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**STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE
736th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 October 2008

**In response to the report by Ambassador Philip Remler,
Head of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova**

The European Union (EU) welcomes Ambassador Philip Remler and thanks him for his substantial report to the Permanent Council. His co-mediation efforts aimed at advancing the process for a political settlement of the Transnistria conflict on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova are appreciated and fully supported by the EU.

As the Council of the European Union recalled in its Conclusions of 13 October, the “5 + 2” negotiating format is the only guarantee of the transparency and legitimacy needed to find a lasting solution. The EU calls on all the parties concerned to resume negotiations in this format. It also encourages them to work together on confidence-building measures. For its part, the EU is determined to increase its engagement, in particular, through the role played by its Special Representative for Moldova, Mr. Kalman Mizsei, the European Commission and the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM).

Furthermore, the EU is ready to have a deeper relationship with the Republic of Moldova in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and to negotiate a new and ambitious agreement with Moldova soon. The EU Council agreed on this last week.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU shares Ambassador Remler’s analysis regarding the test of Moldovan democracy that the spring 2009 legislative elections will represent. Recalling how much importance it attaches to this election being prepared for and conducted in a fully democratic manner, in accordance with OSCE commitments, the EU strongly encourages the Moldovan authorities to take full advantage of the technical assistance provided by the OSCE Mission and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in order to continue improving their practices, particularly as regards access to the media, freedom of assembly, or equal access by citizens to elective office. In this context, the EU recalls its commitment to the implementation of the recommendations of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, which are similar to the recommendations contained in the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report on the two previous elections in the Republic of Moldova.

With regard to the fight against trafficking in human beings, the EU welcomes the growth in activities of the OSCE Mission, and urges it to continue along that path.

In conclusion, the EU reiterates its full support for the OSCE Mission to Moldova, and for Ambassador Remler's efforts to promote a settlement of the Transnistrian conflict.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; as well as Georgia align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.