

ENGLISH only

STATEMENT

delivered by H.E. Mr. Andrei STRATAN,
the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Moldova at the Special Meeting of the Permanent
Council of the OSCE
(Vienna, 30 November 2004)

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, allow me to express my gratitude to the Bulgarian Chairmanship for the opportunity to participate in today's Meeting of the Permanent Council and to present my country's view on the most important issues that our Organization is dealing with. This opportunity is even more appreciated by us as we are aware of the tight agenda you have here in Vienna, since we are on the last one hundred yards before the Ministerial Council in Sofia.

The Republic of Moldova highly appreciates our Organization's activity under the current Chairmanship. Though the process of drafting and coordinating the materials for the Ministerial Council is still going on and sometimes it is quite difficult,

we believe that in Sofia we will adopt an important set of documents meant to contribute to a further consolidation of security and stability in the whole OSCE area, including the Republic of Moldova.

Amongst the aspects of the preparatory process for the Sofia Ministerial, I would like to mention the importance that we attach to the OSCE Concept on border management and security, the reform of the OSCE, the humanitarian dimension, including the Action Plan on gender issues.

As far as fighting terrorism is concerned, I would like to mention that the recent events have proved the imperative character of the Organization's activity in this regard and, hence, the importance of joining efforts in establishing a common and indivisible area of security. To this end, we believe that in order to increase efficiency in the fight against terrorism, it is necessary to eliminate the sources that generate it, including political extremism and aggressive separatism.

From the whole set of mentioned documents, I would like to refer, first of all, to the Political Declaration of the Ministerial Council. I will comment in detail

certain paragraphs of the Political Declaration a bit later, but I would like to highlight, from the outset, that this document will have neither value nor any sense to us if it avoids references to the Istanbul commitments and regional issues. The consolidation of the security of certain countries on the account of other states is a road with no perspectives, which undermines the achievement of the Organization's goals. We strongly believe that the lack of fulfillment of the Istanbul commitments is not only detrimental to security interests of the Republic of Moldova but seriously affects the efficiency, image and viability of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Moldova is grateful to the Bulgarian Chairmanship and the Participating States for maintaining the settlement of the transnistrian conflict high on the OSCE Agenda. We also appreciate the assistance offered to Moldovan authorities by the European Union and the USA, in their efforts aimed to identify a sustainable and comprehensive solution to this problem. Regretfully, in spite of these efforts, we have to recognize that the situation has gotten worse. I am sure that you are all

up-to-date with the situation on the ground, since during this year and especially during the past 4-5 months the transnistrian issue has not been absent from the agenda of the Permanent Council meetings.

First of all I would like to mention the initiative of the Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin regarding the Pact/Declaration on the Stability and Security for the Republic of Moldova. Although this document comprises a broader framework, we believe that its endorsement will give an irreversible impulse to the stabilization of democratic institutions, development of market economy and multiethnic society and will ensure the territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. Undoubtedly the signing of the Declaration will determine the general framework and criteria for overcoming a number of challenges Moldova is dealing with, including the transnistrian issue. Mainly for these reasons we consider this document as an opportunity for the international community to sincerely demonstrate its readiness to come to a consolidated agreement on the Republic of Moldova, founded on the principles of international law and democracy. We call on the parties ready to show a constructive attitude towards the Moldovan

initiative to sign the Declaration on the margins of the Ministerial Council in Sofia.

In this context I would like to express our gratitude to the potential signatories that supported this initiative. We hope that the other invitees, after a more careful consideration, will come aboard in the time before Sofia. Otherwise, I think that everyone has a right to ask himself, as I do, how can some OSCE member states openly disregard the principles that lay at its core.

Secondly, I wish to touch upon the settlement process itself. It is well known that due to a series of unilateral provocations undertaken lately by the Tiraspol administration, the settlement process has been stalled for several months. In this circumstance, why should we avoid calling things by their name: - we are facing a group of foreign citizens manipulated from outside, that occupied by force a part of our national territory, installed a criminal and dictatorial regime, and moreover, for the sake of self protection, insists on a foreign military presence and wishes desperately to maintain the status-quo in order to manage economic interests of certain mafia-type clans from abroad. And if we recognize this state of

affairs, why the Republic of Moldova should be so insistently called to resume negotiations in a format that has proved its inefficiency. Has it not become clear for all that negotiations for the sake of negotiations just lead to the consolidation of an illegal and antidemocratic regime, whose interests are different from those of the population from the region.

What kind of negotiations are we talking about when we are facing the following situation:

- children, their parents and teachers from Moldovan schools, and the whole population are harassed continuously without pity by the criminal regime; Against this background I call on the OSCE and the Council of Europe to closely monitor the fulfillment of the ECHR's decision on the releasing of the illegal detainees of the separatist regime;
- after three months (!) since the beginning of the school year, the children from Tiraspol have not yet resumed their studies, and those from Ribnita study in precarious conditions;
- only the criminal and paramilitary groups controlled by the Tiraspol regime have the luxury of free movement in the Security Zone, while the whole

population of the region is humiliated daily and impeded to work on their ancestors' land;

- the transnistrian authorities took by force the property of the Moldovan railway from the region, leaving thousands of employees jobless, whose sole guilt is their wish to live in peace in a unified and indivisible Moldova;

- the separatist regime has launched a massive campaign of illegal privatizations of the Republic of Moldova's patrimony situated on the left bank of Dniestr-river, openly supported by Russian and Ukrainian political and economic groups.

