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**STATEMENT BY  
THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1470th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

25 April 2024

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

The European Union welcomes the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Kelly Keiderling, and thanks her for her report.

We take this opportunity to also welcome the visit by the Chairperson-in-Office, Dr. Ian Borg, to the Republic of Moldova at a time when it is important to show support for the stability of that country.

In view of the grave repercussions that Russia's unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine is having for the Republic of Moldova, the Mission's monitoring activities and its publication of reports in a professional and impartial manner are of continuing importance. We also appreciate the Mission's manifold contributions to the maintenance of dialogue between the two banks of the Dniester/Nistru River, its work in the politico-military sphere and the projects it implements, while taking care to ensure gender equality in all its activities.

So that the Mission can fulfil its mandate unhindered, it is essential that this mandate be of a one-year duration, in line with Brussels Ministerial Council Decision No. 18/06. We once again urge Russia to join the consensus for reverting to this practice. Mission members must also be able to move around freely in order to fulfil their mandate, monitor the situation in the Security Zone and on the border with Ukraine, and report back without delay, as stipulated in the rules established by the Joint Control Commission in the Security Zone.

The European Union reiterates its support for a peaceful, comprehensive and sustainable settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict based on respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders, with a special status for Transdniestria.

As meetings in the "5+2" format are still impossible to hold given Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the European Union welcomes the continuation of discussions among the chief negotiators in the "1+1" format and within the working groups. We encourage the authorities in Chişinău and Tiraspol to continue their dialogue and to maintain calm while finding specific solutions to the challenges faced by people on both banks of the Dniester/Nistru, which have been exacerbated by the Russian aggression.

It is crucial that all parties in the "5+2" format respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. The European Union condemns all attempts by Russia and its accomplices to

destabilize the country, including through cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns aimed at sapping trust in the country's institutions and undermining confidence with regard to its democratically elected leaders. The incidents in the Transdniestrian region must be investigated thoroughly by the constitutional authorities and the Mission members granted unhindered access in accordance with their mandate.

We regret the absence of progress towards the complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Russian military forces and equipment illegally maintained on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, by which we mean the Operative Group of Russian Forces, and also the lack of transparency regarding Russian troop movements. In the current context, it is more crucial than ever that Russia comply with its commitments undertaken at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, which envisage the withdrawal of Russian military forces and equipment stationed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova without the consent of the host country.

Similarly, we recall the international commitments undertaken by Russia to destroy the ammunition stockpiles at the depot in Cobasna, which constitute a significant hazard for the civilian population of the entire region, and urge Russia to carry out this operation without further delay. 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 to safeguard the transparency and international verification of such operations.

We are 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. The human rights situation in the Transdniestrian region remains alarming. We urge the authorities in Tiraspol to release all political prisoners and stop persecuting and obstructing the freedom of movement and expression of human rights defenders, political activists and journalists.

The European Union has granted the Republic of Moldova candidate status, and in December 2023 it decided to open accession negotiations on the basis of the progress achieved in implementing reforms designed to ensure that national legislation is compatible with the *acquis communautaire*. We continue to firmly support the Government's reform efforts as it pursues its European path. The European Union welcomes the establishment of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, which is beneficial for the entire Republic of Moldova, including as regards exports by enterprises from the Transdniestrian region.

We reiterate our determination to provide all the support required by the Republic of Moldova so that it can address the challenges it is facing on account of the war of aggression being waged by Russia against Ukraine, and to strengthen the country's resilience, security and stability in view of Russia's destabilizing activities. The European Union likewise supports constructive policies and initiatives aimed at bringing the populations on both banks of the Dniester/Nistru closer together economically and socially.

In conclusion, the European Union will continue to support the OSCE Mission to Moldova. We wish Ambassador Keiderling and her capable team much success in their future activities.

The candidate countries North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Albania<sup>1</sup>, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup> and Georgia, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as Andorra, align themselves with this statement.

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