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**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT

at the OSCE Permanent Council meeting with regard to the arrest of the journalist
Ernest Vardanyan by Transnistrian security services
(22 April 2010)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of the United States for bringing to attention of the Permanent Council this worrying case, as well as the European Union for its supportive statement. We also thank the OSCE Mission to Moldova for issuing a spot report on the recent arrests in the Transnistrian region.

The Moldovan authorities are deeply concerned about the fate of the journalist Ernest Vardanyan, who is the citizen of the Republic of Moldova. On the 7th of April, he was arrested on false charges of “espionage and high treason”. This kind of persecution of a journalist, which strives to reflect the situation in the region in an objective manner, has no precedent. More than that, in recent weeks, the *de-facto* Tiraspol authorities have intimidated and brought false accusations of high treason against a number of civil society representatives. A member of local staff of the OSCE Mission has been also put under pressure. We regret very much these cases.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to use this opportunity to reiterate profound concern of the Moldovan Government with regard to the continuing violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and in particular of the universal humanitarian conventions in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. Such counter-productive steps are undermining the efforts aimed at re-establishing trust and confidence – which are key-prerequisites for resolving the problems of local population. These unfortunate developments are also harming the constructive endeavours undertaken by international partners – participants to the 5+2 process.

The Moldovan authorities called for immediate release of Ernest Vardanyan from custody. Deputy Prime Minister for reintegration, Mr. Victor Osipov addressed an official letter to all participants in the “5+2” process, including the Transnistrian representative, asking for their assistance in helping to liberate the journalist. In this context, we call an all Participating States to join the efforts of the Moldovan authorities in this regard. We are grateful to those partners which already raised this issue in their contacts with Transnistrian *de-facto* authorities.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate the commitment of my Government to further promote trust and confidence in the region, as well as its strong desire to restore the official negotiations in the 5+2 format as quick as possible.

I thank you.