



**37th JOINT MEETING OF THE
FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION
AND THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

1. Date: Wednesday, 11 February 2009

Opened: 10.05 a.m.

Closed: 11.55 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador E. Lebédel (FSC) (France)
Ambassador M. Marinaki (PC) (Greece)

3. Subjects discussed — Statements — Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: SECURITY AND STABILITY IN GEORGIA

(a) *Presentation by the Head of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia, Ambassador Hansjörg Haber, on the EUMM's contribution to security and stability*

(b) *Presentation by the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre of the OSCE, Ambassador Herbert Salber, on the contribution of the OSCE Military Monitoring Observers to security and stability*

Chairperson (Greece), Head of the European Union Monitoring Mission (FSC-PC.DEL/6/09), Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (SEC.GAL/19/09 OSCE+), Georgia (Annex), Ukraine (FSC-PC.DEL/3/09), Switzerland, United States of America (FSC-PC.DEL/1/09), Norway (FSC-PC.DEL/2/09), United Kingdom, Turkey, Canada, Russian Federation (FSC-PC.DEL/4/09 OSCE+)

Agenda item 2: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) *Recent developments in Georgia: Czech Republic-European Union (with the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and*

potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Azerbaijan and Ukraine, in alignment), Russian Federation (FSC-PC.DEL/5/09 OSCE+), United Kingdom

- (b) *Photo exhibition to be held in Vienna on 17 February 2009*: Chairperson (Greece)

3. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 18 February 2009, at 11 a.m., in the Neuer Saal



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation
Permanent Council**

FSC-PC.JOUR/24
11 February 2009
Annex

Original: ENGLISH

37th Joint Meeting of the FSC and the PC
FSC-PC Journal No. 24, Agenda item 1(b)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GEORGIA

Madam Chairperson,

First of all, I would like to warmly welcome the Head of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia, Ambassador Hansjörg Haber, and the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) of the OSCE, Ambassador Herbert Salber, to this joint meeting of the FSC and the PC and express my deepest gratitude for their timely and most interesting presentations on the contribution to security and stability in Georgia of the EUMM and the OSCE MMOs. By listening to their presentations, we have once again gained a clear picture of the scale of activities carried out by the EU and the OSCE monitors in this extremely difficult and tense situation.

Madam Chairperson, before I turn to the main part of my intervention, I would like to make one announcement here, as it is directly related to the activities of the OSCE MMOs in Georgia.

On 10 February 2009, early in the morning, on the territory adjacent to the Tskhinvali region, near the village of Adzvi, a criminal armed gang of the Russian proxy regime assaulted two OSCE military monitors. The monitors were kidnapped and released only two hours later. This attack represents yet another provocation planned and masterminded by Russia and its proxies. What would have happened if it had been a Georgian patrol that had encountered the so-called South Ossetia Militia?

The answer is obvious, considering the violence that has been directed towards the Georgian police and civilians. It is most likely that those militias would have attacked any Georgian patrol. This is clearly a provocative act, and undoubtedly the blame would have been placed on Georgia by the Russian Federation, with a clear intention to keep tensions at a high level.

Especially alarming is the fact that violence in this case was targeted against OSCE military monitors conducting monitoring in line with all the relevant rules and laws. Such an insolent attack on representatives of the international organization reveals a high level of cynicism by the Russian occupiers, given that all this took place outside the administrative boundary of the Tskhinvali region.

Georgia expresses its vehement protest over the actions of Russia and its proxy regimes and stresses that the OSCE military monitors enjoy the right of free movement throughout the territory of Georgia. Any kind of infringement of this right, therefore, is viewed as a gross violation of international law.

Madam Chairperson,

In August 2008, the Russian Federation carried out a large-scale military aggression against Georgia, which resulted in the occupation of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region.

The rapid and active involvement of the EU in the conflict resolution process, first by succeeding in brokering a ceasefire on 12 August and then by deploying the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) on 1 October, was decisive in stopping the Russian aggression. Furthermore, the active promotion by the EU and the OSCE of the Geneva talks was a significant step towards reinvigorating peaceful negotiations.

