

EUMM Georgia following the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine

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In 2008, following the Russo-Georgian war, the European Union negotiated a ceasefire, but some Georgian territories remain occupied by Russia, namely Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. These regions are therefore separated from the rest of Georgia by the occupation line, known by the European Union as the ABL (Administrative Boundary Line).¹ The European Union therefore set up the EUMM Georgia, followed by an EUSR (Special Representative) for the South Caucasus. The European Union is, overall, an important player in the security of the region, sending monitoring missions and launching assistance programs. The EUMM has been extended several times, further demonstrating its importance². However, on 24 February 2022, Putin unleashed the war in Ukraine. At first, some thought it would lead to an escalation of the situation on the Russian occupied territories of Georgia. However, this did not happen. In a sense, the situations in Ukraine and the occupied regions of Georgia can be linked, because in both cases, Putin claims that his presence is legitimate and that these territories are his own. He, however, now seems to be on another front, implying a change in the allocation of military and financial resources. Similarly, the outcome of the Russia-Ukraine war could also have an impact on the situation in Georgia and the occupied territories. It is therefore important to understand what challenges are currently being played out within the EUMM, also to try to guess the potential future situation. Thus, it is important to ask: what new challenges is the mission facing after the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine?

The mandate and activities of the EUMM.

The EU monitoring mission in Georgia (EUMM) was set up in September 2008, a month after the Russo-Georgian war. The EUMM operates under the non-recognition and engagement policy of the European Union³. This means that the mission is based on strong support of the principle of Georgian sovereignty, combined with pragmatic engagement with the de facto authorities and populations of the occupied territories⁴. The European Union's idea is to create new incentives and inject constructive momentum into the peace process. It is also about increasing its influence, supporting the creation of alternatives, and fulfilling its objectives. The EUMM is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission⁵. Currently, 26 member states are supporting the mission, notably by sending personnel. Brussels also keeps abreast of developments on the ground through reports. This is the only mandated presence.⁶

The mandate consists of stabilization, normalization, confidence-building, and informing the European Union in order to facilitate the EU's future involvement in the region in an appropriate manner.⁷ The mission also aims to ensure that the Six-Point Ceasefire Agreement drawn up at

¹ In this paper, we will use the European lexicon.

² "Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1990 of 3 December 2020 amending Decision 2010/452/CFSP on the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia, EUMM Georgia", Official Journal of the European Union, 2p. December 7, 2020.

https://www.eumm.eu/data/file_db/factsheets/.council%20decision%20dec%202020.pdf

³ « Résolution du Parlement européenne du 14/12/2022 sur la mise en œuvre de l'accord d'association de l'Union européenne avec la Géorgie (2021/2236 (INI) », Parlement européen, December 14 2022.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0442_FR.html

⁴ « OTAN-EU : quel calcul géorgien ? », Pierre Verluise, in *Revue Internationale et Stratégique*, pp 30-39, n°82. 2011.

⁵ "Council Joint action 2008/736/CFSP of 15 September 2008 on the EU MM in Georgia", Official Journal of the European Union, L248/26. September 17, 2008.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:248:0026:0031:EN:PDF>

⁶ "Revitalising the EU's Non-Recognition and Engagement Policy towards Abkhazia", Marco Cardinali, November 22, 2021.

<https://www.peaceagency.org/revitalising-the-eus-non-recognition-and-engagement-policy-towards-abkhazia/>

⁷ « EUMM, about us », European Union, External Action,

the time of the ceasefire are implemented. On the whole, several of these points are being flouted, in particular point 3 ("provide free access for humanitarian aid")⁸. More generally, at least 3 points are not respected. This is all the more true in view of the ongoing borderisation.⁹ The priority remains to facilitate a return to normality for the local communities living on both sides of the ABL.

The mission produces concrete actions: day and night patrols, facilitating access to healthcare and education, and some people were even able to return home. The EUMM also has to deal with specific cases. For example, the Tiriponi canal supplies the region with water, but crosses the ABL in many places. People living on both sides of the ABL use the water from this system. When the water level drops, a further addition is made, from the Zonkari¹⁰ reservoir, to the north-east of Tskhinvali. This specific case requires real communication between the two parties, and the mission also aims to facilitate exchanges and find compromises. In practical terms, the mission is essential to improving the living conditions of the local population and facilitate communications. In 2015, the mandate focuses on confidence building activities, creating a "confidence-building facility" to support small-scale initiatives between the parties to the conflict.

