



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Remarks by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy following his meeting
with President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili**

It was my pleasure to welcome today again the President of Georgia, Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili. I welcomed the way the parliamentary elections were conducted in Georgia, and underlined the strong desire of the European Union to work effectively and intensively with both the Presidency and the new Government of Georgia on our broad shared agenda. I expressed my hope that the President would continue to work effectively with the government during their period of cohabitation. I also underlined the valuable role which can be played in Georgia's development by a constructive parliamentary opposition.

I reminded the President of the European Union's ongoing commitment to achieve political association and economic integration with Georgia, and more specifically our intention to complete as soon as possible the negotiations of the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area which you launched several years ago. I also spoke of our attachment to progress in the visa dialogue in which we are engaged, given the vital importance of improved people-to-people contacts between Georgians and European citizens. I recalled the importance that the EU attaches to the correct functioning of democratic institutions and the respect of the rule of law.

I reiterated the European Union's unwavering commitment to Georgia's territorial integrity. Through the Geneva International Discussions and the EU Monitoring Mission, the European Union acts as guarantor of Georgia's security. We take this responsibility very seriously, and at the same time we expect Georgia to play its own part.

Finally, both President Saakashvili and I agreed on the critical and positive role which Georgia can continue to play within the Eastern Partnership. I reiterated the long-term engagement of the European Union to support the reform process in Georgia, and our permanent commitment to dialogue with opposition and civil society representatives as well as the government.

P R E S S

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