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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1178th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 March 2018

On the negotiations on a Transdniestrian settlement

Mr. Chairperson,

We are closely following developments in the talks on a settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict. As a mediator and guarantor country, we are working actively with the parties to reach a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

We note that Moldovan-Transdniestrian dialogue has intensified between the political representatives of Chişinău and Tiraspol, and in the relevant working groups. Visible results have been achieved in implementing the agreements reached at the Vienna meeting of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement (“5+2” format). The road bridge connecting Gura Bîcului and Bychok is open, procedures have been agreed for obtaining an apostille for Transdniestrian educational qualification documents, solutions have been found for the operation of Moldovan schools that use the Latin alphabet, and agreements have been reached on the use of agricultural land in Dubăsari district. There are prospects for obtaining practical results in resolving issues regarding politically motivated criminal prosecution. Substantive discussions are under way on modalities for organizing co-operation in telecommunications and the electricity sector.

A good pace has been set in resolving issues of importance for people on both sides of the Dniester through the policy of “small steps”. Goodwill on the part of Tiraspol has greatly contributed to these results. It is important that Chişinău demonstrate similar flexibility in return.

In this context, we regret that at the Vienna meeting of the “5+2” format talks, the parties were unable in the outcome document to settle on a compromise on accepting the participation of Transdniestrian vehicles in international traffic. It is good that the authorities in Chişinău and Tiraspol want to settle this matter as soon as possible. Abandoning attempts to fix in the technical decision status aspects that are sensitive for the parties would facilitate this objective.

In principle, we think it important to reach a swift conclusion of work on an enhanced mechanism for implementing “5+2” format decisions in national legislation. This would help to make Chişinău and Tiraspol more disciplined about fulfilling their reciprocal obligations and make them irreversible and lasting.

We are ready to encourage the negotiation process between Chişinău and Tiraspol with the aim of maintaining the positive dynamic. To ensure continued progress, it is important to organize regular talks at all levels, including in the “5+2” format, in accordance with the decisions reached at the Vienna meeting of the “5+2” format on 27 and 28 November 2017. The Principles and Procedures for the Conduct of Negotiations call for such meetings to take place not less than six times per year.

Russia reiterates its unchanged approach to achieving a peaceful settlement to the Transdniestrian conflict. We believe the responsibility for reaching mutually acceptable agreements lies primarily with the parties to the conflict themselves. We are ready to continue facilitating this process in close co-operation with the OSCE Chairmanship and other participants in the “5+2” format to advance negotiations on a lasting, fair and comprehensive settlement to the Transdniestrian conflict.

Thank you for your attention.