



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

PC.DEL/324/08
24 April 2008

ENGLISH only

Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 710
24 April 2008**

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on Georgia

I would like to draw the attention of the participating States to the following Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union, issued on the 18th of April 2008:

"The EU is seriously concerned about recent developments in the Georgian conflict areas, particularly regarding the latest decision of the Russian Federation, announced by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 16 April 2008, to establish official ties with institutions of the de facto authorities in South Ossetia and Abkhazia without the consent of the Government of Georgia.

The EU reiterates its firm commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders as reaffirmed in the UNSC resolution 1808 of 15 April 2008. The decision of the Russian Federation jeopardises the implementation of these principles. The EU calls on the Russian Federation not to implement its decision.

Furthermore the EU considers that this decision risks further increasing tensions and undermines the international peace efforts where the Russian Federation participates too.

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The EU continues to support international efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts, in particular those of the United Nations, supported by the UN Secretary General's Group of Friends, as well as the Russian Federation in its capacity as facilitator, regarding Abkhazia; and of the OSCE regarding South Ossetia.

The EU urges all parties involved to refrain from any actions that could lead towards the escalation of the situation in the region. The EU welcomes the fact that the Georgian President put forward a new initiative for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, and hopes that it will contribute to a constructive dialogue on the issue. The EU stands ready to contribute to these efforts.

In this regard, the efforts of the European Union Special Representative and the European Commission in implementing the package of EU confidence building measures in support of conflict resolution in Georgia will continue. The EU will keep the implementation of the confidence building measures and the situation in Georgia under review.

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, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and Azerbaijan align themselves with this declaration.

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

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Mr. Chairman, as to the recent incidents involving the shooting of unarmed aerial vehicles in Georgian airspace: we strongly condemn all activities which risk increasing tension. We call on all parties involved in these incidents to renounce armed or military action and to respect Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. UNOMIG should convene with the parties to investigate the incident.

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