



Press release

Conflict between Georgia and Adjara
The Assembly of European Regions calls for peaceful negotiations instead of a military intervention

Strasbourg, 16th March 2004

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) today has called upon the Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili and the leader of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Aslan Abashidze to start immediately an open negotiation in order to defuse the emergent crisis in the country.

“We are alarmed by the escalating tensions between the central and regional governments. The use of military forces should be ruled out. It is definitely not the way forward to overcome a political and constitutional crisis. The Caucasian region is already struck by high political instability and growing economic and social problems. Bloodshed should be avoided by all means” said Klaus Klipp, the AER Secretary General.

“As in all democracies, such a conflict must be tackled by a genuine dialogue and above all by a parliamentary debate over the constitution. In the case of Georgia, the lack of a clear definition of regional autonomy in the Georgian Constitution is at the heart of the issue. The AER regards the acceptance of a federal model as the only solution to overcome the current tensions as the appropriate and the only way forward to achieving long term stability in the Georgian state” he highlighted.

The AER supports the Council of Europe’s proposal for immediate peaceful negotiations in order to define the scope of the autonomy of Adjara. These should take place under the auspices of the Council of Europe. The AER is also prepared to bring in all its expertise in addressing the division of power between central and regional governments.

The AER is convinced that its member region of Adjara would welcome such an initiative. The AER also believes that eventually in cooperation with the Congress of local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe (CLRAE) a successful supporting mission could be established.

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