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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 June 2010

**In response to the address by the  
Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova**

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to welcome the distinguished Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Mr. Victor Mikhailovich Osipov, to today's meeting of the Permanent Council. We are grateful for the view he has outlined on behalf of the Moldovan authorities of the prospects for a settlement of the Transdnistrian conflict and the work of the OSCE in general.

Russia and Moldova have long-standing historic ties, and our countries share many overlapping interests in various areas. As one of Moldova's closest neighbours, we are interested in further strengthening its sovereignty and constitutional status as a neutral country. The Russian Federation bases its mediation efforts on the continuity of the agreements reached in the negotiation process and observance of the international principles for a settlement.

Russia has been and remains a guarantor State, helping to find a just and comprehensive solution to this regional problem. Our position of principle is very well known and was once again set out in a joint statement by the presidents of Russia and Ukraine on 17 May of this year.

I might recall that Dmitry Medvedev and Viktor Yanukovich confirmed the need to find a compromise acceptable to both parties through dialogue on the basis of equal rights and work on confidence-building measures with a view to deciding on a special, reliably guaranteed status for Transdnistria based on respect for the territorial integrity of Moldova. The two countries expressed their intention to work towards a resumption of the official negotiations in the "5+2" format with the participation of the observers. We are pleased to note the commitment of the present Moldovan leadership to the same principles in a settlement of the Transdnistrian problem, and its interest in removing the obstacles that stand in the way of the negotiation process.

We also note the trend towards closer co-operation in this area between Russia and the European Union, and we believe this is providing an important impetus. The main responsibility for a settlement, however, continues to rest with the parties to the conflict.

At the same time, we regret that the political representative of Transdniestria, Vladimir Yastrebchak, has not been invited to address the Permanent Council in line with the principle of equal rights for the parties. Tiraspol's opinion would noticeably improve the understanding of the OSCE participating States as to the extent to which the positions of the principal parties converge as regards the elaboration of confidence-building measures, the work of the expert groups and also the possibilities for the discussion of political problems.

As Victor Mikhailovich mentioned, the fact that the Transdniestrian conflict has remained unresolved for 20 years now means that we also have 20 years of experience of the separate existence of Transdniestria as a self-proclaimed entity. This places particular responsibility on Moldova to find a mutually acceptable formula.

Now, with account taken of the particular features of the political situation in Moldova, the settlement process finds itself in a certain sense in a critical stage. It is important that against this background regular contacts continue between the parties at different levels. At the same time, there is a need to soberly assess a whole range of problems that have developed and not to substitute simple pressure on Chisinau and Tiraspol for patient work to create a constructive atmosphere conducive to resolving existing and future issues.

As for the point made by the distinguished Deputy Prime Minister of Moldova regarding the need to draw up a comprehensive strategy for restoring the unity of the country, I might note that such a document was drafted some time ago – I am referring to the “Kozak memorandum” signed by Chisinau and Tiraspol but rejected by the Moldovan leadership at the last moment.

In this connection, we once again stress the importance of preserving the current format of negotiations, since the unilateral desire by any of the parties to revise the status of the mediators or observers involved in the process, guided by political considerations, can only complicate the situation. It is very important that all the participants in the “5+2” format help to strengthen confidence and restore the momentum of the negotiation process. The most important thing is not to lose the positive aspects that have been achieved during the long years of contacts.

As for the proposals regarding the transformation of the current peacekeeping operation into an operation to ensure peace under the auspices of the OSCE, we note that, in accordance with the existing mandate, it is intended to assist in the negotiation process. A revision of its parameters will therefore be possible only after an agreement has been reached in the negotiation process on the status of Transdniestria. At this stage, when there is no such prospect, the curtailment of one of the most effective peacekeeping operations may push the parties to the conflict into direct confrontation.

In conclusion, I should like to express the hope that through joint efforts it will be possible to achieve a breakthrough in the negotiation process and move towards the goal of a comprehensive and viable settlement.