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**OSCE Permanent Council No 1210
Vienna, 20 December 2018**

**EU Statement on the 46th round of the Geneva International
Discussions**

1. The European Union reiterates its strong support for the Geneva International Discussions (GID), the latest round of which took place on 11-12 December. The GID remain a unique mechanism, engaging all stakeholders in addressing the challenges stemming from the conflict in Georgia.
2. The European Union is actively engaged in conflict resolution efforts through the EU Special Representative Toivo Klaar and his co-chairmanship of the GID, and through the work of the EU monitoring mission in Georgia.
3. We are pleased that the discussions at the 46th GID round took place in a business-like and respectful atmosphere, despite persisting divergences of views between participants. We commend the efforts of the co-chairs to reinvigorate the GID and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs), which are essential for confidence, predictability and transparency on the ground. The resumption of IPRM meetings in Ergneti on 18 December was a welcome step forward, breaking an impasse lasting since September. We appreciate the engagement of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship in this context and commend the work of the CiO's Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Rudolf Michalka, and his team. At the same time, we reiterate our deep concern about the absence for six months of IPRM meetings in Gali and we call for their swift resumption without any preconditions.



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4. The European Union welcomes the relatively calm and stable security situation on the ground, but notes with concern a worrying increase of Russian military exercises in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia continues to violate Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity through its illegal military presence, infrastructure reinforcements and further build-up in the breakaway regions. These trends run counter to the commitment taken to work toward peace and stability in Georgia. We regret that no tangible progress was made on the non-use of force issue. We encourage further efforts in this direction and continue to believe that a clear non-use of force statement by Russia is essential.
5. We commend the Co-Chairs' decision to organize an information session on women, peace and security, which focused on best practices from other conflict contexts, as per the UNSC resolution 1325. We believe that inclusive and meaningful participation of women is vital in all phases of peace building processes, including in Georgia and we strongly encourage further steps towards this within the Geneva International Discussions.
6. The European Union welcomes the discussion on humanitarian issues held in a relatively constructive atmosphere. While we take positive note of the announced intention by the Abkhaz de facto authorities to prolong the validity of existing documents (the so-called "form No. 9"), we strongly urge for a permanent solution to be found to this lingering problem, which negatively affects the ethnic Georgians in the Gali district.
7. We reiterate our deep concern about the ongoing restrictions on freedom of movement, including the continuing "borderization" process, illegal detentions and the negative impact of the closures of crossing points on the administrative boundary lines. Further attempts to push mother-tongue



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education out of Georgian schools keep infringing the fundamental rights of local residents. We renew our call on the Russian Federation and the de facto authorities to reverse these trends.

8. The European Union reiterates its concern about the continuing impunity surrounding the fatal incidents of Georgian citizens Messrs. Tatunashvili, Otkhozoria and Basharuli. We call for a thorough investigation into these and other cases and for justice to be ensured. We welcome the continuing work of the OSCE-commissioned independent expert Dusan Ignjatović supporting investigation on cases of missing persons.
9. We regret that once again the Russian, Abkhaz and South Ossetian participants walked out from the discussion under the key agenda item dedicated to the issue of IDPs and refugees. We call upon all participants to engage on all issues and refrain from walkouts, which contradict the commitments to the GID made by the participants concerned.
10. The European Union remains convinced that there is an urgent need for a meaningful cross-dimensional OSCE presence throughout Georgia. We reiterate our firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. The European Union calls on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and its subsequent implementing measures of 8 September 2008. The European Union also calls for access for the EUMM to the whole territory of Georgia, including the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as per its mandate, as well as for human rights monitoring mechanisms, humanitarian and other civil society organizations.



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11. The European Union looks forward to the next round of the Geneva International Discussions scheduled for 2-3 April 2019.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, the EFTA countries ICELAND, NORWAY and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as CANADA, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.