



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Jennifer Brush

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 21, 2013

The United States warmly welcomes you to the Permanent Council, Ambassador Brush, and we thank you for your detailed report.

The United States strongly supports the OSCE Mission to Moldova. The Mission plays a vital role in efforts to broker a comprehensive settlement to the Transnistria conflict both by facilitating direct dialogue between the sides and official negotiations in the 5+2 format, and by supporting confidence-building measures that address concerns in all three OSCE dimensions.

We are pleased that two meetings between Prime Minister Iurie Leanca and the Transnistrian leader, Evgenii Schevchuk, have taken place since your last report to the Permanent Council in April this year. We are also pleased that the Mission has been able to facilitate four rounds of the 5+2 talks this year, with the fifth round expected to take place in Kyiv from November 25 to 26. This dialogue can bring much needed momentum to the settlement process. The United States welcomes Moldova's initial steps to respect the freedom of movement, which should improve the lives of citizens on both sides of the Dniestr/Nistru River, and calls on the sides to make further progress.

The United States is concerned about efforts to restrict the movements of OSCE personnel and to limit their access to the right bank of the Dniestr/Nistru River. These actions are counterproductive and have a negative impact on the Mission's ability to carry out its mandate to conduct confidence building measures and monitor the security situation, through its patrolling exercises and otherwise. I appreciate your calling to attention the negative consequences this is having even for young people and students, and I agree with you that that's a real shame. Like you, we believe that these patrols are expressly allowed in the Mission's mandate and reject any attempt to limit the mandate or access of the Mission in any part of Moldova, including Transnistria.

While we have not seen the type of progress we may have hoped for in the political-military dimension in many years, particularly with respect to the completion of withdrawal and destruction of ammunition and armaments from the Transnistrian region, the United States supports your continued efforts in this area. Our experts are ready to work creatively with your team and with key players in the region to facilitate the removal and destruction of military equipment.

We commend the Mission's efforts to promote human rights awareness and dialogue with civil society. In particular, we commend the Mission's work to establish a Civil Society Forum, which can become an important mechanism to build trust and confidence among the population on both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River, to encourage dialogue between their leaders, and to foster increased transparency and public accountability. We welcome the Mission's efforts to promote the implementation of the recommendations by the previous High Commissioner on National Minorities in his 2012 report on "Moldovan-Administered, Latin-Script Schools in Transnistria." We also welcome the Mission's activities to support democratic reforms and to help the host country combat trafficking in human beings.

The United States remains committed to working with the other 5+2 partners to find a comprehensive settlement that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova and affords a special status for the Transnistria region.

In closing, allow me to thank you and your staff and to reiterate my government's support for the Mission's excellent work. We are committed to working with Moldova as it continues its integration into European institutions, and as it initials an Association Agreement with the European Union in Vilnius at the end of this month. Respect for the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms—indeed, for the full range of OSCE and international commitments—will continue to be key elements in our relationship.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.