

STATEMENT

**by H.E. Mrs. Natalia Gherman, Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova,
at the 22nd meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
Belgrade, 3 December 2015**

ENGLISH only

Madam Chairperson,
Dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship and its dedicated team for the great work during its mandate.

This year proved once again that the OSCE concept of comprehensive security stays valid as never before. In addition to longstanding problems, the OSCE area and beyond has been confronted with an appalling surge of terrorist attacks and an unprecedented wave of migration flows. These issues pose a major challenge to our security but also are a test to European solidarity. And we have no other options than passing this test. OSCE should be part of the process aimed at defining a sustainable approach to tackle these phenomena.

Newly arising challenges also remind us that we should get back to the fundamentals. 40 years after the Helsinki Final Act was adopted, European security is at a crossroads. I believe the key question for us is – are we ready to start a new process to ensure that European security is indeed our common project? If affirmative – then we consider that the Helsinki Final Act should lie at the core of such a process, with the goal to ensure respect and implementation of Helsinki principles in the current context. The Final Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons offers a number of useful ideas and we thank its members for their valuable effort. Now it is up to us – the participating States – to demonstrate both the responsibility and leadership to find a way forward.

On the broad OSCE agenda, we remain firmly committed to revitalize the conventional arms control in Europe and to significantly modernize the Vienna Document that would adequately reflect the security and military developments in the OSCE area. We need to constructively engage in talks on updating the existing conventional arms control and the Confidence and Security Building Measures regimes in order to provide better military transparency and ensure stability and predictability in Europe.

We acknowledge that the international community, including the OSCE participating States, is working hard on dealing with emerging crisis situations. However, older security issues should not be neglected. Unresolved conflicts in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova should be solved based on respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of these states.

The conflict-resolution process in Ukraine passed through various developments this year. Our efforts should concentrate on consolidating the ceasefire regime and initiating a

comprehensive political process to reach a solution to the crisis. In particular, we highly appreciate the activity of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. We strongly believe Mission's capacities should be enhanced with human and financial resources. I am pleased to inform that the Republic of Moldova has provided as of now 27 qualified persons to the Mission. We support the continuing activity of the Normandy format as well as the Trilateral Contact Group, which aimed at creating conditions for a comprehensive political dialogue on the basis of Minsk agreements. The Republic of Moldova has constantly supported a lasting political settlement based on the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders that include Crimea as well.

Let me turn to the Transnistrian conflict settlement process. The dynamics of the negotiation process lagged behind the desired schedule due to various factors. While the rigid approach and a number of preconditions set by the Transnistrian side did not allow us to reconvene official rounds of the negotiations in the 5+2 format, the dialogue has continued within the meetings of the Political Representatives and the expert working groups from Chisinau and Tiraspol. Some progress was made in identifying solutions in the fields of environment, railway traffic and transportation. Despite all the false accusations of a so-called "economic blockade" against Transnistria, jointly with the EU partners, we undertook significant efforts to promote trade facilitation and secure preferential access of the Transnistrian companies to the European markets. We have worked hard for these efforts to bring results soon. This element constitutes part of the comprehensive European integration agenda, which represents the core of Moldovan authorities' policies in all spheres.

But this is clearly **not** enough. And blocking or artificially limiting channels for dialogue is **not** the right way. Therefore, we reaffirm that dialogue should continue without preconditions at all levels. Moreover, the time has shown that dialogue on very important, but primarily technical issues will not advance far ahead without a strategic perspective in sight. That is why we call on all the mediators and observers to join efforts to revive the 5+2 format and focus it on the core political issues of the conflict resolution. In this regard, I am glad that here – in the OSCE – we agreed on a shared goal: to achieve "*a comprehensive peaceful settlement based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, with a special status for the Transnistrian region that fully guarantees the human, political, economic, and social rights of its population*". In parallel, work should be continued on finding lasting solutions for such issues as functioning of the Latin-script schools in the Transnistrian region, ensuring free access of the Moldovan farmers to their agricultural lands and other.

We remain concerned over the military factor in the region. In this respect, we reiterate our position on the need to complete the withdrawal of Russian military forces as well as ammunition stockpiles from Moldova in accordance with the international commitments. We also support a transparent process of destruction of the ammunition. In addition, the current peacekeeping operation has to be transformed into an international civilian mission to address the real needs on the ground.

In conclusion, I wish to the incoming German Chair every success next year and pledge our support and co-operation.

Thank you.