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**STATEMENT BY
THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1398th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 November 2022

**In response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova,
Ambassador Kelly Keiderling**

The European Union congratulates the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Kelly Keiderling, on her appointment and welcomes her on the occasion of her first report to the Permanent Council. We fully support the work carried out by the OSCE Mission to Moldova and are willing to continue the excellent co-operation that we had with her predecessor, Claus Neukirch, whom we thank for his assiduous work over the past four years. As the Republic of Moldova continues to suffer from the repercussions of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, it is more important than ever to keep up the monitoring activities of the OSCE Mission to Moldova and the publication of its reports in a professional and impartial manner.

The European Union recognizes the European perspective of the Republic of Moldova, which received candidate country status on 23 June. We continue to firmly support the very ambitious Government reform programme, in particular in the area of the rule of law, justice system reform and anti-corruption efforts.

The European Union highly commends the generosity shown by the Republic of Moldova in taking in refugees fleeing Russia's war against Ukraine. The European Union and its Member States fully support the Republic of Moldova in that endeavour and also in terms of helping the country to address the grave socio-economic consequences of that war, including its consequences for energy security. We welcome the organization by France of the next ministerial conference of the Moldova Support Platform, which will take place in Paris on 21 November and will be devoted, in particular, to the topic of energy. Co-chaired by Germany and Romania, it follows on from the meetings held in Berlin and Bucharest earlier this year.

The European Union reiterates its support for a peaceful, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Transnistrian 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 Transnistria. We continue to support the efforts to that end by the Mission and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting.

The European Union regrets that it is currently impossible to organize meetings in the "5+2" format given Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. The European Union welcomes, on the other hand, the continued discussions among the chief negotiators and within the working groups aimed at finding specific solutions to the challenges faced by people on both banks of the Dniester, which have been exacerbated by

the Russian aggression. We encourage the authorities in Chişinău and Tiraspol to continue their dialogue on energy matters with a view to addressing the grave repercussions for people on both banks in light of the decision by Gazprom to reduce its gas supplies to the Republic of Moldova. It is vital that all parties in the “5+2” format continue to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. In this regard, we condemn the violation of the Republic of Moldova’s airspace by Russian missiles. We also deeply regret the repercussions in the region resulting from Russia’s air strikes against Ukraine, as exemplified by the debris from a Russian missile that crashed down on the Moldovan village of Naslavcea on 31 October.

The European Union remains committed to respect for human rights and to the full implementation of the package of confidence-building measures, including the measures regarding Latin-script schools in the Transdniestrian region. We reiterate our concerns about the deterioration of the human rights situation in the Transdniestrian region and underline the importance of respect for international standards and OSCE commitments on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We support the Mission’s efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in all its activities. We welcome the announcement that a Women’s Advisory Board will be launched very soon to offer recommendations with regard to the Transdniestrian settlement process.

We regret the absence of progress on the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russian military forces and equipment from the territory of the Republic of Moldova, which refers to the Operative Group of Russian Forces, as well as the lack of transparency over Russian troop movements. In the current context it is more crucial than ever to complete the processes initiated as part of the commitments undertaken at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, which envisage the withdrawal by Russia of its military forces and equipment stationed on Moldovan territory without the consent of the Republic of Moldova.

In view of the heightened risk posed by weapons and ammunition depots, in particular by the one in Cobasna – a risk aggravated further by the series of unexplained explosions that affected the Transdniestrian region in the spring – we recall the international commitments undertaken by the Russian Federation to destroy the munitions in that depot. We exhort Russia to conduct that operation without further delay. We recall that the OSCE has a mandate and the means to contribute to the withdrawal or destruction of Russian ammunition and armaments from the Transdniestrian region, and that its involvement is essential to the transparency and international verification of these operations.

We call upon the Mission to continue to monitor the situation in the Security Zone and on the border with Ukraine, and to report without delay on any incidents occurring there. We reiterate our appeal for strict adherence to the rules established by the Joint Control Commission in the Security Zone, and for respect for the Mission’s mandate and for the free movement of Mission members.

The European Union and its Member States stand by the Republic of Moldova more than ever, and we shall continue to provide assistance, be it in the framework of the Association Agreement (Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement), the Eastern Partnership, the European Political Community, the visa exemption regime or aid in dealing with the increase in energy prices and the grave consequences of Russia’s war against Ukraine. In that regard, the European Union condemns the efforts by Russia to destabilize the Republic of Moldova politically, economically and in energy terms. The European Union will continue to make its aid contingent on specific reform outcomes, with a view to bringing tangible benefits to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. The European Union stands side by side with the Republic of Moldova.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Albania¹ and Ukraine, the potential candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina¹ and Georgia, and the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

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