

PC.DEL/791/09  
15 October 2009

ENGLISH  
Original: FRENCH

## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 776th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 October 2009

### **In response to the report by Ambassador Philip Remler, Head of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova**

The European Union (EU) welcomes Ambassador Philip Remler and thanks him for his excellent report to the Permanent Council on political developments since the parliamentary elections held on 29 July, on the prospects for a settlement of the Transdnistrian conflict and on the activities of the mission that he heads.

The European Union has taken note of the preliminary conclusions drawn by the International Election Observation Mission that monitored the 29 July parliamentary elections. It notes, in particular, the conclusion that “many of the OSCE commitments were met”. The European Union also welcomes the fact that these elections did not give rise to the same violent disturbances as the 5 April elections. It recalls the desire it expressed earlier that those responsible for this violence should be identified and brought to justice.

The European Union notes with concern, however, that certain problems that became apparent during the 5 April elections made their appearance once again. The EU notes in particular the lack of impartiality of the media, the utilization of judicial procedures for political purposes, the climate of intimidation and the poor quality of the electoral registers.

The EU calls on all political forces to act in a spirit of responsibility and to unite their efforts to ensure full respect for the commitments assumed by the Republic of Moldova with regard to the rule of law and to democratic reforms. It stresses, in particular, the efforts that must be made by the authorities to ensure true freedom of expression. The freedom and impartiality of the media must also be a high priority for the new Government. We appeal to the Government to co-operate closely on these issues with the OSCE Mission and with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Haraszti, who will be visiting the Republic of Moldova at the end of November. Nor should the use of judicial procedures for political purposes continue to be considered acceptable.

The European Union hopes that the Parliament issuing from the 29 July elections will be able to elect a new President on 23 October and thus put an end to the political instability of recent months. In this context, the European Union recalls the importance for all political actors to engage in a constructive dialogue. All this is particularly necessary in view of the economic crisis that the Republic of Moldova is experiencing at the present time.

The European Union emphasizes the importance of continued normalization between the Republic of Moldova and its neighbours, particularly Romania and Ukraine. In this regard, the EU notes with satisfaction the cancellation of the visa obligation that was imposed on Romanian citizens on 8 April 2009 by the previous Government. The EU also reaffirms its desire to develop and strengthen its relations with the Republic of Moldova. It welcomes the prospect of embarking as soon as possible on negotiations regarding a new agreement with the Republic of Moldova, to replace the current Partnership and Co-operation Agreement and go beyond it, and welcomes the intention of the Government of the Republic of Moldova to participate fully in the Eastern Partnership.

As far as the Transdniestrian conflict is concerned, the European Union remains firmly determined to contribute to the search for a political settlement on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. It calls for the resumption at the earliest date and without conditions of negotiations between the parties in the “5+2” format, the only framework making it possible to guarantee the transparency and legitimacy needed for a lasting solution, and recalls the importance in this connection of measures to re-establish confidence. It will take a full part in this exercise, in particular through its Special Representative, Mr. Kálmán Mizsei.

The EU welcomes the action taken by the OSCE Mission regarding security- and confidence-building measures. The seminar held in Vienna in June has allowed the dialogue to be renewed. The EU hopes that the seminar to be held in early November, and to be attended by experts from the security forces of the two parties, will allow an intensification of the discussions and the achievement of concrete results, particularly in the economic and social fields and with regard to freedom of movement. It hopes that these meetings will create a favourable climate for a resumption of political negotiations in the “5+2” format.

In conclusion, the European Union reiterates its full support for the OSCE Mission to Moldova and for Ambassador Remler’s efforts to promote a settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict and the democratic development of the Republic of Moldova.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia and the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Norway align themselves with this statement.

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\* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.