



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **On the Territorial Integrity of Georgia**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Kate Byrnes  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 16, 2015

We join others in expressing disappointment that shortly after the latest round of Geneva International Discussions, Russia decided to place so-called “state border” signs on the territory it is occupying in South Ossetia. We are deeply concerned to hear that people who have had access to this territory for farming and grazing their cattle have been told that this access will be withdrawn. This runs contrary to the goal of improving the lives of people on the ground and potentially deprives them of their livelihoods.

Our position on South Ossetia, as well as Abkhazia, remains clear: these regions are integral parts of Georgia. We reaffirm our strong support for Georgia’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence.

We once again urge Russia to comply with the 2008 ceasefire agreement to withdraw its forces to pre-conflict positions, to reverse its recognition of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, and to provide access for humanitarian assistance to these regions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.