



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

RESPONSE TO SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE OSCE CIO, AMBASSADOR HEIKKI TALVITIE

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
20 November 2008

Mr. Chairman,

The Norwegian Delegation joins others in warmly welcoming Ambassador Talvitie back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his update on the protracted conflicts in our region, and notably the situation in Georgia.

We welcome the successful resumption of the Geneva talks earlier this week. We hope that they eventually will help to ensure long-term stability and security in the region, and bring about a peaceful solution that fully respects Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the more immediate future, we hope that they will contribute to bringing speedy and efficient relief to the suffering populations in the area of the conflict.

Mr. Chairman,

Like others, Norway remains concerned about a number of violent incidents over the past weeks that exacerbate the still tense situation in the region, and urges all parties to help avoid further incidents. Again, we call on all parties to comply fully with their obligations under the six-point agreement of August 12 and the subsequent agreement negotiated by president Sarkozy. As repeatedly stated, Norway welcomes a robust EU presence in Georgia, and we reiterate our full support for this mission, which in our view performs well and acts professionally, in full compliance with its mandate.

We reiterate our firm conviction that also other OSCE institutions, notably the OSCE field mission in Georgia, the ODIHR and the High Commissioner on National Minorities, have important tasks to tend to, and should accordingly enjoy free and unrestricted access to the whole of Georgia, including to South Ossetia and, notably, the Akhalkalaki region. We welcome the news that ODIHR and the HCNM have finally been able to visit South Ossetia, at the request of the CIO, and look forward to their report.

Norway strongly believes that the continued presence of the OSCE in Georgia is more necessary than ever, and appeals to all participating States to agree to an extension of the Mission's mandate without unnecessary delay.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Talvitie for his excellent work throughout a very busy year. If things went terribly wrong in Georgia, and if the overall situation continues to give cause for concern, it is certainly not due to any lack of determined and competent efforts from the side of the Finnish Chair, often so ably represented by Ambassador Talvitie.