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Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the Presidential Election and Referendum in Abkhazia

The European Union regrets that the authorities in Abkhazia, Georgia held so-called Presidential Elections on 3 October together with a referendum on the Constitution of Abkhazia. The elections were described as unacceptable and illegitimate in UN Security Council Resolution 1255 of 29 July 1999. The European Union considers the elections and the referendum null and void and the holding of them detrimental to the efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict within the Geneva process.

Simultaneously the EU wants to reiterate the necessity of finding a definitive and just solution to the Abkhazian problem by political negotiations. The solution should show respect for the territorial integrity of Georgia and the necessity of granting maximum autonomy for Abkhazia which would permit the Abkhazians to express their identity within Georgia.

It must be underlined that it is equally essential to ensure a safe return for the refugees.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.