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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY BY
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1577th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 September 2026

In response to the statement by the representative of Georgia

Mr. Chairperson,

As my country has been mentioned, I should like to exercise my right of reply.

We are baffled by the incessant attempts by certain representatives of Georgia to undermine the negotiation efforts aimed at dealing with the consequences of the events of August 2008. We are seeing such attempts not only in the Hofburg, but also at other international venues. Suffice it to recall the extremely politicized draft United Nations General Assembly resolution on internally displaced persons and refugees that Georgia pushes every year, a resolution that merely prevents a substantive discussion of this important humanitarian issue. We consider this to be nothing other than a desire to exploit this contentious issue for propaganda purposes by shifting the blame for the events in question on to Russia despite what the facts say.

It is particularly strange to observe this sort of behaviour given the efforts being made within Georgian society to reinterpret the events that occurred 18 years ago. As part of these efforts, the Parliament of Georgia established a special commission to investigate the crimes of the Mikheil Saakashvili regime. On 4 September 2025, Georgian Members of Parliament adopted a resolution based on the report submitted by that commission following the conclusion of its work. The report attributes responsibility for the outbreak of bloodshed on the night of 7 to 8 August 2008 to Saakashvili and other Georgian political figures who, I quote from the report, “in the expectation of external assistance and ignoring the advice of the Georgian military, launched an attack on the city of Tskhinval”.

This is entirely consistent with the findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, established under the auspices of the European Union and headed by Swiss diplomat Heidi Tagliavini, which pointed out that Georgia’s attack on the peacefully sleeping residents of the South Ossetian capital was in no way provoked.

That inhumane act resulted in numerous casualties among the civilian population of South Ossetia and among the Russian peacekeepers stationed there in accordance with international agreements and with the consent of the authorities in Tbilisi. In these circumstances, the Russian Federation was compelled to intervene and conduct an operation to force Georgia to sue for peace.

The aggressive actions of the authorities in Tbilisi left no doubt as to the desire of the Georgian leadership at the time to regain the “lost” territories by force. In order to prevent a recurrence of bloodshed, the Russian leadership decided to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent States. The attempts to portray this step as some sort of “occupation” are completely unfounded.

We call upon the delegations of Georgia and the European Union to desist from the fruitless speculation that has been going on at the OSCE for so many years, and to focus instead on meaningful work towards normalizing relations between Georgia on the one hand, and Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the other.

In this regard, we should like to reaffirm the Russian Federation’s commitment to the format of the International Discussions on Security and Stability in Transcaucasia. The mechanisms established under the auspices of the Discussions continue to make an appreciable contribution to maintaining stability in the border areas. Their effective functioning is even more crucial now, given that revanchists in Georgia and aggressive forces beyond its borders are trying to push that country into becoming involved in new military adventures.

We believe that, at this stage, the primary task of the International Discussions on Transcaucasia is to ensure lasting security for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It is essential to strive for the initiation of substantive work on drafting and signing a legally binding agreement on Georgia’s non-use of force against Abkhazia and South Ossetia. As for practical steps, we are convinced of the need to launch the process of delimiting the Abkhaz-Georgian and Georgian-South Ossetian borders as soon as possible, followed by their demarcation. For our part, we stand ready to provide further comprehensive assistance to the parties in advancing the negotiation process, building trust and developing inter-State relations for the sake of stability and security in Transcaucasia.

We are confident that resolving the issues raised will contribute to the further development of good-neighbourly relations and economic ties between the States of the region. The potential that such development holds can be gauged from the dynamic evolution of bilateral relations between Russia and Georgia. In particular, there has been steady growth in trade turnover (which rose by 6 per cent in 2025 to reach 2.7 billion dollars) and in the flow of tourists between our countries (with the number of Russian tourists in Georgia rising by 5 per cent in the first half of 2026 to exceed 610,000). Cultural, sporting, academic and religious ties between Russia and Georgia keep expanding.

All this testifies to the widespread interest among our peoples, who are bound by a shared history, in bringing Russia and Georgia closer together. The attempts by ill-wishers to drive them apart – we are witnessing one such attempt today in this room – are doomed to failure.

Thank you for your attention.