



Statement in Response to the Report of the Head of Mission to Moldova

Delivered by Counsellor Marit Halsvik Lillealtern at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 26 April 2023

Mr. Chair

I join others in welcoming Ambassador Keiderling to the Permanent Council and thank her for the detailed report on the Mission's activities. Norway commends her and the Mission's work and pursuit of a peaceful settlement, not least during these challenging times. The Mission continues to prove important as a stabilizing actor in the rapidly changing security situation in Moldova following the Russian Federation's illegal and brutal war of aggression against its peaceful neighbour, Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

Norway commends the Mission's fostering of constructive exchanges between the Sides, and facilitation of 1+1 meetings to identify needs, create dialogue and propose solutions. Dialogue is indeed the only way to move forward, especially when the 5+2 format remains on hold. Positive steps have been taken before, and Norway supports result-oriented meetings, also in the 5+2 format, when circumstances allow. The Mission's work concerning monitoring of the situation and gathering of information is important as developments in the Transnistria conflict may entail consequences for the broader regional security situation. We appreciate the focus on the Women, Peace and Security agenda in these efforts.

Norway stands firmly by our common goal of a comprehensive, peaceful, and sustainable settlement of the Transnistria conflict in all its aspects, based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders, and with a special status for Transnistria.

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Mr. Chair,

As Ambassador Keiderling states in her report, the war in Ukraine creates uncertainty and apprehension among people on both banks of the river Nistru, and the war adversely affects the people of Moldova. We are impressed by the formidable ability and openness to welcome refugees from Ukraine, shown by Moldovan people, volunteers and authorities. These efforts must be commended and widely supported, as the influx of refugees, unprecedented high energy prices and increased pressure on national institutions are placing a heavy burden on the Moldovan authorities. To remedy the demanding situation and further support the Moldovan authorities, Norway has decided to include Moldova in our 7 billion euros, five-year support program for Ukraine, the Nansen-programme. A stable Moldova is crucial in helping Ukrainian refugees and to avoid further deterioration of the security situation in Europe.

The Mission has a pivotal role in securing a way forward, towards peace and stability, and it is crucial that we agree on a continued OSCE presence. The Mission is essential to avoid deterioration of relations between the Sides and to increase trust and willingness to find mutually acceptable solutions. We have confidence in Ambassador Keiderling and her team's ability to make efficient use of the diverse OSCE. However, to assist Moldova in the best possible way, the toolbox must be accessible. Norway therefore underlines the importance of renewing the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Moldova.

It is also the responsibility of the participating States to ensure that the OSCE Missions have adequate resources to implement their mandates. Staff must be given sufficient salaries, if we wish to retain competent personnel.

Ambassador Keiderling can rest assured that Norway's support to the Mission to Moldova, will remain unwavering.

Thank you.