

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

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EU statement on Georgia

The European Union is pleased that during the latest round of the Geneva discussions on Georgia on 28 January, participants exchanged views on interim steps towards a framework for a potential non-use of force agreement and international security arrangements, as well as on a number of humanitarian issues.

We recall that, despite the still existing difficulties and differences amongst participants, the EU considers the continuation of the Geneva discussions to be of great importance, as they provide the only forum in which all sides are represented and three major international actors - the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations - work in close co-operation for the security and stability in the region. We reiterate our full support for the OSCE's active participation in the meetings, in which good use can be made of its extensive cross-dimensional experience. We appreciate Kazakhstan's active engagement in both Working Groups and its commitment to intensify efforts of the previous Greek OSCE Chairmanship to address urgent humanitarian issues, in particular

restoration of water and gas supplies, in order to build confidence. We are looking forward to the next round of consultations set for 30 March 2010, and call on all participants to engage constructively towards concrete progress in both working groups.

Recent incidents, including detentions of civilians along the administrative boundary lines, remain a cause for concern, and underline the importance of the incident prevention and response mechanisms, in which the OSCE plays an essential role, and other confidence building measures. We are pleased with the regular meetings of the Gali mechanism, and are looking forward to the next one scheduled for 9 February. However, we regret that still no agreement has been reached on the next meeting of the second mechanism, despite the clear need for it. We hope that ongoing efforts, compounded by the CIO's very timely visit to the region in mid February, will result in resumption of the Ergneti/Dvani mechanism without further delay and without preconditions.

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 line. In this regard, we refer to the proposals by the Finnish and Greek Chairmanships on this issue, which we continue to support, for the sake of security and stability in the region. We would also like to revisit another longstanding issue: the urgently needed follow-up to the 27 November 2008 report by ODIHR in cooperation with HCNM on the human rights situation in the war-affected areas in Georgia, including through unhindered and unconditional access for humanitarian organizations to the South

Ossetian region. We trust that the Chairman-in-Office's upcoming visit will be effectively used to make concrete progress on both issues and to continue exploring possibilities to bring the OSCE back to Georgia as soon as possible and we look forward to hearing further about this from the Chairmanship.

The EU takes note of Georgia's "State Strategy on Occupied Territories; Engagement through Cooperation", which was endorsed by the Georgian government on 27 January. We welcome the initiative as a constructive step, aimed at reaching out to the residents of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian regions. We encourage the Georgian government to conduct consultations with all stakeholders regarding the preparation of the action plan on the implementation of the strategy, which we hope will contribute to easing tensions and building confidence.

In concluding, the EU reiterates its call for the full implementation of the 12 August and 8 September 2008 agreements, including the withdrawal of all military forces to the positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Although we are pleased that the EUMM was able to enter the Georgian region of South Ossetia on 5 January, this highlights once more the need for unhindered access of EUMM to the Abkhazian and South Ossetian regions.

The EU reiterates its firm support for the security and stability of Georgia, based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognized by international law.

Los países candidatos TURQUÍA, CROACIA* y la antigua REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*, los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA y MONTENEGRO, los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA, LIECHTENSTEIN y NORUEGA, al igual que UCRANIA, la REPÚBLICA DE MOLDAVIA y AZERBAIYÁN se alinean con esta declaración.

*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación