



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN GEORGIA

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
30 October 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Like the previous speaker, we were somewhat puzzled when Russia in last week's meeting of the Permanent Council, and again today, suggested that the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia is failing to fulfil its mandate. Norway has in this forum repeatedly stated that we welcome a robust EU presence in Georgia, and it is our clear impression that the monitors are performing well and acting professionally, in full compliance with their mandate. We see no basis for questioning their capability or reliability, and are certain that their presence contributes to improving the stability in Georgia.

Mr. Chairman,

As I stated in our meeting two weeks ago, Norway welcomed the withdrawal of Russian forces from the areas adjacent to South Ossetia and Abkhazia, but we call on Russia to comply fully with her obligations under the six-point agreement of August 12 and the subsequent agreement negotiated by president Sarkozy and return all their forces to their August 7 positions.

Let me also take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to reiterate our firm conviction that the OSCE military monitors should enjoy free and unrestricted access to the whole of Georgia, including to South Ossetia and, notably, the Akhgori region. Such access is needed, inter alia, to provide us with reliable information on the situation for the civilian population, including those ethnic Georgians who still reside in South Ossetia, and to follow up the implementation of the ceasefire agreement.

Norway was pleased to announce at the Donors' Conference in Brussels on October 22 that we will contribute up to € 30 million in 2008-2010 to humanitarian assistance, reconstruction efforts and further reforms in Georgia. We would like to once again thank the European Commission and the World Bank for hosting the conference.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

We also hope that the international talks, when they resume in Geneva on November 18, will eventually help to ensure long-term stability and security in the region, and that a peaceful solution will be found which fully respects Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman