

PC.DEL/94/19
1 February 2019

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1214th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 January 2019

In response to the statement by the representative of Moldova

Mr. Chairperson,

We cannot remain without reaction to the anti-Russian rhetoric of the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova. The absurd and unfounded accusations directed against us plainly require clarification.

The clearly biased assertions about the “eminently unconstructive and subversive” actions of Russia and the attempts to cast doubt on the impartiality of our mediation in the Transdnistrian settlement in the format of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdnistrian Settlement (or “5+2” format) are vexing.

The representatives of Moldova will hardly deny that the positive dynamic prevailing today in the negotiations on the Transdnistrian settlement process was established as a result of the formal “5+2” meeting in Berlin in June 2016. It is appropriate to recall that Russia contributed to the effectiveness of that landmark meeting through its timely transmission to the parties of its proposals for possible steps for normalizing the work of the format. It is no secret either that it was thanks to Russia’s active efforts that the work of the “5+2” format was resumed in 2012 after it had been stalled for six years. Incidentally, the protracted crisis in the negotiations was mainly connected with the adoption in the Republic of Moldova of the Law on the Basic Provisions of the Special Legal Status of the Settlements on the Left Bank of the Dniester and the earlier refusal at the last moment to sign the already initialled plan for settlement of the Transdnistrian problem.

The pronouncements by the representatives of Moldova on the inauguration in Moscow of the “Transdnistria” Foundation for the Development of Social and Cultural Relations are misleading. The office nameplate correctly reflects its designation, and the statutory aims of this non-governmental organization in no way threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova.

The remarks by our Moldovan colleagues on the decision by the leader of Transdniestria concerning the village of Varnița are clearly out of place. We attribute this to the breakdown in the channels of communication with the authorities in Tiraspol. In that connection, we consider it important to recall the need to ensure the smooth functioning of the work in the “5+2” format, which could help in resolving the differences between Moldova and Transdniestria. We would ask the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship to take note of this fact.

It is difficult for us to judge the veracity of the information by unnamed “local media” referred to by Moldova concerning the increase in the number of military exercises conducted in Transdniestria. The Joint Control Commission responsible for safeguarding security in the conflict region has made no mention of it.

The information from the representatives of the Moldovan Government concerning a possible escalation in the run-up to the parliamentary election in Moldova requires further elaboration. The OSCE Mission monitoring the situation in the country has not yet indicated the background to this. We trust that the Moldovan Government will duly alert the peacekeeping unit stationed in the area in the event that it receives reliable information.

It is difficult for us today to form any assessment of the motives for Moldova’s attack on us. I would not like to think that the unfounded claims that have been made derive from a desire by our Moldovan colleagues to divert attention away from their own unwillingness to fulfil their obligations. It is sufficient to recall the sensitive issue for Transdniestria of the closing of the politically motivated criminal proceedings in Moldova. The Moldovan Government is effectively sabotaging fulfilment of the agreement confirmed at the OSCE Ministerial Council meetings in Hamburg, Vienna and Milan.

Perhaps the Moldovan Government is looking to disrupt the “5+2” format itself. In that context, mention might be made of the ambivalent interpretation by Ms. Cristina Lesnik, Deputy Prime Minister of Moldova, of the 1992 Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova, which forms the basis for the Transdniestrian settlement. The likely change in attitude by Moldova, if it actually takes place, will make the search for solutions to the Transdniestrian problem significantly more difficult.

The growing intensity of feelings in the Republic of Moldova in the run-up to the parliamentary elections on 24 February should also be taken into account. Election periods are difficult for any State, particularly when there is pressure from external partners insistently demanding full transparency and compliance of the electoral process with international standards.

For our part, we shall continue to look closely at the evolution of the Moldovan Government’s attitude. At this point, we can establish that the Permanent Representative of Moldova, deliberately or not, is calling into question the positive developments of the past three years in the Transdniestrian settlement. We cannot fail to note that the anti-Russian attack coincided with the working visit of the President of Moldova, Mr. Igor Dodon, to Moscow.

We shall continue our active co-operation with the authorities in Chișinău and Tiraspol and with the international participants in the negotiations in the “5+2” format. We

should like to re-emphasize our unchanged attitude as a mediator and guarantor State to the settlement of the conflict in Transdniestria. We firmly believe that responsibility for achieving mutually acceptable agreements lies first and foremost with the parties to the conflict themselves. We are also willing to carry on assisting in this in close co-ordination with the OSCE Chairmanship and the other participants in the "5+2" process with a view to making progress in the negotiations towards a sustainable, fair and comprehensive settlement of the Transdniestrian problem. We trust that the Moldovan Government also continues to share this aim.

Thank you for your attention.