

ICPS newsletter[®]

PASOS: EU should fast-track Georgia's accession to NATO and be tough on Russia

In executing a military intervention in Georgia, Moscow is trying to break down the unipolar world system and to take for itself territories it considers part of its immediate sphere of influence. How the West reacts will have a deciding impact on further developments. If Moscow is simply reprimanded without any actual consequences, it will consider this carte blanche to do what it wants further.

According to PASOS, a network of think-tanks to which the International Centre for Policy Studies belongs, the EU needs to fast-track Georgia's accession to NATO as a top priority, and press for international, third-party peacekeeping forces in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The EU also needs to take tough action against Russia, including trade sanctions and blocking WTO membership following Moscow's attack on Georgia's sovereignty. Below is the PASOS statement on the Russian-Georgian conflict that was issued on 13 August*

The European Union and NATO must now take unequivocal steps to ensure that Moscow understands that its invasion of Georgia cannot be tolerated. Measures should include swift preparation of international and impartial peacekeeping forces for South Ossetia and Abkhazia and, unless Russia withdraws fully from Georgian territory, freezing of Russia's application to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) and EU trade sanctions against Russia. Georgia's early membership of NATO should be made a top priority.

The claim by Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov, writing in the Financial Times on 13 August 2008, that Russia is a "guarantor of stability in the Caucasus" is code for "Russia has the right to override the sovereignty of democratic countries to secure its own strategic predominance in the region". Despite an announcement early on 12 August by Russian President Dimitri Medvedev of an "end to operations" in Georgia, by the end of the day Russia

had not withdrawn from its positions inside Georgia.

The EU should strengthen in all communications with Russia the non-negotiable principle that Georgia (likewise Ukraine and Moldova) has the right to choose freely its own alliances and partnerships, including membership of NATO and the EU, and that any NATO member has the right to host NATO military bases. NATO should also extend its support to Ukraine if it insists on the removal of Russia's fleet from the Crimea.

The ceasefire plan negotiated with Georgia and Russia during the visit of French President Nicolas Sarkozy to Moscow and Tbilisi on 12 August must mark the beginning of an intensive engagement by the French EU Presidency. President Sarkozy must persist in his calls for an international peacekeeping force. Until Russia agrees, it must be made clear that negotiations on the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the liberalized visa

Fellowship Program for Ukrainian Policy and Opinion Makers

The International Centre for Policy Studies and the Institute of Public Affairs (Warsaw, Poland) have launched a project called "The Fellowship Program for Ukrainian Policy and Opinion Makers." The project is financed by the 2008 Polish Aid Program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Fellowship Program is intended to strengthen think-tank networks and to directly support the future leaders of Ukrainian society through sharing experience and transferring know-how in policy research and recommendations. The main objectives are:

- the effective communication of political issues among Ukrainian civil society activists and the country's government;
- support for NGOs in the form of establishing new contacts and strengthening existing ones;
- the promotion of a new generation of public policy analysts working in Ukrainian institutions and organizations;
- enhancing public debate in Ukraine using the experience of transformation in another country.

The eight IPA/ICPS fellowships will be granted to people from Ukraine who wish to conduct research, learn how to write professional policy papers, and look for new contacts in Poland. ■

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* The Policy Association for an Open Society is an association of think-tanks in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

regime for Russian passport-holders will be frozen. Without a full withdrawal from Georgian territory, the EU should also push for the suspension of Russia's membership of the Council of Europe, its exclusion from G8 summits, and the cancellation of the Sochi winter Olympics of 2014 (Sochi is 20 kilometers from Georgia).

International mediation, led by the EU, working in close co-operation with the US administration and both principal US presidential candidates, is essential to put an end to the conflict between Russia and Georgia.

The EU should extend humanitarian support to refugees from the past week's fighting. The French Presidency should then draw up a roadmap for talks to ensure resolution of the plight of Georgia's internally displaced, and settlement, without Russian interference and without military force by the different ethnic communities in

Georgia or by the Georgian government, of the future status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The settlement of all the "frozen" conflicts in the Black Sea region should be made a priority of the French-Czech-Swedish trio presidency of the EU that extends until the end of 2009.

The invasion by Russia of Georgia is an unacceptable infringement of the sovereignty of Georgia. A full Russian withdrawal must take place, and mediation measures must be put in place to ensure that such an infringement is not repeated by Russia on the territory of Georgia or other former Soviet countries. Peaceful mediation and negotiation must be the routes towards any resolution of the status of South Ossetia and other "frozen conflict" regions.

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Managing migration in the Black Sea region

ICPS and its partners, the Institute of Public Policy (Romania) and the Viitorul Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (Moldova) began a new project called "Managing Migration in the Black Sea Region: Improving the implementation of national policies in Ukraine, Moldova and Romania through regional cooperation among NGOs." The project is funded by the East-East: Partnership Without Borders Program of the International Renaissance Foundation and the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, a project of the German Marshall Fund.

The goal of the project is to foster cooperation among civil society organizations in Moldova, Romania and Ukraine to produce an effective migration policy agenda at the national, regional and European levels, to build more effective migration management policy, and to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and practices on migration policy within the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy.

During the project, three working sessions will be held, in Kyiv, Chisinau and Bucharest, involving the various expert communities and CSOs dealing with migration issues in Ukraine, Moldova and Romania, policy-makers in all three countries, the European Commission, and representatives of international organizations.

One of the outputs of this project will be an analytical report with recommendations as to how to improve the carrying out of national migration policy and institute intensive three-sided cooperation. It also discusses how to determine priorities in regional coordination of migration policy in the context of European integration and Black Sea cooperation.

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