



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

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Statement in response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Dr. Claus Neukirch

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1199th meeting of the Permanent Council,
1 November 2018

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova Dr. Claus Neukirch to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his thoughtful report. As this is your first appearance, Dr. Neukirch, in the Permanent Council in the new capacity, we wish you and your able team every success in your activities.

Ukraine, as guarantor and mediator in the Transdniestrian settlement process, is grateful to the OSCE Mission to Moldova for active engagement, including within the “5+2” negotiations on political settlement. We encourage the Mission to be guided by “strong resolve to attain a comprehensive, peaceful and sustainable settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders with a special status for Transdniestria” expressed by Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the OSCE participating States last December in Vienna.

We share your view, Dr. Neukirch, on the substantial progress reached over the past 12 months on a number of practical issues which were blocked for decades, and we will support efforts aimed at maintaining this positive dynamics. Building confidence and implementing agreements, which benefit the daily lives of the population on both banks of the Dniester river, in particular the “package of eight” reconfirmed in the 5+2 Rome Protocol of 30 May, must remain in the focused attention of the Mission. We fully support the Mission’s plans to play a facilitating role in accordance with its mandate on the removal and destruction of Russian ammunition and armaments on Moldova’s left bank, which would definitely add to mutually reinforcing confidence-building measures. At the same time, we fully subscribe to the view of the Head of the Mission that confidence-building measures are not an end in itself, as they serve a purpose of final settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict based on a special status for Transdniestria within a reintegrated, sovereign and independent Republic of Moldova.

In order to perform its tasks, the Mission must have full access to the whole territory of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders.

We particularly encourage the Mission to continue providing regular updates on the political and security situation on the ground, in particular in the Transdnestrian region of Moldova and border areas with Ukraine adjacent to Odesa oblast. Without such full access, the Mission will not be able to conduct proper monitoring activities in line with its mandate – to gather and provide “information on the situation, including the military situation, in the region, investigate specific incidents and assess their political implications.” We regret that in August this year, both the Mission and the Moldovan representative of the Joint Peacekeeping Force, were blocked by military guards from entering an area located in the Security Zone in which Russian military units from the Operational Group of Russian Forces conducted river-crossing exercises. Unsanctioned movement (exercises) of military vehicles in the Security Zone took place in August and September.

I would remind that the Operational Group of Russian Forces is stationed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova without consent of this state. In this regard, we reiterate the importance of implementation of earlier reached agreements and commitments, including from the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transdnestria, and the UN GA resolution A/RES/72/282 of 22 June 2018 “Complete and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova” co-sponsored by Ukraine.

We continue to believe that there exists a real added value and urgent need in change of the existing peacekeeping format in the Transdnestrian region to a civilian police mission under the auspices of the OSCE with an appropriate international mandate, which would enable effective and impartial fulfillment of its mission. Withdrawal of Russian troops from the sovereign territory of the Republic of Moldova and transformation of the existing peacekeeping format to a civilian police mission would significantly contribute to the peaceful resolution of the Transdnestrian conflict in line with the OSCE principles and commitments, and international law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.