

PC.DEL/572/08
3 July 2008

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR EBERHARD POHL,
DEPUTY POLITICAL DIRECTOR OF THE GERMAN FEDERAL
FOREIGN OFFICE, AT WORKING SESSION III OF THE OSCE
ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Vienna, 1 and 2 July 2008

We value the OSCE as a platform for political dialogue, in which dialogue on security policy issues plays a special role. The Organization's participating States have — in the form of the existing OSCE acquis — created the most comprehensive, best articulated and most tried and tested set of confidence- and security-building measures and arms control tools in the world. These tools include a range of specific instruments and mechanisms in the areas of early warning, conflict prevention and conflict resolution, which fortunately seldom need to be used but of whose importance and usefulness we must always be aware.

Precisely the most recent cases that triggered the mechanism for consultation and co-operation as regards unusual military activities under Chapter III of the Vienna Document 1999 make it clear that through its available mechanisms our Organization is able to respond quickly to crises and bring the parties together in dialogue. In addition to the aforementioned opportunities for confidence and security building in line with the Vienna Document 1999, we might also mention early warning and conflict mediation mechanisms and, not least, the security dialogue within the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

The available mechanisms should be used in a timely and coherent manner. Some of them have to date been used only rarely or never at all. We are therefore proposing that the review started at the end of last year to determine which of these mechanisms are still relevant and which may be in need of updating be continued without delay. Naturally, this review might also look into the question as to what lessons can be learnt from the way in which OSCE mechanisms have up to now been applied in specific conflict situations. This is a task that we should take up as soon as possible and one that will require much care. In the run-up to our meeting, the Conflict Prevention Centre distributed an excellent summary covering all the existing mechanisms along with a compendium, which provide a good basis for a review of this kind.

We should continue to expand and make intensive use of the opportunities afforded by the OSCE in the areas of early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management, in addition to which we should press for close co-operation between the OSCE and other international players. At the same time, the OSCE requires our political support if it is to continue to be an effective actor.

The Programme for the Economic Rehabilitation of South Ossetia/Georgia is a good example of a confidence-building measure and could serve as a model for the region. Experience, however, shows that this kind of programme in such a sensitive environment requires massive support at the political level as well. We call on the parties to the conflict to support the programme in a constructive way and to quickly find solutions to the problems that may arise. We emphasize the urgent need to implement the decision calling for the number of observers with the OSCE mission in South Ossetia to be increased. We condemn the violent incident of 15 June 2008, in which OSCE personnel also came under fire.

As regards the situation in Abkhazia/Georgia, we expressly support the role played by the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) in monitoring the ceasefire in Abkhazia. We also welcome the speedy submission of the UNOMIG investigative report regarding the downing of the drone on 20 April 2008. This subject has been discussed in detail in the various bodies of the OSCE. The comprehensive application for the first time of all three levels of the conflict prevention mechanism provided for in Chapter III of the Vienna Document has demonstrated the OSCE's ability to respond quickly to crises and to bring about dialogue between the parties to the conflict. The specific proposals made in the course of the discussion deserve further consideration.

The role of the United Nations in the search for a peaceful settlement of the Abkhaz conflict is a central one. As co-ordinator of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Georgia, we actively support the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the search for a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the conflict. We see a high political priority in this endeavour. At the same time, it will be important to pay increased attention to the humanitarian, social and economic aspects of the conflict. Here we are open to suggestions as to how the OSCE also can contribute to confidence building and a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The European Union too can play a greater role in conflict resolution, in particular as regards confidence-building measures.