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## EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 867  
Vienna, 10 June 2011**

### **EU statement on the 16<sup>th</sup> round of Geneva Discussions (7 June 2011)**

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The European Union reiterates its strong support for the Geneva discussions, the latest round of which took place on 7 June. Despite the persistence of difficulties and differences amongst participants, we consider the continuation of the Geneva discussions and the continued participation of all parties in good faith to be of utmost importance. They provide the only forum in which all sides are represented and three international actors – the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations – work in close co-operation for the security and stability of the region. We support the OSCE's active participation in the meetings, in which good use can be made of its extensive cross-dimensional experience.

With regard to the first working group, we share the view that the security situation on the ground is stable, but unpredictable, with a potential for dangerous escalation due to highly worrying developments and incidents. We underline the need for renewed bilateral and collective efforts between participants in order to deescalate tension, as well as for additional confidence-building measures in the conflict-affected areas.

Regarding the second working group on humanitarian issues, we support Ambassador Čekuolis' call on all parties to urgently improve living conditions for people affected by the August 2008 conflict. The EU is pleased that progress is

being made with regard to water supply projects along the South Ossetian administrative boundary line, which are benefitting both communities, and to which the OSCE contributes. However, we are increasingly concerned about the lack of progress regarding the restoration of gas supplies, which negatively affects the daily life of the local population, in particular in the South Ossetian region of Georgia. We reiterate our call on all stakeholders to engage constructively in order to restore these basic utilities to the affected communities.

The EU is looking forward to the next round of Geneva discussions scheduled for 4 October 2011.

We reiterate our 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. We call once again for full implementation of the EU-brokered Six Point Agreement of 12 August 2008 and its Implementing Measures of 8 September 2008, including the withdrawal of all military forces to the positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. We also reiterate our call for unhindered access for the European Union Monitoring Mission to the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as well as unhindered access for humanitarian organisations.

The EU remains convinced of the urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia, in particular for the benefit of the civilian population, including a robust monitoring capacity able to operate unhindered across the administrative boundary lines. We reiterate our full support for the efforts by the Lithuanian Chairmanship-in-Office to make progress towards this end.

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 and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the European Free Trade Association country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO 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.