



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Mike Scanlan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 12, 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States warmly welcomes you, Ambassador Scanlan, to the Permanent Council for your final report. Your leadership and support helped the Sides to bring about unprecedented progress towards resolving a seemingly intractable security challenge during a time of great insecurity in Europe. Here in Vienna I particularly want to applaud you for the time and energy that you've put into providing detailed, impartial reports, your willingness to meet with delegations, and your availability for informal consultations. The reports, together with these informal consultations and your availability, provide us a tremendous amount of detail and perspective and it gives all participating States an equal opportunity to learn more about this important issue and the important work that you and your team has done. It really has been a model that I hope other heads of mission will continue to follow, Ambassador Scanlon, so thank you very much for that effort.

The United States is pleased to hear from your report that the Sides have not only agreed on six measures from the "package of eight" – they are indeed implementing them. After taking a courageous step in 2017 to outline a series of practical measures, the Chief Negotiators, with the support of their respective leaderships, have had the tenacity to find creative and workable agreements. Their hard work with a focus on concrete results is paying off in ways that are improving the lives of people on both banks of the Dniester River. The United States encourages the Sides to build on this momentum and find solutions to the remaining two measures and to develop a new generation of practical outputs to advance the settlement process still further. These agreements are setting the precedent to determine the delineation of responsibilities, as called for in the OSCE Ministerial Statement-endorsed end state.

The success of the peace agreement depends not only upon the allocation of responsibilities for carrying out its terms but also upon building a truly democratic and inclusive society in Moldova. We praise you and the Mission to Moldova for your work to help the country strengthen its democracy. We encourage Moldova to address abuses of administrative resources and to foster a pluralist media environment as recommended by ODIHR after [Moldova's] 2016 October presidential election. In the aftermath of the invalidation of the recent mayoral election in Chisinau, and with the upcoming parliamentary elections on the horizon, these reforms are pressing. We concur with the statement made earlier by the esteemed Swiss representative that the Mission's support to Moldova through implementation

of its Action Plan on Holocaust Remembrance and Education is indeed helping the country heal painful wounds from its past. Likewise, we encourage Moldova to revise its laws to implement the special legal status for Gagauzia before the next parliamentary elections. Both these steps would demonstrate for all inhabitants of Moldova that the country is ready to learn from its past in order to move forward.

Mr. Chair, parties must also do their part to advance the settlement process, and can take a number of steps to improve the security situation. The drawdown of munitions from the Cobasna weapons depot is a good starting point. Likewise, the unsanctioned movement of military vehicles in the security zone must stop. We call on Russia to withdraw its military forces from Moldova as agreed upon at the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit. Freedom of movement through the security zone needs to be a reality for all local inhabitants. Thus, it is critical to ensure the removal of any barriers that imply a border. It is also critical for the OSCE Mission to have unfettered access through all of Moldova, including Transnistria, and we welcome the progress, Ambassador Scanlan, that you have made toward restoring this critical capability.

The United States continues to support the 5+2 Format on the Settlement Process, and Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders with a special status for Transnistria.

In conclusion, allow me to thank you, Ambassador Scanlan, and your staff for your dedicated work to help the sides advance the Transnistrian settlement process in the 5+2 format. The Mission's unbiased reporting on the political and security situation, including in the Transnistrian region, is crucial. We remain committed to working with Moldova as it strives to build a truly inclusive society and strengthen its democracy based on the respect for rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all, which are essential for the country's political transition and its eventual European reintegration.

And finally, if anybody in this room questions the invaluable role that a Head of Mission and a mission can play in the field in helping the Sides bring about peace, and resolving a difficult issue, you and your team have shown [it is possible].

Thank you very much.