



Security Council

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Letter dated 22 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the situation concerning the Georgian Autonomous Republic of Adjara issued on 17 March 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Richard **Ryan**
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

Annex to the letter dated 22 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the situation concerning the Georgian Autonomous Republic of Adjara issued on 17 March 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union is closely monitoring the situation in Georgia, particularly concerning the Georgian Autonomous Republic of Adjara.

The European Union reaffirms its attachment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. The European Union calls on all sides to refrain from any further escalation which could result in violence. It urges both the central government in Tbilisi and the authorities in Batumi to re-establish dialogue at the highest level with a view to finding a peaceful solution acceptable to all and in the interest of Georgia. The European Union is ready to contribute to such a settlement together with the other international organizations and key players in the region.

The EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Heikki Talvitie, flew to Tbilisi yesterday, Tuesday 16 March 2004. He had meetings there to discuss the situation with President Saakashvili, as well as with the Adjara representative in Tbilisi. Today he flew to Poti where he has met with Prime Minister Zhvania and other officials. The EU Special Representative is keeping the Council fully informed of latest developments.

The European Union supports and values today's visit to Batumi of Mrs. Nino Burjanadze, Speaker of the Georgian Parliament. This should pave the way for a visit of President Saakashvili to Batumi as soon as possible. Such a visit by President Saakashvili should in turn serve to create conditions for holding free and fair parliamentary elections in Adjara, as in the rest of Georgia, on 28 March.

The European Union urges the authorities of the Georgian Autonomous Republic of Adjara to respect human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, and to allow for orderly preparations for free and fair parliamentary elections.

The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia align themselves with this statement.