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**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT

at the 809th OSCE Permanent Council meeting with regard to the
case of Mr. E. Vardanyan
(13 May 2010)

Mr Chairman,

First of all, let me thank the United States Delegation for its statement, drawing once again our attention on the case of Vardanyan and others. We are grateful to US, European Union and the OSCE for their efforts aimed at resolving this particular case, as well as for promoting and protecting human rights in the Transnistrian region of Moldova in general.

The Chisinau authorities remain deeply concerned about the fate of the journalist Ernest Vardanyan and Mr. Ilie Kazak, both Moldovan citizens, who were arrested by the Transnistrian security services on the basis of false accusations of “espionage and high treason.” Since the arrest of Mr. Vardanyan, the Moldovan authorities are undertaking all necessary efforts to make his release from custody possible. In parallel, we are also informing the international community about the cases of human rights and fundamental freedoms infringement in the Transnistrian region.

We are deeply worried about the fact that during the detention, due to the mistreatment, Mr. Vardanyan’s personal integrity was compromised, as witnessed by his wife. His family was under constant pressure and intimidation. The purpose of these actions is obvious – the “investigators” from Transnistrian security service were seeking to get from Mr. Vardanyan a “voluntary confession” that was, actually, prepared by Tiraspol security people themselves. All the elements of this case – accusation of high-treason and yesterday’s public self-denunciation by Vardanyan on his very 30th birthday anniversary – are reminding us the methods of oppression used against political opponents in older times. Let me also highlight that from the very beginning he was deprived of his fundamental right to freely choose his own legal counsel.

The situation regarding Mr. Vardanyan as well as other similar actions against the civil society on the left bank of Nistru just come as a confirmation that the Tiraspol regime is permanently looking to create an imaginary “external enemy”, aiming to discredit the settlement process and confidence building measures, and prevent any attempts to open the society towards democratic values and standards.

We reiterate our call to all our partners, especially the mediators in the 5+2 format, to join the Moldovan authorities in their efforts to ensure the immediate release of the journalist and

other persons arrested under these false accusations. I would also like to confirm that these unconstructive steps by security structures in Tiraspol will not undermine our will to engage in promotion of confidence building measures for the benefit of citizens from both banks of Nistru.

Mr. Chairman,

Looking forward to the upcoming 5+2 meeting in Astana on 24 May, we would like to stress out once again our firm interest in the earliest resumption of official talks in the 5+2 format, which is the only suitable mechanism for reaching a sustainable settlement to the conflict based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. In this context, we would like to thank all our partners and in particular the Kazakh CiO for all their efforts in this respect. Preparations are well under way. Chisinau is also elaborating its contribution for this meeting. We hope that discussions will be focused on the substance and will help to identify practical solutions for concrete problems that the people are facing in the region on a daily basis.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman