

**STATEMENT BY THE
EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 708th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 April 2008

**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 first report to the Permanent Council. It pays tribute to his determination as a mediator in the Transdnestrian settlement to facilitate the resumption of the negotiation process that has been suspended since March 2006.

The European Union is convinced that a lasting political settlement of the Transdnestrian conflict can be achieved only on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova.

Encouraged by the willingness expressed by President Voronin and Mr. Smirnov to resume dialogue, the European Union urges all the parties concerned to encourage unconditional resumption of the negotiation process in the 5+2 format, which remains the most appropriate framework, and to show the political will needed for a successful outcome. The European Union would like to take this opportunity to renew its support to the good offices of the Special Envoy of the Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador Talvitié.

In this context, the re-establishment of confidence between the two banks of the Dniester through projects of common interest is a goal that enjoys the full support of the European Union. It welcomes the efforts of the OSCE Mission to facilitate the development of the initiatives concerning free movement of persons and goods, rail transit and economic and environmental co-operation. The European Union wishes to encourage the implementation of these measures by providing advice and, where appropriate, financial support. It hopes that the meeting in Odessa on 14 and 15 April will be a success.

The European Union remains firmly committed to a settlement of the Transdnestrian conflict through the role played by its Special Representative, Mr. Kalman Mizsei, the European Commission and the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM). As Ambassador Remler noted, EUBAM has made an essential contribution to the implementation of the customs regime agreed between Chisinau and Kiev, which has been of great benefit to Transdnestrian enterprises. The European Union appreciates the positive and more intensive involvement of Ukraine in this area and points out

its willingness to update the participating States on the work of this mission soon at a future meeting of the Permanent Council.

Mr. Chairman,

Relations between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova were especially dynamic in 2007, as can be seen, for example, from the granting of autonomous preferences and the entry into force of the agreements on visa facilitation and readmission. Moldova is also one of the main beneficiaries of European aid per inhabitant.

As part of its Neighbourhood Policy, the European Union is committed to supporting the programme of political and economic reforms being carried out by the Moldovan Government. As noted in the conclusions of the General Affairs Council of 18 February 2008, the European Union believes it is very important that this process continues. Efforts are needed to consolidate democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of the media, *inter alia* in the run-up to the parliamentary elections. It is also necessary to reinforce the fight against corruption and improve the investment climate.

At all events in the light of the progress highlighted by the Commission in its recent evaluation of the Action Plan, the European Union is prepared to examine the means available for consolidating the contractual framework of its relations with the Republic of Moldova beyond the current Partnership and Co-operation Agreement.

The European Union welcomes the OSCE Mission's active role in most of these essential areas for rapprochement between Moldova and the EU. The assistance it provides the Moldovan Government along with its initiatives with respect to civil society are considerable.

In conclusion, the European Union reiterates its full support for the OSCE Mission to Moldova and for the efforts of Ambassador Remler to resolve the Transdnistrian conflict.

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, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Norway, as well as Georgia align themselves with this statement.

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