



PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN GEORGIA

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

Mr. Chairman,

Referring to the conclusions of the recent GAERC meeting just presented by France on behalf of the EU, Norway salutes the determined efforts deployed by the EU under the French Presidency to contribute to a ceasefire agreement, and subsequently to have this agreement implemented in good faith.

We also fully share the views, objectives and principles outlined in the GAERC conclusions concerning a more lasting, long-term solution to the conflict, which must fully respect Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

As an immediate priority, Norway joins the calls on Russia and all other parties involved to proceed with the speedy implementation of the six-point peace plan concluded by French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Russian President Medvedev on August 12. We strongly urge all the parties concerned to withdraw their forces to the positions that they held on August 7 by the October 1 deadline.

Norway would certainly appreciate a robust EU presence in Georgia. As we see it, monitors from the EU would, in co-operation with those from the OSCE, facilitate the withdrawal of forces and the return to the *status quo ante bellum*, and, in the longer perspective, to secure a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia.

Mr. Chairman,

We are extremely concerned by the situation of the suffering civilian populations, of which we also lack adequate knowledge. We call upon both Russia and Georgia to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians, and to facilitate full, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to those in need.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

I must express our deep regret over the failure to reach agreement on the modalities for the additional OSCE observers, notwithstanding the Finnish Chair's valiant efforts. As stated several times, we find it crucially important that the observers have unhindered access to the whole area, and not least South Ossetia, in order to observe the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, to get a true picture of the situation on the ground, and to contribute to secure unhindered access for much-needed humanitarian assistance to the suffering civilian populations.

It is a source of great disappointment and concern to us that, after a month of diligent and patient efforts, and considerable flexibility shown by some of the participants, it has still not been possible to find the necessary common ground to show that our organisation can act with due speed and efficiency, in deploying the additional observers already agreed upon.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman