



Georgia and the world community

The next steps

BY ALEXANDER STUBB

The hope that we had banished war from the face of modern Europe was dashed in early August when Georgian and Russian troops engaged in a pitched battle in Tskhinvali, capital of the separatist Georgian region of South Ossetia. Since the conflict broke out, the OSCE has been actively contributing to efforts aimed at an immediate ceasefire and at setting the stage for international negotiations.

On 10 August, as hostilities spiralled dangerously out of control, Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner of France, which holds the rotating EU presidency, and I flew to Tbilisi to initiate immediate peace talks. We also managed a quick visit to Gori, in the Shida Kartli region, just about

an hour's drive from the Georgian capital. Seeing the devastation around us strengthened our resolve to come up with a sustainable solution for peace and stability — and fast.

Minister Kouchner and I worked in tandem to lay the foundations for a ceasefire and drew up a four-point peace plan that was signed by Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili in Tbilisi and presented to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, current President of the Council of the EU, then sealed an agreement with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and President Saakashvili on an elaborated six-point peace plan.

When I returned to Gori on 21 August, I saw for myself how volatile the humanitarian situation still was, even though relief efforts were going relatively well, with only minor hitches. This was confirmed by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Food Programme, and by the Governor of the Shida Kartli region.

During our short visit, Ambassador Terhi Hakala, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, and I met several elderly people who had been displaced from their homes in the village of Heiti. In Tbilisi, we also visited a centre for

Tbilisi, 21 August, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Alexander Stubb (right) talks to families displaced from Gori and other villages. Photo: OSCE/German Avagyan

Gori, 21 August. Displaced people from several outlying villages arrive with their belongings.



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people who had been displaced within Gori itself or who had been brought there temporarily from other villages affected by the conflict.

Meanwhile, in Vienna on 19 August, OSCE participating States agreed to increase the number of Military Monitoring Officers in Georgia by up to 100. The first 20 have now joined the eight monitors who were already stationed in the country as part of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. We needed them to be on the ground as quickly as possible to help prevent further violence. They can also play a role in ensuring that progress in humanitarian work and the return of people to their homes is unhindered and unimpeded.

Beyond the humanitarian work, much remains to be done to address the wide-ranging consequences of the conflict.

First and foremost, we need to do our utmost to ensure that the ceasefire agreement is strictly adhered to and that its implementation is based on fundamental OSCE principles.

Second, the international community should explore how efforts towards a peaceful settlement in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgia, can be re-tooled and re-energized in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

Since the early 1990s, responsibility for international efforts to resolve these two conflicts has been split between the United Nations and the OSCE. I am convinced that the time has come for us to come up with a new global negotiating platform supported by the UN, the OSCE, the EU, and other stakeholders as well. During my talks at the United Nations in late September, I found there was broad agreement that the Geneva talks in mid-October provide a good opportunity to start building this platform.

The OSCE has been at the forefront of international efforts to stabilize the situation in Georgia. I am confident that the OSCE and its Mission to Georgia will continue to be a key

actor in the region. There will be no shortage of tasks for the Mission and its more than 200 staff members as they begin to tackle new challenges related to the human, economic and environmental, and politico-military dimensions of security.

I look forward to seeing all 56 participating States continuing a constructive dialogue in the months ahead so that the OSCE can keep playing a pivotal role in the region.

Alexander Stubb is the Foreign Minister of Finland and Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE.

What do Military Monitoring Officers do?

Under the guidance of the Head of Mission and the direct supervision of the Chief Monitoring Officer, unarmed Military Monitoring Officers:

- contribute to the full implementation of the six principles for the resolution of the conflict by monitoring the situation on the ground
- interact with the relevant authorities and military and civilian representatives, and co-ordinate liaison with other monitoring contacts
- prepare reports on observations

What is the typical profile of an OSCE Military Monitoring Officer in Georgia?

- is seconded from an OSCE participating State
- is active or reserve military personnel, authorized to be in uniform with rank insignia during the assignment
- holds an advanced degree and is trained as an Officer or Warrant Officer
- has at least six years of relevant professional experience including significant background in arms control, peace-keeping operations or other relevant areas of military-related affairs
- experienced in negotiations and liaising with governmental and military authorities



OSCE/DAVID KHIZANISHVILI



From Vienna to Vladikavkaz

Solidarity with refugees and OSCE staff

BY MARC PERRIN DE BRICHAMBAUT

On 16 and 17 August, at the request of Chairman-in-Office Alexander Stubb, I flew to Vladikavkaz, the capital of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, to meet refugees from South Ossetia, Georgia, and carry out a first-hand assessment of the humanitarian situation in the wake of hostilities.

With me were Ambassador Anvar Azimov, the new head of the Russian delegation to the OSCE, and Ambassador Klaus Korhonen, who was representing the Organization's Finnish Chairmanship.

The media followed the visit with keen interest. The minute we stepped off the domestic flight from Moscow, we were surrounded by television crews and reporters, and several press cars followed our delegation to its various destinations.

Our first stop was in Beslan, to lay flowers at a monument honouring the more than 300 victims of the school hostage tragedy that thrust this small town into the world's consciousness in September 2004.

As we moved on to Vladikavkaz and met refugees, we were overwhelmed by the unfolding human drama. The flow of people who fled the region of South Ossetia after the start of hostilities had by then reached 34,000. This was according to Mikhail Tyurkin, First Deputy Director of the Russian Federal Migration Service, who along with his staff was confronted with the challenging task of registering the refugees and helping them with their immediate needs.

Some people took shelter in schools and summer camps in and around the small town of Alagir, 54 km west of Vladikavkaz. Others were given the option of moving to other parts of Russia. We learned that quite a few families were ready and willing to return to their homes and that the authorities had offered to transport them by bus to Tskhinvali or to outlying villages.

I was truly moved by the stories I heard from refugees and from injured civilians in the central hospital of Vladikavkaz. One could not help but feel compassion for all, regardless of ethnic background. I know from my contacts with the Chairman-in-Office that he heard similar accounts during his two visits to Georgia.

Near Alagir, North Ossetia, 16 August. A refugee describes her ordeal during the conflict to Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut (right) and OSCE Press Officer Mikhail Evstafiev. Reuters/Vasily Fedosenko

I also had informal meetings with North Ossetian officials — President Taimuraz Mamsurov, Prime Minister Nikolay Khlyntsov and his First Deputy Yermak Dzansolov, and the Speaker of Parliament Larisa Habitseva, as well as with the North Ossetian members of the Joint Control Commission.

The visit to Vladikavkaz would not have been complete without seeing at least some of our local colleagues from the Tskhinvali Field Office of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. At short notice, I was able to get together with ten of them, which represented about half of the local staff. Each one had a dramatic and poignant story to tell. Some had lost family members and friends.

Now it is time to move on and start the hard work of helping people settle back into their homes so that they can rebuild their lives. As always, the OSCE stands ready to fully engage itself in this crucial process and to steer all parties firmly along the path of reconciliation.

Marc Perrin de Brichambaut is the Secretary General of the OSCE.

Secretary General starts second term

Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut of France has been reappointed for a second three-year term as Secretary General of the OSCE starting on 1 July. He assumed his position in June 2005.

Reflecting on his first three years in office, the Secretary General said that he remained inspired by the Organization's unifying role. "Despite difficulties and differences, the OSCE binds the North Atlantic, Europe and Eurasia within a forum of permanent dialogue and joint action," he said.

The Secretary General's role is multifaceted: He is the Organization's chief administrative officer, head of its Secretariat in Vienna and focal point for co-ordination and consultations across the Organization.

Supporting and representing the Chairman-in-Office is also a key task. "The rotating Chairmanship is vital for the good health of the OSCE because it provides a source of constantly renewed political will and guides activities in new directions," Ambassador Perrin de Brichambaut said. "The Secretary General is here to provide the Chairmanship with expert, advisory, material, technical and legal assistance. This includes assisting in policy-related issues, promoting the process of political dialogue and negotiations among participating States, and assisting the Chairmanship in raising the visibility of the Organization."

