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EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE OSCE AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GEORGIA

**Delivered on the 811th Permanent Council meeting
Vienna 27 May 2010**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

Ambassador Tagliavini, I welcome you most warmly to the Permanent Council. I would like to thank you for your professionalism and long-standing dedication to conflict resolution in Georgia.

Madam Ambassador,

It is my strong belief that the Report is looking to the future and not backwards as some may argue. I also believe that it has the potential to make a valuable contribution to a negotiated solution to the conflict, if there is sufficient political will. Conflict between Russia and Georgia, as you put it in the most important observations of the Report, “continues to be a threat to peace in the Caucasus, causing destabilizing effects in the region and beyond.” This is indeed the case and we agree with your assessment that “this conflict has not only a local or regional relevance but a direct bearing on the security architecture of Europe.”

This is precisely why we should regard your visit to the OSCE as relevant and timely, although quite some time has passed since the publication of the Report. As we are still engaged in the Corfu Process and are preparing ourselves for the upcoming Ministerial Meeting and possibly a Summit later this year, we should all be delighted to have this opportunity to listen to you speaking about the ways in which the OSCE can learn from the Russia-Georgia armed conflict, and particularly to hear your observations on the causes of the war and on ways to settle the ongoing conflict.

As you rightly point out, Madam Tagliavini, OSCE documents from the Helsinki Final Act through to other such landmark documents as the Charter of Paris and the Charter for European Security have suffered much as a result of the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia. Therefore it must be our common responsibility to look for ways to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

The OSCE is a natural place for serious dialogue on security issues to take place and should therefore be one of the important venues for proper and extensive dialogue on conflict resolution in Georgia. Madam Ambassador, you stated recently that the virtually passive and non-innovative approach to the peace process adopted by the international community in the area – the OSCE in South Ossetia and the UN in Abkhazia – had not helped to bring about a peace settlement. Given this bitter reality, we should all agree that we need to take collective action to remedy this gap. A passive and non-innovative approach from the OSCE's side, if continued, will neither improve the situation on the ground nor help the Organization itself, which is at present undergoing very challenging times. The OSCE needs to become relevant.

Madam Ambassador,

Before you came to Vienna I had the honour of presenting the Chairperson of the Permanent Council and all my distinguished colleagues with a proposal that we should look for ways of making the most of your visit to the OSCE. I suggested, *inter alia*, engaging in more substantial discussions than those carried on in the Permanent Council. The necessity of improving the quality of the Permanent Council and making it more instrumental and operational is a matter on which we have all, without any exception, agreed in the course of our Corfu deliberations.

I offered to go beyond the selective reading of the Report and routine accusations at the Permanent Council. I also proposed using a format made up of special/thematic meetings in the framework of Corfu Process or informal reinforced Permanent Council meetings, which would have allowed participants to freely exchange opinions, engage in a meaningful dialogue, and jointly seek ways to build on the observations and recommendations of the Report. The purpose of my initiative was to grasp the forward-looking side of the Report and thus make the OSCE more relevant.

For that very purpose, and being encouraged by your Report as well as by ambitions expressed in the course of our Corfu deliberations, my delegation has also put forward the idea of conducting a methodological survey of the OSCE's role in conflict resolution in Georgia. Indeed, as you Madam Ambassador have said recently, "There is hardly any chance for a future peace without the facts being presented in a sober and impartial manner." This has also been one of Georgia's principal goals when putting forward these and similar proposals throughout the years in the OSCE.

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

The required political will to which we so frequently refer cannot come out of nowhere; it has to be generated and built up step by step. But we need to start from somewhere. And if we continue missing good opportunities, there will always be the problem of lack of political will.

Soon, when the Geneva Co-Chairs are expected to visit the OSCE, we will have another chance to try to fill the gap.

I still hope that we all will find strength to carry out follow-up to valuable reports relevant to our work and objectives and also to the OSCE's own reports. I hope that sooner or later, better sooner, the OSCE will be able to overcome this stalemate of being virtually passive and non-innovative in its approaches to conflict settlement processes and will become increasingly relevant to the requirements of our time.

Mr. Chairperson,

As for the main findings of the Report, my delegation presented its position on the occasion of the FSC meeting on 7 October 2009, to be found under the reference number FSC.DEL/188/09. On 25 May, 2010, my delegation also distributed the document entitled Main Findings of the Tagliavini Report, to be found under the reference number PC.DEL/441/10. I am not therefore going to read and re-read those papers now.

By way of conclusion, Ambassador Tagliavini, let me express my support for your view that "in order to keep the peace – or even just maintain the effectiveness of ceasefire agreements – we do not need any new commitments or provisions, just those that already exist: they just need to be respected." I thus join our voice to all those calling on Russia to stop disregarding its international commitments and to start implementing the ceasefire agreement signed by its President.

Thank you.