

Press Release

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Georgia-Russia conflict: statement by PACE President

Strasbourg, 08.09.2008 – “A first parliamentary debate on the conflict between Georgia and Russia took place during the meeting of the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Paris on 5 September. This meeting was exceptional in that it was attended by the representatives of Russia and Georgia, and in particular the heads of the two parliamentary delegations.

The parliamentarians discussed the causes of the conflict, analysed the current situation and considered what role can be played by the Council of Europe, a European organisation of which both Russia and Georgia are full members.

I am very satisfied with how the meeting went. It showed that the parliamentarians of both countries have diametrically opposed views on the events that took place in August and the current situation in Georgia. The discussion of the issues was very frank, but conducted in a very proper way, and generally constructive.

Put an end to this tragedy. Stop the violence once and for all. Bring peace back to Georgia and provide the country with the necessary humanitarian assistance. Stabilise the whole of the Caucasus and ensure the rule of law and respect for human rights, democracy and international law in that region. These are some of the conclusions I drew from the debate.

Both parties recognised that the Council of Europe, and in particular the Parliamentary Assembly, can play an outstanding role in implementing these conclusions. The Bureau of the Assembly has therefore decided to send a [fact-finding mission](#) to Tbilisi and Moscow to try to establish the facts and gain a clearer idea of each party's responsibility. The Assembly will hold a plenary debate in Strasbourg at the end of September on the basis of the mission report and its findings.

The PACE will not remain silent in the face of the violations of human rights and international law which have occurred in Georgia and will take the appropriate decisions in due course. At the same time, the Assembly will be unstinting in its efforts to promote a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict, even if that appears very difficult today”, said Lluís Maria de Puig, President of the PACE.

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: Lluís Maria de Puig (Spain, SOC) ; Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); SOC (Socialist Group); EDG (European Democratic Group); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).