On the ground, the mission has a number of tools to help it carry out its mandate. These include telephone lines open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is also the IPRM mechanism, an incident prevention and response mechanism, and other confidence-building measures. In April 2022, the hotline was activated 300 times, representing 10 hours a day. The mission has to help to respond to complex cases, such as kidnappings¹¹, or accusations of crimes by one side against the other.¹² This mission is still crucial to peacekeeping, particularly in view of the internal developments in the occupied regions. Recently, there was an internal conflict in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. Former President Bibilov was accused of transferring South Ossetian occupied territory to Georgia by redefining the occupation line. The ABL remains, therefore, a controversial issue.¹³

Thus, the European Union plays a major role in security in the region. This mission is part of the drive to promote stability, cooperation, prosperity, and good governance in the South Caucasus.¹⁴ In addition to leading this monitoring mission, it is also a co-moderator in the

https://www.eumm.eu/en/about_eumm

⁸ « Protocol on Agreement – The Medvedev-Sarkozy- Saakashvili Plan», PA-X, Peace Agreement Access Tool, August 12, 2008.

<https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/724>

⁹ "State Security Service confirms illegal 'borderisation' activities resumed near occupation line", Agenda Georgia, June 14, 2023.

<https://agenda.ge/en/news/2023/2330>

¹⁰ "Interview, Head of the EUMM Georgia Talks Abkhazia, S. Ossetia", Civil Georgia, May 16, 2022.

<https://civil.ge/archives/490393>

¹¹ "Russian forces illegally detain Georgian citizen near occupation line", Agenda Georgia, May 11, 2023.

<https://agenda.ge/en/news/2023/1859>

¹² "Russia denies involvement in death of Georgian man near ABL with Abkhazia", Agenda Georgia, May 20, 2016.

<https://agenda.ge/en/news/2016/1220>

¹³ "South Ossetia – political crisis over border demarcation", Zhanna Tarkhanova Tskhinval, Jam News. January 10, 2022.

<https://jam-news.net/south-ossetia-political-crisis-over-border-demarcation/>

¹⁴ « Nécéssité d'une stratégie européenne en faveur du Caucase du Sud », Journal Officiel de l'Union européenne, C161 E/136, May 20, 2010.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:161E:0136:0147:FR:PDF>

Geneva International Discussions, through its Special Representatives. This multilateral forum was set up to address the security and humanitarian consequences of the 2008 war. The situation within these discussions remains relatively tense, and even more so since the postponement of the discussion scheduled for February 2023. In response, Geneva's international delegation was banned from entering Abkhazia.¹⁵ The positions are clear: Georgia wants its international obligations to be applied, particularly with regard to the Six-Point Ceasefire Agreement mentioned above. The country calls for the safe and dignified return of displaced persons to their homes. Moscow, Sokhumi and Tskhinvali focus on the "politicization" of the GID, on the attempts of the "collective West" to very much reinforce the logic of Ukraine's confrontation with the "Transcaucasus".¹⁶ At the same time, Russia refers to "borders", an unfair and provocative term. Similarly, through EU4Dialogue: Support to Conflict Transformation in the South Caucasus, the European Union is trying to encourage dialogue and people-to-people contacts by setting up community initiatives in occupied regions beset by conflict.

Another aspect of the EUMM mandate is the relations with the governments and de facto regimes involved in the conflict. Firstly, the Georgian government is fully committed to the success of the mission. For the mission to continue, the European authorities must ask the Georgian government for its agreement. There are also exchanges of information, and any problems observed in the field are passed on to the Georgian government. This is all the more true as the mission is involved in numerous crises on the ABL. This is particularly the case for cooperation on the release of citizens kidnapped by the South Ossetian de facto authorities.¹⁷ The Georgian liaison officer is more than important for cooperation. Consensus is required for every action taken by the mission. However, the cooperation between the de facto authorities, the EUMM and the Georgian government remain complicated. In particular, the Abkhazian and South Ossetian de facto regimes have banned access to the territory for the EUMM, a ban that is hampering the smooth continuation and full completion of the mission¹⁸. Given the negation of the mission, the situation is not optimal for achieving the objectives. To get around this prohibition, the EUMM is trying to concentrate on its visibility, thus appearing as a precious witness in the event of an overflow¹⁹, even if this situation is detrimental to the mission.²⁰