The OSCE Mission to Georgia

The OSCE Mission to Georgia is one of the Organization's oldest field operations. Based in Tbilisi, the Mission launched its activities in December 1993 shortly after the Sochi Ceasefire Agreement of June 1992 ended the violent fighting that broke out in South Ossetia in late 1991. In 1997, the Mission set up a field office in Tskhinvali. Over the past 15 years, the Mission's main tasks have gradually expanded and now comprise:

Politico-military dimension activities

- promoting negotiations between the conflicting parties and building confidence in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict
- supporting the peace process in the zone of the Georgia-Abkhaz conflict, which is under the responsibility of the United Nations with a separate negotiation mechanism
- destroying, dismantling or recycling surplus and obsolete ammunition stockpiles
- assisting police reform and enhancing capacity to deal with terrorism
- strengthening national capacity to manage borders and ensure border security

Human dimension activities

- assisting the Government to fulfil its OSCE commitments concerning human rights, rule of law, democratization and freedom of the media by, for example, supporting electoral, judiciary, penitentiary and civil registry reform; promoting the role of civil society; strengthening the fight against trafficking in human beings; and integrating Georgia's national minorities into the mainstream of society

Economic and environmental dimension activities

- supporting the economic, energy and environmental sectors through, for example, small and medium enterprise development, legislative reforms, anti-corruption and good governance initiatives, environmental education and a river monitoring project

The OSCE Mission to Georgia has more than 200 national and international staff members. This number includes the original eight Military Monitoring Officers who were already on active duty before the recent hostilities. On 19 August, participating States agreed to increase the monitors by up to 100, 20 of whom had taken up their posts by early September.



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Georgian crisis dominates agenda of Finnish Chairmanship



Tbilisi, 7 July. An OSCE delegation, comprising ambassadors and representatives of permanent missions in Vienna, exchanges views with Prime Minister Lado Gurgenzidze. Over three days, the group held discussions with several key officials of the Georgian Government and visited the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

When Finland unveiled its priority themes at the beginning of its 2008 Chairmanship, addressing protracted conflicts in the OSCE area was high up on its agenda. The Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, wasted no time in embarking on a series of visits to key capitals to ensure continuity and inject fresh impetus into the various negotiations. He also issued a strong signal in appointing as his Special Envoy the experienced diplomat Heikki Talvitie, who once served as the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and as Co-Chairman of the Minsk Group, which deals with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

As the developments in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict started taking a turn for the worse early in the year, it became clear that the Chairmanship and the OSCE would indeed need all the energy and skill they could muster to help the sides address the potentially explosive situation posed by the tension on the ground and the dialogue vacuum.

In early August, the worst fears were realized when open conflict did break out. The consequences of the brief but intense fighting have been profound — not only for the immediate parties involved but for the very concept of common and co-operative security.

“This crisis has totally changed the nature of the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship,” the Chairman-in-Office said. “The rapid response of participating States to increase the number of Military Monitoring Officers on the ground is commendable, but it is only a first step. We urgently need to stabilize the situation, do our utmost to help with relief efforts, and work as intensively as we can to revive the dialogue.”

The following summary is far from comprehensive, but it reflects the intensity of diplomatic and political activity before and shortly after the August events, much of it conducted behind the scenes. It tells a story of constant early warning action and attempts to de-escalate tensions, followed by immediate work to halt the war and move towards normalization — by the Chairmanship, the Mission to Georgia, OSCE institutions and the OSCE decision-making bodies in Vienna. The story is far from over.

27 February, Tbilisi The OSCE Chairman-in-Office meets Georgia’s leaders to discuss the country’s parliamentary elections in May and emphasizes the Organization’s role in promoting stability and democratic reforms. He calls for progress in the settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

13 March, Vienna Head of Mission Terhi Hakala provides the Permanent Council with a wide-ranging report on the OSCE’s activities in Georgia, the core aim of which is to assist both sides to achieve a peaceful and comprehensive resolution of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. “The political process has continued to be at a standstill,” and “the past twelve months have seen little to no improvement in the security situation in the zone of conflict,” she says. “Despite this, the Mission continues to do its utmost to find any kind of platform to which all the parties can subscribe.”

