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**STATEMENT**  
**by the Republic of Moldova in**  
**response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Michael Scanlan,**  
**and to the Head of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine,**  
**Mr. Francesco Bastagli**  
*(1019<sup>th</sup> Permanent Council, October 16, 2014)*

Mr. Chairman,

We warmly welcome Ambassador Michael Scanlan, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, and Mr. Francesco Bastagli, Head of the EUBAM Mission, and thank them for their first reports to the Permanent Council. Their presentations provide a good opportunity to assess the current state of affairs in the Transnistrian conflict settlement process as well as the overall situation on the Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border.

Let me start with our remarks on Ambassador Scanlan report, which adequately reflects the situation on the ground. Ambassador Scanlan has put the emphasis on search for opportunities and possibilities to advance forward which, we believe, is a helpful approach.

The Head of Mission's report starts with references *to upcoming elections in Moldova*. It is true that elections can be viewed both as a challenge and as an opportunity to the conflict settlement process. Our approach is to reduce challenges and to make use of the opportunities. The Transnistrian conflict resolution will remain one of the Moldova's key priorities for future and formation of a new government should provide a renewed commitment and engagement in the settlement process. But a strengthened commitment of the future Moldovan government is not a *panacea* that would guarantee major progress. As we previously stated "*the Transnistrian conflict settlement needs a reset, both in terms of concepts, as well as in terms of efforts and energy invested in promoting the settlement process by all actors involved*". Therefore, an active and coordinated engagement by mediators and observers, despite all contradictions among them, is one of the prerequisites for progress.

Mr Chairman,

I'd like to refer to a number of ongoing issues in the conflict settlement process. *The 5+2 negotiations* continue to be in a regretful break due to unilateral preconditions imposed by Tiraspol. The negotiations rounds were postponed for three times over this year. By reducing space for dialogue Tiraspol is decreasing chances to identify solutions as well as is undermining the capability of the mediators and observers to bring their constructive contribution into the settlement process. Hopefully, the Transnistrian side will reconsider its position, so we will be able to resume full-fledged negotiations, that will also include political and security aspects – the well-known "third basket".

We continue to be concerned about a number of issues that could generate tensions, in particular situation of the Moldovan administered Latin-script schools and access of the farmers to their lands that are situated beyond administrative line.

*With regard to the schools* we are currently trying to reach functional solutions that would make sure that schools have all the rental and utilities contracts signed and implemented. In parallel we are looking into the issue of a regulatory document on the functioning of the Latin-script schools. There are some useful ideas on the table already. A comprehensive long-term solution should provide those schools with a clear status, as well as prevent any substantial changes in the educational process. It is also important to avoid double-taxation of the teachers.

On the *issue of farmers' access to their lands*, there is a need to advance on the regulatory framework and agree on conditions for land use. Such an agreement should be depoliticized and should not affect the issue of property rights, because the sides have quite different opinions in this regard. Chisinau has recently made some proposals and we expect to continue the dialogue. In meantime, it is important to avoid any unilateral measures. We rely on the Mission's continuous support in achieving progress on both issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Ensuring *economic growth* and development is a common goal for Chisinau and Tiraspol that could be better achieved through joint actions. The economic future of the right and left banks of Nistru river depends very much on the relations with EU market after the creation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. We hope to see more openness and pragmatic approach from Tiraspol in terms of discussing parameters of the **DCFTA** implementation in the Transnistrian region. Recently, we noted certain signs of increased interest in this regard and we need to build on them during the coming weeks and months.

The *security situation* in the region remains generally stable, although there are still valid reasons for concern. Tiraspol keeps the course towards enhancing its infrastructure along the administrative line. The Joint Control Commission remains in the impasse because of the refusal of the Transnistrian delegation to accept discussion on the issue of freedom of movement, although this is one of the key provisions in the basic documents on the peacekeeping arrangements in the Security Zone. It only reminds about the need to look into the possibilities to transform the current peacekeeping operation into a multinational civilian mission under international mandate. In the same context, we would like to reiterate our longstanding position regarding the need to finalize, without any preconditions, the withdrawal of Russian forces and remaining ammunition stockpiles from Cobasna, in accordance with the relevant international commitments.

Mr Chairman.

It is true that *confidence-building activities* are very important for keeping the dialogue and removing the barriers between communities on both banks of Nistru. We also hope that cooperation will be resumed on *eliminating pesticides and radioactive sources* from the Transnistrian region. The dismantling of the major part of the *obsolete cable-car* across Nistru river by Russian specialists in cooperation with the civil emergency services from Chisinau and Tiraspol and financial support of the European Union – is an example of efficient and transparent cooperation which needs to be multiplied in other areas. Effective promotion of confidence-building activities requires *full and unrestricted access of the OSCE Mission* to the Transnistrian region. The ongoing dialogue on this matter should result in solutions that would not undermine the Mission's capacity and effectiveness.

Mr Chairman,

The assistance and expertise provided by the OSCE Mission to Moldovan authorities in matters of *human rights and law enforcement* is highly appreciated. In this sense, I would highlight the support provided to the national institutions in the field of combating hate crimes, the prosecution office reform, training the law enforcement officials as well as monitoring of detention facilities.

At the same time, we note the important contribution of the OSCE towards *improving the media* regulatory framework as well as promoting diversity of opinions throughout the country. However, we share the point made by Ambassador Scanlan regarding the fact that propaganda represents a serious challenge for media landscape in Moldova. Our independent regulatory body is taking gradual actions to improve diversity and pluralism in accordance with the law.

Also, we appreciate the Mission activities aimed at mobilizing *civil society and youth* from both banks of the Nistru river in order to make them more involved in decision-making process. In this regard, we would also welcome any extra-budgetary support from our partners to the development of the Civil Society Forum.

Touching upon the *trafficking in human beings* we would like to express our gratitude to the OSCE Mission for the continuous support and assistance provided on the implementation of the policies in this field. In particular, the monthly Technical Coordination Meetings are of the major importance and represent a good platform to enhance the partnership between the central government, the civil society and donors. Also, we value the capacity-building trainings and seminars on diverse aspects regarding the THB for national institutions organized with the support of the OSCE Mission.

Before concluding this part, let me wish Ambassador Scanlan every success in implementing the Mission's mandate during these challenging times. The OSCE community remains united with regard to the need of resolving the Transnistrian conflict on the basis of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, while providing a special status for the Transnistrian region within a reintegrated country. Hopefully, we will be able to reconfirm this approach at the upcoming OSCE ministerial council in Basel.

Mr. Chairperson,

Turning to the address of Mr. Bastagli, I would like to mention that since the very launch of the Mission in 2005, we have established an excellent cooperation with the EUBAM on the whole spectrum of its mandate. During the past nine years, the EUBAM has played a key role in enhancing interoperability between customs and border guards' services of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. It contributed to strengthening the two countries capacities to jointly address common challenges and to ensure a more effective integrated border management in line with the best EU practices and standards. The EUBAM assistance in ensuring a better control of migration and trade flows, particularly on the Transnistrian segment significantly contributes to securing the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, which is of special relevance nowadays in light of the current developments in the region.

A particular point has to be made about the EUBAM's valuable contribution in assisting the efforts aimed at advancing the Transnistrian conflict settlement both by monitoring the Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border and supporting various confidence building measures between the two banks of the Nistru River. In this regard, we would like to express our appreciation for the expertise provided by EUBAM in the search of compromise practical solutions on passenger and cargo rail transportation, trade and movement of people.

Facilitating the interaction between relevant institutions of Chisinau and Tiraspol and organizing joint trainings, the EUBAM brings a necessary added value to the confidence building measures process. We stand ready to continue working closely with the EUBAM on all these issues as well as in moving forward with the concept of common economic space of the two banks of the Nistru River.

We find of particular importance the data provided by the EUBAM on the trade flows while assessing the situation on the Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. As it was noted, this year the Transnistrian region has registered a positive trend in the export of goods, which proves once again that allegations on the so-called blockade are inconsistent and do not correspond with the realities on the ground.

In conclusion, we would like to thank once again Ambassador Scanlan and Mr. Bastagli for their comprehensive reports and wish them and their teams every success in performing the tasks ahead. We are looking forward to continue the very good cooperation with the EUBAM and the OSCE Mission in Moldova.

Thank you.