I would like to especially emphasize the extremely important role of the EUMM in Georgia. Through its rapid response to the incidents, and its unbiased reporting on the ongoing events to the international community, the EUMM largely contributes to the prevention of new outbursts of violence in the region. The Georgian side has always deemed it important to actively support the EU Monitors, and as a result we have developed a good practice of fruitful co-operation with them.

Nevertheless, I have to reiterate that a threat of a new Russian aggression is still present. Since the adoption of the six-point ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008, Russia has been in gross violation of its provisions and has failed to fulfil the obligation to withdraw its forces back to the positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. On the contrary, Russia has started increasing its military presence, *inter alia*, by building new military bases in the Georgian territory, namely, in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region.

A continuous sequence of provocations, and oftentimes terrorist attacks, is taking place from the territories occupied by Russia. Numerous facts regarding killings, injuries, robbery, plundering, kidnappings, violations of Georgian airspace and other criminal activities are well documented in the EUMM and OSCE Mission's reports of past months.

Against this background, Russia continues to follow its "tradition" of throwing up all possible obstacles to the international transparency measures and undermining the international involvement in Georgia. With regard to the OSCE, during previous years, we were all witnessing impediments raised by Russia to the MMOs — sometimes through the Joint Peacekeeping Forces, sometimes through Russia's proxy regime. To say nothing of the permanent Russian veto of the proposals to increase the number of OSCE MMOs, or place international monitors at the Didi Gupta bridge and the Roki tunnel.

For the time being, the Russian positions at the negotiations in Vienna, New York and Geneva are extremely inflexible and counterproductive. Notwithstanding enormous efforts by the Finnish and Greek OSCE Chairmanships to ensure a consensus on further OSCE Mission activities in Georgia, Russia has remained stubbornly unwilling to co-operate. We have been observing the same trend with regard to UNOMIG's presence in Georgia, and permanent,

unjust and ungrounded Russian criticism directed at the EUMM serves the very same objective, namely, to impede all international presence and transparency in Georgia.

At the same time, Russia attempts to accuse Georgia of concentrating military forces in the areas adjacent to the Tskhinvali region and conducting provocations. But the international monitors report the contrary to these allegations. Besides, Georgia has always actively co-operated with all international representatives on its territory. The latest vivid example of such close co-operation is the signing on 26 January 2009 of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Defence of Georgia and the EUMM, setting forth certain mutually acceptable regulations relating to the movements of the Georgian armed forces in the territories adjacent to occupied Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region of Georgia. The Memorandum is designed to provide a comprehensive, transparent and effective mechanism for interaction between the Ministry of Defence of Georgia and the EUMM.

If we fit all these elements into one big picture, we will clearly see Russia openly challenging the international community in a way that goes far beyond just being cynical. Taking into account the Russian behaviour at the negotiations in Vienna, New York and Geneva, we unfortunately get the impression that this country, even its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has completely lost its ability to be involved in the constructive dialogue. This dangerous trend is growing, thus making the threat of a new aggression more evident.

Madam Chairperson,

Allow me to once again express the Georgian position and at the same time to echo that of other parties, by saying that now is the time for more, and not less, international presence in Georgia, to help deter violence, to guarantee security and stability, to promote human rights, to encourage dialogue and reconciliation, and to monitor the implementation of the 12 August ceasefire agreement.

We believe that the European Union is an extremely effective international organization with a strong security dimension which is capable of maintaining peace and stability in our region and avoiding the emergence of a security vacuum in case the OSCE Mission and UNOMIG should have to leave Georgia due to the veto of an occupying State. Therefore, we are fully convinced that, through a more robust EU presence, it will be possible to counter the threats and challenges to the national security and sovereignty of Georgia.

Madam Chairperson,

Here I would like to echo Ambassador Haber and express a strong belief that the EU is an extremely effective international organization with a strong security dimension, which is capable of maintaining peace and stability in our region and avoiding the emergence of a security vacuum in case the OSCE Mission and UNOMIG should have to leave Georgia due to the veto of an occupying State.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the readiness of Georgia to further closely co-operate with the EU and the OSCE in regard to all relevant issues. We shall unify our efforts to

prevent one single country from blasting regional peace and stability and thus endangering the security of Europe as a whole.

Thank you.