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Prohlášení

Statement

Déclaration

Vienna 26 February 2009

Permanent Council No.751

EU Statement on Georgia

The European Union welcomes the agreement, reached by consensus among all the participants during the fourth round of Geneva talks on 17 and 18 February, on Proposals for joint incident prevention and response mechanisms. We call on all involved to contribute to the adequate and timely implementation of the mechanisms agreed in Geneva, for the benefit of stability and security in the region. We particularly note that the text of the agreement calls for the mechanisms to be convened shortly after the Geneva talks of 17 and 18 February. We consider this agreement an important confidence building measure, following the signing on 26 January of a Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union Monitoring Mission and the Ministry of Defence of Georgia. Against this background, we would like to encourage the Russian Federation to consider a similar step.

We urge the parties to reach agreement in the near future in the second working group, on urgent humanitarian questions, including those concerning internally displaced persons and refugees, unhindered and unconditional access for humanitarian organisations and aid to South Ossetia, Georgia. We also call on all sides to implement the recommendations made in the ODIHR's report on the human rights

situation in the war-affected areas in Georgia, and are looking forward to OSCE follow-up to the report.

We fully support the continuation of Geneva talks and we believe that the exact date of the next round of the negotiations will be determined and agreed upon shortly, as the UNSCR 1866 calls for efforts on discussions in Geneva to be intensified.

The EU also welcomes Mr. Johannides' report on the irrigation and potable water systems in South Ossetia, Georgia, and its adjacent areas, which was distributed on 16 February. The expert suggestions in the report confirm once more the useful role the OSCE can play on both sides of the administrative boundary line. We support the Chairmanship's intention to remain seized of the matter, and look forward to an OSCE follow up to the report. The EU stands ready to assist in these efforts.

The EU remains convinced of the need for a meaningful and cross-dimensional OSCE presence across Georgia, including in South Ossetia, with a strong military monitoring component. We strongly support the ongoing efforts of the Greek Chairmanship to this aim. We reiterate our call on all parties to engage constructively in the discussions, in the spirit of compromise, in order to reach a workable compromise solution for the benefit of the region. The EU reiterates its firm commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA* and the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA

AND HERZEGOVINA and MONTENEGRO, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area ICELAND and NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, AZERBAIJAN and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.