The list of such questions is much longer and they are not rhetorical, on the contrary, they express the concern over the extremely difficult situation in the field. We would like the authorities from other capitals to share our concern. Regretfully, in the situation when even the mediators do not have a common assessment regarding the causes of the impasse in the negotiation process and a clear vision on the ways for the settlement, a fact seen at the recent Varna consultations, we have to consider the need to change the negotiation format.

I firmly believe that the settlement process will get the desired dynamics if all participants at the process have a common term of reference – districts from the left bank of Nistru river are an integral part of the Republic of Moldova. This subject cannot bear any negotiations. Only the status of these districts within internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Moldova is to be negotiated. The Republic of Moldova has been calling repeatedly on the United States and the European Union to get more actively involved in the settlement process, given that these two important international actors hold the necessary instruments and capacities to identify a viable, comprehensive and lasting solution of the transnistrian issue.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of the settlement process I can not avoid raising the situation on the transnistrian sector of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. I have no intention to bring figures and to present documents that would demonstrate the gravity of the problem, since our Delegation at the OSCE has informed in detail on numerous occasions the Permanent Council on the size of the illicit traffic of goods, persons and

arms through this sector. I just wish to express my belief that without securing properly this portion of the border, the separatist regime and its supporters from abroad will continue to get richer, to consolidate its position in defying the international community and to threaten continuously the stability and security in the region.

We count very much on the political will of Ukraine to confirm through concrete actions its attachment vis-à-vis the principle of sovereign equality of the states by respecting bilateral and multilateral engagements in the fields of border, customs and transport control. In this context, I wish to reiterate the necessity to deploy an OSCE/EU monitoring mission at this border. I should mention that the Republic of Moldova is carefully studying the OSCE document on Border and Customs Monitoring Operation at the Moldovan-Ukrainian Border, distributed by the Bulgarian Chairmanship, whom we express our gratitude. We are willing to initiate consultations on this project.

Also, we express our gratitude to the EU for its active involvement in solving this problem by organizing trilateral EU-Moldova-Ukraine

consultations held periodically in Brussels. I wish to recall that the Republic of Moldova accepted from the very beginning the European Commission's proposal concerning the implementation, at an early stage, of a customs information exchange system and we are looking forward to receive the reaction of our Ukrainian partners. At the same time, with a view to ensure the implementation of the European standards for border management I want to reiterate the invitation to participate to moldo-ukrainian consultations on border issues addressed to European experts.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Moldova has already made its suggestions to the draft text of the Political Declaration of the Sofia Ministerial. We don't expect more from this document than an objective reflection of the realities in the settlement process and on the ground in the paragraphs on Moldova. It is obvious, that the defiant attitude displayed by the criminal and antidemocratic regime from the districts on the left bank of Nistru river, which was often criticized in this forum, can not be left without assessment on the ministerial level of the OSCE. Moreover, we call on

the whole OSCE community to join the EU and the USA in their restrictive measures, and adopt even stronger measures against separatist leaders. We consider that a simple appeal addressed to the parties in the conflict to renew negotiations isn't enough for obtaining real progress in the settlement process. The Political Declaration must stipulate that the final aim of the negotiations is to regain the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, where its eastern districts are its integral part. Only such an approach, without any hesitations from all participants in the negotiations could revive the settlement process and bring some palpable results in a relatively short period of time.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to make a point regarding another issue, which in our view should also find reflection in the Political Declaration. I am talking about the fulfillment of the Istanbul commitments. The Republic of Moldova reiterates its regret about the lack of progress in the process of the complete withdrawal of the Russian armed forces from its territory during this year. It is widely known that the greater share of this arsenal was transferred from the

former 14th Army, with the direct support of Russian commanders.

In this context the Republic of Moldova insists on the deployment under the aegis of OSCE of an international inspection mission whose mandate will include: inspection and transparent assessment of the quantity of arms and munitions from Colbasna stocks and other military units belonging to the military forces of the Russian Federation; monitoring and assessment of the situation in the security zone; inspection and transparent assessment of the quantity of arms, munitions, number of military units under the orders of the so-called power structures of the eastern region of Moldova; constant monitoring of the military facilities, plants and organizations from the transnistrian region that have the necessary capacities for manufacturing different types of arms and military equipment, as well as of the military airport from Tiraspol.

It is also known that some types of the armament in the possession of the mentioned forces are produced by the 14 enterprises from the eastern regions of Moldova and fall under the incidence of the CFE

Treaty as UTLEs (Unaccountable for Treaty Limited Equipment).

We recall that there has never been and never will be a freely expressed agreement of the Moldovan constitutional authorities regarding the presence of the mentioned forces on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and, in this context, it is absolutely necessary that the participating states once again urge the Russian Federation to complete without delay the withdrawal process in a transparent manner.

Under these circumstances, the Republic of Moldova remains the only country on the European continent a part of whose territory is under the foreign military occupation, that of the Russian Federation.

We also underline that the full implementation of the Istanbul commitments on Moldova and Georgia is a precondition for ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty. This language corresponds to the generally accepted principles of international law and the Republic of Moldova will support its inclusion in the text of the Sofia Political Declaration.

Mr. Chairman, Dear Colleagues,

I would like to emphasize the readiness of the Republic of Moldova to be active and constructive in the process of consultations in order to draft and coordinate the text of the Ministerial Declaration and other documents in order to achieve a language acceptable to all parties. An adequate reflection of the transnistrian issue in the Ministerial Council documents, as well as the signing of the Declaration for Stability and Security for the Republic of Moldova, will amplify our common efforts in consolidating the statehood, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the republic of Moldova, and reinforcing the security of this region of Europe.

Thank you and I hope to see you again in Sofia.