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Parliamentary questions to the Chairperson-in-office of the Committee of Ministers

Parliamentary questions

1. Question from Mr Minashvili (Georgia, ALDE)

Mr Minashvili asks the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, what concrete actions the Committee of Ministers' has taken to address consequences of the war between the Russian Federation and Georgia and how does the Slovenian Chairmanship see a prospect for the promotion of Council of Europe values and standards in the Russian Federation and Georgia.

Reply by Mr Samuel Žbogar, on behalf of the Committee of Ministers:

I would like to recall that the Committee of Ministers 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. This was followed by an informal meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Council of Europe member states in New York on 24 September 2008, which provided an opportunity to review the situation and to consider steps to be taken to restore respect for Council of Europe values and standards.

Subsequently, the Committee of Ministers agreed a number of measures to restore human rights and the rule of law and to help the victims of the conflict. Notably the organisation of human rights training for members of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia and the launch of projects to provide counselling for children traumatised by the conflict and to promote dialogue and inter-community relations at local level.

The question of the consequences of the conflict in Georgia has been on the agenda of every meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. In 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, including information on the findings of the various monitoring mechanisms of the Organisation.

At its Session in Madrid on 12 May 2009, the Committee of Ministers reiterated its concern regarding the human rights protection and humanitarian situation of all persons affected by the conflict. 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. It 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.

The Committee invited the Secretary General to submit projects for further activities with a view to restoring democracy, human rights and the rule of law in all areas affected by the conflict.

Following the Ministerial Session, the Ministers' Deputies have 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.

The Slovenian Chairmanship attaches great importance to the continued action of the Council of Europe to address the consequences of the conflict in Georgia. A review of this action will be carried out at the meeting for the handover of the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers on 18 November 2009.

