



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**EU-GEORGIA COOPERATION COUNCIL
TENTH MEETING, LUXEMBOURG, 26 OCTOBER 2009
Press Release**

The Cooperation Council between the European Union (EU) and Georgia held its tenth meeting on Monday 26 October 2009. The meeting was chaired by Mr Grigol Vashadze, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. Mr Giorgi Baramidze, Vice Prime Minister of Georgia, State Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration also participated in the meeting. The EU delegation was led by Mr Carl Bildt, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden. Ms Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy represented the Commission and Mr Juan José Rubio de Urquía, Deputy Director General for Eastern European Affairs represented the incoming Spanish Presidency. The EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Peter Semneby also took part in the meeting.

The recent EU Foreign Ministers' Troika visit to Tbilisi (16-19 July 2009) marked the continuing high level political dialogue between the EU and Georgia.

P R E S S

During the Cooperation Council, the parties discussed the implementation of the EU-Georgia European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan and issues connected with enhancing of EU-Georgia relations, including prospects for the negotiation of a new EU-Georgia Association Agreement within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. The Cooperation Council noted Georgia's strong commitment to the implementation of the ENP Action Plan, welcomed the progress made in some areas and agreed on the need to focus the efforts on further implementation, as reflected in the ENP Action Plan implementation Progress Report by the Commission, published in April 2009.

The Cooperation Council also provided a timely opportunity to take stock of political developments in Georgia, as well as the advancement of political and economic reforms, in particular “the second wave of democratic reforms” announced in September 2008 by President Saakashvili.

The EU underlined the importance of sufficient progress in democracy, rule of law and human rights, which belong to important conditions for the deepening of bilateral cooperation between the EU and Georgia within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. The EU further stressed that fundamental freedoms, as well as freedom of expression and freedom of the media are essential elements in the bilateral dialogue with Georgia. It reaffirmed its willingness to continue its support for the further development of democratic institutions in Georgia, including in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership.

The Cooperation Council also took note of the positive results of the first meetings of the multilateral thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership, stressing the importance of a continuing positive attitude of all partners to this form of cooperation.

The Cooperation Council discussed the increased EU role in the conflict settlement, in particular through the continued presence on the ground of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM Georgia), the EU's role in the Geneva international discussions and the increased financial assistance pledged by the EU in the framework of the International Donors' Conference (October 2008) aimed at post-conflict rehabilitation, support of internally displaced persons and economic stability. The EU underlined its commitment to Georgia's security and stability, based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to a peaceful and lasting conflict resolution.

The plenary meeting of the Cooperation Council was preceded by a joint ministerial working breakfast between the EU and Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to discuss Eastern Partnership and prospects for deeper cooperation between the EU and the three South Caucasian countries, as well as Conflict Resolution. Mr Carl Bildt, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden represented the EU Presidency. He was accompanied by Mr Javier Solana, High Representative for CFSP, and by Mr Hugues Mingarelli, Deputy Director-General, Directorate General for External Relations, representing the Commission, as well as Mr Diego López Garrido, State Secretary for European Affairs, represented the incoming Spanish Presidency.
