

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

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EU response to H.E. Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, Diplomat in Residence at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy

The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Tagliavini and thanks her for her presentation. As already stated on various occasions, we highly appreciate Ambassador Tagliavini and her staff's professional work and dedication with regard to the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, which had enjoyed EU support from the beginning. We have taken good note of the observations in the report, which remains relevant today, also in the light of our Corfu discussions, relating to conflict prevention and resolution and the future of European security.

We are also appreciative of the contribution by the OSCE to the success of the mission headed by Ambassador Tagliavini, in particular through the communication of available reports and through individual interviews of OSCE staff.

The situation in Georgia, including its Abkhaz and South Ossetian regions, remains of concern to the EU. We reiterate our firm support for the security and stability of Georgia, based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognized by international law. We call once again for full implementation of the 12 August and 8 September 2008 agreements, including the withdrawal of all military forces to the positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. We also reiterate our call for unhindered access of the EUMM to the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and unhindered and unconditional access for humanitarian organizations in particular to the South Ossetia region.

Looking at the way ahead, confidence building and continued engagement with all stakeholders are most urgently needed. We are pleased to note in the report of the independent international Fact-Finding Mission numerous references to the 27 November 2008 report by ODIHR, prepared in cooperation with the High Commissioner on National Minorities, on the human rights situation in the war-affected areas in Georgia. Follow-up to this report would be very relevant to efforts to build confidence.

The EU remains committed to international efforts towards conflict resolution. Despite the continuing difficulties and differences amongst participants, the EU considers the continuation of the Geneva discussions to be of utmost importance. They provide the only forum in which all sides are

represented and three major international actors – the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations – work in close cooperation for the security and stability in the region. We are looking forward to the next round of consultations set for 8 June 2010, and call on all participants to engage constructively towards concrete progress in both working groups.

The EU will continue to follow the situation in Georgia closely. We welcome ODIHR's decision to observe the upcoming municipal elections in Georgia on 30 May, and are looking forward to its reports. But more needs to be done. The EU remains convinced of the urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia, in particular for the benefit of the civilian population, including a robust monitoring capacity able to operate unhindered across the administrative boundary line. We encourage the Chairmanship-in-Office to intensify its efforts to bring the OSCE back to Georgia as soon as possible.

In conclusion, we again thank Ambassador Tagliavini for her address, and wish her success in her future endeavors.

Los países candidatos TURQUÍA, CROACIA* y la ANTIGUA REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*; los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA y MONTENEGRO; el país de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y miembro del Espacio Económico Europeo ISLANDIA; al igual que la REPÚBLICA DE MOLDAVIA y AZERBAIYÁN se suman a esta declaración.

*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación.