

Press Release

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Georgia: Commissioner Hammarberg facilitates further releases and exchanges of detainees and hostages

Strasbourg, 29.09.2008 - At the end of a four-day mission to Georgia including South Ossetia the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, stated that he was satisfied that important progress had been made on the release and exchange of persons who had been deprived of their liberty on each side. "Progress is also made on identifying the dead bodies exchanged and recently found thereby reducing the number of cases of missing persons whose fate are unknown" he said.

The Commissioner offered his good offices to both sides on these problems and achieved important agreements the result of which will be known within the coming weeks. He expressed his gratitude for the constructive responses from the parliamentarian Givi Targamadze in Tbilisi and ombudsman David Sanakoev in Tskhinvali.

'The progress achieved demonstrates that humanitarian issues can be resolved also in extremely complex political situations', the Commissioner concluded.

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The Commissioner for Human Rights is an independent, non-judicial institution within the Council of Europe, mandated to promote awareness of, and respect for, human rights in the 47 member States of the Organisation. Elected by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the present Commissioner, Mr Thomas Hammarberg, took up his function on 1 April 2006.

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