Similarly, relations between authorities can also hamper the mission. Since 2018, Gali IPRM has been blocked. This mechanism involved regular meetings between the Abkhazian de facto authorities and the Georgian government. The EUMM remains ready to contribute to the setting up of new meetings, so important for the local populations.²¹ On the other side, the internal politics can have a really important role. Recently, following the election of a new de facto leader in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, a crossing point was reopened (closed since 2010). According to the EUMM, 486 people crossed this crossing point for Easter 2022. The

¹⁵ "International Geneva delegation banned from entering Abkhazia", OC Media. February 1, 2023.

<https://oc-media.org/international-geneva-delegation-banned-from-entering-abkhazia/>

¹⁶ "57th Round of Geneva International Discussion", Civil Georgia, April 6, 2023.

<https://civil.ge/archives/536277>

¹⁷ Interview with Kakha Gogolashvili, June 22, 2023.

¹⁸ « EUMM, about us », European Union, External Action,

https://www.eumm.eu/en/about_eumm

¹⁹ "Head of EUMM gives an interview to the JRC", EUMM Georgia YouTube channel. 16m04. July 29, 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk6YpRyuCd0>

²⁰ "Family Still Waiting for Bode of Georgian Killed in South Ossetia", Eurasianet, in Georgia, South Ossetia, Caucasus, Conflict zone. February 27, 2018.

<https://eurasianet.org/family-still-waiting-for-body-of-georgian-killed-in-south-ossetia>

²¹ "Interview, Head of the EUMM Georgia Talks Abkhazia, S. Ossetia", Civil Georgia, May 16, 2022.

<https://civil.ge/archives/490393>

closure of crossing points is dramatic: loss of jobs, families separated, terrible situation for farmers working on the ABL, lack of access to school or healthcare, etc.²² The best hope for a lasting situation therefore remains mediation and diplomatic engagement. The EUMM wants to focus on easing travel restrictions and restarting trade in order to improve the economy and therefore the quality of life of the local population.

The situation post-24th February 2022.

24 February 2022. Putin speaks on Russian television, launching the war in Ukraine. Sometime later, the first explosions took place in Kiev and Kharkiv. Tbilisi soon feared a new war, or at least new movements around the ABL. Be that as it may, the EUMM is facing new challenges, or sometimes just almost similar challenges, but in a different form due to the war.

- Challenge n°1- The Borderisation.

The situation prior to 24 February 2022 was marked by a growing borderisation of the area. Specifically, over the last few decades, Russian military personnel have fenced off more than 80km of the line of separation between the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and the rest of Georgia. 60,000 people have been distributed on each side, implying, almost de facto, a risk of escalating tensions. Since the start of the war, the borderisation continues. However, its form has changed. Russia no longer intervenes in densely populated areas and concentrates on fencing projects that do not involve the resettlement of residents, reducing the risk of tension. In practical terms, Putin does not wish to waste his diplomatic and military resources, so useful for his war in Ukraine. At the same time, troops deployed in Russian-occupied Abkhazia have been moved to Ukraine. In March 2023, 800 soldiers from the Russian base at Gudauta and 1,200 from the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia crossed from Russia into eastern Ukraine²³. At least 20 young South Ossetians died in Ukraine. The EUMM must keep a close eye on this strategic leap forward. Some of the EUMM personnel have nevertheless been sent to Armenia, where the EU also tries to stabilize the situation. We could explain this transfer by the idea that since Putin is seeking to reduce direct confrontation, the members of the EUMM can be transferred, as the risks of direct confrontation seem to be reduced regarding this new strategy. In any case, the borderisation activity has a direct impact on the mission. Actually, the mission also aims to facilitate freedom of movement, with the aforementioned objective of access to healthcare, education, religious sites, etc.²⁴ In view of the mission's existence, the considerable unanimity could be reduced. Indeed, the war in Ukraine could lead to a restriction of resources, implying less unanimity. However, the situation on the ABL is still very high-risk, and the mission is keeping an eye on any potential problems and preventing tensions from escalating. The EUMM is a key witness in the event of violence or aggression. Moreover, war increases the risks. If Georgia were to agree to join the sanctions, it would be to Putin's advantage to encourage the escalation of tensions, in order to terrorize the country and put it in a paralyzing situation²⁵. The visible presence of the monitors helps to stabilize the situation, although the environment remains unsteady. The EUMM must continue to produce reports for Brussels. Borderisation cannot be prevented directly by the EUMM.