She singles out one bright note in confidence-building work, namely, the €8 million OSCE-led Economic Rehabilitation Programme in the zone of conflict, which is being financed by 20 participating States. “Many of the projects have been completed by mixed teams of Georgian and South Ossetian workers, demonstrating that despite the challenging security environment, joint work at the community level towards mutually agreed aims can succeed.”

28 March, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office deplores the series of bomb explosions in the zone

Sveri, a mixed village with a Georgian majority to the north of the zone of conflict in South Ossetia, 9 July. Dutch Ambassador to the OSCE Ida van Veldhuizen-Rothenbücher, along with diplomats from Vienna, visited several projects under the donor-funded Economic Rehabilitation Programme, such as this village school that was undergoing major refurbishment. A library and clinic were also planned. Donors: Czech Republic and Italy.



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of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and calls on both sides to resume dialogue.

17 April, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office expresses concern over the Russian Federation's decision to establish official ties with the de facto authorities of Georgia's two breakaway regions, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. He reaffirms the Organization's support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and regrets that existing negotiation mechanisms have not been fully utilized. "I call on the parties to look for ways to build confidence and engage in efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflicts," he says.

29 April, Tbilisi Ambassador Heikki Talvitie, Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, discusses with Georgian authorities the shooting down of a Georgian unmanned aerial vehicle over Abkhazia on 20 April. He reiterates the OSCE's support for UN actions in Abkhazia.

30 April, Vienna The OSCE Permanent Council convenes a special session to discuss the airspace incident over Abkhazia, while the Forum for Security Co-operation examines its politico-military implications.

30 April, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office states that recent developments in the zones of conflict, including a military build-up, have considerably increased tension in the region. He speaks on the phone with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, urging them to defuse tensions through dialogue and confidence-building measures. "All parties should refrain from unilateral measures and threats to use military force," he says.

30 May, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office meets Georgian Foreign Minister Ekaterine Tkeshelashvili regarding the situation in Georgia's breakaway

regions. "OSCE confidence-building measures should be used by participating States to calm tensions and foster dialogue," he says. He also says it is time to explore possibilities for a new negotiating format that will be acceptable to the parties to the conflict.

2 July, Astana The Chairman-in-Office addresses the annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, drawing attention to the worrying situation in the South Caucasus.

4 July, Tbilisi Following a recent series of incidents resulting in loss of life and serious injuries in the zone of conflict, the Chairman-in-Office calls on all parties to "use all necessary tools at their disposal to restore dialogue, which is a pre-condition for building confidence."

7-9 July, Tbilisi and Tskhinvali Led by Finnish Ambassador Antti Turunen, Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council, ambassadors and representatives of 21 OSCE participating States engage in a series of intensive discussions with key members of the Georgian Government and the main stakeholders in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. Ambassador Turunen urges all parties to stop the violence, resume dialogue and undertake more confidence-building measures to de-escalate tensions. The need for more OSCE Military Monitoring Officers is also discussed.

The OSCE representatives travel to the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict for two consecutive days and meet leaders from the South Ossetian side. They are briefed by the the Commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces and the Military Monitoring Officers in the Mission's Tskhinvali office. They visit projects of the OSCE-led Economic Rehabilitation Programme, which was designed to build confidence between communities in the zone of conflict and adjacent areas. They also visit two sites that figure prominently



Roki Tunnel connecting South Ossetia and North Ossetia, 8 July. The OSCE delegation of ambassadors and representatives visited the zone of conflict for two consecutive days and met South Ossetian leaders.

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in Permanent Council debates concerning the conflict — the village of Didi Gupta and the Roki Tunnel, which leads to North Ossetia-Alania in the Russian Federation.

7 July, Moscow Special Envoy Heikki Talvitie meets Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko to discuss the situation in Georgia's breakaway regions.

10-11 July, Tbilisi and Tskhinvali Ambassador Talvitie holds meetings and consultations with key officials and the Commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces to try to advance the conflict settlement process.

