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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

04.12.2020

#### STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. Aureliu Ciocoi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration,  
at the 27th meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council  
(Tirana, 4 December, 2020 – online)

Thank you, Madam Chair,  
Dear colleagues,

I would like to join previous speakers in expressing our sincere appreciation to the Albanian Chairmanship and to Prime Minister Edi Rama for the work very well done under the challenging circumstances during 2020.

*Madam Chair,*

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected many areas of our lives and had a huge toll on the public health and socio-economic well-being of all our countries. At the same time, this unprecedented crisis highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation, flexibility and coordinated responses.

Over the past nine months we have witnessed many inspiring examples of societies and countries living up to the challenges by showing solidarity and capacity to jointly act for the common good.

However, there are also cases when instead of bringing people closer and fostering cooperation, the opposite happened - existing divides deepened and new barriers were created. Unfortunately, this is what happened in the case of the Transnistrian conflict settlement process.

In spite of all the efforts made by Moldovan authorities not to allow the pandemic to roll back important progress made in recent years, the leaders of the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova decided to use the crisis to advance its narrow interests at the expense of the

interests and fundamental human rights and freedoms of hundreds of thousands of people living on the both banks of the Nistru river.

Under the false pretext of quarantine measures, the abovementioned leaders attempted to deepen separation and undermine the negotiation process. To this end, it illegally installed dozens of new control posts and de facto blocked the free movement of the region's residents.

Tiraspol also rejected all our appeals to combine efforts to tackle the pandemic and to mitigate its severe impact.

We are deeply concerned about the further deterioration of the human rights situation in the Transnistrian region of my country and call on all our partners involved to exercise all their leverages and influence to reverse these negative trends.

*Dear Colleagues,*

We regret that in spite of our proposals and readiness, it was not possible to hold, not even online, a meeting of the "5+2" format. We hope that a result-oriented meeting of the "5+2" will be organized as soon as possible in 2021.

It is our strong belief that along with advancing on the implementation of the Berlin Plus package, we should also start discussions on the core issue of the mandate of the negotiations process – achievement of the lasting and comprehensive political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict.

This is the only way to overcome the *status quo* and to effectively progress towards our shared goal that was outlined for the ninth year in the row in today's Ministerial Statement on the negotiations in the "5+2" format: "*Attaining a comprehensive, peaceful and sustainable settlement of the Transnistrian conflict based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders with a special status for the Transnistrian region*".

I would like to stress our principled, consequent and firm position that the conflict could be solved exclusively by peaceful means.

As we all aware, the protracted conflicts pose a very serious threat to the security of the entire OSCE area. In our conflict prevention and resolution efforts, preserving the principle of indivisibility of security in the OSCE region should remain essential. In this regard, following a comprehensive approach to enhancing security for all states, we should remain committed to the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of all OSCE participating states.

*Distinguished colleagues,*

Referring to the political-military aspects, I would like to reiterate our long-standing position on the need to finalize the withdrawal of foreign military troops and its ammunition stockpiles from the territory of the Republic of Moldova in accordance with its constitutional provisions of neutrality and in line with international commitments assumed within the OSCE.

In this context, we are ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with our Russian partners to follow up at a practical level on the initiative launched last year by the Russian Federation regarding the resumption of the process of destruction and withdrawal of ammunition from the

Cobasna deposits. The OSCE could play an important role in ensuring the transparency of this process.

At the same time, concerning the peacekeeping operation deployed on the basis of July 1992 Moldovan-Russian *Agreement on the Principles of Peaceful Settlement of the Military Conflict in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova*, we appreciate the role it had played in separating the sides and stabilizing the situation after the end of the military conflict. However, the stability and security which have been consolidated over the years in the region require new tasks for the peacekeeping mechanism. Its focus should be shifted from the separation of the sides towards promoting confidence, interaction and reintegration.

Today, our main goal should be to build a lasting peace, promote comprehensive settlement and reintegrate the country. We stand ready to engage in constructive consultations on how to adjust the peacekeeping arrangement to these tasks and existing realities.

We are firmly convinced that all these steps will help build confidence and create a conducive atmosphere to the successful negotiation process.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, let me extend my best wishes to the incoming Swedish Chairmanship in 2021.

Thank you for your attention!