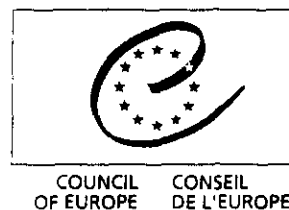


SECRETARIAT GENERAL

SECRETARIAT OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

SECRETARIAT DU COMITE DES MINISTRES



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České předsednictví
v Radě EU

Czech Presidency
of the Council of the EU

Présidence tchèque
du Conseil de l'UE

2009

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Secretary General's reports concerning the situation in the areas affected by the conflict in Georgia and further action by the Council of Europe

The European Union welcomes the report of the Secretary General on the human rights situation in the areas affected by the conflict in Georgia which completes the package of documents requested by the Committee of Ministers' Deputies at their 1048th meeting on 11 February 2009. The European Union takes note with satisfaction of the Secretary General's commitment to update this report on a quarterly basis, or even more frequently if the situation so requires. The report on the human rights situation provides the Committee of Ministers with a good basis for an assessment of the situation and decisions for Council of Europe activities to protect human rights. The three reports submitted (SG/Inf(2009)04, SG/Inf(2009)5 and SG/Inf(2009)7) constitute in their entirety a solid basis for further response from the Council of Europe in line with its core objectives.

The European Union reaffirms its conviction that the conflict in Georgia and its consequences call for a specific action by the Council of Europe in keeping with its fundamental role of promoting human rights, the rule of law and pluralist democracy, and with the values and commitments to which each of its member States has subscribed. In this respect, the European Union highly appreciates the engagement and the contribution of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights.

The European Union, while thanking the Secretary General for his specific proposals for Council of Europe's action to promote its values and standards in the post-conflict situation in Georgia and Russia, notes that additional financial resources may be needed to implement the necessary measures in this regard and that a decision by the Committee of Ministers on their unfreezing, in whole or in part, should be taken when appropriate.

As emphasized in the reports of the Secretary General, the lack of access to the areas affected by the conflict aggravates the human rights situation in the region. The European Union calls on all parties concerned to give free and unhindered access to international organizations to all war-affected areas. This issue requires its immediate resolution based on respect for human rights and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States. The European Union reiterates its commitment to give these matters its continuing attention.

The candidate countries **CROATIA, FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA** and **TURKEY**, countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates **ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA** and **MONTENEGRO**, along with the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area **ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN, NORWAY** as well as **AZERBAIJAN, MOLDOVA, SWITZERLAND** and **UKRAINE** align themselves with this declaration.

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