

N.A.T.O.

Joint Statement

Meeting of the NATO-Georgia Commission at the level of Ambassadors, with the participation of the Prime Minister of Georgia

On the occasion of the North Atlantic Council's visit to Georgia:

1. The NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC) at Ambassadorial level met in Tbilisi today with the participation of the Georgian Prime Minister. In addition to the meeting of the NGC, the North Atlantic Council will meet with President Saakashvili and members of the Georgian Government. There will also be meetings with representatives of the Georgian Parliament, representatives of political parties, and members of the Georgian civil society. The official visit of the North Atlantic Council to Georgia is an opportunity for Allied Ambassadors to assess and acknowledge the progress in the wide-ranging reform agenda that Georgia has achieved since the Council's last visit in 2008, when the NGC was inaugurated. It is also a chance to discuss priorities for enhancing cooperation between Georgia and NATO in support of Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration goals. In this context, Allied Ambassadors, together with the Georgian Prime Minister, recalled the Berlin meeting of the NGC at the level of Foreign Ministers and the joint statement released after that meeting. They also commended the work of the NATO Liaison Office in maximising Allies' support to Georgia's reform efforts.

2. Allied Ambassadors, together with the Prime Minister of Georgia, reaffirmed the central role of the NGC and the Annual National Programme (ANP) in supervising the process set in hand at the Bucharest Summit.

3. As set out in their assessment of Georgia's implementation of its Annual National Programme in 2011, Allied Ambassadors welcomed the concrete achievements in Georgia's democratic reform process. They stressed the importance of maintaining the momentum in electoral reform and upholding democratic principles to ensure free, fair and inclusive elections. They encouraged Georgia to continue to strengthen the rule of law and the role of the civil society and media, as well as to deepen reforms regarding the judiciary and the right of assembly; they also commended the progress that has been achieved in the fight against corruption and encouraged Georgia to keep it a high priority. The Georgian Government agreed these should be priorities for the Annual National Programme in 2012.

4. Allied Ambassadors expressed strong appreciation for Georgia's substantial contribution to Euro-Atlantic security, including Georgia's efforts as the second largest non-NATO troop contributor nation to ISAF, and they welcomed Georgia's commitment to further contributions to the operation in Afghanistan. Allied Ambassadors also welcomed the training assistance Georgia provides to Afghanistan, as well as support to Operation Active Endeavour.

5. The NGC welcomed the deepening NATO-Georgia cooperation in the defence and security fields.

6. Allied Ambassadors recalled the agreement of Heads of State and Government at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Georgia will become a member of NATO, and reaffirmed all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions.

7. The NGC expressed its strong support for the international process of negotiations in Geneva and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms.

NATO Ambassadors encouraged all participants to these negotiations to play a constructive role, as well as to continue working closely with the OSCE, UN and the EU to pursue peaceful conflict resolution on Georgia's territory. The NGC expressed its support for the work of the European Union Monitoring Mission, and stressed the need for international monitors to have unimpeded access throughout all of Georgia, including the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia. NATO Ambassadors reaffirmed their strong support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders. They also reaffirmed their continued policy of non-recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia and recalled the decisions taken at the Lisbon Summit, notably the decision to continue to call on Russia to reverse its recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia as independent states.

8. NATO Ambassadors welcomed Georgia's pledge not to use force and Georgia's full compliance with the EU-mediated cease-fire agreement. NATO Ambassadors recalled the decisions taken at the Lisbon Summit, notably the decision to urge Russia to meet its commitments with respect to Georgia, as mediated by the European Union on 12 August and 8 September 2008. NATO Ambassadors welcomed the Georgian Government's engagement policy with the populations of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia and encouraged Georgia's further engagement with the population of these regions.

9. The NGC also discussed concrete measures to enhance Georgia's relations with NATO and agreed to pursue further work to:

Broaden and deepen the political dialogue and practical cooperation within the NGC to cover wider issues of common interest, including on regional cooperation, and on emerging security challenges, such as the fight against terrorism, and risks to cyber and energy security;

Provide support to Georgia's participation in ISAF;

Increase interoperability in military cooperation, crisis management and civil emergency planning;

Enhance cooperation on education and training, including through supporting the National Defence Academy of Georgia;

Strengthen the role of the Professional Development Programme in supporting the implementation of civil service reform and strengthening capacity for civil democratic oversight of the defence and security sector in Georgia;

Underpin Georgia's efforts at building a vibrant democratic society, including through a more structured engagement with the civil society of Georgia;

Issues related to the democratic development in Georgia, the conflict resolution process, Georgia's engagement strategy, as well as Georgia's contributions to Euro-Atlantic security will be subjects of NGC discussions, also at Ambassadorial level, in 2012.

10.To support this effort, Allied Ambassadors committed themselves to further strengthening the NATO Liaison Office in Georgia. They also committed to work towards completing the NATO Georgia Trust Fund III on Explosive Remnants of War Clearance and Medical Rehabilitation Support through seeking further contributions to this project.

11.Allied Ambassadors extended their gratitude to Georgia for its hospitality.

1. As complemented by President Sarkozy's letter dated 16 August 2008 and subsequent correspondence on this issue.