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**STATEMENT BY  
THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1420th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 April 2023

**In response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova,  
Ambassador Kelly Keiderling**

The European Union thanks the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Keiderling, for her report. As the Republic of Moldova continues to suffer from the repercussions of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, it is more important than ever to keep up the Mission's monitoring activities and the publication of its reports in a professional and impartial manner.

We deplore the isolated position taken by Russia, which led last December to the extension of the Mission's mandate being limited to six months. We urge Russia to allow a return to the practice of extending the Mission's mandate by one year, as reaffirmed in Decision No. 18/06 of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Brussels, and to join the consensus to adopt, in due course, the decision on the extension of the mandate.

The European Union recognizes the European perspective of the Republic of Moldova and its status as a candidate country for membership. It will continue to firmly support the Government reform programme, in particular in the area of the rule of law, justice system reform and anti-corruption efforts.

The European Union highly commends the generosity and solidarity shown by the Republic of Moldova in taking in refugees fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The European Union and its Member States will continue to help the country to address the grave socio-economic consequences of Russia's war of aggression, including its consequences for energy security, notably through the allocation of more than 1 billion euros last year. We welcome the organization by the Republic of Moldova of the next ministerial conference of the Moldova Support Platform. Co-chaired by France, Germany and Romania, it follows on from the meetings held in Berlin, Bucharest and Paris in 2022.

The European Union reaffirms its support for a peaceful, comprehensive and sustainable settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict on the basis of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders, with a special status for Transdnistria.

The European Union notes that it is currently impossible to organize meetings in the "5+2" format given Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Nevertheless, the European Union supports the continued discussions in Chişinău among the chief negotiators and within the working groups aimed at finding specific solutions to the challenges faced by people on both banks of the Dniester, which have been exacerbated by the Russian war of aggression. We continue to endorse the efforts of the OSCE Chairmanship, the Mission

and the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office. It is vital that all the parties continue to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. In this regard, the European Union strongly condemns the efforts by Russia and its proxies to destabilize the Republic of Moldova politically, economically and in energy terms, and also the attacks carried out in the form of cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and the staging of demonstrations.

The European Union remains committed to respect for human rights and to the full implementation of the package of confidence-building measures, including the measures regarding Latin-script schools in the Transdnistrian region, where the situation continues to be of concern. We remain troubled by the deterioration of the human rights situation in the Transdnistrian region and underline the importance of respect for international standards and OSCE commitments on human rights and fundamental freedoms. While we welcome the release of Oleg Horjan and Adrian Glijin, we urge the authorities in Tiraspol to release all the political prisoners held in the Transdnistrian region.

We regret the absence of progress on the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russian military forces and equipment from the territory of the Republic of Moldova, which refers to the Operative Group of Russian Forces, as well as the lack of transparency over Russian troop movements. In the current context, it is more crucial than ever to complete the processes initiated as part of the commitments undertaken at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, which envisage the withdrawal by Russia of its military forces and equipment stationed on Moldovan territory without the consent of the Republic of Moldova. In view of the heightened risk posed by weapons and ammunition depots, in particular by the one in Cobasna – a risk aggravated further by the series of unexplained explosions that affected the Transdnistrian region in the spring of 2022 – we recall the international commitments undertaken by Russia to destroy the munitions in that depot and urge it to carry out this operation without further delay. We recall in this regard that the OSCE has a mandate and the means to contribute to the withdrawal or destruction of Russian ammunition and armaments from the Transdnistrian region, and that its involvement is essential to the transparency and international verification of these operations.

We call upon the Mission to continue to monitor the situation in the Security Zone and on the border with Ukraine, and to report without delay on any incidents occurring there. We reiterate our appeal for strict adherence to the rules established by the Joint Control Commission in the Security Zone, and for respect for the Mission's mandate and for the free movement of Mission members. We condemn the cases of unjustified stopping and excessive control, in the Security Zone, of the means of transport of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, and of the representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Republic of Moldova.

We condemn the violations of the Security Zone regime by the Russian contingent between February and April 2023, during which armoured military equipment was moved out of range of the [Joint Peacekeeping Forces] posts without prior co-ordination with the Joint Control Commission.

We continue to support the Mission's efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in all its activities.

The European Union and its Member States stand by the Republic of Moldova more than ever, and we shall continue to provide assistance, be it in the framework of the Eastern Partnership, the European Political Community, the Association Agreement, the visa exemption regime or help in dealing with the grave consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine. We welcome the decision to establish the EU Partnership Mission in the Republic of Moldova under the Common Security and Defence Policy.

The European Union will continue to make its aid contingent on specific reform outcomes, with a view to bringing tangible benefits to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. It stands by the Republic of Moldova and welcomes the European Political Community Summit to be held in Chişinău on 1 June.

The candidate countries North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Albania<sup>1</sup>, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>, the potential candidate country Georgia, and the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

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1 North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.