



THE EUROPEAN UNION MONITORING MISSION IN GEORGIA

1. WHO WE ARE

The European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission established by the European Union (EU) on 15 September 2008. We consist of more than 200 monitors from all corners of the EU. Our Headquarters is in Tbilisi, and we have three Field Offices in Mtskheta, Gori and Zugdidi. We are one of 11 civilian CSDP missions currently conducted by the European Union on three continents.

2. THE BACKGROUND

The EU-mediated Six-Point Agreement of 12 August 2008 brought an end to the five-day Russian-Georgian war. To observe the parties' compliance with the Agreement, the Council of the European Union established on 15 September 2008 a civilian monitoring mission. In only two weeks – by 1 October – the EU succeeded in deploying more than 200 monitors. This has been the fastest deployment of a mission ever carried out by the EU.

The primary objective of the Mission is to contribute to long-term stability in Georgia and the wider region. To ensure there is no return to hostilities between the conflict parties, the Mission observes, gathers, analyses and reports information on conflict-related issues, incidents, and developments in Georgia.



3. OUR MANDATE

Stabilisation: We contribute to a stable and secure situation in Georgia and the wider region. Our 24/7 visible and regular presence along the Administrative Boundary Lines (ABLs) with South Ossetia and Abkhazia has a preventative effect: the parties know we are patrolling, and could bear witness to any activities they might engage in. Our constant presence contributes to a stable situation on the ground and increases a sense of safety for the conflict-affected population.

In addition, we have several confidence-building mechanisms in place which facilitate dialogue and exchange of information between the conflict parties when issues or incidents need to be addressed.

Normalisation: We also facilitate a return to a normal life for those people whose lives have been most affected by the conflict. We gather information about their basic rights and needs, such as freedom of movement and the effects it has on access to healthcare, education, pension, property and water. We then pass this information on to those who are in a position to offer the necessary assistance.



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Confidence-building: We contribute to confidence between the conflict parties, and help prevent and defuse tensions, through our continuous monitoring presence and the facilitation of dialogue via the EUMM Hotline and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM). The Mission also has a Confidence Building Facility that finances small projects intended to generate dialogue and understanding between local populations across the ABLs.

Informing EU policy: And finally, by providing and relaying impartial and objective information we contribute to the EU's and Member States' foreign policy in relation to Georgia and the wider region. We also contribute to and participate in the Geneva International Discussions (GID).



Monitoring

We patrol around the clock, 365 days a year, either in the Mission's easily recognisable blue patrol vehicles or on foot in closed terrain.

The monitors in our Field Offices in Mtskheta, Gori and Zugdidi are split into three specialised teams. *Administrative Boundary Line Patrols* monitor the ABLs and the areas adjacent to them. They observe freedom of movement along and across the ABLs and 'borderisation' activities – the process of installing physical barriers, such as fences, barbed wire, movement detectors and watchtowers to separate the two breakaway regions from the rest of Georgia. *Human Security Patrols* monitor the human rights situation of the conflict-affected population and monitor issues relating to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their settlements.

Compliance Patrols monitor compliance with the agreements signed between the Mission and the Georgian Ministries of Defence and Internal Affairs as well as the State Security Services of Georgia. These agreements allow the monitors to access specific sites and monitor certain military and police activity.



4. OUR ACTIVITIES

EUMM contributes to long-term stability throughout Georgia and the surrounding region through its monitoring presence along the ABLs, its confidence-building work and its impartial reporting.



Confidence-building

Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism

The Ergneti IPRM meetings are facilitated and moderated by the EUMM and the OSCE and bring together representatives from the Georgian, Russian and de facto South Ossetian authorities. The bi-monthly meetings offer an opportunity to meet in person to exchange information and discuss and resolve specific incidents and issues that affect people along the South Ossetian ABL. These issues can include the installation of 'borderisation' features, freedom of movement and detention cases. The meetings resulted in numerous practical achievements, ranging from the release of detainees to cross-ABL cooperation on agricultural matters and other issues important to local villagers. And they have proven very useful for building greater confidence and trust between the participants.

EUMM also participates in the Gali IPRM, which is chaired by the United Nations, and brings together representatives from the Georgian, Russian and de facto Abkhaz authorities. Their objective is to diffuse tensions and resolve tensions along the Abkhaz ABL. The meetings are currently suspended, but can be resumed at short notice.

EUMM Hotline

Attached to the IPRM is the EUMM-managed Hotline. It is a way to reduce tensions by phone: it allows the conflict parties to exchange information around the clock, seven days a week, whenever an issue or incident requires immediate attention. The EUMM Hotline Holders are the central point of communication between all sides: they receive all the calls and then further share the messages with the other parties. The topics discussed over the Hotline include a wide range of confidence building matters, such as exchange of information on detentions, irrigation flows, needs for medical crossings, etc. The Hotline has proven very useful for participants to effectively establish a common understanding of events surrounding such incidents and it has repeatedly helped to de-escalate arising tensions. The Hotline is activated about 2,500 times per year.



Geneva International Discussions

The Geneva International Discussions (GID) were launched in Geneva, Switzerland, in October 2008. They are held four times a year and are co-chaired by the OSCE, the EU and the UN, and bring together the conflict parties as well as the United States.

Whereas the IPRM and the Hotline are in place to solve practical issues that impact the conflict-affected population, the GID is the only internationally recognised political format where resolution of the conflict in Georgia is discussed. The role of EUMM in the Geneva International Discussions is regularly informing the Co-chairs of developments on the ground, as well as providing an update on the security situation to participants at each round of the GID.



Informing EU policy

The EUMM has established itself as the main source of reliable information for the EU institutions and Member States, as well as the wider international community concerning security developments in Georgia.

Where appropriate, this information is passed on to the relevant local, national and international bodies responsible for providing adequate assistance.

Ultimately, our reporting enables the European Union and its Member States to develop better policies in relation to Georgia and the wider region. We always apply the principle of “operational impartiality”; reporting must be fact-based and unbiased.

5. PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

The Mission – constantly observing and reporting and ready to react by quickly deploying patrols and supporting communication – has played an important role in improving the security situation along the ABLs. While incidents were not infrequent in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, the situation is now relatively stable, with a low risk of incidents.

The relative stability, however, has taken place against a backdrop of ever-increasing challenges for the population most affected by the conflict – especially women, men and children living near the ABLs. Ongoing ‘borderisation’ activities have negatively affected their freedom of movement and, as such, their opportunities to maintain social relations, protect their property rights, to have a decent income, and for children to be educated in their mother tongue.

In terms of our mandate itself, the main problem remains our restricted possibilities to monitor in the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. From the beginning we have been denied access to both territories, even though our mandate covers the entire territory of Georgia. Having access would increase transparency, bring clarity on incidents that have already taken place and thus decrease the risk of future destabilising incidents.

We hope that one day a lasting solution to the conflict will be found that will not require a Mission like ours to be on the ground. Until then, the Mission will continue to patrol day and night, helping to maintain stability in the region.



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