

Departamento de Seguridad Internacional y Defensa

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Chairman's statement

Meeting of the NATO-Georgia Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels

The NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC) at the level of Foreign Ministers met in Brussels today, for the first time, to discuss the security situation in the Euro-Atlantic region, the ongoing process of reform in Georgia and NATO's assistance to those reforms, and the further development of the NATO-Georgia partnership.

The NGC Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the NATO-Georgia relationship and their commitment to adding substance to that relationship. They expressed their approval of the rapid development of the NATO-Georgia Commission. They reviewed the progress of the NATO-Georgia relationship since the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, and welcomed the deepening political and practical cooperation between NATO and Georgia. They noted with satisfaction the successful visit of the North Atlantic Council to Georgia in September 2008, the first meeting of Defence Ministers in NGC format in October 2008, and the concrete NATO assistance provided to Georgia in a number of areas following the August conflict.

NATO Ministers recalled their statement of 19 August 2008 in which they reaffirmed the commitments undertaken in Bucharest, and expressed grave concern over the military conflict in Georgia and Russia's actions during the crisis. They also recalled the statement of the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session on 27 August 2008, in which the Council condemned Russia's recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia. NATO Ministers reaffirmed NATO Allies' support for Georgia's full independence,

sovereignty, and territorial integrity recognised by international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions. NATO Ministers called for the immediate and full implementation of the 12 August 2008 six-point plan and the 8 September 2008 agreement, as agreed by Presidents Saakashvili and Medvedev. Allied Ministers expressed their strong support for the international process of negotiations in Geneva, and urged all sides to engage constructively in those talks in the interest of promoting peace and security in the region.

NATO Ministers briefed their Georgian colleague regarding the decisions on Georgia and Ukraine taken during the North Atlantic Council meeting on 2-3 December 2008. In that meeting, NATO Ministers reaffirmed all elements of the decisions regarding Ukraine and Georgia taken by NATO Heads of State and Government in Bucharest. They noted that Georgia has made progress, yet has significant work left to do. Therefore, they decided to provide further assistance to Georgia in implementing needed reforms as it progresses towards NATO membership. Through a performance based process, NATO Ministers also agreed to maximise NATO's advice, assistance, and support for Georgia's reform efforts in the framework of the NATO-Georgia Commission, which has a central role to play in supervising the process set in hand at the Bucharest Summit. NATO Ministers also decided to reinforce the NATO Liaison Office in Tbilisi. Finally, without prejudice to further decisions which must be taken about MAP, they agreed that under the NATO-Georgia Commission, an Annual National Programme will be developed to advance Georgia's reforms, which will be annually reviewed by NATO Allies.

NATO Ministers expressed their continuing resolve to assist Georgia in its democratic development and the programme of reforms under the auspices of the NGC. They acknowledged Georgia's efforts to continue to improve elections, political pluralism, and judicial professionalism and independence. Noting the recent Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) assessment, they encouraged Georgia to continue pushing forward with deeper reforms, in particular in the areas of electoral reform, transparency and accountability in government, media freedom, and functioning of the rule of law. Allied Ministers stated that Georgia's continuing implementation of reform initiatives will be

watched closely by the Alliance, and stressed their commitment to assisting Georgia in its reforms.

NATO Ministers encouraged Georgia to continue reforms in the defence and security sphere, starting with a thorough lessons-learned process from the recent conflict, and then incorporating those lessons into the planned comprehensive review of security documents. They encouraged Georgia to continue its efforts to improve the system of personnel management within the military, transparency of the defence budget, and interoperability of its forces with those of NATO Allies. Allied Ministers expressed their appreciation for Georgia's contribution to NATO-led operations. As in other areas, Ministers expressed their commitment to assist Georgia in its defence reform efforts as it seeks to achieve NATO standards.

Foreign Minister Tkeshelashvili expressed Georgia's appreciation for the support and assistance rendered by NATO in the wake of the August conflict with Russia, and stressed Georgia's commitment to continuing reforms and pursuing its path to membership in NATO. The Minister stressed the commitment of the Government of Georgia to peaceful resolution of conflicts, to constructive participation in the international process of negotiations in Geneva, and to full implementation of the 6-point agreement of 12 August 2008, and the 8 September 2008 agreement. The Minister expressed Georgia's view that Russia is violating both the 12 August and 8 September agreements, and asked NATO countries for their assistance in ensuring full implementation of these agreements, including ensuring full access for international monitors to the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia. The Minister also reiterated Georgia's intention to participate fully and transparently in the EU-led inquiry into the August conflict. Finally, Foreign Minister Tkeshelashvili outlined renewed efforts by the Georgian Government to implement democratic reforms in order to move Georgia closer to its goal of Euro-Atlantic integration.

In closing, the Ministers of the NATO-Georgia Commission highlighted the importance of regular dialogue to reinforce practical cooperation, and committed themselves to making full use of the existing tools and mechanisms for NATO-Georgia cooperation, including the drafting of an Annual National Programme. The NGC Ministers agreed that the NATO-

Georgia relationship benefits Euro-Atlantic security and stability, and that they should continue their dialogue at all levels on an ongoing basis.