



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1181
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**EU statement in response to the Deputy Minister of Foreign
Affairs of Georgia, Mr. David Dondua**

The European Union warmly welcomes Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia Mr. David Dondua to the Permanent Council. We thank you for your comprehensive and timely address.

The European Union reiterates its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders as well as its policy of non-recognition and engagement concerning the breakaway Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The EU remains firmly committed to conflict resolution in Georgia using all instruments, including EU and OSCE tools, through a comprehensive approach.

We welcome the package of proposals adopted on 4 April by the Government of Georgia. These measures can benefit the citizens living on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Lines by facilitating trade, education and mobility and they are in line with the European Union's policy in this respect. We are looking forward to positive parliamentary discussions on the package of proposals presented by the Government of Georgia as well as positive responses by all participants in the Geneva International Discussions.

It is troubling that the human rights situation in the Georgian breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia continues to deteriorate. Freedom of movement, the right to education and property rights are areas of particular concern. There are also severe obstacles to the rights of displaced persons to choose a durable solution and to restitution of, or compensation for, their property. The European Union renews its call on the Russian Federation to reverse these trends and will continue closely monitoring developments in this regard.

The Geneva International Discussions and fully functioning Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) provide a forum for dialogue and are vitally important to address and resolve the challenges stemming from the conflict in Georgia.

The European Union notes that the latest round of the Geneva International Discussions, held on 28 March, was negatively affected by the death of Georgian citizen Mr Tatumashvili in Tskhinvali on 22 February. We are concerned about the impunity surrounding this fatal incident and, in this context, recall the cases of Basharuli in 2014 and Otkhozoria in May 2016. The EU is worried about this trend and subsequent deterioration of the overall human security environment. The EU therefore calls for a thorough investigation into these cases, the fate of missing persons and for justice to be applied.

We take note that a joint statement on the non-use of force by all parties could not be finalized during the round, and we continue to believe that a clear non-use of force commitment by Russia is essential. The European Union encourages further efforts in this direction and in particular with a view to establishing much-needed additional international mechanisms to monitor the fulfilment of non-use of force commitments.

The European Union regrets that once again the Russian, Abkhaz and South Ossetian participants walked out from the discussions under the agenda item dedicated to IDPs and refugees' issues. The European Union recalls that these issues are at the core of the Geneva International Discussions' mandate.

Russia continues to violate Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity through its military, security related presence and infrastructure reinforcements in the Georgian breakaway regions. The European Union calls on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and its subsequent implementing measures of 8 September 2008. The European Union also calls for access to the breakaway regions for the EUMM, as per its mandate, as well as for humanitarian organizations.

The European Union looks forward to the next round of the Geneva International Discussions scheduled for 19-20 June 2018.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

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