

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 610
18 May 2006**

EU Statement on South Ossetia, Georgia

1. The EU highly regrets that it has to - once again - return to the issue of violation of freedom of movement of OSCE Military Monitoring Officers in South Ossetia, Georgia.
2. The Spot Report of the OSCE Mission to Georgia of 12 May 2006 describes how two OSCE Military Monitoring Officers were detained for 45 minutes by two camouflaged men, who later replied that they belonged to the South Ossetian so-called "Ministry of Internal Affairs". The Spot Report of 14 May describes how two OSCE Military Monitoring Officers were stopped by armed men, who refused to identify themselves. The armed men checked the camera and documents of the Military Monitoring Officers without authorization or approval.
3. The EU is very concerned that the OSCE's right for unhindered access to the whole of the zone of conflict, as guaranteed by the South Ossetian side in the Memorandum of Understanding between the OSCE and the South Ossetian side, continues to be violated.
4. The EU welcomes the reported positive change in the response by the JPKF and the Senior Military Observer from the Russian Federation to the first incident, as described in the Spot Report of 12 May. In the Permanent Council of 6 April 2006 the EU called on other parties in the Joint Control Commission to remind the South Ossetian side of the right of the Mission to conduct independent monitoring. The EU hopes that the reported positive change can be instrumental in this respect.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA country Norway, a member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

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