



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1253 Vienna, 19 December 2019

EU Statement on the 50th round of the Geneva International Discussions

1. The European Union reiterates its strong support for the Geneva International Discussions (GID), the 50th round of which took place on 10-11 December. The GID remain a unique mechanism, engaging all stakeholders in addressing the challenges stemming from the unresolved conflict in Georgia.
2. The European Union is actively engaged in conflict resolution efforts through the EU Special Representative and his co-chairmanship of the GID, and through the work of the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM), which remains the only international presence on the ground, tirelessly contributing to stabilisation, normalisation and confidence building between the conflict parties. As the Head of the EUMM Erik Høeg is leaving his post, we would like to warmly thank him for his dedicated work and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.
3. We regret that the discussions at the 50th GID round were overshadowed by the continuing worrisome tensions along the South Ossetian administrative boundary line (ABL) in the Chorchana-Tsnelisi area. Moreover, an unprecedentedly long period of closure of crossing points since the beginning of this year and an increased number of incidents, including detentions, have considerably contributed to the deteriorating situation on the ground. We commend the GID Co-Chairs and the EUMM, which are putting considerable efforts to de-escalate the situation. However, more concrete political will and engagement of the civil society is needed to respond to the current acute security and humanitarian challenges. In this context, we urge the Russian

Federation to fully assume its responsibility as a party to the conflict in Georgia and actively engage in reversing these deplorable trends.

4. We welcome the continuous efforts undertaken by the IPRM in Ergneti, which help to ease tensions, and we call for the resumption of the IPRM in Gali. We encourage participants to make full use of both IPRMs without preconditions or further delay.
5. While no tangible progress was made on the issue of non-use of force and international security arrangements, we take note of the information session on the topic. We encourage further efforts in this direction, and continue to believe that a clear non-use of force statement by Russia is essential to enhance security, help build confidence and provide space for further political dialogue. Russia continues to violate Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity through its military presence, infrastructure reinforcements, military exercises, and further build-up in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These trends run contrary to the principles of international law and commitments undertaken by Russia to work toward peace and stability, and we call for them to be reversed.
6. We regret that the discussions on humanitarian issues took place in a confrontational atmosphere. Continuing restrictions to freedom of movement on the conflict-affected population, including through the intensified “borderization” process, closures of crossing points and ongoing arbitrary detentions are dividing communities and building up hardship, frustration and fears among the local population. Crossing points must reopen urgently. All illegally detained Georgian citizens, including Dr. Gaprindashvili, must be released immediately. Stamping of passports of all foreigners by the de facto Abkhaz authorities must stop. The enforcement of this practice for the first time prevented the Co-Chairs from travelling to the Georgian region of Abkhazia for pre-GID consultations. This is unacceptable.
7. The European Union takes note of an exchange of documents between Russian and Georgian participants on the death case of Georgian citizen Mr. Kavaratskhelia. We reiterate our call for thorough investigations into the fatal cases of Georgian citizens

Messrs. Tatumashvili, Otkhozoria, Basharuli and other cases in order for justice to be ensured and impunity avoided.

8. We regret that once again the Russian, Abkhaz and South Ossetian participants walked out from the discussion under the key agenda item dedicated to the issue of IDPs and refugees. We call upon all participants to engage on all agenda items and refrain from walkouts which contradict participants' commitments to the GID.
9. The European Union remains convinced that there is an urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia. We reiterate our firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. The European Union calls on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the EU-mediated ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and its subsequent implementing measures of 8 September 2008. The European Union also calls for access for the EUMM to the whole territory of Georgia, including the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as per its mandate, as well as for human rights monitoring mechanisms, humanitarian and other civil society organizations. Furthermore, the European Union calls for a more active involvement of women and youth in the conflict resolution process.
10. The European Union looks forward to the next round of the Geneva International Discussions scheduled for 31 March – 1 April 2020.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA* and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.