

**Brussels, 14 October 2008  
Press Speaking points**

**José Manuel BARROSO  
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**Following his meeting with Mikhaïl SAKASHVILI  
President of Georgia**

I had a useful exchange with President Saakashvili. This comes right after the Council meeting yesterday in Luxemburg, and ahead of important appointments for Georgia, starting with the European Council from tomorrow here in Brussels, but also the launch of international talks in Geneva on security and stability in the region and, next week in Brussels, the International Donors conference hosted by the European Commission.

I reiterated to President Saakashvili our strong political, financial and practical support to his country in this very difficult juncture.

We reviewed the situation in Georgia and in the region, as well as the progress achieved in the implementation of the six-point ceasefire agreement.

The EU contributed decisively to stop the hostilities in August, and an EU observer mission has been deployed, which has verified the withdrawal of Russian forces from the buffer zones around Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The return of displaced people remains an urgent priority. The Commission will contribute to addressing this challenge within the scope of the Geneva talks.

All parties must ensure the full respect of international humanitarian law.

We are also working hard to support the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts, to help displaced people and to bring stability.

Among these efforts, the Commission is preparing this International Donors' conference on 22 October here in Brussels. I will be present at the opening of that conference.

We will make available up to €500 million from EU, taking into consideration the situation on the ground, and we hope to mobilize a critical mass of funds from other international donors in order to assist the economic recovery of Georgia.

Our aid will contribute to alleviate the dire humanitarian situation of thousands of internally displaced persons, which face the prospect of spending the winter in tents. It will also help the Georgian economy to go back to sustained level of growth.

We are also preparing to start negotiations on important aspects of the ENP Action Plan, such as Visa Facilitation and Readmission agreements and a Free Trade Agreement. We have discussed this with President Saakashvili, we both agree that this is indeed in the long term the most important issue.

Indeed we are willing to support the implementation of democratic and market reforms in Georgia, as we do in other countries in the region.

I want to welcome, President Saakashvili, your recent speeches at the Georgian Parliament and also at the UN General Assembly and your renewed commitment for introducing a more effective and participative democracy in Georgia.

I sincerely look forward to seeing these proposals translate soon into concrete developments.

I really believe that we can work together for a better future for Georgia and for improving and deepening the relations between the EU and Georgia.