



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova Ambassador Michael Scanlan

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 14, 2015

The United States warmly welcomes Ambassador Scanlan to the Permanent Council, and we thank you for your comprehensive and, even more importantly, frank report.

The United States strongly supports the OSCE Mission to Moldova. The Mission performs a crucial role in efforts to broker a comprehensive settlement to the Transnistria dispute by facilitating direct dialogue among the sides through the official negotiations in the 5+2 format, by supporting the expert working groups, and by encouraging confidence-building measures that address concerns in all three OSCE dimensions. We were deeply disappointed by the repeated postponement of the 5+2 talks in 2014, as well as their delay this year. We are pleased, however, that there now is an increasing dynamism on the ground through high-level and meaningful contacts among the sides, and we hope this will lead to concrete progress in 2015. All sides need to show they are ready to move forward and engage in productive 5+2 negotiations with the aim of finding a comprehensive settlement that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova with a special status for the Transnistrian region. The plan to “focus on solutions” is a good starting point for re-energizing the 5+2 process.

Ambassador, as you have reported, cooperation among the sides and all interested parties is possible. The extension of a rail freight agreement through the end of 2016 is a good illustration. It is imperative that cooperation on smaller projects, such as reconnecting landline telecommunications networks, contribute to, rather than distract from, the primary goal of a resolution of the dispute. We share your hope that the remaining pieces of the dangerous cable car over the Rybnitsa River can be fully removed this year. We also hope that a durable solution regarding the Latin-script schools can be found and that the Gura Bicului/Bychok Bridge can be reopened this year.

The United States supports the Mission's continued efforts to complete the withdrawal and destruction of ammunition and armaments from the Transnistrian region. Our experts are ready to work creatively with your team and with key players in the region to facilitate the removal and destruction of military equipment.

We commend the Mission's efforts to draw attention to Gagauzia and to establish a joint commission between the Moldovan parliament and legislative body in Comrat to implement the 1994 law on the special status of the Gagauz autonomous territorial unit. We welcome the Mission's work with the High Commissioner on National Minorities to support the development of a national dialogue, strategy, and action plan on the integration of national minorities and social cohesion.

The OSCE Mission to Moldova has an important role to play in supporting Moldova's reform program and reporting on the political and security situation, including in the Transnistrian region. The Mission must have unrestricted access to all of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region, to perform its activities and fulfill its mandate. The conduct of observation patrols is specifically written into the Mission's mandate to bring to light any problems with the free movement of goods and people, to provide insight into security concerns, and to support the negotiation process. We are encouraged by your report, and expect that the Mission will soon have unfettered access to Transnistria in order to provide unbiased reporting.

In conclusion, allow me to underscore my government's strong commitment to our partnership with Moldova. We remain committed to Moldova as it pursues reforms and continues on its path to European integration.

Thank you, Ambassador Scanlan, for your hard work and dedication, and for that of your highly skilled team.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.