



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the Presidential elections in Georgia on 5 January 2008**

The Presidential Elections on 5 January 2008 were an important test for democracy and stability in Georgia, particularly in the light of the recent political developments in the country.

The European Union congratulates the Georgian people for the peaceful conduct of the elections and notes the Statement of the Preliminary Findings and Conclusions of the International Elections Observation Mission which concludes that the elections were in essence consistent with most OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and standards for democratic elections. The EU also welcomes good cooperation of the Georgian authorities with OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission. However the European Union also notes that significant challenges were revealed which need to be addressed urgently.

The European Union urges Georgia to take all necessary steps to address the identified shortcomings in order to ensure successful Parliamentary elections later this year. In particular, Georgia needs to do more to reinforce the independence of state institutions in a political campaign environment and to strengthen the freedom and pluralism of the media, as well as the independence of the judiciary.

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The European Union looks forward to the final results of the presidential elections and calls on the competent authorities to ensure that all complaints are adequately and urgently addressed. Moreover, the EU urges all political forces to respect the election results and to engage constructively and democratically in order to ensure that Georgia continues moving forward. Dialogue between political forces is an essential part of this process. The European Union also reiterates its full commitment to strengthen relations with Georgia in the context of the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan.

"The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process."
