

**Rethink Teleradio-Moldova - Conference on reform of the public broadcaster
Chisinau, 23 September 2011**

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the occasion of the high-level conference on re-organization of the public broadcaster Teleradio-Moldova, held in Chisinau, Moldova, on 23 September 2011, by the OSCE Mission to Moldova, the Mission, together with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, present the following summary of the major findings, conclusions and recommendations of the conference.

The conference, the first of its kind, was attended by officials from the Government and Parliament, including the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Chair of the Parliamentary Committee for Culture, Science, Education, Youth, Sports and Media, representatives from public institutions, development partners, diplomatic missions, international organizations, civil society, national and international media experts, representatives from the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, media and other local and international stakeholders. The event provided a unique platform for the mutual exchange of views on Teleradio-Moldova reform and its transformation into a genuine public service broadcaster, examining different courses of action in line with three restructuring options.

Debate and discussion during the conference focused on the form and speed that the re-organization of the public broadcaster should take, ways to ensure editorial independence and financial security, the principles guiding sound public broadcasting, and the legislative foundation required.

Specifically, the conference produced the following conclusions and recommendations:

Conclusions:

- Strong and independent public broadcasting is an important feature of European culture, and the full and final transformation of Teleradio-Moldova from a state broadcaster into a public service broadcaster is an important step toward European integration;
- Changes within the country over the last two years have created a critical opportunity for Teleradio-Moldova to undertake deep and full-ranging reforms. This is an opportunity not to be missed;
- Statements and actions by both the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the management of Teleradio-Moldova indicate the will and determination to move forward with comprehensive reform;
- Sound public service broadcasting that answers to international standards must operate with a firm legal basis, financial security and editorial independence. However, there is no uniform model to create a public service broadcaster and each country must define its own process in this regard;

- The current legal framework for public broadcasting is weak in that it vaguely defines financing of the broadcaster and contains no mechanisms for support;
- Of the three plans for reform developed through analysis and study (slow, progressive and comprehensive), only the plan for *comprehensive* restructuring of Teleradio-Moldova produces the level of management and personnel efficiency, technical capacity, projected revenue and overall convergence within a timeframe that can make reform sustainable;
- The support of international donors and the international community in all aspects – funding, training and consultation – will be critical to the success of this reform.

Recommendations:

- The establishment of a genuine public service broadcaster is a requirement stemming from Moldova’s membership in international organizations, including the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and is an important element of European integration;
- The reform process of Teleradio-Moldova has reached a stage presenting a window of opportunity to establish a public service broadcaster, and government and parliament should seize this opportunity;
- The goals of editorial independence, financial security and legal certainty should guide the reform of the public broadcasting in the Republic of Moldova;
- Teleradio-Moldova should pursue reforms in accordance with the plan developed for “radical” or “comprehensive” restructuring – which has already been approved by its board and is the plan most likely to bring about sustainable reform;
- All elements of the plan, including the construction of a new building, should be pursued;
- The reform process should continue to include the active participation of all stakeholders, including civil society;
- Government and Parliament should give its political support to Teleradio-Moldova’s comprehensive reorganization, by means of a political decision;
- A comprehensive plan on financing Teleradio-Moldova reorganization should be developed;
- Current legislation governing public broadcasting – the Broadcasting Code – should be reviewed and amended to clarify funding streams for the reformed public service broadcaster that are transparent and secure, and not subject to significant changes in annual budget cycles or to political pressure;
- A broad base of funding sources should be explored and developed. An inclusion of direct subscription or licensing fees should be accompanied by clear plans for the collection of these fees from consumers;
- The merchandising of Teleradio-Moldova’s extensive and unique video archive should also be explored as another possible source of revenue;
- The legal status of Teleradio-Moldova’s physical premises should be clarified;
- Teleradio-Moldova should strive to produce modern and attractive products that are competitive on the commercial market, yet still answer to the public interest;
- Teleradio-Moldova should take steps to ensure continued levels of service for national minorities in its programming throughout this transition;
- International donors and organizations should support Teleradio-Moldova throughout the reform process, through grants, training and consultation.