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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1071st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 October 2015

**In response to the report by the
Head of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank Ambassador Michael Scanlan for his detailed report on the activities of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova headed by him.

We appreciate the Mission's assistance in organizing meetings of political representatives of Moldova and Transnistria in the "1+1" format and also within the joint Moldovan-Transnistrian expert groups. It is true that some movement is being observed here, but unfortunately this is not yet bringing about a solution to crucial problems for the further development of relations between Chişinău and Tiraspol. First and foremost, I am referring to the criminal prosecution of Transnistrian officials by Chişinău and the synchronized blockade with Kyiv of Transnistria's transport links and economy. It will be difficult to move forward in a Transnistrian settlement unless there is an end to the policy of pressure on Tiraspol.

Against this background, the break in the holding of official meetings of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for a Transnistrian Settlement ("5+2" format) has dragged on inadmissibly long. Instead of the five to six meetings agreed under the negotiation process, only two rounds of talks took place last year, and not a single official meeting was held at all during the first nine and a half months of this year. We urge the parties to return to the official working format of the Permanent Conference as soon as possible in order that the international mediators can assist directly in the search for solutions that are acceptable to both Moldova and Transnistria.

We trust that the high-level conference on confidence-building measures scheduled to take place in Germany on 29 and 30 October will break the impasse in the official negotiation process. The Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Gubarev, will represent Russia at that event.

As a mediator and a guarantor State, Russia affirms the constancy of our approaches to settling the conflict in Transnistria. We are convinced that the responsibility for achieving mutually acceptable agreements lies, first and foremost, with the parties to the conflict themselves. We are also ready to continue to facilitate this in close co-ordination with the Chairmanship and the other participants in the “5+2” process with a view to advancing the negotiations to find a sustainable, just and comprehensive settlement to the Transnistrian problem by ensuring a special and reliably guaranteed status for Transnistria in a unified, sovereign and neutral Moldova.

Mr. Chairperson,

We noted that the worrying situation regarding freedom of the media in the Republic of Moldova was outlined in general terms in the report by the Head of the OSCE Mission. To be frank, the Moldovan authorities are to all intents and purposes blocking the work of Russian journalists. During the last few months alone, a LifeNews camera team and a Russia Today producer have been deported from Moldova; on 4 October two NTV camera teams were refused entry under spurious pretexts, and the same thing happened quite recently to journalists from the Russia-24 television channel, who had gone to Chişinău to cover the 2016 UEFA European Championship qualifier between Moldova and Russia.

The draft laws under consideration by the Moldovan Parliament on amendments to the Television and Radio Code, which prohibit broadcasting on television and radio of current affairs, analytical and political programmes produced in countries that have not ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television, are aimed at tightening censorship. What is more, this is being done in spite of the negative findings by Council of Europe and OSCE experts.

Steps like this by Chişinău contravene not only a host of OSCE commitments on freedom of expression, freedom of the media and freedom of movement, but also European standards that Chişinău is constantly claiming it adheres to. We call on the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatović, to provide a public, objective assessment of the policy of the authorities of the Republic of Moldova with regard to the Russian media. We trust that the OSCE Mission will pay the utmost attention to this matter.

In conclusion, we should like to wish Ambassador Scanlan and the Mission staff continued success in their demanding work.

Thank you for your attention.