

PC.DEL/208/18

2 March 2018

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1177th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

1 March 2018

On the death of Archil Tatunashvili in South Ossetia

Mr. Chairperson,

We express our condolences to the Georgian representatives following the death of Georgian citizen Archil Tatunashvili in South Ossetia. We hope that the relevant South Ossetian law enforcement agencies will conduct a thorough investigation into all circumstances of this incident. As we understand it, an investigation is currently under way. We now need to wait for the results. The first official information on the incident was published in the South Ossetian media. The matter of handing the body of the deceased man to his relatives is in the process of being settled.

We know that there have been contacts on this incident between the Plenipotentiary Envoy of the President of South Ossetia Murat Dzhioyev and the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions on the Trans-Caucasus. Georgia has the necessary direct channels for dialogue with South Ossetia on this matter, in particular as part of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism meeting which took place today in Ergneti.

In this context, we think it counter-productive to use this tragic incident for unjustified, politicized attacks against us. The Border Guards Directorate of the Russian Federal Security Service has no connection to the incident involving Archil Tatunashvili. The Russian border guards confirmed this on 23 February in response to a request from representatives of the European Union Monitoring Mission to Georgia via the hotline.

Thank you for your attention.