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**STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE  
1192nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 July 2018

**In response to the report by His Excellency Ambassador Michael Scanlan,  
Head of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova**

The European Union thanks Ambassador Scanlan for his eighth and last report to the Permanent Council.

The European Union supports a peaceful and comprehensive settlement to the Transdniestrian conflict on the basis of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders, with a special status for Transdniestria.

We welcome the adoption of the Rome Protocol following the meeting of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement in the “5+2” format held on 29 and 30 May. The European Union calls on the parties to continue to rapidly implement the agreements reached, including those regarding the technical assessment of the Gura Bîcului-Bychok bridge, the apostilization of diplomas, and the normal and sustainable functioning of Latin-script schools. We also urge the parties to maintain the positive dynamic that has characterized the negotiations since the German and Austrian OSCE Chairmanships.

We welcome the signature at the end of June of a road map on the telecommunications market as provided for in the Rome Protocol and call on the parties to make progress with penal matters and freedom of movement. We are also gratified to note that they have started discussing topics going beyond the priorities identified in the “package of eight” measures, in particular human rights and the banking sector. We nevertheless continue to strongly urge the authorities to finalize their shared internal vision on conflict settlement.

We trust that all these results will lead to tangible progress in the three baskets on the agreed agenda for the negotiation process, in particular on political, institutional and security aspects of the third basket.

As stated on the occasion of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a decision on the “Complete and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova” in connection with the Operational Group of Russian Forces, we recall the importance of completing the processes initiated as part of commitments

undertaken at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999. We regret the incidents that occurred in the security zone in June and urge that discussion on the withdrawal or destruction of Russian ammunition and arms in Transdniestria be resumed in the near future, especially with regard to the depot in Cobasna. We welcome the continued efforts of the Mission in this process and also appreciate the support that it provides to the Joint Control Commission.

We welcome the decision that came into force on 1 January 2018 regarding access by members of the Mission to Transdniestria, which is an essential element that increases the Mission's operational capacity.

We welcome the work carried out by the Mission to improve human rights on both sides of the Dniester, particularly with regard to combating trafficking in human beings and domestic violence. We fully support the implementation of the Action Plan for the National Strategy for the Consolidation of Inter-Ethnic Relations and hope that the necessary financial resources will be allocated with a view to building an inclusive and tolerant society.

Progress needs to be made in the implementation of the Law on a Special Legal Status for Gagauzia. The European Union urges the authorities in Chişinău to complete the suspended legislative initiatives.

We also recall the importance of implementing all the recommendations made by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights that have not already had an impact, including those on the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns.

Although not mentioned in Ambassador Scanlan's report, we should like to add a few words on the non-transparent invalidation of the municipal elections in Chişinău, which deprives the citizens of that city of their democratically elected mayor. The European Union expects the Moldovan authorities to guarantee the independence of the judiciary in accordance with its international commitments, as this is one of the fundamental principles of the rule of law, an essential aspect of democracy and a long-awaited expectation by the citizens of the country.

We should like in conclusion to take this opportunity to express our warm gratitude to Ambassador Scanlan for the high-quality work accomplished during his four years as Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova and for all of the energy he has invested. We highly appreciate the lessons learned from his experience and wish him every success in his future projects. We are ready to continue this excellent co-operation with his successor.

The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup> and Albania<sup>1</sup>, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Andorra, align themselves with this statement.

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1 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.