



**Statement by the Chair at the 863rd meeting of the
OSCE Permanent Council of 26 May 2011**

The Chairmanship is concerned about reports of violence last night in connection with demonstrations in Tbilisi.

The right to demonstrate comes with a responsibility to do so peacefully, without violence and provocations. Maintaining public order and the rule of law should be exercised equally responsibly.

The Chairmanship, with the support of the Secretariat, is looking into the facts of the situation.

We call for restraint from all sides, and urge the authorities and the leaders of the demonstrations to ensure that violence does not escalate and that the right to peaceful assembly and demonstration, as well as the freedom of the media to report on events, continue to be respected.

We invite the Government of Georgia and opposition to resume constructive political dialogue and to exercise calm and restraint.

The Chairmanship will continue to monitor developments carefully.

Congratulations to the people and the Government of Georgia on its 20th anniversary of independence, marked today.