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## Georgia's Future in NATO: Outcomes of Bucharest Summit, Next Steps for Reform & New Peace Initiative for Abkhazia

### I. OVERVIEW

At the Bucharest Summit, NATO allies deliberated the next steps in Georgia's path to Euro-Atlantic integration. The result was that all 26 NATO members agreed upon Georgia's future membership in the Alliance. This unprecedented decision marks a new phase in Georgia-NATO relations; the Government of Georgia is encouraged by this clear signal of trust and support. At the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in December 2008, the Alliance will decide on the application of tailored reform instruments—a Membership Action Plan—to prepare Georgia for membership. While Georgia looks forward to using MAP to accelerate its progress, the Government will redouble its own reform efforts with special emphasis on the upcoming parliamentary elections and the peaceful reintegration of Georgia's territories.

### II. KEY POINTS

1. **Alliance members have unanimously confirmed that Georgia will join NATO.** The text of the Alliance communiqué from Bucharest states, "We agreed today that these countries [Georgia and Ukraine] will become members of NATO." It emphasizes NATO's clear support for Georgia's MAP application and announces a period of "intensive engagement" as Georgia proceeds on its "direct way to membership."

Georgia welcomes the summit outcome as a new stage of relations with NATO. "We are deeply honored by the trust that all members of the Alliance have placed in Georgia," said President Mikheil Saakashvili. "We are committed to ensuring that our NATO integration brings greater peace and stability to the region, and we will reach out to our neighbors to assure them of this."

"We came to Bucharest seeking a Membership Action Plan, which the Alliance had insisted was not a promise of membership," the President added. "Yet the 26 Allies, for the first time, have now committed that Georgia will become a NATO member."

FULL TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html> (see paragraph 23)

2. **The Government of Georgia will redouble its efforts to support the Alliance.** In August or September, Georgia will send around 400 troops to aid the NATO peace and stability operation in Afghanistan. Georgia participated in the Afghanistan effort in 2004, and has deployed troops to Kosovo and Iraq. In addition, Georgia plans to contribute forces to the NATO naval operation "Active Endeavour" in the Mediterranean Sea, which functions to prevent the movement of weapons and terrorists. Although Georgia is not yet a member in the Alliance, its commitment to NATO values is borne out by its repeated contributions to NATO-led peacekeeping missions around the world.
3. **Democratic reforms—and especially free and fair parliamentary elections in May—remain a top priority.** Georgia will ensure that the benefits of reforms reach every single citizen of the country. This not only means meeting the highest NATO standards, but also pursuing consensus-based reforms to consolidate rule of law, pluralism, and democratic institutions. The parliamentary elections in May will be Georgia's next step forward along this way; the Government is working diligently to address outstanding concerns and ensure that both Georgians and international observers will confidently assess the vote as free and fair.

4. **Georgia will rededicate itself to the peaceful reintegration of its territories, building upon the peace initiative for Abkhazia announced last week.** Finding peaceful political settlements to the separatist conflicts in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia has long been one of the Government's highest aims. On March 28, President Mikheil Saakashvili proposed a sweeping new peace plan for the separatist territory of Abkhazia.

"There are no issues that we and the Abkhazians cannot solve through negotiations," he declared. "Unlimited autonomy, wide federalism, and very serious representation in the central governmental bodies of Georgia-all will be guaranteed, with the support of international guarantors." The only issue not on the table, the President emphasized, was the "disintegration of Georgia."

MORE INFORMATION: <http://www.president.gov.ge/?l=E&m=0&sm=1&id=2569>,  
<http://www.president.gov.ge/?l=E&m=0&sm=5>