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

23 September 2010

**In response to the report by Mr. Kalman Miszei,  
EU Special Representative for Moldova**

Mr. Chairperson,

We join in the words of welcome addressed to Mr. Kalman Miszei, European Union (EU) Special Representative for Moldova. We listened closely to his assessments of the current state of affairs with regard to a Transdniestrian settlement. We take the position that the unfriendly pronouncements by individual EU members on this issue that are heard from time to time have a strictly personal underlying cause and do not reflect the official position of the EU.

Russia is closely following the development of the situation in the region. In our contacts with Chisinau and Tiraspol, we constantly touch upon the subject of a Transdniestrian settlement and issues related to maintaining stability along the Dniester. We think that constructive approaches by all parties to the conflict, and direct contacts between them, are the principal guarantees of a political settlement.

To this end, Russia, as a guarantor country, intends to contribute, along with international partners, to the creation of suitable conditions for resumption of the work of the "Permanent conference on political issues within the framework of the negotiation process for a Transdniestrian settlement". This is mentioned, in particular, in the Joint Declaration of the Presidents of the Russian Federation and Ukraine, of 17 May 2010. We trust that the EU, as an observer, will also help to encourage contacts and rapprochement between the parties within the framework of the 5+2 format, which has proved its effectiveness. Only close co-operation and co-ordinated efforts by all of its participants can hasten the achievement of a lasting political solution to the Transdniestrian problem.

The Meseberg agreements between Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and German Chancellor Angela Merkel provide assurances that our European partners also do not question the leading role of the 5+2 negotiating format and are ready to co-operate with regard to a fair settlement of the conflict. In our view, such a forum for collaboration between Russia and the EU on the Transdniestrian issue aptly takes into account the realities existing today.

The activities of the Kazakh Chairmanship of the OSCE, which is actively supporting steps towards the elaboration of agreements within the framework of confidence-building measures between Chisinau and Tiraspol, also appear to be going in the right direction. We hope that the informal meetings of participants in the 5+2 format, organized by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, will help to resolve a number of pressing issues that have arisen in the functioning of the bilateral expert groups. We see the establishment of such working-level collaboration as an important basis for a political settlement.

At the same time, we think that at the current stage, progress towards a Transdnistrian settlement is directly connected with the situation in Moldova, which has lately been in a prolonged political crisis. The contradictory steps taken by the Moldovan leadership, and the absence of a real negotiating partner as represented by Chisinau, do not in any way promote confidence-building between the parties; they worsen the political climate of the settlement process, and can hardly be conducive to the resumption of formal negotiations. In these circumstances, we look forward hopefully to the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Moldova. We expect a measured and responsible approach to the issue on the part of the new authorities in Chisinau, and a determination above all to seek a viable solution to it, and not to obtain political dividends.

In these difficult circumstances, we are baffled by the persistent suggestions to Russia that it wind down its participation in one of the most effective peacekeeping operations, in utter disregard of the fact that its abolition will bring the parties to the conflict into direct confrontation. As you know, the mandate of the Russian peacekeepers stationed in the territory of Transdnistria clearly links the duration of their presence and the time of withdrawal to a political agreement on a settlement of the conflict, which is not yet on the horizon.

Russia is not clinging to its military presence on the left bank of the Dniester. I recall that in the aforementioned high-level declaration by Russia and Ukraine, both countries expressly supported the transformation of the current operation into one that guarantees peace.

In conclusion, I should like to express the hope that the combined efforts of the guarantors, the mediators and the observers will succeed in giving the necessary impetus to the negotiation process and bring us closer to the achievement of a viable form of solution to the conflict.

Thank you for your attention.