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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1244th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 October 2019

On the report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova

Mr. Chairperson,

We express our appreciation to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, distinguished Ambassador Claus Neukirch, for his detailed report. We should also like to thank the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transdniestrian Settlement Process, Mr. Franco Frattini, for organizing the meeting of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement in the “5+2” format, and our Slovak partners for their warm welcome of the meeting participants in Bratislava from 8 to 10 October.

There would be no justification for exaggerating the results of the latest round of negotiations. An objective assessment of the situation concerning the Transdniestrian settlement gave us no reason to hope for a different outcome. It was clear that the negotiation process was losing momentum. Most of the practical agreements on social and humanitarian issues agreed upon in 2016 and 2017 from the “Berlin plus package” remained unfulfilled. Since the unjustified breakdown in communication between the Moldovan Government and the Transdniestrian authorities at various levels – from the “5+2” format to working groups – new problems have accumulated.

It was obvious to us that any further delay in the negotiations would jeopardize the positive developments achieved in recent years. The positive response to the Russian proposal to organize a trip for mediators and observers to Moldova and Transdniestria clearly showed that the partners share our concerns. It is gratifying that the visit on 12 July facilitated the resumption of contact between the political representatives of the Moldovan Government and of the Transdniestrian authorities, the co-operation among experts in specialized working groups and, finally, the holding of a meeting in the “5+2” format. We hope that by ramping up the negotiation process at all its levels we will be able to finally agree on the protocol of the Bratislava meeting.

In the future, it is important not to deviate from the 2012 document on principles and procedures for the conduct of negotiations within the framework of the Permanent Conference, which provides for such meetings at least six times a year without reference to certain preliminary practical solutions.

We are confident that it is important for the parties to achieve the full implementation of already secured agreements, without exception, following the letter of the “Berlin plus package”. I would like to believe that the positive developments of the past three years will not be wiped out by the policy of the new authorities in Moldova. By shielding the agreements between the Government of Moldova and the authorities of Transdniestria from the domestic political situation, it would be possible to fulfil the task set in 2016 of improving the mechanism for implementing achievements in the “5+2” format in national legislation. The ball is now in the Moldovan Government’s court.

The attempts to create a fuss over the statements by representatives of the Russian leadership confirming its readiness to dispose of the ammunition in the village of Cobasna are hardly justified. It is common knowledge that we would have fulfilled our obligations once the appropriate conditions were in place.

As a mediator and guarantor State in the settlement of the Transdniestrian problem, Russia is determined to continue assisting the Government of Moldova and the authorities of Transdniestria in finding compromises in close co-ordination with the OSCE Chairmanship and other participants in the “5+2” process. The effectiveness of these efforts depends, first and foremost, on the parties themselves and their readiness for a constructive dialogue, taking into account each other’s interests. The temptation to apply unilateral pressure should be avoided. As the history of the Transdniestrian settlement shows, such attempts are unlikely to lead to the creation of preconditions for progress in solving the problem.

Thank you for your attention.