



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO CO-CHAIRS OF THE GENEVA
DISCUSSIONS AND TO AMBASSADOR HABER, HEAD OF THE EUMM AND
AMBASSADOR SALBER, HEAD OF THE CPC
STATE SECRETARY/DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN
FEDERATION

**As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Joint Meeting of Forum for Security Cooperation and the Permanent
Council,
17 June 2009**

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

Let me first join previous speakers in expressing a warm word of welcome to the three Co-chairs of the crucially important Geneva process, Ambassadors Christopoulos, Morel and Verbeke, and thank them for their very interesting reports. Let me in the same vein welcome Ambassador Haber, Head of the EU Monitoring Mission, and thank him and Ambassador Salber of the Conflict Prevention Centre for their informative reports.

Madam Chairwoman, Mr Chairman,

Notwithstanding the valiant and very commendable efforts of all the various actors at work, the main impression of the state of play and the progress achieved so far is one of disappointment and concern:

- The implementation of the six-point agreement of 12 August is inadequate in many respects. Russian troops have not withdrawn to their pre-conflict positions, and many developments, like the agreement on joint border control and the establishment of permanent bases, go in the wrong direction
- The agreement in principle on an incident prevention and response mechanism was very welcome, but has yet to be fully implemented in a practical and meaningful manner
- Unfortunate incidents continue to occur, as illustrated in some of the reports we just heard, and the situation of the most affected populations remains precarious
- The OSCE military observers have so far, through their very presence, contributed to protect civilian populations and reduce tensions, and also provided us with unbiased and reliable information, as was amply and clearly documented in Ambassador Salber's report. Let me in this context echo the vote of thanks just expressed by the US

delegation to our OSCE Military Observers, who have represented our organisation with distinction and in an impeccably professional manner. After their imminent withdrawal, caused by the blockage of the Chair's compromise proposal on a continued OSCE presence in Georgia, there will be even more pressure on the EU monitors, with their limited mandate and limited freedom of movement. We join the calls just expressed by Ambassador Haber and the EU for unhindered access for EUMM throughout the territory of Georgia, including South Ossetia and Abkhasia

- Unhindered access for humanitarian assistance has not been granted, in violation of international humanitarian law
- There is a more and more urgent need for follow-up of the very thorough and preoccupying joint report presented by ODIHR and the HCNM. Their mandates are still valid, independently of the continued existence of the OSCE mission in Georgia
- The hostile attitude prevailing in South Ossetia towards the OSCE, to a large degree caused by unfounded and frivolous accusations levelled against the OSCE Mission by the de facto authorities of Tskhinvali, as described by Terhi Hakala in her last report to the Council last Thursday, have had a very negative impact on the potential of the OSCE to play its normal mediating and conflict prevention role
- The repeated attempts to extract some form of official or unofficial recognition for the so-called authorities of the breakaway Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhasia, which have only been recognised by two countries so far, represent a constant challenge for all those who try to play a positive role in reducing tensions and alleviating the plight of suffering populations
- With the closing of OSCE Mission in Tbilisi, the pressure on the Geneva process and the remaining international presence in Georgia, mainly the EU, will increase
- We join the European Union in deploring the recent decision of the Russian Federation to veto the extension of the UNOMIG mandate, the result of which will be another dramatic reduction in the much-needed international presence in the area.

We accordingly appeal to all parties concerned, and in particular the Russian Federation, to play a more constructive role in the continued Geneva process, and also to reconsider its position on a continued OSCE presence in Georgia.

Finally, my delegation wishes to join in the thanks expressed to the Geneva Co-chairs and the Heads of the EUMM and CPC for all their efforts, and wish them every success in their crucially important work.