



EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE OSCE AND
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

**Statement as delivered by the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the OSCE H.E.
Konstantin Zaldastanishvili in response to the President of Swiss Federation head of the
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Didier Burkhalter
at the 980th session of the OSCE Permanent Council
Vienna, January 16, 2014**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me join other speakers in warmly welcoming the President of Swiss Federation, head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Didier Burkhalter to the Permanent Council and thank him for presenting the Chairmanship's priorities for 2014. On behalf of the Georgian delegation, let me emphasize that we share the spirit and determination of the Swiss Chairmanship, as well as the goals and objectives stated today.

Mr. President,

Today, we all realize that the organization finds itself in challenging times. What we need is to demonstrate our resolve to strengthen the role that the OSCE plays with its unique approach to security in all three dimensions. We hope that your guidance will help us to address the existing challenges and make progress towards the accomplishment of our affirmed goals. On our part, we would like to assure you in our support for the initiatives and activities of your Chairmanship aimed at achieving the progress in realizing the vision of common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security community for the benefit of everyone.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to use this opportunity to highlight Georgia's priorities for the OSCE in the year ahead, which we look forward to engaging on during the Swiss Chairmanship:

- We attach utmost importance to the continuation of the work in the framework of the "Helsinki+40" process, adherence to which we all have once again confirmed in Kiev. Herewith, we would like to thank the outgoing Ukrainian Chairmanship for its efforts and work during the last year, for taking the leadership over the process and facilitating the first steps. We appreciate the determination of Switzerland, together with the Serbian consecutive Chairmanship to lead the 'Helsinki+40' process for the next two years and take the responsibility for guiding the participating states through this ambitious and challenging endeavor. We hope that our joint efforts will enable us to register progress even on those controversial issues, which hamper the organizations work and hinder the way forward towards a genuine security community;
- Given the existence of unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area posing great challenges to security and stability of the participating states, the Swiss-Serbian joint work plan through 2014-2015 periods should address the conflict resolution and foresee appropriate actions to this end. As the conflict resolution is at the heart of the OSCE's mandate, we should seek ways to update and revive existing instruments of peaceful resolution of the conflicts in the OSCE area. In this regard, we encourage the Swiss Chairmanship to continue efforts to work towards the restoration of a full-fledged and comprehensive OSCE presence in Georgia, including the peacekeeping, military and police monitoring of the occupied regions;

- The pro-active and dynamic role of the OSCE within the Geneva International Discussions, as well as its participation in the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms should be continued and ensured. Herewith, we welcome the decision of the Swiss Chairmanship and the consecutive CIO of Serbia to appoint the Ambassador Gnadinger as a CIO special representative for the South Caucasus for two years;
- We welcome the Swiss Chairmanship's priority to focus on the confidence building measures and enhance the organization's capacity in this respect. We believe that implementation of CBMs, is an effective tool promoting peace and security in terms of trust building. Moreover, confidence building efforts should avoid strengthening or legitimizing the status quo and thus need to be consistent with the goal of reaching a final settlement of the conflicts;
- We believe that implementation of the OSCE commitments in all three dimensions, particularly of those undertaken in human dimension should be a top priority for participating states. As we agreed in Astana, the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms is our first responsibility, and the implementation of commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension is of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States;
- We welcome the breakthrough in the third basket at the MC meeting in Kiev and hope that the same spirit will be continued through the next years enabling us to record more progress in the third dimension. Herewith, let me underline, that it is essential to keep the issues related to the fundamental rights and freedoms of IDPs and refugees high on the OSCE agenda, including their safe and dignified return to the places of their origin;
- We welcome the Chairmanship's intention to continue efforts to improve efficiency and accountability in the budget planning process. We will of course also remain engaged in discussions to reach consensus on a Unified Budget for 2014;
- Finally, we would like to warmly welcome the representatives of youth here at the Permanent Council and commend the Chairmanship for its leadership in offering the civil society and particularly the young people the platform for their engagement.

In closing, we wish the Chairperson-in-Office and his able team in Bern and in Vienna a productive and successful year.

Thank you.