

**STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE  
1097th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 April 2016

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

The European Union thanks Ambassador Scanlan for his fourth report to the Permanent Council.

The European Union supports a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Transdnestrian conflict on the basis of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova, with the region of Transdnestria granted special status. The OSCE Mission plays a pivotal role in this regard. We are grateful for the visit of mediators and observers of the settlement process to Chişinău and Tiraspol on 5 and 6 April 2016. This is a positive step which has demonstrated that the mediators and observers are unanimous about the need to achieve a resolution to the conflict and in their determination to move the process forward. In this context, we support the proposed approach of holding regular meetings between the chief mediators of the parties (“1+1” format), as well as working groups, in view of convening a major and constructive meeting in the 5+2 format in the coming weeks. As highlighted in the report, this requires considerable commitment by both parties, on the basis of genuine proposals.

A major factor in the stability and prosperity of the region will be the continuation and completion of the discussions in this format. The Republic of Moldova, including the region of Transdnestria, would reap specific benefits from this. The parties must therefore find a shared vision of the status of Transdnestria based on respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova. We call on the parties to show the political will needed to resume the process. We still have confidence in the positive role played by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transdnestrian Settlement Process, Ambassador Meier-Klodt.

We trust that relaunching the negotiations in the “5+2” format will lead to tangible progress in the three baskets, in particular as regards political and institutional aspects, and security matters under the third basket. It is at the same time important to make headway in specific fields, such as number plates, the recognition of diplomas, telecommunications and criminal proceedings against figures and civil servants from both sides. We also call on the parties to redouble their efforts to promote legal trade so that the association and free trade agreement can be applied effectively across the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova, including the Transdnestrian region.

We welcome the Mission's activities in the three dimensions, including with regard to security, the freedom of the media and national minorities, and the establishment of a working group to promote co-operation between the Moldovan parliament and the People's Assembly of Gagauzia.

We encourage all of the field missions to focus their reports on an evaluation of the impact of their activities and the monitoring of this over time. We would be grateful to Ambassador Scanlan if he could shed light on the major impact of the activities carried out by his Mission over the past six months and tell us about its plans for evaluation in the coming year.

The obstacles to freedom of movement, to the opening of bridges and to free access by farmers to their land in the region of Transdnistria are also important issues to be resolved. The same applies to incidents in the security zone, and also to the withdrawal of the remaining Russian military presence from the Republic of Moldova. The European Union also continues to pay particular attention to schools in the Transdnistrian region which teach in the Latin alphabet and encourages the Mission to continue its involvement in this field, so that efforts are effective and have a lasting impact.

To allow the members of the Mission to carry out their mandates in full and contribute effectively to meeting the conditions necessary for a peaceful settlement of the Transdnistrian conflict, they need full and unimpeded access to the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova, including to the Transdnistrian region and the Russian arms depot at Colbasna. We call on all participants in the "5+2" talks to again use their influence to convince the Transdnistrian leadership that it is in its interest to put an end to the restrictions on the freedom of movement of the members of the Mission. We hope that this matter, which is a priority of the Chairmanship and the members of the "5+2" format, can achieve a favourable outcome as soon as possible.

In conclusion, the European Union reiterates its commitment to strengthen its political association and economic integration with the Republic of Moldova under the Association Agreement currently in force. We hope that the Moldovan people and all of the political and economic decision makers in the Republic of Moldova, especially those from the Transdnistrian region, will manage to recognize and seize the opportunities available to them and that they will be intent on pursuing the reforms in earnest.

The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Serbia<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 Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

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