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European Greens demand that EU takes a tough and unified stance in relation to Russia at emergency summit

The European Green Party today said that EU leaders meeting next Monday, September 1st, in Brussels must take a tough and unified stance in relation to Russia.

EGP Co-Spokesperson Ulrike Lunacek, who is also the Austrian Green Party's parliamentary spokesperson on foreign and security policy, said: "What is clear is that by unilaterally recognising the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Russians are not only breaking international law but are also making a mockery of the ceasefire agreement which they claimed to be committed to. This is completely unacceptable behaviour which will only exacerbate the tensions in the Caucasus. It is now imperative that the EU institutions and member states take a very firm and unified stance in relation to Russia. We welcome the fact that the French Presidency has called an emergency summit in Brussels next Monday but the leaders meeting there must not waste the opportunity to send a clear and unequivocal message to the Russian government: that Russia is risking doing great damage to its relationship with the EU and the international community in general. "

EGP Co-Spokesperson Philippe Lamberts continued: "Regardless of how this dispute started, we European Greens have clearly said that both sides' primary responsibility was to stop the violence and to adhere to both the letter and the spirit of the ceasefire agreement. The Russian authorities have failed to do this in various ways and this latest move (namely the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia) is inexcusable and the Russian attempt to justify this decision with reference to the recognition by many western countries of Kosovo's independence, though predictable, is disingenuous. We must also condemn the terrible environmental destruction to vital parts of Georgia's natural heritage, including the destruction of hundreds of acres of forest by fires, which is reported by environmental organisations to have been caused by Russia's recent military action. The EU politicians meeting in Brussels on September 1st must focus their attention on how they can best facilitate a sustainable peace agreement. The EU must also make it clear that no further progress in the negotiations for a new strategic partnership with Russia is possible until Russia shows that it respects the sovereign rights of its neighbouring countries and that it is a worthy partner."

Press release

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