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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1230th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

30 May 2019

In response to the report by Claus Neukirch, Head of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova

The European Union welcomes Claus Neukirch, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, and thanks him for his second report to the Permanent Council.

We support a peaceful and comprehensive settlement to the Transdniestrian conflict on the basis of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders, with a special status for Transdniestria.

We note that the parliamentary elections on 24 February and the current negotiations to form a new coalition government in Chişinău have slowed down the conflict settlement process and hope that a government can be formed soon. We also note the assessment by the Head of Mission that the political commitment on both sides remains intact, which will enable them to continue a pragmatic approach to find practical solutions for the benefit of the population on both sides of the Dniester. It is essential that the positive dynamic that has characterized the negotiations since 2016 is kept up, and we call for close co-ordination between the OSCE Mission to Moldova, the Conflict Prevention Centre and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transdniestrian Settlement Process to achieve this. We welcome the visit by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, the Slovak Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák, to the country in January.

The European Union calls on the sides to continue to rapidly implement all of the agreements concluded in Rome on 29 and 30 May 2018 at the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement in the “5+2” format.

Regarding telecommunications, we urge the authorities of the Republic of Moldova to intensify dialogue with the private operators concerned so as to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution.

We also encourage the sides to make progress as soon as possible with regard to criminal cases and freedom of movement.

With respect to the situation of Latin-script schools in the region of Transdniestria, we are gratified to note that the mechanism in place is functioning, and we count on the Mission to closely monitor the developments necessary for their normal and long-term operation.

We welcome the constructive work by the sides in new areas to bring together the populations on either side of the Dniester, such as the railways, postal services and environmental questions.

We trust that all these results will lead to tangible progress in the three baskets on the agreed agenda for the negotiation process, in particular on political, institutional and security aspects of the third basket.

As stated on the occasion of the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly of a decision on the “Complete and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova” in connection with Operational Group of Russian Forces, we recall the importance of completing the processes initiated as part of commitments undertaken at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999. We urge that discussion on the withdrawal or destruction of Russian ammunition and arms in Transdniestria be resumed in the near future. The destruction of ammunition at the arms depot in Cobasna has become particularly critical in view of the heightened risk that some of the arms are seriously damaged. We call on the Mission to continue to monitor the situation in the security zone and to provide regular information on incidents.

We welcome the work carried out by the Mission to improve human rights on both sides of the Dniester, particularly with regard to combating trafficking in human beings and violence against women. We urge the sides to participate actively in the human rights working group re-established in 2018. We fully support the efforts by the authorities in Chişinău to implement the National Strategy for the Consolidation of Inter-Ethnic Relations with a view to building an inclusive and tolerant society.

Progress needs to be made in the implementation of the Law on a Special Legal Status for Gagauzia. The European Union urges the authorities in Chişinău to complete the suspended legislative initiatives.

Finally, following the publication by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the final report on the 24 February elections, we recall the importance of implementing all of its recommendations and of continuing efforts to ensure that the country’s electoral law and the way it is implemented are in line with international standards.

The candidate countries North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹ and Albania¹, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

1 North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.