



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 863
Vienna, 26 May 2011

EU statement on the shooting incident in Georgia on 18 May

With reference to the discussion in last week's Permanent Council, the European Union deplores the serious shooting incident that took place on 18 May close to the South Ossetian administrative boundary line, in which two Georgian civilians were wounded, one of whom is in a critical condition.

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the press release issued by the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) on 24 May 2011 in connection with the incident:

'Following the serious incident that took place close to the South Ossetian administrative boundary line on 18 May, resulting in civilian casualties, the EU Monitoring Mission has been gathering information from eyewitnesses, the local population, the local police and medical personnel about what may have occurred.

On the basis of the information available at this time, there appear to be inconsistencies and contradictions. On the key points, however, it is clear that two Georgian citizens were seriously wounded, one with life threatening injuries. As to the shooting itself, the Mission has so far found no information to substantiate the South Ossetian version that their border patrol came under fire and acted in self-defense.

EUMM has noted the statements about the incident from the Georgian Government and the de facto South Ossetian authorities. It has been in regular contact with the Russian Federation Border Guards and the de facto South Ossetian authorities through the “hotline”. The Mission also called and facilitated an ad hoc meeting in Dvani on 19 May, in the framework of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, with representatives of the Georgian, Russian Federation and de facto South Ossetian authorities.

The Mission will continue to gather information surrounding this case, but whatever the circumstances, this incident raises important issues about the safety and security of civilians in areas close to the administrative boundary line. This will be raised at the next meeting of the IPRM on 17 June.’

The EU would like to emphasize that this incident underlines once more the need for the EUMM to have unhindered access to both sides of the administrative boundary line.

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

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

**Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.