



### **Statement by Romania in the Permanent Council with regard to the Conference on Mediation in the OSCE Area (15-16 July, Bucharest)**

On 15-16 of July, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation and the OSCE Secretariat, Centre for Conflict Prevention organized the Conference on *Mediation in the OSCE Area* at the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Mr. Titus Corlatean, opened the debates. It gathered over 130 practitioners, decision-makers in the field of mediation from OSCE participating States, the UN, OSCE and other regional organizations, representatives of NGOs and the academic community.

The vast contribution of our Organization to positive developments in the South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, based on its mandate related to early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation was commended. OSCE efforts to strengthen its performance and capacities across the conflict cycle, including through the implementation of MC Decision 3/11, including the development of a systematic mediation-support capacity, were welcomed. Nonetheless, shortcomings and security challenges and threats in our area and the need to tackle them decisively were also acknowledged, not least the persistence of protracted conflicts. It was pointed out that the Organization's success in endeavours across the conflict cycle depends to a large extent on the political will of its participating States to use the existing capacities and develop new ones for the Organization to act.

The conference tackled issues related to the principles and good practices in the field of mediation, regional organizations' role in the field of mediation, the peace infrastructure, as well as the way forward with regard to the OSCE's endeavours in the field of mediation. Among the more specific outcomes of the discussions, we can mention:

- The debates acknowledged the usefulness of mediation in all phases of the conflict cycle, as well as the fact that it has to be integrated in broader strategies and linked to other instruments, such as conflict analysis.
- Mediation has been an integral part of the efforts of the international community to maintain peace and security for many decades. Nonetheless, a number of challenges remain to be tackled, among which there were mentioned: training of practitioners at all levels; ensuring complementarity of actions among international and regional actors and the need to define the best actor for mediation efforts; the sustainability of mediation efforts.
- Acknowledgement was given to efforts to define mediation and dialogue facilitation and their principles, among which those put forth by the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation. At the same time, different dimensions of mediation were further explored, such as the notions of neutrality, objectivity, impartiality of



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mediators, the issue of leverage of mediators in the process of bringing the sides to a solution, the ethical, intellectual, psychological components of mediations.

- Mediation today cannot be conceived or carried out without the involvement of the civil society, which underpins the need for complementarity of Track I and Track II efforts. A key component of all these efforts is the role of women, whose involvement is indispensable in all stages of the conflict cycle and has proven to bring more efficiency, cost-effectiveness and sustainability to mediation and its long-term impact.
- The intention to adopt a Resolution at the next UN General Assembly on the topic of the role of regional organizations in mediation is a validation of the tremendous contribution of regional organizations in mediation efforts around the world. It is also an attempt to realize the full potential of regional organizations. These efforts at UN level provide undeniable opportunities for the OSCE as a regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

As far as the OSCE is concerned, the discussions identified: the potential of developing a fully-fledged, fully institutionalized mediation support capacity of the Organization, that would provide mediation training and operational support to OSCE mediators and practitioners; the possibility for meetings of the Group of Friends of Mediation in Vienna and better capitalizing on the experiences of the UN and other regional organizations in the field of mediation; the further exploration of the peace infrastructure concept and of cooperation between the OSCE and other Track II actors in the field of mediation; strengthening the role of women in mediation.

On a more general note, participants expressed expectations that the Helsinki+40 Process would strengthen the OSCE capacities in all phases of the conflict cycle, including in the field of mediation-support and dialogue facilitation.

A full report of the conference on *Mediation in the OSCE Area* will be circulated shortly.

The conference testified once more Romania's commitment to international and regional organizations, including the OSCE, on issues related to effective prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, as well as post-conflict rehabilitation. The organization of this event, together with our partners, was circumscribed to the logic of advancing efforts in the field of mediation and strengthening the respective OSCE's capacities. Romania is fully committed to continue contributing both within the OSCE and within other frameworks in this respect.