

ALDE background notes:



THE EU AND GEORGIA [\[FR\]](#)

Since Bulgaria's accession in 2007, only the Black Sea separates the European Union from Georgia. That country, situated in a strategic region for oil supplies, is the site of two frozen conflicts in South Caucasus: the first concerns the separatist region of Abkhazia and the second that of South Ossetia.

I. Relations between the European Union and Georgia

Between 1992 and 2004 the European Union was the **second-largest donor** of financial aid to Georgia, after the United States. It set up programmes for the rehabilitation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and also intervened in energy questions: the BTC (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline (of which Nabucco is the extension) both cross Georgia. Since 1999 relations between the Union and Georgia have been governed by a **Partnership and Cooperation Agreement**, the main purpose of which is to ensure respect for democracy and human rights.

The Rose Revolution

Following the 'Rose Revolution' of 2003, the European Union strengthened its presence in Georgia by setting up the '**EUJUST Themis**' operation. That mission, created under the aegis of the ESDP, was given a one-year mandate to promote the rule of law in Georgia. Made up of ten experts, its activities focus on reform of the Georgian criminal justice system.

Furthermore, in July 2003 the Union created the office of **European Union Special Representative** (EUSR) in South Caucasus, which is currently held by the Swedish Ambassador Peter Semneby, in order to give Europe a more pro-active role in the three South Caucasus countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The head office was symbolically sited at Tbilisi in Georgia, as a sign that the EUSR devotes special attention to that country. Following the departure of the EUJUST Themis mission and the parallel OSCE mission, the EUSR's responsibilities were widened to include implementation of the reforms initiated by the European mission, and border surveillance. To that end, it is assisted by a border support team.

Since June 2004 Georgia has participated in the **European Neighbourhood Policy**, which aims to promote 'close relations between the EU and its partners with a view to establishing an area of stability, prosperity and security'.



The 2008 crisis between Russia and Georgia

Following the crisis that broke out between Russia and Georgia on 8 August 2008, the EU, through the French Presidency, played a key role in **negotiating the ceasefire**.

Thereupon a new operation under the aegis of the ESDP, the **European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM)**, was deployed in Georgia, with a mandate that is due to expire on 14 September 2010. Data on the EUMM:

- 320 people
- budget of EUR 49.6 million
- 26 participating Member States
- 3 offices in South Ossetia
- 1 office in Abkhazia
- 15 days' preparation prior to actual presence (the most rapid deployment of any EU mission).

The EUMM, which follows in the direct line of the ESDP objectives, combines a civilian with a military approach to crisis management by multinational teams. The mission's main objectives are to contribute to restoring the rule of law and confidence by re-establishing contact between the parties. To that end, information gathering plays a key role, as shown by the Tagliavini report.

The European Union has also created an **EUSR** post specifically concerned with the crisis in Georgia. It is held by the Frenchman Pierre Morel whose role is to monitor compliance with the ceasefire undertakings and provide a permanent secretariat for the international discussions in Geneva. Here the European Union plays the role of neutral conciliator.

II. ALDE

In 2006, returning from a visit to Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, **Graham Watson**, former Chairman of ALDE and still a Group member, declared: 'Liberals and Democrats worked hard to have the countries of the southern Caucasus included in the EU's new Neighbourhood Policy. Not only will they shortly be near neighbours across the Black Sea, but they occupy a strategically important corner of Europe between Russia and Iran. The EU must work to help give them fully-fledged democracies and market economies.'

In 2008, following the adoption of a report on a more effective European policy in South Caucasus, **Lydie Polfer (Luxembourg, PD)**, then a member of ALDE and rapporteur for Parliament, commented: 'The EU must step up its efforts to support the South Caucasus countries in their efforts to consolidate democracy, in their economic reforms and in their efforts to strengthen their respect for the rule of law and human rights. As my report states, the three countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, have all made great progress in these areas but more needs to be done. The EU Neighbourhood Policy is our main instrument in assisting these countries in their quest for further development.'

For further information:



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