

Press Release

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PACE calls for independent international investigation into the war between Georgia and Russia

Strasbourg, 02.10.2008 – Since the facts surrounding the outbreak of war between Georgia and Russia are disputed, there should be an independent international investigation into what happened, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) said today after debating the consequences of the war.

In a resolution, the Assembly declared that both Georgia and Russia had violated Council of Europe principles and values, and their commitment to settle conflicts by peaceful means. Both sides were responsible for violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

The parliamentarians pointed to "a disproportionate use of armed force by Georgia" and said the Russian counter-attack "equally failed to respect the principle of proportionality". The use of indiscriminate force and weapons in civilian areas by troops of both sides "can be considered war crimes", they added.

The Assembly also called on Russia to withdraw its recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and to allow EU and OSCE monitors to have access to both territories. It said these, as well as full implementation of the EU-brokered ceasefire agreement, were "minimum conditions" for a meaningful dialogue.

The parliamentarians also expressed concern at "credible reports of acts of ethnic cleansing committed in ethnic Georgian villages in South Ossetia and the 'buffer zone' by irregular militia and gangs which the Russian troops failed to stop".

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).