



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN GEORGIA

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
4 September 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first welcome the conclusions of the European Council just summarised by France on behalf of the EU, with which Norway largely concurs.

Turning to the urgent business at hand, Norway reiterates her firm support to the Finnish Chair in its determined efforts to achieve consensus on a mandate for the OSCE military observers. This will make it possible to deploy all 100 observers throughout Georgia, including to South Ossetia and adjacent areas, without any restrictions, as foreseen in the PC decision of 19 August. Unhindered access for the observers to South Ossetia is urgent and of great importance. We need international observers on the ground in order to provide reliable information on the situation, and to follow up the implementation of the ceasefire agreement. We call upon all parties involved to agree to such a mandate without further delay.

Our first priority must be the implementation of the ceasefire agreement. We call for the immediate withdrawal of all forces not yet withdrawn to the positions they were in before the outbreak of hostilities.

For the next stage, we agree with the Chairman-in-Office that the efforts towards a peaceful settlement in Abkhazia and South Ossetia *“must be re-tooled and re-energised”*, and that a new international platform is needed for this purpose. Norway believes that the OSCE has an important role to play in finding lasting solutions that can stabilise the situation. And let me once again reiterate that a long-term peaceful solution must be found which fully respects Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, within her internationally recognised borders.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway welcomes the European Union's determination to strengthen its engagement in Georgia, and we would appreciate a robust EU monitoring mission, which – together with and in close cooperation with the OSCE military observers – could constitute the international mechanism to be established. The speedy deployment of substantial contingents of additional international observers from the OSCE and the EU will contribute to establishing and monitoring the conditions required for effective humanitarian assistance to the civilian populations and to prepare for the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman