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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1324th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

15 July 2021

On the early parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova held on 11 July

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the citizens of the Republic of Moldova turned out in large numbers to vote in the early parliamentary elections on 11 July, once again demonstrating their commitment to democracy and the rule of law. They gave a clear and strong mandate to the Party of Action and Solidarity to start implementing the ambitious programme of President Maia Sandu.

The European Union has taken due note of the preliminary conclusions of the election observation mission deployed by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). These preliminary conclusions point out that the elections were competitive and well administered and that fundamental freedoms were largely respected. The candidates had ample opportunities to campaign, and the voters were provided a wide range of alternatives. However, the ODIHR also noted shortcomings throughout the campaign and on election day, in particular the lack of effective campaign finance oversight, the political bias shown by the majority of monitored news outlets, the absence of an adequate legal framework to regulate electoral dispute resolution, and the handling of electoral complaints. Moreover, the ODIHR noted that decisions regarding the number of polling stations to be established abroad and for voters residing in Transdniestria as well as the issue of voter transportation raised questions about the impartiality of the Central Election Commission.

The EU fully supports the strengthening of democratic institutions in the Republic of Moldova and encourages the authorities of the Republic of Moldova to implement the recommendations of the ODIHR and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe.

The EU remains shoulder to shoulder with the Republic of Moldova, and we will continue to provide assistance, be it in the framework of the Eastern Partnership, the Association Agreement, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, the visa exemption regime or aid in overcoming the COVID-19 epidemic and its socio-economic consequences. The EU will continue to make this aid contingent on concrete results of reforms, with a view to bringing tangible benefits to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Serbia¹ and Albania¹, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as Ukraine and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

1 The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.