

## Q5 Legal/Reference 23

### Peace-Plan of the German Minister of Foreign Affairs Steinmeier.

In July 2008, Frank-Walter *Steinmeier*, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, forwarded a plan of peaceful settlement of the Abkhaz conflict. The plan envisaged renunciation of the use of force, reaching an agreement on return of the IDPs, undertaking practical projects aiming at confidence building and assisting to the process of political resolution of conflicts in the future through the means of negotiations. By the end of July, both the Russian and separatist sides refused to partake in the meetings related to the afore-mentioned plan, and requested to delay discussions until September 2008.<sup>1</sup>

July 10-2008 - The expert meeting of “Group of Friend” countries.<sup>2</sup>

The Russian diplomat claimed concerning the “German Plan” that it did not reflect cooperation with CIS peacekeeping forces, the issue of bilateral meeting, signing the declaration concerning non-use of force, and the issues of Tskhinvali bombing and the developments in Kodori.

### Abkhaz Leader Rejects ‘German Plan’<sup>3</sup>

Abkhaz leader Sergey Bagapsh said Sokhumi could not consider the settlement plan developed by Germany in the frames of the UN Secretary General’s Group of Friends on Georgia.

Abkhaz news agency, Apsnipress, reported that Bagapsh told EU special representative Peter Semneby in Sokhumi on July 14 that he had read the plan, “but we can not consider it such as it was presented today.”

Earlier on July 14 the Abkhaz leader met with Hans-Dieter Lukas, special envoy of the German Foreign Ministry for Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, who briefed the Abkhaz side about the plan.

The plan is not public, but *Der Spiegel* reported last week that the German-proposed three-stage plan would envisage a year of trust-building measures, involving the signing of a treaty on the non-use of force and the beginning of the return of internally displaced persons in phase one. The second phase, the following year, would see the beginning of reconstruction work, with Berlin organizing a donors' fundraising conference, and the third would involve defining Abkhazia’s political status.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.parliament.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=1315&info\\_id=22617](http://www.parliament.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=1315&info_id=22617)

<sup>2</sup> Information found in the letter of UN permanent mission to MFA Georgia.  
See also “German Plan” i.e. *Stainmaier* plan in *Annex 62*.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=18775>

“We are not going to discuss Abkhazia’s status with anyone,” Bagapsh said. “We are building an independent, democratic state.”

Bagapsh said that Sokhumi would only resume talks with Tbilisi if it signed a treaty on non-use of force and withdrew its troops from upper Kodori Gorge – two terms also put forth by Moscow as a precondition for resumption of a comprehensive peace process.

The Group of Friends includes France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia and the U.S. Russia did not take part in the development of the plan and it still has not publicly made its position known on the plan.

- Abkhazia, Backed By Moscow, Rejects German Peace Plan<sup>4</sup>

[...] Steinmeier chairs the five-member UN Friends Group -- comprising Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States -- which is trying to resolve the long-standing Abkhazia conflict.

A key element in chief German diplomat's plan is the return of hundreds of thousands internally displaced persons (IDPs), uprooted when the pro-Moscow region broke from Georgia following a war in the early 1990s. In exchange, Georgia is being asked to sign a pledge not to use military force to take the breakaway province.

Abkhazia and Russia have both rejected allowing the displaced persons to return, and have instead insisted that Georgia sign the pledge not to use force as a precondition for the talks -- something Tbilisi refuses to do. [...]

- STEINMEIER’S PLAN ON ABKHAZIA: BENIGN INTENTIONS, LIMITED RELEVANCE, BLOCKED BY MOSCOW<sup>5</sup>

Drafted by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the document has been more or less cleared by the UN Secretary General’s Group of Friends on Georgia, consisting of the United States, Russia, Britain, France, and Germany which chairs the group at this time. Presenting the document on the Friends’ behalf made it look initially as if Moscow was more or less on board. **Russia and the Abkhaz authorities, however, rebuffed the document promptly on its official presentation by the German MFA there, even before Steinmeier had reached Sukhumi and Moscow.**

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.rferl.org/content/German\\_FM\\_Presents\\_Abkhazia\\_Plan\\_In\\_Georgia/1184610.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/German_FM_Presents_Abkhazia_Plan_In_Georgia/1184610.html)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=33820](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33820)

Brusquely at first and then more politely, Moscow has basically turned down the German plan despite its far-reaching concessions to Russian interests.

The document accepts the continuation of Russia's "peacekeeping" operation. This can not be surprising, considering the German MFA's support for Russian "peacekeeping" in Moldova and Georgia in the name of "stability" since Steinmeier became minister.

It is, however, surprising that the document fails to mention Georgia's territorial integrity and internationally recognized borders. Such mentions are standard at least pro forma in international documents. Only Russia has ceased even that lip service since the beginning of this year, practically de-recognizing Georgia's integrity and borders. The omission in the German plan is a striking one and Steinmeier hastened to repair it, at least in words, in Georgia (though not, apparently, at the two other stops on his tour). Emerging from the talks with President Mikheil Saakashvili, Steinmeier found it necessary to add several times during the briefing that Germany respects Georgia's territorial integrity (Georgian Public TV, July 18).

[...]