



PERMANENT DELEGATION  
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STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO H. E. MR. GRIGORY KARASIN,  
STATE SECRETARY/DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION

**As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik  
to the Permanent Council,  
4 June 2009**

Madam Chairperson,

The Norwegian delegation joins the previous speaker in welcoming State Secretary/Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, H. E. Mr. Grigory Karasin to the Permanent Council. We listened with great attention to his remarks on Russia's policy towards Georgia, including the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We had hoped for some new and positive signals for the next round of the Geneva discussion, in which State Secretary Karasin is a key player. Judging from the presentation we just heard, I am sorry to have to say that our hopes in this regard appear to have been unfounded. This is all the more unfortunate since the present stalemate on Georgia represents another lost opportunity to instil some – much needed – confidence and create a more promising atmosphere in the broader dialogue on European Security. Still, we do hope and expect that the meeting scheduled for 1 July will be held in a more constructive spirit than the previous ones and produce some tangible results.

Madam Chairperson,

Norway remains deeply concerned about the serious humanitarian problems in the area, not least with regard to the fate of the many internally displaced persons who are unable to return to their homes, inter alia because most of the homes of ethnic Georgians previously residing in the region of South Ossetia have been pillaged and burnt. We call on all parties to find practical solutions that could alleviate the suffering of all those affected by the August 2008 conflict, and urge the Russian Federation to guarantee free and unhindered humanitarian access to the South Ossetian and Abkhaz regions, in line with the commitments made in the August 12 cease-fire agreement and UNSCR 1866. Furthermore, we hope for the full implementation of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, and welcome the meeting held in Dvani on 29 May.

Norway is seriously concerned by the signing of the agreements on the joint protection of borders between Russia and the breakaway Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia a couple of weeks back and urges Russia to reverse these agreements, which are in breach of

the 12 August 2008 six point agreement and the Helsinki Final Act. Again, Norway reiterates her unyielding support for Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We are also deeply worried about the fact that so-called "parliamentary elections" took place in the South Ossetian region of Georgia on 31 May. We agree with the European Union that such elections are illegitimate and represent a setback in the search for a peaceful and lasting settlement of the conflict in Georgia.

Madam Chairperson,

As we have stated on numerous previous occasions, there is a clear need for a strengthened OSCE presence throughout Georgia. Norway, together with the vast majority of the participating States, wants a cross-dimensional OSCE presence in the country with two main components: a) a strong presence of military observers able to operate unhindered across the administrative boundary line, to, inter alia, oversee adherence to the August 12 six-point agreement by all the parties to the conflict, contribute to easing tensions and preventing unfortunate incidents, and to provide reliable and unbiased information, and b) a full-fledged regular Mission to assist the host country in promoting the further positive development of Georgian society and institutions. We remain convinced that the final compromise proposal presented by the Greek Chairmanships on 8 May, after months of laborious negotiations, which came quite close to our red lines, represents the only viable solution. We therefore once again call on the Russian Federation to reconsider its position on this issue.

Finally, Madam Chairperson, it is not possible in such a severely time-limited statement to do full justice to the position of Norway on the very unfortunate and complex situation in Georgia. Let me therefore add that my Delegation also fully subscribes to the slightly more comprehensive positions that were just presented by the Czech Delegation on behalf of the EU.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.