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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1097th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 April 2016

**In response to the report by the
Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank Ambassador Michael Scanlan for his detailed report on the activity of the OSCE Mission to Moldova which he heads.

We agree with the opinion that it is critical to resume formal dialogue, which has been suspended since June 2014, in the format of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement. It is important to ensure that the negotiations continue on a regular basis and not be hampered by the internal political situation in the Republic of Moldova or Transdniestria. As a guarantor in the negotiation process, Russia submitted its proposals to the parties for possible steps to normalize the Conference's work. We trust that they will be given careful consideration.

We take note of the efforts by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transdniestrian Settlement Process, Ambassador Meier-Klodt, to relaunch dialogue in the "5+2" format. We believe that the visit to Transdniestria and Moldova on 5 and 6 April 2016 by a delegation of mediators and observers, featuring one Russian representative, the Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Gubarev, will help to reset full-scale negotiations on the Transdniestrian problem and enable the plans of the German Chairmanship to hold an official meeting in the "5+2" format in June this year to come to fruition.

We support the Mission's activities in organizing meetings between political representatives of Moldova and Transdniestria in the "1+1" format and also through joint Moldovan-Transdniestrian expert groups. It is crucial to maintain the positive momentum and ensure the success of those meetings, which are dedicated to resolving practical matters, in line with the fully justified tactic of "small steps". We firmly believe that the parties have demonstrated their readiness to co-operate in practice to ease the strain on the lives of citizens on both sides of the Dniester and that this will produce the conditions necessary for discussing the political aspects of a settlement.

In this context, it is of fundamental importance to avoid unilateral steps which undermine the multilateral mediation efforts to resolve the conflict. This primarily concerns measures taken jointly by the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to control both the foreign economic activity of Transdnistria and the movement of permanent residents on the left bank of the Dniester. It is already patently obvious that the policy of exerting pressure on the Transdnistrian leadership is not paying off.

We share the point of view of Ambassador Scanlan regarding the need to ensure that the Joint Control Commission and the joint peacekeeping operation on the Dniester can work unimpeded. We consider it to be unacceptable to try to introduce restrictive measures against Russian peacekeepers who are effectively ensuring the safety of the zone under their responsibility within the agreed framework of international law and under their respective mandate.

The principled line taken by Russia with regard to the resolution of the conflict in Transdnistria has remained consistent. At talks in Moscow on 4 April 2016 with the Moldovan Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Mr. Andrei Galbur, Russia again confirmed its willingness to continue acting as mediator in the talks and guarantor of the agreements reached in the unique and generally recognized "5+2" format. We are looking forward to moving beyond the current period of distrust between the Moldovan and Transdnistrian leaderships and to compromise-based decisions being taken which address concerns for a comprehensive and feasible solution to the problem. We are convinced that the responsibility for achieving mutually acceptable agreements lies primarily with the parties to the conflict themselves. We are also prepared to provide further assistance in this, in close co-operation with the Chairmanship and other participants in the "5+2" process, with a view to promoting negotiations in the search for a lasting, fair and comprehensive solution to the Transdnistrian problem, whereby Transdnistria might be granted a special and reliably safeguarded status as part of a united, sovereign and neutral Moldova.

In conclusion, we should like to wish Ambassador Scanlan and his colleagues in the Mission further success in their difficult job.

Thank you for your attention.