

Georgia

Since the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, the EU, OSCE and UN have all been active in efforts to maintain stability and find political solutions to the disputes over Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This is in spite of the fact that the OSCE and UN missions in Georgia both closed down in 2009 due to differences between Russia and Western powers over the status of the two secessionist regions. The EU maintains a monitoring mission (EUMM) at the invitation of the Georgian government, but this is not able to operate in Abkhazia or South Ossetia.

Two EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) have also been involved in post-war politics. The former EUSR to the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby, had been in office before the war, supported by a small team of police and civilian experts in Georgia. He was replaced in August 2011 by Philippe Lefort, who also doubles as the EUSR for the Crisis in Georgia, replacing Pierre Morel.

Morel and co-chairs from the UN and OSCE oversee efforts to mediate the Georgian conflict in the context of the Geneva Discussions, launched in the wake of the 2008 Russo-Georgian war. The talks bring together representatives of Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia (before the war, the Abkhaz and Ossetian questions had been treated separately). The 16th round of the Geneva Discussions was held on 6-7 June 2011. The discussions have made only limited progress in addressing both political issues and humanitarian concerns.

An earlier round of the Geneva Discussions resulted in a 2009 agreement to set up two Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM), meant to reduce tensions on the frontlines within Georgia. The two mechanisms fall under different auspices: the Gali Mechanism for Abkhazia is supervised by the UN chairmanship in the regional UNHCR office, while the Ergneti Mechanism for South Ossetia is facilitated by the EU and the OSCE.

Some progress has been made in the context of these mechanisms. The Gali IPRM recently agreed regulations for patrol behavior on the Abkhazia-Georgia line of separation. Apart from the established mechanisms for discussion, the OSCE continues to promote confidence-building measures between parties, such as carrying out water supply related projects on Georgian and South Ossetian-held territory. Nonetheless, the fundamental political differences between the parties to the conflict are very unlikely to dissipate soon.