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Swedish Presidency of the European Union

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EU Statement in response to the presentation on “Lessons Learned from August 2008” by the Russian Federation

The position of the European Union on Georgia is well known and has not changed. The EU remains firmly committed to playing a full role in the resolution of this crisis, including in the Geneva talks and on the ground. We recall the European Union's position, that a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia must be based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognised by international law, the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and United Nations Security Council resolutions. We recall the Conclusions of the Presidency of the Extraordinary European Council of 1 September 2008, in which the European Council strongly condemned Russia's unilateral decision to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and reiterate our call for full implementation of the 12 August and 8 September 2008 agreements. We also recall the stabilizing role of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia.

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Given the situation on the ground, the EU remains convinced of the urgent need for a continued cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia, in particular for the benefit of the civilian population. This presence must include a meaningful monitoring capacity able to operate unhindered across the administrative boundary line. We call again on the Russian Federation to join others in order to reach consensus on the Greek Chairmanship's Draft Decision of 8 May 2009 on an OSCE Office in Tbilisi and the deployment of the OSCE monitors in the framework of the implementation of the six-point agreement of 12 August 2008, for the sake of security and stability in the region.

Mr. Chairman, the EU reserves the right to return to individual issues raised by the Russian Federation today, at a later stage.

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

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