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The consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 1846 (2008)

Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully followed the successive debates that the Parliamentary Assembly has had on the consequences of the August 2008 conflict in Georgia. In addition to the information already communicated to the Assembly at each of its sessions by the successive chairs of the Committee of Ministers, it would like to provide the following elements in response to [Recommendation 1846 \(2008\)](#) of the Assembly.

As to [recommendations 3.1 and 3.2](#) of the Assembly

2. The Committee recalls that it acted swiftly after the conflict, through a visit in Georgia by the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers in office at that time and the Secretary General as early as 11 August 2008. At the instigation of the Swedish Chair of the Committee of Ministers, an informal meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Council of Europe member states was held in New York on 24 September 2008. This meeting provided an opportunity to review the situation and to consider steps to be taken to restore respect for Council of Europe values and standards. The Ministers concluded, *inter alia*, that the conflict required a distinctive response from the Committee of Ministers, in line with the Council of Europe's core objective.

3. A draft action plan for the promotion of the Council of Europe values and standards was subsequently tabled on 14 October 2008 by the Swedish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers.

4. However, the Ministers' Deputies did not adopt the draft action plan but agreed a number of measures to restore human rights and the rule of law and to help the victims of the conflict. Notable examples of these measures included organising human rights training for members of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia, launching projects to provide counselling for children traumatised by the conflict and to develop inter-community relations at local level. Meetings were also organised between representatives of civil society from Georgia and the Russian Federation to promote dialogue and encourage initiatives designed to overcome the consequences of the conflict and projects to foster dialogue and co-operation through activities in the cultural sphere. The Committee of Ministers also decided to lend its full support to the efforts being made by the Commissioner for Human Rights.

5. In order to monitor developments as closely as possible, the question of the consequences of the conflict in Georgia has been on the agenda of every meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. On 11 February 2009, the Deputies asked the Secretary General to submit two reports: firstly a regular report on the human rights situation in the areas affected by the conflict, and secondly a report on the initiatives carried out, under way or planned within the Council of Europe to address the consequences of the conflict between Georgia and the Russian Federation, including information on the findings of the various monitoring mechanisms of the Council of Europe.

6. On the basis of the 11 February decisions, the Secretary General started reporting on a regular basis, using all available sources of information, in order to provide the Committee of Ministers with a basis for the evaluation of the situation and subsequent decisions on the follow-up action.

1. adopted at the 1070th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (18 November 2009)



7. At its 119th Session in Madrid on 12 May 2009, the Committee of Ministers was provided by the outgoing chair with an information note on Council of Europe action in response to the conflict in Georgia (CM/Inf(2009)25). In Madrid, the Committee of Ministers took note of the Secretary General's reports on "The situation in the areas affected by the conflict in Georgia and further action by the Council of Europe" (SG/Inf(2009)7) and on "The activities for the promotion of Council of Europe values and standards" (SG/Inf(2009)5). It reiterated its concern regarding the human rights protection and humanitarian situation of all persons affected by the conflict in Georgia. It reaffirmed its active support to the activities of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and to the full implementation of his six-point action plan, and called on all those concerned to facilitate and grant access by the Council of Europe and the international community to all persons affected by the conflict and in need of human rights protection. Underlining the importance of restoring democracy, human rights and the rule of law in all areas affected by the conflict, in line with the Council of Europe values and standards, it invited the Secretary General to submit projects for further activities to this end.

8. Following the Ministerial Session, the Secretary General issued the next report on "The activities for the promotion of Council of Europe values and standards" (SG/Inf(2009)5 add) on 26 June 2009 and the Ministers' Deputies decided to release additional financial means for action by the Commissioner for Human Rights on the ground, as well as for the implementation of activities in the fields of culture and cultural heritage. On 30 June 2009, the Secretary General issued the second report on "The human rights situation in the areas affected by the conflict in Georgia" (SG/Inf(2009)9).

9. At their meeting of 10 June 2009, the Ministers' Deputies endorsed the schedule for the presentation of reports envisaged by the 11 February decision of the Deputies, presented by the Secretary General (SG/Inf(2009)10) at the request of the Deputies.

10. A review of action taken by the Council of Europe following the conflict in Georgia would be carried out at the meeting for the handover of the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers on 18 November 2009.

As to [recommendation 3.3](#) of the Assembly

11. The Assembly will be informed of any follow-up which the Committee of Ministers may consider giving to this recommendation in the context of the response which the Committee will provide to Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1871 \(2009\)](#) entitled "Ban on cluster munitions".