²² “Georgian village welcomes reopening of crossing points with South Ossetia”, Eurasianet. September 28, 2022. <https://eurasianet.org/georgian-village-welcomes-reopening-of-crossing-points-with-south-ossetia>

²³ “The EU in the South Caucasus, Navigating a geopolitical labyrinth in turmoil”, Bob Deen, Wouter Zweers, Camille Linder, Clingendael Report. March 2023, 77p.

<https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/the-eu-in-the-south-caucasus.pdf>

²⁴ “Eu monitoring mission in Georgia in the spotlight”, EEAS, February 27, 2023.

https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eumm-georgia/eu-monitoring-mission-georgia-spotlight_en?s=335

²⁵ Interview with Kakha Gogolashvili, June 22, 2023.

- Challenge 2 – The Detention.

Similarly, the number of people detained by the Russian occupying forces has fallen in recent months, resulting in their release being quicker and less complicated than in previous years. Putin seems to be concentrating his efforts on the Ukrainian front, without abandoning all his ambitions for these occupied territories²⁶. In reality, whether it's detention or borderisation, the idea is that Putin is seeking to conserve his resources for the war in Ukraine. It is undeniable that the EUMM remains essential if we assume that this situation is temporary. However, the management of detention cases seems less common. The EUMM continues its mediation to encourage the release of the kidnapped people.

- Challenge n°3- The growing isolation of the occupied territories.

The war in Ukraine comes after a delicate moment: the Covid-19 crisis. During this difficult period, the mission continued to monitor the situation. However, the task was complicated by the fact that the crisis accelerated the feeling of separation and isolation of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia from the rest of Georgia. This fact alone hinders the very objectives of the mission. The same applies to the restrictions on freedom of movement, the prolonged closure of crossing points, the unabated expansion of the borderisation (which has also created psychological barriers), and the increase in the “passportisation” process in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia (requests for passports in order to receive benefits and pensions). Clearly, the situation had already become more fragile.

Similarly, in the light of the declarations, we might even think that the ABL is becoming militarized, through digitalization. There are now motion detectors and cameras, which reinforce the feeling of danger and hinder the strengthening of harmonization and the work to return to normality. During the Covid crisis, arrests seem to have increased, as desperate residents approached the ABL to seek care.²⁷ The mission’s task is also to make the crossing of the ABL easier, without fear.²⁸ The war comes at a time of fragility, a time of emerging from crisis. The war has also made it more difficult for the mission to make these occupied territories visible. All eyes are on the war in Ukraine. Russia is seen by many countries as a ferocious danger, and so are its allies. In this sense, the occupied region can also suffer from this. Indeed, the Council adopted a decision in December 2022 not to accept Russian documents issued in Ukraine and Georgia. As a result, the populations of the occupied territories will see their possibility of mobility reduced. In this sense, the mission still has to take action to make these territories less isolated at the global level.²⁹ The EUMM's mission is becoming more complex. People-to-people relations can become complicated, especially given the polarization of the

²⁶ “Fenced In: Stabilising the Georgia-South Ossetia Separation Line”, International Crisis Group, Europe & Central Asia. December 6, 2022.

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/georgia/fenced-stabilising-georgia-south-ossetia-separation-line>

²⁷ “Interview, Head of the EUMM Georgia Talks Abkhazia, S. Ossetia”, Civil Georgia, May 16, 2022.

<https://civil.ge/archives/490393>

²⁸ “EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia: ten years of deployment”, European Union External Action, October 1, 2018.

https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/51399_en

²⁹ “The Council adopts decision not to accept Russian documents issued in Ukraine and Georgia”, European Council, Council of the European Union. December 8, 2022.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/08/council-adopts-decision-not-to-accept-russian-documents-issued-in-ukraine-and-georgia/>

world into two camps: those who support Putin and those who support Zelensky. In any case, reducing the isolation is becoming an arduous task, not least because the occupied territories are affected by international sanctions. The journey of the populations of the occupied territories is becoming difficult.

