

EPP PRESIDENT CALLS ON RUSSIA TO RESPECT GEORGIA

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With respect to the continuing instability in Georgia following Russia's military intervention in Georgia-proper in August 2008, the President of the European People's Party, **Wilfried Martens**, called today on Russia to respect Georgia:

"I call upon Russia to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of

Georgia and to reverse its recognition of the independence of the breakaway Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as this is contrary to international law.

I would like to underline that there is no legitimate reason for Russia to invade Georgia, to occupy parts of it and to threaten to override the government of a democratic country, and that there exists no legitimate Russian interest in other sovereign states.

I would also like to stress that the partnership between Europe and Russia must be based on respect for the fundamental rules of European cooperation, upheld not just in words but in action. I, therefore, endorse the European Council's strong condemnation of Russia's actions and, at the same time, fully support the French Presidency's initiatives to rectify the situation."

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