14 July, Vienna The OSCE Permanent Council devotes a special meeting underscoring the urgency of the resumption of dialogue between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali to de-escalate tension. Ambassador Heikki Talvitie briefs participating States on his recent consultations with all sides.

17 July, Washington, D.C. The Chairman-in-Office meets U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Georgia's frozen conflicts are at the top of their discussion agenda.

2 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office deplores and condemns the latest escalation of violence in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, including the night-time shooting that killed and wounded several people. "The international community is watching developments with mounting concern and expects the sides to do their utmost to de-escalate tension," he says. He appeals to them to take up his offer to facilitate dialogue and consultations.

7 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office deplores the fact that a planned meeting of Georgian and South Ossetian representatives has failed to take place. Once again, he extends an invitation to the parties to meet in Helsinki as soon

as possible. "The situation in the conflict zone is extremely tense and requires immediate de-escalation," he says, urging them to stop all military action and re-establish direct contacts.

7-8 August, zone of conflict, Georgia Hostilities break out.

8 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office continues to be in contact with Tbilisi, Moscow, and all international actors involved in resolving the conflict. He announces that Special Envoy Heikki Talvitie will travel to Georgia immediately to defuse tensions and seek ways to launch humanitarian action. "The intense fighting in the South Ossetian conflict zone is at risk of escalating into a fully-fledged war, which would have a devastating impact for the entire region," he says. "I urge the Georgians, South Ossetians and Russians to cease fire, end military action and stop further escalation." Condemning the shelling of the OSCE Mission premises in Tskhinvali, he says that the OSCE Mission to Georgia is working intensively with all parties to defuse tensions and that its work and mandate must be respected by all parties to the conflict. Minister Stubb announces that he is ready to increase the number of OSCE Observers as soon as the situation allows.

8 August, Vienna The OSCE Permanent Council convenes a special meeting on the situation in Georgia.

9 August, Tbilisi Special Envoy Heikki Talvitie meets EU officials and other international actors.

10-11 August, Tbilisi and Gori The Chairman-in-Office travels with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, whose country holds the EU presidency. "The overriding priority of the OSCE and the EU is to broker a ceasefire as soon as possible," Minister Stubb says. "After that, we need to launch a humanitarian effort, given the

Tbilisi, 21 August. The Chairman-in-Office is briefed by Steve Young, Chief Military Officer at the OSCE Mission to Georgia.



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number of civilians who have suffered in this needless fighting.” He says that additional Military Monitoring Officers are needed to supplement the eight already on the ground and that he will seek agreement from participating States to provide them. Minister Stubb and Minister Kouchnar meet Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili with an OSCE/EU-drafted ceasefire plan and visit Gori, close to the conflict zone, which had briefly come under bombardment.

12 August, Moscow The Chairman-in-Office presents the proposed agreement to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. He welcomes the decision by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to halt the military operation in Georgia, saying that the OSCE stands ready to help monitor a ceasefire and assist in humanitarian relief efforts. President Medvedev and French President Nicolas Sarkozy hold talks and meet the press to announce that Russia has endorsed a six-point peace agreement. (President Saakashvili later accepts the six-point ceasefire plan. He and President Sarkozy present an outline of the document at a press conference.)

13 August, Brussels The Chairman-in-Office takes part in an emergency meeting of EU foreign ministers focusing on the agreed plan and the role of the OSCE and the EU. “We have a ceasefire, we do not yet have peace,” he says.

13 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office, who is in constant contact with the OSCE Mission to Georgia, expresses “grave concern” about the continuing violence and the safety of civilians in and around the South Ossetia conflict area. “The ceasefire agreed on yesterday must be strictly adhered to. The OSCE should do its utmost and deploy additional Military Monitoring Officers as soon as possible,” he says. “I expect all measures

necessary to be taken to ensure the safety of non-combatants, regardless of their ethnic origins, and that obligations under international humanitarian law will be respected.”

