

Joint statement

at the meeting of the NATO-Georgia Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers in Berlin, Germany

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The NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC) at the level of Foreign Ministers met in Berlin today to discuss priorities for cooperation between Georgia and NATO.

NATO Ministers recalled the agreement of Heads of State and Government at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Georgia will become a member of NATO, and reaffirmed all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions.

NGC Ministers reaffirmed the central role of the NATO-Georgia Commission and the Annual National Programme (ANP) in supervising the process set in hand at the Bucharest Summit. In this context, they welcomed the opening of the NATO Liaison Office in Georgia, which will enhance NATO's assistance and support for Georgia's reform efforts.

NATO Ministers expressed strong appreciation for Georgia's substantial contribution to Euro-Atlantic security, including Georgia's efforts as the second largest non-NATO troop contributor nation to ISAF. They expressed their gratitude to all the Georgian servicemen who have served in ISAF, and extended their deepest sympathies to the families of those Georgian soldiers who lost their lives or were injured on this mission. NATO Ministers welcomed that Georgia is also committed to provide additional training assistance to Afghanistan, as well as support to Operation Active Endeavour.

NGC Ministers expressed their readiness to continue to develop practical cooperation, including on emerging security challenges, such as terrorism, and risks to cyber and energy security. They expressed their commitment to continue strengthening political dialogue at all levels of the NATO-Georgia relationship and viewed their meeting as a good opportunity to exchange views also on wider issues of common interest.

NATO Ministers welcomed the steady progress Georgia has shown in implementing its ANP. NATO Ministers welcomed the overall positive dynamic in Georgia's democratic development. At the same time, they noted that work remains to be done for the Georgian Government to adopt and implement necessary reforms, and to cooperate with the opposition on implementing democratic reforms. NATO Ministers stressed the importance of electoral reform in view of the upcoming parliamentary elections in 2012. They also encouraged Georgia to continue to strengthen the rule of law and the role of civil society, as well as continue to deepen reforms regarding the judiciary and the media.

NATO Ministers welcomed the National Security Review process under way in Georgia and looked forward to its timely completion by the end of 2011. Based on the Strategic Defence Review findings and the objectives of the ANP, they encouraged further reforms in the defence

and security sphere, assisted by the recently adopted Military Committee with Georgia Work Plan, the Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process, and the NATO Liaison Office in Tbilisi. NATO Ministers expressed their appreciation for Georgia's commitment to consult with Allies on key strategic and planning documents. NGC Ministers also welcomed the successful implementation and the expansion of the NATO-Georgia Professional Development Programme for Civilian Personnel of the Georgian Ministry of Defence and other Security Institutions. They also welcomed the start of the NATO Georgia Trust Fund III on Explosive Remnants of War Clearance and Medical Rehabilitation Support and encouraged further contributions to this project.

NGC Ministers expressed their strong support for the international process of negotiations in Geneva and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms. NATO Ministers encouraged all participants to these negotiations to play a constructive role, as well as to continue working closely with the OSCE, UN and the EU to pursue peaceful conflict resolution on Georgia's territory. NGC Ministers expressed their support for the work of the EUMM, and stressed the need for international monitors to have unimpeded access throughout all of Georgia, including the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia. NATO Ministers reaffirmed their strong support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders. They also reaffirmed their continued policy of non-recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia and recalled the decisions taken at the Lisbon Summit, notably the decision to continue to call on Russia to reverse its recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia as independent states.

Foreign Minister Vashadze reaffirmed Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, outlined the Georgian Government's efforts to deepen reforms under the Annual National Programme and reaffirmed its commitment to implement these reforms. He reiterated Georgia's concern over the Russian military build-up in the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia. He reaffirmed Georgia's commitment to peaceful conflict resolution; Georgia's pledge in line with international law not to use force; full implementation of obligations under the EU-mediated cease-fire agreement by Georgia; full cooperation with the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM); the implementation of the "State Strategy on the Occupied Territories" with its Action Plan and constructive participation in the Geneva talks.

NATO Ministers welcomed Georgia's pledge not to use force and Georgia's full compliance with the EU-mediated cease-fire agreement. While noting the withdrawal of the checkpoint in Perevi as a first step, NATO Ministers recalled the decisions taken at the Lisbon Summit, notably the decision to urge Russia to meet its commitments with respect to Georgia, as mediated by the European Union on 12 August and 8 September 2008¹. NATO Ministers welcomed the Georgian Government's engagement with the populations of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia and encouraged Georgia's further engagement with these regions.

NGC Ministers welcomed the meeting of the NGC at the Ambassadors' level to be held in Georgia in autumn 2011.

Ministers of the NATO-Georgia Commission extended their gratitude to Germany for its hospitality.

¹ As complemented by President Sarkozy's letter dated 16 August 2008 and subsequent correspondence on this issue.