- Challenge n°4- The respect of the Six-Point Ceasefire Agreement.

Regarding the aims of the EUMM, the mission still has to ensure that the Six-Point Ceasefire Agreement is fulfilled. For the moment, Russia has not withdrawn its forces from the occupied territories of Georgia and continues to isolate them. This tendency has greatly increased during the Covid-19 crisis, notably due to the restrictions of free movement. Actually, during the crisis, Russia deliberately rebuilt the border infrastructure to control all movement around the ABL and intimidate the local population (discouraging them from crossing the ABL). Normalization, the mission's objective, has therefore still not been achieved. Regarding stabilization, interaction between individuals is limited³⁰. Similarly, in terms of Putin's strategy, it would appear that he is concentrating on the situation in Ukraine and seems impervious to international decisions. Then, it is unlikely that he will respect the whole of the agreement, including withdrawing his troops, at a time when he is demonstrating his desire to colonize. Putin is showing the whole world his desire to extend his borders into the territories he considers to be his own. Finally, the EUMM remains essential, particularly with regard to compliance with the Six-Point Ceasefire Agreement. Russia's actions do not seem to be going in the direction of compliance. The EUMM can only continue to encourage conciliation, mediation, and contact, to promote relatively "normal" living conditions, and to seek stabilization. However, this will remain a challenge, and even more so if Ukraine loses the war. Putin will probably not wish to limit himself to Ukraine alone, and thus leave his troops in the occupied territories, in direct violation of point no. 1. That's all the EUMM can do here. Generally speaking, the European Union continues to set up discussion forums. However, Putin's ambitions now lie elsewhere. The EUMM must therefore continue to monitor and focus on the civilian aspect (access to healthcare, education, etc.).

Overall, and for the time being, relations seem to have calmed down. Officials are describing the current period as a "honeymoon", as the situation has not been this calm since 2008. Precisely, the situation has not deteriorated, but uncertainty reigns.³¹ The rest of the war could be decisive for the situation around the ABL. Of course, the global security environment has changed, but the implications of the war for Georgia are significant. Despite a stable situation, they must remain vigilant, particularly in order to detect potential deterioration and avoid uncontrolled incidents.³² The form of the mission could then itself change in the light of the situation and new future challenges. Before the war, we saw the reopening of crossing points in three areas. We counted 1,100 crossings by residents who were able to visit their families, to have access to healthcare and so on. The turn of the conflict could have an impact on the shape of the mission. For the moment, the configuration seems suitable, but conditions may change.

³⁰ "Interview, Head of the EUMM Georgia Talks Abkhazia, S. Ossetia", Civil Georgia, May 16, 2022.
<https://civil.ge/archives/490393>

³¹ "Fenced In: Stabilising the Georgia-South Ossetia Separation Line", International Crisis Group, Europe & Central Asia. December 6, 2022.
<https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/georgia/fenced-stabilising-georgia-south-ossetia-separation-line>

³² "Head of EUMM gives an interview to the JRC", EUMM Georgia YouTube channel. 16m04. July 29, 2022.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk6YpRyuCd0>

It's not out of the question either that police or military force missions could be deployed (only in areas of open conflict), or that the number of monitors on site could be increased³³.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that the situation in Russia can have a direct impact on the situation in Georgia. For example, the Russian events of 24 June 2023 could have had a significant impact on the EUMM. The Russian military deployed in the South Caucasus are commanded from the headquarters in Rustov-on-Don,³⁴ the first town that Yevgeny Prigozhin took. Teleologically, we know that nothing happened, but this concrete example is proof of the volatility of the situation. A change on the political chessboard could alter the situation and have serious consequences. Besides, on 26 June 2023, Borrell explained that Russia's war in Ukraine was "cracking Russian power and affecting its political system", indicating a growing uncertainty about the near future.³⁵

