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Swedish Presidency of the European Union

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EU statement on Georgia

The European Union notes that during the recent month, one year after the August 2008 conflict in Georgia, the situation has remained generally stable, without major incidents.

We commend the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) for contributing to this effect. With reference to our statement in the Permanent Council on 30 July 2009, we recall again the conclusions of 27 July 2009 of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of the European Union, stating inter alia that the deployment of EU monitors has contributed to creating the necessary conditions for the implementation of the agreements of 12 August and 8 September 2008 and calling for unhindered access of EUMM to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which has so far been denied.

Such access is of paramount importance, since the security, human rights and humanitarian situation on the ground, including the situation of IDPs and refugees, remains fragile. Violent incidents along the administrative boundary lines continue to occur and

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demonstrate the importance of the two incident prevention and response mechanisms, as confidence building measures contributing to security and stability in the region. We are pleased that meetings of both mechanisms took place recently: on 11 August in Gali, and on 14 August in Dvani. We welcome the fact that in both meetings a range of substantive issues were discussed in a constructive manner. We are looking forward to the next meetings, scheduled for today in Ergneti, and for 8 September in Gali.

The EU reiterates its firm support for the security and stability of Georgia, based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognised by international law, including the Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and United Nations Security Council resolutions. We recall the Conclusions of the Presidency of the Extraordinary European Council of 1 September 2008, in which the European Council strongly condemned Russia's unilateral decision to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

In this context, the EU is concerned about the successive visits of President Medvedev, Prime Minister Putin and other Russian officials to the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, without prior consent of the Georgian authorities. We are likewise concerned about the intention of the Russian Federation to sign another large number of agreements - including in the military sphere - with the de-facto authorities of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, also without the consent of the Government of Georgia. The EU does not consider such initiatives compatible with the principle of territorial integrity nor helpful for the international efforts to stabilise the region.

We are particularly concerned about the current tensions related to the Georgian territorial waters near the Abkhaz region. We urge all sides to exercise restraint and refrain from provocative actions, or any steps that could increase tensions, in order to avoid further escalation.

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

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