



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 864
Vienna, 2 June 2011**

EU statement on the demonstrations in Georgia

The EU is following closely recent domestic political developments in Georgia. We regret that, following peaceful demonstrations, clashes took place in Tbilisi on 26 May and that, in connection with the events, many were injured, including some fatally. We express our condolences to the families of the victims.

We appreciate the initial measures taken by the Georgian authorities to allow for the protesters to use their legitimate rights to freedom of expression and assembly. When exercising these fundamental freedoms, the rule of law should be respected by all concerned, including both protestors and law enforcement agencies. Violence is unacceptable as a means for political ends.

The EU is concerned about allegations of excessive use of force and harassment by the police, including against journalists, during and after the demonstrations. In this context, we share the concerns by the Representative on Freedom of the Media expressed in her statement of 27 May.

The EU reiterates its support for the ongoing democratic reform process in Georgia and encourages the Georgian authorities to continue and strengthen their efforts in this regard. We call on representatives from all political parties to renounce violence and to engage in constructive and issue-based political debate in the appropriate fora.

The EU calls on the Government of Georgia to fully investigate in a transparent manner the events of 26 May, including the allegations against the police. The EU will continue to follow developments closely.

In conclusion, these events, as well as recent events on the administrative boundary lines, underline once more the urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia. We fully support the efforts by the Lithuanian Chairmanship-in-Office to make progress towards this end.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

**Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.