14 August, Vienna At a special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, Special Envoy Heikki Talvitie briefs participating States on the “fragile” situation in and around the South Ossetia conflict area. He relays to participating States the request of the Chairman-in-Office to increase the number of OSCE Military Monitoring Officers by up to 100, adding that they could monitor the ceasefire and withdrawal of forces and help establish and maintain a humanitarian corridor for international relief efforts. “All sides must abide by the ceasefire. International monitoring of the ceasefire and of the humanitarian situation in and around the South Ossetia conflict area is urgently needed,” he says. Several participating States pledge financial and material assistance for humanitarian purposes.

16-17 August, Vladikavkaz At the request of the Chairman-in-Office, OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut travels to the North Ossetian capital to meet refugees from South Ossetia and assess the humanitarian situation (see page 6).

18-19 August, Brussels The Chairman-in-Office takes part in meetings aimed at co-ordinating the international community’s further action concerning the conflict in Georgia. He has talks with Belgian Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht, whose country holds the presidency of the UN Security Council (since succeeded by Burkina Faso), and meets U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. In his capacity as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, he takes part in a meeting of NATO foreign ministers with the OSCE Ministerial Troika (Spain, Finland and Greece). He also meets EU officials to co-ordinate efforts in Georgia.



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Gori, 21 August. Lado Vardzelashvili, Governor of Shida Kartli region (centre), OSCE Chairman-in-Office Alexander Stubb and Ambassador Terhi Hakala, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, assess the humanitarian situation.



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Tbilisi, 3 September. New Military Monitoring Officers are briefed and trained at the OSCE Mission to Georgia before their deployment.

19 August, Vienna After intense negotiations at a special meeting of the Permanent Council, the 56 OSCE participating States agree to increase the number of OSCE monitors in the Mission to Georgia by up to 100. The decision calls for 20 unarmed Military Monitoring Officers to be deployed immediately to “areas adjacent to South Ossetia”, with the specific details for the remaining monitors still to be discussed further.

19 August, Brussels “I hope that today’s decision by the OSCE will contribute to the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement and facilitate the prompt opening of humanitarian corridors to assist the civilian population and prepare for a return of refugees and internally displaced persons,” the Chairman-in-Office says. “I also hope that the OSCE Military Monitoring Officers will very soon be ensured safe and free movement throughout Georgia.”

21-22 August, Tbilisi and Gori The Chairman-in-Office assesses the security and humanitarian situation. He visits Tbilisi and Gori where he talks with displaced people. He also discusses the crisis with Georgian officials, stressing the importance of implementing the ceasefire and the role of the OSCE Military Monitoring Officers. He calls for support in providing humanitarian assistance and sets out the OSCE’s priorities in the region (see page 4).

25 August, The Hague The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Knut Vollebaek, expresses profound concern over recent comments by leaders of participating States on the right of States to protect their citizens and in particular those national minorities residing abroad. “Both the past and the present have shown us that when States take unilateral action to defend, protect or support their citizens or ‘ethnic kin’ abroad, there

is a risk of increasing political tensions, including inter-State conflict and regional instability,” he says in a statement.

26 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office condemns Russia’s decision to recognize the independence of the breakaway Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as violating fundamental OSCE principles.

28 August, Vienna Georgian Foreign Minister Ekaterine Tkeshelashvili addresses the participating States. “The OSCE has been very prompt in responding to the realities of the situation,” she says at a special session of the OSCE Permanent Council. “The Chairmanship has been instrumental in facilitating the ceasefire agreement and at the same time has committed itself to the monitoring and assurance of the implementation of the ceasefire.” The Foreign Minister calls for “adequate modalities” to permit the Military Monitoring Officers to meet needs on the ground.

28 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office sends a letter to all OSCE foreign ministers, laying emphasis on the implementation of the ceasefire agreed upon by the French and Russian presidents. He calls for support in providing humanitarian assistance, refers to the role of OSCE Military Monitoring Officers and proposes a new international platform to deal with the conflicts in Georgia.

1 September, Brussels In his role as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb attends a special EU summit to discuss the Georgian crisis.

