

PC.DEL/1180/14  
16 October 2014

ENGLISH  
Original: FRENCH

## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1019th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 16 October 2014

### **In response to the statements by Ambassador Michael Scanlan, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, and Mr. Francesco Bastagli, Head of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union congratulates Ambassador Scanlan on his appointment to head the OSCE Mission to Moldova. We welcome him very warmly on the occasion of his first activity report to the Permanent Council. We also warmly welcome Mr. Francesco Bastagli, the Head of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine. We thank you for your reports this morning.

Ambassador Scaplan, the contribution to a peaceful settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict is central to the mandate of the Mission that you lead. We are convinced that the Mission's projects in the three dimensions contribute to creating the necessary conditions for a peaceful settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict that respects the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. We should appreciate it if, from your fresh viewpoint, you would tell us what contribution has most impressed you in the activities of the Mission.

Your Mission can count on our support, based on the commitments undertaken within the OSCE by its participating States, particularly as regards security. We encourage the Mission to implement its mandate actively and continue to follow and report on developments in this area.

The increasing efforts by Tiraspol to restrict access by members of your Mission to the Transdniestrian region and to prevent you from continuing to involve the representatives of the two banks of the Dniester River in implementing these projects are worrying. We once more call on all participants in the "5+2" negotiations to use their influence to convince Tiraspol that it is in its interests to put an end to these restrictions and to help the Mission accomplish its mandate. To be able to do this, the members of your Mission must have full and unrestricted access to the whole territory of the Republic of Moldova, including the Transdniestrian region, and to the Russian armaments depot in Colbasna.

You know also how committed we are to the continuation and completion of the discussions in the "5+2" format, the only format that will ensure the transparency and

legitimacy of a lasting solution. A solution to the conflict would be a major step forward for the stability and security of the region and would bring specific benefits to the Republic of Moldova, including the Transdnestrian region. The European Union is willing to support its implementation, including financially. We regretted the postponement of the meeting for the third time this year and remain convinced that it will be useful to set a new date for the meeting, as soon as possible and without preconditions. We count on Ambassador Bogojević, the Special Representative of the Swiss Chairmanship, to take the necessary initiatives.

We are relieved to know that the schools in the Transdnestrian region that teach using the Latin script were able to open their doors at the beginning of the school year. This matter should be followed closely so that efforts to ensure the normal and enduring operation of these eight schools can be effectively supported.

Other issues, such as freedom of movement, the opening of bridges and the facilitation of contacts between the populations of the two banks, necessitate an active dialogue in a spirit of co-operation. This also applies to the problem of incidents within the Security Zone – the militarization of which nothing now justifies – and with regard to the withdrawal of the forces of the Russian Army stationed in the Republic of Moldova.

In short, we regard it as most important to ensure the continuity of the “5+2” negotiations and we hope to see tangible progress on the three baskets, and particularly on the political, institutional and security aspects of the third basket, subject to respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova.

The success of the Republic of Moldova in its rapprochement with the European Union has been remarkable. We welcome the very active participation of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership. We also welcome the signing on 27 June 2014 of the Association Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova, which also provides for the establishment of a deep and comprehensive free trade zone. We congratulate the Republic of Moldova on the application of this Agreement since 1 September 2014 and hope to finalize the process of ratification by the Member States and the European Parliament as quickly as possible. We hope that all the political and economic decision makers in all the regions of the country, and particularly in the Transdnestrian region, will recognize the opportunities available to them and be committed to the resolute pursuit of reforms.

We hope that the parliamentary elections to be held on 30 November will meet the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) standards and we will be grateful to ODIHR for sending observers.

Mr. Chairperson,

Regarding the work of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), we wish to stress that the Mission’s work in promoting confidence-building measures that may facilitate settlement of Transdnestrian conflict has taken on new importance in the context of the crisis in and around Ukraine.

We welcome the efforts of the Border Assistance Mission to strengthen its presence on the Transdnestrian segment of the border between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the last few months.

We note that the information furnished by the Mission shows an unobstructed movement of goods and persons across the Transdnestrian segment of the border.

We also welcome the co-operation existing between the Border Assistance Mission and the OSCE Mission to Moldova, as well as with the team of the Special Monitoring Mission in Odessa, which we understand is stationed alongside EUBAM.

In conclusion, we once more wish you every success in the performance of your tasks.

The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Iceland<sup>2</sup> and Albania<sup>1</sup>, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina, the members of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Ukraine, Georgia and Monaco, align themselves with this statement.

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

2 Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area.