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

Minister

STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. Aureliu Ciocoi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration,
at the 26th meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
(Bratislava, 5 December, 2019)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to join the previous speakers in expressing our sincere appreciation to the Slovak Chairmanship and in particular to H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák for the work that has been done during 2019 and for the outstanding organization of this Ministerial Council.

Mr. Chairman,

We highly value the merits of the OSCE in promoting a climate of security and cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region thus contributing to a safer future and well-being of people throughout the OSCE area. We remain firmly convinced that the OSCE is a significant actor in the European security landscape and its role should be further strengthened in order to be able to respond not only to the current security challenges and threats but also to those of tomorrow. Thus, I would like to fully subscribe to the Bratislava Appeal of Minister Lajčák - the OSCE's principles and commitments must remain at the core of our work to prevent conflict and foster stability for people throughout the OSCE area. There is no alternative to real, interactive and solutions-based dialogue on this matter.

Dear Colleagues,

In this context, I would like to draw once again your attention to protracted conflicts in our area. I strongly believe that the OSCE remains an essential instrument for settling these

conflicts. A peaceful settlement of conflicts based on the respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries in their internationally recognized borders has no alternatives.

Mr. Chairman,

Now I would like to refer in more details to the Transnistrian conflict settlement process. Despite some difficulties and challenges, we continued to implement and deliver on the "small steps" policy supporting first of all the population from the region. We are convinced that by consistently promoting confidence-building measures simultaneously with the identification of the key elements of the political solution for the Transnistrian conflict by the stakeholders, we create favorable framework for a peaceful, comprehensive and sustainable settlement of this conflict.

Therefore we insist on starting discussions on the issues from the third basket on the agenda of the negotiation process in the "5 + 2" format with regard to settling the main problem of the conflict - the development and adoption of the special status for the Transnistrian region as an integral part of the Republic of Moldova, based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders.

At the same time, we reiterate the need to progress on the withdrawal of foreign military troops and its ammunition from the territory of the Republic of Moldova, in line with the Istanbul Summit commitments. We are convinced that by acting in such a manner, we can contribute effectively to the elimination of some serious security threats in our region, given particularly the major humanitarian risks posed by Cobasna ammunition stockpiles, and implicitly, to contribute to building confidence between all parties involved in the Transnistrian settlement process.

In this context, the Moldovan authorities has welcomed the recent initiative of the Russian Federation to start the destruction of ammunition from the Cobasna deposits. The transparency of the process, under the OSCE mandate, is the only way forward, bringing advantages and credibility to all partners involved.

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

Therefore, our new concept for a balanced foreign policy, which in fact means dissociation from geopolitical confrontations and replacing the "either, or" approach with "both, and" strategy in our foreign relations is most likely to ensure the resultative tackling of all the challenges faced. In this very context, finding the best formula for internationally recognized neutrality status, which is already enshrined in Moldovan Constitution, and could be based on best examples, including from OSCE member states, would be an asset.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me thank once again the Slovakian Chairmanship for their efforts in 2019 and extend my best wishes to the incoming Albanian Chairmanship in 2020.

Thank you for your attention!