



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1024 Vienna, 6 November 2014

EU Statement in Response to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva International Discussions

The European Union warmly welcomes the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions, Ambassadors Anti Turunen, Angelo Gnaedinger, and Herbert Salber, and thanks them for their address. The EU reiterates its strong support for the Geneva International Discussions, the latest round of which took place on 8-9 October. The European Union continues to support the OSCE's active participation in the meetings, and believes that its extensive cross-dimensional experience and its contribution on the ground can be useful.

We welcome the fact that the 29th round of the Geneva International Discussions was held in a constructive atmosphere allowing for both Working Groups to have substantive discussions on relevant topics. In this context we note that all participants reconfirmed their commitment to the Geneva International Discussions, which remains the best forum to address and resolve the challenges stemming from the conflict in Georgia, with the participation of all stakeholders.

However, referring to discussions in Working Group I., the European Union notes with profound concern the potential implications of the possible closure of crossing points along the Abkhaz Administrative Boundary Line, as well as the impact of the revised crossing regime along the South Ossetian Administrative Boundary Line and the continued deployment of fences and other obstacles at different locations along and beyond the Administrative Boundary Lines. We call on the Russian Federation to remove the fences and other obstacles, and to reconsider the reduction of the number of crossing points in the two breakaway regions of Georgia.

In the context of discussions in Working Group II., the EU reiterates its deep concern about the potential impact of these actions by Russia on the freedom of movement and other basic rights of the local population. We reiterate our call on all stakeholders to engage constructively in order to avoid further impact on the daily lives of people living in the area.

We call on all participants to address these unacceptable developments, including within the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms, with the aim of finding appropriate solutions. In this context the EU reiterates the importance of resuming the effective functioning of the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism meetings without preconditions.

The Geneva International Discussions have at their core the non-use of force and international security arrangements. We welcome the efforts of the Co-Chairs to help unlock the stalled discussions on a joint statement of participants on non-use of force. The EU calls on all participants to continue to work together towards sustainable security arrangements. We continue to believe that a clear commitment by Russia on non-use of force is essential.

We welcome that participants also addressed the issue of missing persons. The EU reiterates its commitment to help improve the situation of Internally Displaced Persons and refugees from the conflicts and their unconditional right to a safe and dignified return.

Mr Chairman,

The EU takes this opportunity to reiterate its concern at the Russian Federation's proposal on a so-called "Draft Treaty on Alliance and Integration" with the breakaway region of Abkhazia in Georgia. This would violate principles of international law, OSCE principles and commitments and Russia's international commitments made in 2008, and would undermine the security and stability of the

region. The Geneva International Discussions provide a forum where these issues can be addressed. The EU is closely monitoring the developments in this regard.

The EU reiterates 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 of 8 September 2008, including providing EUMM access to the breakaway regions. We also reiterate our call for unhindered access for humanitarian organisations.

The EU thanks the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva International Discussions for their comprehensive address which has once again demonstrated that there is an urgent need for re-establishing 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. The EU looks forward to the next round of the Geneva International Discussions scheduled for 9-10 December 2014.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania 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.