



Second day of the Thirteenth Meeting
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STATEMENT ON GEORGIA

1. We express our firm commitment to support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. We reiterate our support of the ongoing democratic reforms in Georgia and encourage the authorities to continue their efforts in this regard. We support efforts for peaceful settlement of the conflicts and reaffirm previous OSCE Summit and Ministerial Council documents regarding Georgia.
2. We welcome the initiatives taken towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia. However, we regret that in recent months the positive dynamics of the peace process have been disrupted by violent actions and note the importance of adherence to the principles of peaceful settlement of the conflict, as set forth in the Sochi Agreement of 24 June 1992. We call for full implementation of agreed measures for stabilization of the situation in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia in Georgia, in particular the early and complete demilitarization of the zone of conflict. We welcome the steps taken by the Georgian side to address the peaceful resolution of the conflict and believe that the recent proposals, in particular the Peace Plan built upon the initiatives of the President of Georgia presented at the 59th United Nations General Assembly and supported by the sides, will serve as a basis for the peaceful settlement of the conflict. We are of the view that an early meeting of the Prime Minister of Georgia with the leader of South Ossetia would be an important step towards intensification of the peace process. We support further OSCE involvement in the conflict-resolution process. We underline the need to increase the effectiveness of existing negotiation mechanisms, including the Joint Control Commission, and to fully implement the decisions agreed within their framework. We call upon all sides to promote dialogue and increase efforts at all levels to facilitate political negotiations and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. In this context, we express our satisfaction with the quadrilateral co-operation between the OSCE, the EU, UNHCR and UNDP in the framework of the rehabilitation programme in the zone of conflict funded by the European Commission, which is directed at the creation of the conditions required for such a return. We look forward to the report of the OSCE Needs Assessment Study and to the implementation of the projects it identifies for improving conditions and building confidence between the sides in the conflict. We remain ready to support the development of joint policing activities in the zone of conflict.
3. We reconfirm the leading role of the United Nations in the negotiations aimed at a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia. We stand ready to continue co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations and support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Representative, with the assistance of the

Russian Federation in its capacity as facilitator as well as of the United Nations Secretary-General's Group of Friends. We are prepared to enhance our involvement in the region, particularly by increasing project activities in the human and economic and environmental dimensions. We regret that the opening of a joint UN-OSCE human rights office in the Gali district has not been possible so far and we call upon the Abkhaz side to agree to its opening as soon as possible and to provide security conditions for its unhindered functioning. We are convinced that such an office would contribute to the improvement of the human rights situation in the region and thus promote the creation of conditions for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons in safety and dignity. We note the positive role of confidence-building measures and the importance of non-resumption of hostilities. We support the deployment of the United Nations civilian police component in the Gali district and call on the Abkhaz side to allow its swift deployment.

4. We welcome the Joint Statement issued by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Georgia on 30 May in Moscow. In this respect we note with satisfaction the negotiations carried out on the agreement to be signed shortly on the time frame, mode of functioning and withdrawal of the Russian military bases Batumi and Akhalkalaki and the Russian military facilities on the territory of Georgia foreseen by the Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and Georgia made on 17 November 1999 annexed to the Final Act of the Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. We welcome the withdrawal of part of the Russian heavy military equipment from Georgian territory. We look forward to further progress in the ongoing negotiation process both to enable a multinational mission to Gudauta and to establish its purpose.

5. We acknowledge the important contribution of the OSCE training assistance programme in improving the capacity and capability of the Georgian Border Guards.