



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Remarks by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy following his meeting
with Prime Minister of Georgia Bidzina Ivanishvili**

It was my pleasure to welcome today the new Prime Minister of Georgia, Mr Ivanishvili. I congratulated him on his appointment as Prime Minister, and expressed appreciation that he had chosen Brussels for his first official visit outside his country.

I underlined the firm commitment of the European Union to work closely and intensively with both his Government and with the President on our ambitious programme of co-operation within the Eastern Partnership. In this context, I underlined the importance of the Prime Minister and the President continuing to interact effectively during their period of cohabitation, bearing in mind their respective constitutional roles. I also underlined the valuable function which can be played in Georgia's development by a constructive parliamentary opposition, and by an active civil society.

I reminded the Prime Minister 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 an Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. We shared our hopes for progress in the visa dialogue in which we are engaged, a critical process given the vital importance of improved people-to-people contacts between Georgians and European Union citizens. I recalled also the importance that the EU attaches to the correct functioning of democratic institutions and the respect of rule of law.

Finally, 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 a guarantor of Georgia's security. We take this responsibility very seriously, and at the same time we expect Georgia to play its own part.

P R E S S

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