that discussion took place on the issues of missing persons, education and cultural heritage preservation. The EU looks forward to the implementation of a new set of water related projects along the South Ossetian administrative boundary line, benefitting both communities. The EU will continue to cooperate closely with the OSCE on this issue. We reiterate

our call on all stakeholders to engage constructively in order to restore basic utilities and services to the affected communities and to ensure freedom of movement across the administrative boundary line.

The EU is looking forward to the next round of Geneva discussions scheduled for 3 October 2012.

The EU once more recalls its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders and reiterates its concern about the continuing Russian military and security-related presence and infrastructure reinforcements in the Georgian breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The EU calls on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and the Implementing Measures of 8 September 2008, including by providing access to EUMM to the breakaway regions. The EUMM plays a leading role in the IPRM's within its stabilisation, normalisation and confidence-building mandate. We also reiterate our call for unhindered access for humanitarian organisations.

The EU remains convinced of the urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional 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.

The Acceding Country Croatia\*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Iceland+ and Serbia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.