

Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 637  
16 November 2006**

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the "referendum" and the "presidential elections" in South Ossetia, Georgia on the 12 November 2006**

I would like to inform the Permanent Council of the Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the "referendum" and the "presidential elections" in South Ossetia, Georgia on the 12 November 2006, which reads as follows:

" The European Union is aware that a "referendum" and "presidential elections" have taken place in the South Ossetian region of Georgia on 12 November 2006. The "referendum" contradicts Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The EU considers that the situation in South Ossetia did not allow the free expression of the popular will. Recalling its statement at the OSCE Permanent Council on 9 November, the EU reiterates that it does not recognize the "referendum" or its outcome. The same applies to the "presidential elections" in South Ossetia, Georgia.

The European Union fully supports Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The European Union considers that the referendum and the elections did not contribute to efforts for peaceful conflict resolution. It calls on all parties to the conflict to strictly respect existing agreements and to return immediately to the negotiating table in order to work towards a speedy and transparent solution of the South Ossetian conflict.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration."

\* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process