



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

STATEMENT

*Delivered by Ambassador Victor Dolidze at the 746th Permanent Council Meeting
Vienna 15 January, 2008*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Having subscribed to the GUAM statement, allow me to add few words in my national capacity as well.

I am honoured to join other delegations in welcoming Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis to the Permanent Council in the capacity of OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for 2009. Georgia supports, Madame Minister, the objectives that you have outlined in your statement. I won't be original in saying that the organization which will be under your leadership for the year ahead finds itself in challenging and turbulent times. In my country we enjoy highest possible expectations that Greece will be able to deal with these challenges.

Last year was stormy and unfortunate for my country. We face very difficult times in this year as well. Security situation in Georgia after the invasion and occupation of our territories remains extremely volatile. New wave of thousands of internally displaced persons has been created as a result of aggression. Thousands of occupying troops together with their proxy regimes and militias represent the main source of threat and of ongoing crimes and terrorist acts taking place on the ground on a permanent basis. Almost no provision of the six-point cease-fire agreement has been fulfilled: the invading forces have not withdrawn to the lines initially agreed, free access for the humanitarian assistance has not been allowed by the invading force and its proxies, international monitors are still unable to access the occupied regions and implement their mandated functions.

It is an unfortunate fact that due to the opposition to transparency, dialogue and good faith cooperation, tireless efforts of the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship to reach a consensus over continued OSCE activities in Georgia has not come true and the OSCE Mission to Georgia, as we speak, finds itself in the phase of technical closure.

Madam Minister,

I would like to recall, with appreciation, your words spoken at the Helsinki Ministerial closing session that we have to deepen OSCE engagement in Georgia and the region, to bolster our activities for comprehensive security, to build synergy with other international organisations on the ground, and to maintain as ever our commitment to protecting the 'human dignity' of every person in the OSCE area. We were heartened

and encouraged by these words.

First and most challenging task we face in the nearest future is to preserve the OSCE in Georgia. There is a need of impartial monitoring, of continued regular assessment of the situation on the ground. We need to find ways to strengthen OSCE Mission to Georgia, which would have ever stronger capabilities to monitor the cease-fire, keep record of the human rights violations on the occupied territories and monitor the humanitarian situation on the ground. OSCE presence in Georgia is important in all three dimensions, and my country stands ready to cooperate closely with this organization to this end.

We appreciate strong efforts by the OSCE Greek Chairmanship to reinvigorate talks on the meaningful OSCE presence and engagement in Georgia. We are carefully studying your proposal and we will provide our ideas in that respect. We want to retain hope that efforts aimed at transparency, cooperation and confidence-building would prevail.

Second task that we face is maintaining Geneva process, which we deem as utmost important, as for the time being, it is the only working forum which addresses urgent security and IDP-related issues. It goes without saying that any attempts to discontinue Geneva discussions should not be allowed to be realized. Moreover, OSCE needs to stay fully involved in the Geneva discussions, as it has expertise, impartiality and institutional ability to contribute to the solution of many outstanding issues in this format.

Third task that this organization will face is to follow up on the existing humanitarian situation in the occupied Georgian regions. Latest ODIHR/HCNM report on the human rights in the war-affected areas provides an extremely important platform in this respect. We call upon all sides to study this report very thoroughly, and to contemplate of the ways forward by engaging OSCE in the implementation of the recommendations set forth by the ODIHR. Furthermore, we would reiterate our request that this practice of joint assessments by ODIHR and HCNM will be used by the Greek Chairmanship to ensure regular assessment missions.

This organization cannot leave the facts of ethnic cleansing and massive violations of the human rights within the OSCE area without adequate reaction. We need to use all the existing instruments, and if we lack them, devise new ones, to make sure that the outrageous facts of ethnic cleansing and massive violations of human rights remain high on the agenda of this organization. Just few months ago we had new wave of dozens of thousands of IDPs and refugees in the OSCE area. We need to react to this issue as the Organization and need to find ways how to reflect the IDP problems in the work of the OSCE.

Madam Minister,

Let me wish you personally and your dedicated team here all the best and every success for this year.

Thank you Mr. Chairman