



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1289 Vienna, 12 November 2020

EU Statement in reply to the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions

The European Union warmly welcomes the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions (GID), Mme Cihan Sultanoğlu, Mr Rudolf Michalka and Mr Toivo Klaar, to the Permanent Council and thanks them for their presentations. We highly appreciate the close cooperation which the EU, OSCE and UN have within the GID.

The EU reiterates its unwavering support for the leadership and endeavors of the Co-Chairs in facilitating a peaceful resolution of this conflict. The GID remains the key international platform in this regard and we are ready to continue being actively involved in it. We will also continue our engagement in the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) and through the work of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM), which remains – 12 years after the end of the Russia-Georgia war – the only international presence on the ground.

It is regrettable that no GID meetings have yet been held in 2020, notwithstanding the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU joins the GID Co-Chairs in their call for the resumption of GID meetings in-person without any further delay and welcomes the announcement that a meeting is scheduled to take place on 10 and 11 December.

Regular GID meetings are critical to prevent security incidents and to respond to pressing humanitarian needs of the local population. Unfortunately, the security

situation on the ground remains tense. Russia's continued military presence, holding recently large scale military drills "Kavkaz 2020" partly on Georgia's soil as well as other illegal acts in Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is in violation of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The EU once again underlines its deep concern about the continuing deterioration in the human rights situation in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The ongoing violations of the freedom of movement, including through the closure of the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) crossing points, severely impact the security, safety and well-being of the local population, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU would therefore welcome the opportunity for the GID participants to discuss ways for developing cooperation and to build confidence across the dividing lines, including to respond to the need of the population affected by the pandemic as too many lives have already been lost because of current restrictions.

The EU welcomes the resumption of the Ergneti IPRM on 30 July 2020 and urges the immediate and unconditional resumption of IPRM meetings in Gali to be held in line with the established rules. These mechanisms are vital in order to build trust and confidence among the people living on both sides of the ABL, thus contributing to a durable and sustainable solution of the conflict.

In conclusion, we reiterate our support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. We once again call on Russia to fulfill its obligations under the EU-mediated ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and its subsequent implementing measures of 8 September 2020.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the GEORGIA, ANDORRA, SAN MARINO and CANADA align themselves with this statement.

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