



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council Nr 947 Vienna, 11 April 2013

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#### **EU statement on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Round of the 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 27 March 2013 under the co-chairmanship of the EU. We continue to support the OSCE's active role as co-chair of these meetings, in which good use can be made of its extensive cross-dimensional experience.

The current format of the Geneva discussions continues to be the only forum to address and resolve the challenges and problems related to the conflict in Georgia, with the participation of all stakeholders. We call on all parties to remain committed to this process and to work together constructively.

With regard to the First Working Group, the EU welcomes the relative calm maintained since the last round of the Geneva discussions, but notes with concern the increased *borderisation* on the ground which has negative effects on freedom of movement of the local population. In this context we continue to stress the importance of resuming the effective functioning of the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) meetings. On a positive note the participants have reviewed the draft statement on non-use of force based on the Co-Chairs' proposal and we look forward to continued exchanges in the next round of the Geneva discussions. The issue of non-use of force and international security arrangements continues to be one of the core subjects of the Geneva discussions. In this regard, a clear non-use of force commitment by Russia would be necessary.

Regarding the Second Working Group we continue to call on all parties to urgently improve living conditions for people affected by the August 2008 conflict. We take note that a potential needs-assessment on the socio-economic situation in areas affected by the conflict was discussed and Co-Moderators urged the exchange of information to map immunisation programmes. Regarding the

humanitarian aspect of freedom of movement, there is a need for special provisions in case of medical emergencies. We take note that various options for institutionalising the work on missing persons have been examined.

We also take note that Co-Moderators of Working Group II suggested to hold a cultural heritage workshop. In view of the ongoing water projects on both sides of the South Ossetian administrative boundary line, the EU continues to co-operate closely with the OSCE for the benefit of the communities. 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 reiterates its commitment to help improve the situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia and refugees from the conflicts and their unconditional right to safe and dignified return.

The EU once more recalls its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised 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 the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. The EU calls on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and its subsequent implementing measures, including by providing access to EUMM to the breakaway regions. The EUMM plays a leading role in the IPRMs within its stabilisation, normalisation and confidence-building mandate. We also reiterate our call for unhindered access for humanitarian organisations.

We remain convinced of the urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia, in particular for the benefit of the civilian population, including robust monitoring capacity able to operate unhindered across the administrative boundary lines.

We call on all participants to remain committed to the process under the agreed format and we look forward to the next round of the Geneva discussions, scheduled for 25-26 June 2013.

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.