4 September, Vienna Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut reports to the Permanent Council that almost all the 20 additional Military Monitoring Officers have joined their eight colleagues on the ground and are already patrolling

in different areas. (By 9 September, they had all been deployed.) He thanks the participating States that responded to calls for contributions in cash and in kind, which have enabled the monitors to start their work without delay.

5-6 September, Avignon Alexander Stubb briefs an informal meeting of EU foreign ministers, which is largely devoted to Georgia.

10 September, Vienna The OSCE and its Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) must take into account the changed politico-military situation in the OSCE area brought about by the crisis in Georgia, says Pauli Järvenpää, who heads the department for defence policy at the Finnish Ministry of Defence. In a speech ushering in Finland's four-month FSC chairmanship, Mr. Järvenpää says that the challenge now for the Forum and the OSCE is how to ensure the effective implementation of arms control and confidence-building regimes in a new and more difficult situation.

15 September, Brussels OSCE Chairman-in-Office Alexander Stubb, Chairman of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers Carl Bildt, Secretary General of the Council of Europe Terry Davis, and the Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General Paul Fritch meet and issue a statement calling for strict adherence to the six-point ceasefire agreement. The participants remind Russia and Georgia that they are bound by human rights obligations and commitments that must be respected in all circumstances. They agree on the importance of continuing to assess human rights in war-affected areas, including South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

15 September, Tskhinvali Terhi Hakala, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, meets Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. "We discussed the question of access of OSCE Military Monitoring Officers to South Ossetia, the need for restrictions to be lifted on freedom of movement of the OSCE Mission, and the possibility of reopening the OSCE Field Office in Tskhinvali," says Ambassador Hakala. She emphasizes the importance of protecting the civilian population in war-affected areas and of the delivery of humanitarian aid as soon as possible. She also visits the premises of the OSCE Field Office and meets local staff.

18 September, Vienna The Finnish Chairmanship of the Permanent Council issues the following statement: "The Chairmanship regrets to inform the OSCE participating States that negotiations on the draft decision on the modalities for additional Military Monitoring Officers in Georgia have not brought any results. There was no basis for consensus. Therefore, the Chairmanship has come to the conclusion with the parties involved that there is no point in continuing negotiations in Vienna at this stage. The Chairmanship worked intensively with the parties involved until

yesterday to explore all possible avenues for a compromise."

22 September, Vienna The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklós Haraszti, calls for journalists to be allowed safe access to the crisis regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and urges unbiased reporting from all sides. "The war in Georgia has claimed the lives of professionals dedicated to informing the public, in addition to those of innocent civilian victims," he says. "The post-Yugoslav wars have demonstrated what devastation propagandistic coverage and hateful comment can cause between nations. Investigating claims of genocide, reporting on the plight of civilian victims, documenting demolished villages and visiting refugees are best done by independent reporters, and what they need is not guided tours but free and safe access."

23 September, The Hague The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Knut Vollebaek, reports on his visit to Georgia from 14 to 20 September, aimed at assessing the inter-ethnic situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He says that detailed interviews with internally displaced persons in Tbilisi and Gori who had fled Abkhazia and South Ossetia and reports by representatives of international organizations raise "serious concern" about the situation in South Ossetia and the adjacent areas under Russian control. "I reiterate that international norms and standards require that any authority exercising jurisdiction over population and territory, even if not recognized by the international community, must respect the human rights of everyone, including those of persons belonging to national minorities," the High Commissioner says. He regrets having been prevented from visiting South Ossetia and urges the de facto authorities to allow him to make a full assessment of the situation on the ground.

23 September, New York At the invitation of the Chairman-in-Office, Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, foreign ministers from the five countries holding the 2007–2011 OSCE Chairmanships meet on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, joined by OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut. Together with Minister Stubb, Ministers Miguel Ángel Moratinos of Spain, Dora Bakoyannis of Greece, Marat Tazhin of Kazakhstan and Petras Vaitiekūnas of Lithuania recognize the important role played by the OSCE in contributing to the achievement of the ceasefire and in sending additional Military Monitoring Officers to Georgia. They agree that the OSCE should continue to play an active role in the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and in seeking a lasting settlement to the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, co-ordinating their efforts with the United Nations and the European Union.