



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**MEMO**

Brussels, 26 November 2012

**Remarks by High Representative/Vice President Catherine Ashton at the end of her visit to Georgia**

"I am delighted to be visiting Georgia again, so soon after Georgia's historic parliamentary election and the first democratic transfer of power since Georgia's independence.

I congratulated both the President and the Prime Minister on this achievement. I urged them both to continue to use their offices and institutions to contribute constructively to Georgia's good governance.

I stressed that the European Union calls on all sides in Georgian politics to uphold European values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law. There should be no selective justice; no retribution against political rivals. Investigations into past wrongdoings must be, and must be seen to be, impartial, transparent and in compliance with due process.

I thanked both the Prime Minister and the President for their recent visit to Brussels. The continued high intensity of contacts between the EU and Georgia bears witness to the breadth and depth of our engagement.

I welcomed the continuity in Georgia's commitment to Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area negotiations. We continue to make rapid progress in these negotiations, and I am hopeful that we will conclude our negotiations in a relatively short time-frame. I also reiterated the EU's commitment to improving mobility between the EU and Georgia.

I paid tribute to Georgia's role in international security, and its contribution to international operations. I invited Georgia to begin negotiations with the EU on a Framework Agreement for Georgia's participation in EU crisis management operations.

I stressed to the President and the Prime Minister that the European Union is committed to Georgia's territorial integrity. We will continue to demonstrate this in a practical way through our role as co-chairs of the Geneva International Discussions and the work of our Monitoring Mission. I expressed the EU's support for Prime Minister Ivanishvili's government as it explores ways of engaging with Georgia's breakaway regions.

Finally, I warmly welcome Georgia's generous offer to host the next informal Eastern Partnership dialogue here in Tbilisi.

Thank you."