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STATEMENT

by Ambassador Andrei Popov, Head of the Permanent Delegation, in response to the statement delivered by H.E. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

(OSCE Permanent Council, January 16, 2014)

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to join previous speakers in warmly welcoming the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland H.E. Didier Burkhalter at the first meeting of the Permanent Council and thank him for outlining the priorities of the Swiss Chairmanship. While aligning to the EU Statement, we would like to make some brief remarks in our national capacity.

We welcome the willingness of the Swiss Chairmanship to work on achieving tangible results in building and maintaining peace and stability in the OSCE region. As a future Chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation, we are looking forward to working closely with the Swiss Chairmanship and the FSC Troika towards accomplishing this goal, in particular increasing efforts on modernizing the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence and Security Building Measures.

We especially welcome the Chairmanship's focus on achieving tangible progress in the settlement of protracted conflicts. By all accounts the 2014 will be a challenging year for the Transnistrian conflict settlement and that is why a continuous and active engagement on behalf of the OSCE Chairmanship, Institutions and the Mission to Moldova is very much needed. We are looking forward to the upcoming visit by the CiO SR for the Transnistrian Settlement process Ambassador Radojko Bogojevic to the Republic of Moldova. In this context, let me also underline that the emphasis put by Switzerland and Serbia on ensuring coordination and continuity during next two years should provide a good ground for promoting a more strategic and long-term approach towards the Transnistrian conflict.

Mr. Chairman, let me briefly present key priority areas in the conflict resolution field. First of all, it is important to continue negotiations in the 5+2 format and achieve more practical results. So-called "third basket" of the negotiation agenda on political and security aspects of the conflict resolution should be finally opened. The confidence building measures should remain a driving force for the settlement process, while the Working Groups should intensify their work and engage into a meaningful and result-oriented dialogue. This process will help to address real problems in the social, economic

and other relevant spheres and will contribute to bringing the both banks of the Nistru River closer.

There will be an increased need to deal with possible unilateral actions and tensions, particularly in the Security Zone. We would expect the existing peacekeeping arrangements to react adequately and timely to possible incidents. Failures to diffuse tensions would confirm the necessity to bring the peacekeeping mechanism in line with real needs on the ground and international standards. Indeed, 20 years after the end of the military phase, the main task is not to stop the war and separate sides, but to build lasting peace and promote cooperation and interaction across the Nistru River.

There are, also, more and more worrying trends around Latin-script schools in the Transnistrian region administered by the Moldovan government. Some of them, such as Lucian Blaga lyceum in Tiraspol, are experiencing growing pressure and intimidation. Chisinau is committed to continue dialogue with Tiraspol through all channels in order to prevent tensions, but we also call on the OSCE to keep situation in these vulnerable areas under close watch and be ready to assist. In this regard, I would like to recall the important role the OSCE Mission to Moldova is playing and reiterate that there should be no unilateral and unjustified limitations to the activities conducted by the Mission in the Transnistrian region in accordance with its mandate.

Mr Chairman, I would like to reiterate our longstanding position on the need to finalize the withdrawal of Russian military forces and stockpiles of outdated ammunition, including through their disposal, where OSCE can play an important role, like it did in 2001-2004, when the withdrawal process was halted.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that at the Kiev ministerial meeting we adopted an important document – the Statement on the work of the 5+2 negotiation format. Let me stress that in this statement all 57 Participating states reaffirmed their strong determination to achieve a comprehensive, just and viable resolution of the Transdnistrian conflict exclusively through negotiations, on the basis of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova with a special status for Transdnistria that fully guarantees the human, political, economic and social rights of its population. This is our common ground and joint mandate in dealing with the Transnistrian conflict.

We would, also, like to use this opportunity to extend an invitation to your Excellency to pay a visit to the Republic of Moldova to further explore on the ground in consultation with key stakeholders ways to advance the Transnistrian conflict settlement process.

Finally, let me once again thank the President Burkhalter for his statement and wish him and his able team every success during the Chairmanship.

Thank you,