Conclusion

Therefore, we can sum up the main challenges facing the EUMM after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Firstly, the borderisation still exists, but it is being used strategically by Putin. In this sense, the EUMM must maintain calm around the ABL and its role as a key witness. For the time being, the EUMM cannot take concrete action, apart from continuing its role as mediator. This explains why some of the EUMM's staff have been sent to Armenia. The situation seems stable. As far as detention is concerned, the EUMM has noted a reduction and facilitation of procedures. The challenge remains, however, despite the war. The increasing isolation of the occupied territories is perhaps the challenge that has grown as a result of the war. Overall, even if the EUMM's idea would be to set up an equivalent to the UNMIK Travel Document, without mentioning nationality or the country code, it is highly likely that this would fail. Indeed, in a general and international movement, world public opinion is seeking to punish Russia. The recent decision not to recognize passports issued by the Russian authorities also implies, for the population, a profound isolation under the Russian yoke. The war has heightened Russia's suspicion and willingness to sanction, including through its "allies". In this sense, these occupied territories remain affiliated to Russia. This is even more true regarding the fact that some people living in the occupied territories went to fight on the Russian side.

Overall, the EUMM's tasks have not changed, especially given the "stabilization" of the situation. In other words, it would appear that the situation is currently calm. However, we can question the decision to send part of the EUMM staff to Armenia. The situation may be quiet at present, but it remains highly uncertain and volatile. As we have already mentioned, an internal change in Russia could have a major impact on the mission and on the situation in the occupied territories. Lowering our guard at such an uncertain time might seem risky.

Overall, the EUMM's mandate has not changed. The situation surrounding the ABL seems stable - for the time being - and implies that the EUMM is not changing its action strategy. The

³³ Interview with Kakha Gogolashvili, June 22, 2023.

³⁴ « La présence militaire russe dans le Caucase du Sud », Gaidz Minassian, in *Revue Défense Nationale*, pp 168-176, n°802. 2017.

<https://www.cairn.info/revue-defense-nationale-2017-7-page-168.htm>

³⁵ « Guerre en Ukraine, en direct : après la mutinerie de Wagner, quelles conséquences pour la Russie de Poutine ? », *Le Monde*, June 26, 2023.

https://www.lemonde.fr/international/live/2023/06/26/guerre-en-ukraine-en-direct-apres-la-mutinerie-de-wagner-quelles-consequences-pour-la-russie-de-poutine_6179222_3210.html?fbclid=IwAR3faqg4NWmfF_V4TiUuwlCIzydT9cft2-ofiQCHhdOfMgmLgh8njldkwP0

challenges facing the mission appear to remain the same, although some have worsened and are becoming increasingly urgent.

It is, therefore, hard to draw any definite conclusions about the future of the mission. It is undeniable that its usefulness remains paramount, especially in view of the war unleashed by Russia in Ukraine. The EUMM remains the most essential and secure institutional means. By 2018, ten years after the mission began, 65,000 patrols and 1,700 EU nationals had been deployed to strengthen security and stability. The aim is still to work for peace and a lasting resolution to the conflict.³⁶ The security mechanisms put in place are essential: two or three hundred times a month, the hotline is activated.³⁷ The war probably made it even more necessary, given the volatility of the situation. Russia remains convinced that a European presence in the region is harmful. According to Putin, it is his direct sphere of influence.³⁸

Nevertheless, the Russian war in Ukraine is not the only factor that could influence the situation: Georgia's potential acquisition of the EU candidate status, Georgian behavior with regard to the occupied regions, and the very behavior of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia over time. There are a number of key parameters, and the situation is likely to change very soon. The European Union remains committed to Georgia. The country is at the crossroads between East and West, which is why it is so important to European security. Despite numerous obstacles, the usefulness of the EUMM's moderating role remains paramount, and effective. A long-term situation is difficult to predict at the moment, partly because of the war. The outcome of the war will also be decisive for Georgia. Several scenarios are conceivable: a withdrawal, an attack, recognition of the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetian referendum by Russia, and therefore the illegal annexation of both occupied regions. Obviously, maintaining stability remains a priority. In any case, the ground is ripe for speculation. Future challenges are likely to emerge as the war progresses.

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³⁷ "Interview, Head of the EUMM Georgia Talks Abkhazia, S. Ossetia", Civil Georgia, May 16, 2022.
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³⁸ "The Return to Europe and the Rise of EU-Russian Ideological Differences", Maxime Henri André Larivé, Roger E. Kanet, 14p.pp 125- 138. Spring 2013.
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