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**Statement by the spokesperson of HR Catherine Ashton
on the adoption of the Georgian Action Plan for Engagement
for Abkhazia and South Ossetia**

The spokesperson of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the Commission Catherine Ashton issued the following statement today:

"The High Representative welcomes the adoption of the "Action Plan for Engagement" by the Georgian government and is encouraged by the many constructive proposals in the Plan. It represents a significant step forward towards a policy of engagement with the populations living in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Reaching out to the populations is a prerequisite for finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The Action Plan should create a permissive and enabling environment, including for international organisations and non-governmental organisations active in conflict regions. The EU is ready to contribute to these efforts in line with its non-recognition and engagement policy and fully supports the approach based on confidence building and facilitation of people to people contacts as well as freedom of movement.

The EU reiterates its firm support for the security and stability of Georgia, based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognised by international law."

P R E S S

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