



STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE
HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION TO MOLDOVA

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 17 October 2019

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Mr. Chair,

I am pleased to welcome the Head of the Mission to Moldova, Dr. Claus Neukirch, back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report.

After Moldovan parliamentary elections and with a new government in place, we appreciate the resumption of direct contacts between the two chief negotiators. We note the holding of constructive 5+2 talks in Bratislava last week, and join Foreign Minister Lajčák and Dr. Neukirch in their appeal to the sides to work out a compromise on a Protocol.

We acknowledge the positive developments as reported concerning, *inter alia*, education, student diplomas, vehicle registration and unimpeded travel and transportation. Pragmatic steps benefiting citizens of both riverbanks contribute to the long-term goal of finding a solution to one of the unresolved conflicts in our region.

We welcome the positive signals from the Russian ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Defence, concerning the possible destruction of ammunition stored in the Cobasna deposit and look forward to hearing about further developments on this issue.

We welcome the Mission's work on integrating a gender perspective in the thematic expert working groups. As stated in our response to your last statement, ensuring an appropriate gender perspective in our efforts is crucial to reaching our objectives more

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effectively. We also appreciate the increase in women's participation in the working groups. That said, one in three and one in four respectively for the two sides leaves room for further improvement.

We appreciate the support provided by the Mission to Moldova in its efforts to promote an inclusive, open and tolerant society. We particularly commend measures taken by the Mission to combat hate crime through awareness-raising and capacity building as well as assistance provided to amend hate crime-related legislation.

Norway's view on the OSCE field operations are well known. The work done by the field operations in cooperation with the host countries, together with the work of the autonomous institutions at country level, exemplifies the real added value of our organisation.

Thank you