

**STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF THE SOVEREIGNTY AND
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF GEORGIA**

As delivered by Ambassador Ellen Svendsen at the Permanent Council, Vienna, 18
September 2025

Mr. Chair,

The aligning countries of Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America are resolute in reaffirming Georgia's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Seventeen years after the war of 2008, Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia remain under Russian occupation. The UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act are clear: sovereign rights, political independence, and territorial integrity must be respected, and borders cannot be changed by force.

We call on the Russian Federation to fully implement the 12 August 2008 Six-Point Agreement and its subsequent implementing measures of 8 September 2008, to withdraw its forces to pre-conflict positions, and to reverse its recognition of the so-called independence of Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

We condemn Russia's military aggression against Georgia in 2008 and reiterate our concern over its continued military presence on Georgian territory, the use of hybrid tactics, and the ongoing 'borderization' along the administrative boundary lines. We continue to deplore the restrictions on freedom of movement, access to education, and the enjoyment of residence and property rights for ethnic Georgians in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

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We continue to support the Geneva International Discussions, which serve as the only format for addressing the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and for advancing a peaceful resolution to the conflict. We also underline the important role of the European Union Monitoring Mission, whose presence contributes to stability on the ground.

We encourage the OSCE and the wider international community to remain actively engaged in efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Georgia and the Russian Federation concerning the occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Finally, we highlight the significance of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms in Ergneti and Gali. Their continued functioning in line with established ground rules is vital to prevent escalation. The immediate resumption of the Gali mechanism, without preconditions, is both necessary and overdue.

I thank you.