

Press Release

Parliamentary Assembly – Communication Unit

Ref: 267a09

Tel. +33 (0)3 88 41 31 93

Fax +33 (0)3 90 21 41 34

Internet: <http://assembly.coe.int>

e-mail: pace.com@coe.int



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Georgia-Russia: PACE President welcomes the dialogue instituted between the parliamentary delegations of the two countries

Strasbourg, 30.03.2009 – At the close of a meeting of the Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Valencia (Spain) today, its President, Lluís Maria de Puig, welcomed the dialogue that had been instituted between the Georgian and Russian delegations. "Today we have succeeded in bringing representatives of the Georgian and Russian delegations¹ together round a table. To me, their participation is a sign that they are in favour of the principle of dialogue and believe that our Assembly can play a positive and constructive role in this respect," he said.

"Despite the substantive differences that persist between the two delegations, which were again set forth at the meeting, we discussed drawing up a road map and a list of priority issues acceptable to both delegations. In particular, we agreed that the well-being of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian communities should be at the heart of our discussions.

This means preventing their becoming isolated, taking confidence-building steps and tackling such issues as free access to these territories for NGOs, the distribution of humanitarian aid and assistance with reconstruction. We therefore decided to involve representatives of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian communities in our next meeting, which will take place in Strasbourg on the occasion of the spring Session from 27 to 30 April," added Mr de Puig.

"The meeting follows on from the so-called 'parliamentary diplomacy' efforts of PACE. Any agreement - even on an initial detail - is a big step forward that makes it possible to create new opportunities and establish momentum in favour of dialogue," he concluded.

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The ad hoc committee was set up to promote dialogue between Georgian and Russian parliamentarians in the Assembly, and thus help to improve, through this parliamentary channel, the situation prevailing in August 2008 in the territories at the heart of the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia, and relations between the two countries.

In its [Resolution 1647 \(2009\)](#) – adopted in January 2009 – on the implementation of [Resolution 1633 \(2008\)](#) on the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia, the Assembly "reconfirmed" its conviction that the establishment of a genuine dialogue is the only way forward for the resolution of any conflict and to secure long-term stability in the region, provided the minimum conditions for meaningful dialogue as defined in Resolution 1633 (2008) are met.

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¹ The meeting was attended by Chiora Taktakishvili (Georgia, ALDE), Alexander Pochinok (Russian Federation, EDG) and Leonid Slutsky (Russian Federation, SOC)

It therefore tasks its Bureau to set up in due course a special ad hoc committee, in which both Georgian and Russian parliamentarians will be invited to participate, to discuss their differences and develop concrete proposals to address the consequences of the war, in line with Resolution 1633 (2008). The Assembly would also welcome the possible participation of representatives of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian communities, from both the *de facto* authorities and those that favour integration with Georgia, in the work of the committee, subject to an agreement on the format of their participation."