



## ATLANTIC MEMO #8

## The EU Can Mediate Georgia Conflict

As the international community strives to find an adequate solution to the crisis in Georgia, the members of *atlantic-community.org* have developed the following proposals on how to successfully mediate the conflict. Atlantic Community members conclude that the EU, acting in coordination with the UN, is in the best position to negotiate a peaceful solution.

### 1. The EU Must Act as Mediator.

The majority of Atlantic Community members consider the EU the best potential mediator of the conflict. As Ari Rusila argues, the EU should balance its criticism of Russia and Georgia and try to facilitate dialogue between the US and Russia. Marek Swierczynski notes that such mediation should result in replacing Russian and Georgian troops with international peacekeepers, coordinated by the UN and EU. Heinrich Bonnenberg recommends that the EU also establish itself as the mediator between Russia and Ukraine to avoid future problems like those experienced in Georgia. To protect its neutral position, the EU must decrease its dependence on Russian energy, as this could endanger the EU's ability to effectively deal with Russia (Swierczynski).

### 2. NATO has to Consider Expansion More Prudently.

Members could not agree on NATO expansion, and the following points summarize highly divergent arguments. Grigol Ubiria argues in favor of eastward expansion, as NATO supports the stability of its members and thereby increases regional security. Furthermore, Swierczynski concludes that it is NATO that must secure the territorial integrity of Poland and Ukraine against Russian aggression. On the other hand, there are many calls against Georgia's accession to NATO because of its violent acts in South Ossetia. Additionally, Akishkin argues that NATO, a military bloc, is by definition a threat to Russia.

### 3. The US Should Avoid Isolating Russia.

While some members of *atlantic-community.org* suggest that the US should increase its military presence in Eastern and Central Europe in order to prevent further Russian aggression (Mitchell), the majority considers such a move as unnecessarily provocative. Furthermore, many regard the US (and NATO) to be partly at fault for the conflict, as they should have never armed Georgia. US policies of isolating Russia are ill-advised, and its call for Russian exclusion from the WTO is another example of poor foreign policy (Akishkin).

### 4. Russia Must Abide by International Order.

Most members believe that Russia's military reaction was disproportionate. Swierczynski argues that it was Russia who first violated international law by invading sovereign Georgia. Therefore, Russian troops must leave Georgia and South Ossetia. And Akishkin suggests that restrictions on Russia's liberal issuing of passports have to be established.

### 5. Georgia Should Withdraw Troops and Take Responsibility.

Most members agree that Georgia and Saakashvili should take responsibility for the violence committed against South Ossetia. Opinion is split on whether or not South Ossetia and Abkhazia should remain part of Georgia, but there seems to be consensus on the need for mediation resulting in the peaceful autonomy of the two regions (Fu). Hall Gardner suggests that redefining "independence" may allow South Ossetia and Abkhazia to have the autonomy they desire as well as cooperative relationships with Georgia and Russia.

### 6. The Media Needs Integrity

Concerning the Georgia crisis, many members expressed frustration and anger towards the questionable veracity of both Western and Russian media covering the issue. Andreas Umland argues that the conflict between the West and Russia is as much due to disinformation and miscommunication as it is to actual differences. Government censorship in some cases, and explicit commercialism and sensationalism in others, have led our members to suspect the media of often circulating misinformation and propaganda.

*Atlantic Memos showcase the best ideas and arguments from debates in the Open Think Tank on [atlantic-community.org](http://atlantic-community.org). All policy recommendations in this document were made registered members of the Atlantic Community.*

Atlantische Initiative e.V.

Wilhelmstraße 67  
10117 Berlin  
Germany

Tel: +49.30.206 337 88  
Fax: +49.30.206 337 90

#### Atlantic Memo Contributors:

##### Authors:

Judy Fu, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization  
Prof. Dr. Hall Gardner, American University of Paris  
Wess Mitchell, Center for European Policy Analysis  
Marek Swierczynski, TVP  
Grigol Ubiria, Australian ational University

##### Commenters:

Valentine Akishkin, Entrepreneur  
Dr. Heinrich Bonnenberg, Energiewerke Nord, DGAP  
Ari Rusila, Freelancer  
Dr. Andreas Umland, Institute for Central and East European Studies (ZIMOS)