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## EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council 894**  
**Vienna, 15 December 2011**

### **EU statement on the 18<sup>th</sup> round of the Geneva discussions**

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The European Union reiterates its strong support for the Geneva discussions, the latest round of which took place on 14 December. Despite the persistence of difficulties and differences amongst participants, we consider the continuation of the Geneva discussions to be of utmost importance. They provide the only forum in which all sides are represented and three international actors – the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations – work in close co-operation for the security and stability of the region. We support the OSCE's active participation in the meetings, in which good use can be made of its extensive cross-dimensional experience.

With regard to the first working group, while the security situation on the ground remains calm and stable and the two IPRMs continue to function well, renewed efforts are needed between participants in order to make progress towards better stability and security on the ground. We call upon all stakeholders to engage without delay in the development of additional confidence and security building measures with the aim to increase military transparency. The issue of non-use of force and international security arrangements continues to be the main stumbling block in the Geneva

discussions. In this regard it is especially important that the commitment to the non-use of force should be made by all sides.

Regarding the second working group on humanitarian issues, we reiterate our call on all parties to urgently improve living conditions for people affected by the August 2008 conflict. We welcome the commitment by all participants to continue addressing the sensitive issue of missing persons. The EU is pleased with the progress in the implementation of water supply projects along the South Ossetian administrative boundary line, which are benefitting both communities, and to which the OSCE contributes. However, we remain concerned about the lack of progress regarding the restoration of gas supplies. We reiterate our call on all stakeholders to engage constructively in order to restore basic utilities and services to the affected communities and to ensure freedom of movement across the administrative boundary line.

The EU is looking forward to the next round of Geneva discussions scheduled for 28 and 29 March 2012.

We reiterate our firm support for the security and stability of Georgia, based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, recognised by international law. We call once again for full implementation of the EU-brokered Six Point Agreement of 12 August 2008 and its Implementing Measures of 8 September 2008, including the withdrawal of all military forces to the positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. We also reiterate our call for unhindered access for the European Union Monitoring Mission to the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as well as unhindered access for humanitarian organisations.

The EU remains convinced of the urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia, in particular for the benefit of the civilian population, including a robust monitoring capacity able to

operate unhindered across the administrative boundary lines. We express our appreciation for the efforts of the Lithuanian Chairmanship-in- Office to make progress towards this end.

The acceding country CROATIA\*, the candidate countries THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO and ICELAND\*\*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the European Free Trade Association countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, AZERBAIJAN, ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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

\*\*Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.