



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO THE EU SPECIAL
REPRESENTATIVE FOR CENTRAL ASIA AND FOR THE CRISIS IN
GEORGIA, AMBASSADOR PIERRE MOREL**

OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna
6 November 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Norway warmly welcomes Ambassador Pierre Morel to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his very useful and interesting report about recent developments regarding the conflict in Georgia, as well as main developments in the EU - Central-Asia relations.

With regard to the EU – Central-Asia relations, we have positively noted the prospective initiatives within the framework of the EU strategy for the region. We consider EU efforts and policies in the region as very much in line with Norwegian engagement and commitment for a strengthened cooperation with countries of Central Asia.

Central Asia is a region of great strategic importance. Assisting in ensuring security and stability as well as sustainable and predictable supply of energy from the region are important priorities which we share. In addition to strengthened bilateral contacts, the regional approach is instrumental in furthering economic and social development. We very much welcome news that the five countries recently agreed to an arrangement on the distribution of energy and water resources for the winter season.

Fundamental reforms, a comprehensive approach to border security and management as well as continued efforts in combating trafficking in drugs, weapons and human beings are all important areas where also Norway focuses her project activity. Increased coordination of international efforts in close cooperation with the countries themselves will maximize our engagement and thereby strengthen the common effort.

We also listened with keen interest to Ambassador Morel's remarks regarding Georgia and the preparations for the international discussions in Geneva that are scheduled to resume on November 18. Concerning the situation in Georgia, we would like to reiterate 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 have previously expressed our concern about the delay in the Geneva talks. The postponement of the talks for a whole month is clearly a considerable loss of time, not least for the affected populations. Nevertheless, we have taken some comfort from the agreement to resume the talks, and we expect all parties to participate in good faith. We also hope that the international talks, when they resume, will provide for the 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.

Let me also take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to reiterate our firm conviction that both the OSCE military monitors and the other OSCE institutions, notably the OSCE field mission in Georgia, the ODIHR and the High Commissioner on National Minorities, have important tasks to tend to, and should accordingly enjoy free and unrestricted access to the whole of Georgia, including to South Ossetia and, notably, the Akhalkalaki region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman