



ENGLISH only

Chairman's statement
on the closure of Moldovan schools in Latin script
in the Transdnestrian region of the Republic of Moldova

Today, the 22 July 2004, the OSCE Permanent Council met in a special session to discuss the closure of Moldovan schools in Latin script by the self-proclaimed Transdnestrian authorities. Reports and information were received from Mr. Sova, the Minister of Reintegration of the Republic of Moldova, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE Mission in Moldova. The decision of the CiO to send his Personal Representative to Moldova, Deputy Minister Draganov was welcomed. The participating States express their extreme concern over the situation created by the arbitrary actions of administration and law enforcement officials in Tiraspol.

During the discussion the Permanent Council has most strongly condemned the irresponsible and provocative actions undertaken against School No 20 in Tiraspol and School No 19 in Benderi. The forced closure of one of the schools and the measures undertaken against the other one were accompanied by acts of vandalism and illegitimate use or threat of use of force by law enforcement personnel against children, including orphans, parents and school personnel. These actions, together with the "administrative measures" announced in respect to other schools in this area represent gross violations of fundamental rights and freedoms of large part of the population on the left bank of the Dniestr river.

The OSCE participating States voiced their strong support for the activities of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Last year Mr. Rolf Ekeus provided valuable assistance for resolving the problem created by those responsible in Tiraspol, who have arbitrarily denied registration to the Latin script schools. He has continued to be consistently involved in the matter.

Full support has also been expressed in the Permanent Council for the activities of the OSCE Mission in Moldova led by Ambassador Hill. It has been requested from the Mission to continue to monitor closely the dangerous developments caused by the destabilizing arbitrariness of the local authorities. The OSCE

Mission's actions designed to calm the situation and prevent the breakout of violence have been fully endorsed.

Participating States have demanded from those responsible in Tiraspol not to take further unilateral measures, to restore the situation existing before the latest events, to return to the negotiating table and to work out, together with the Moldovan side, an agreement, which would allow the Moldovan schools teaching in Latin script in the Transdnestrian region to function freely.

In their statements participating States have called on all countries and international organizations which have influence and a role in this part of the OSCE area to undertake steps to prevent violence, to assist the restoration of stability and to continue the five-sided negotiations on the reunification of Moldova.

Some OSCE participating States called for additional measures to be considered with the aim to stop provocative actions by the Transdnestrian authorities.

Participating States have called upon all parties involved to show restraint, to resolve the situation calmly and without violence and to refrain from any action which might deepen existing differences and hinder substantial negotiations.