



Joint statement by the Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, MEP David McALLISTER, the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina KALJURAND, and the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Georgia, MEP Sven MIKSER

on the 13th anniversary of the Russian aggression against Georgia of August 2008

Brussels, 7 August 2021 – "Today marks the 13th anniversary of the Russian aggression of August 2008 against Georgia.

Despite the challenges posed by a difficult geopolitical situation, the citizens of Georgia are part of the pan-European family and they have chosen freely and overwhelmingly to follow the Euro-Atlantic integration path.

Unfortunately, the inhabitants of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region / South Ossetia can neither exercise their political and civil rights as Georgian citizens, nor benefit from the socio-economic development fostered by the Association Agreement with the EU, as they continue to suffer from the scourge of Russian occupation. Their suffering is further aggravated by the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We commend the Georgian authorities for their laudable readiness for dialogue, illustrated by the ambitious 'A Step to a Better Future' initiative aimed at facilitating trade, education and mobility for the citizens living on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Lines. We welcome the Government Commission recently launched by the office of the Prime Minister of Georgia to elaborate and implement the Georgian State Strategy for De-occupation and Peaceful Conflict Resolution.

We remain firmly committed to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, and we are determined to contribute to a peaceful resolution to the conflict, including through the full implementation of the EU-mediated ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008, the Geneva International Discussions, the activities of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and the efforts of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia. We call on the Russian Federation to fulfil its obligations under the ceasefire agreement.

Furthermore, we call on the Russian Federation, as the country exercising de facto control over Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region / South Ossetia (as highlighted by the European Court of Human Rights in its ruling of 21 January 2021 on the inter-State case of Georgia vs. Russia II), to grant the EUMM unhindered access to both occupied regions, to revert the rampant 'borderisation' process, to put an end to systematic human rights violations – in particular those committed on grounds of ethnicity, to see that the perpetrators of such violations are brought to justice, and to allow for the safe and dignified return of the internally displaced persons to their ancestral lands."

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