

STATEMENT

by Mr. Ion STAVILA, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Moldova, at the first Annual Security Review Conference
(Working Group C)
(26 June 2003, Vienna)

Mr. Chairman,

As it is well known, the Republic of Moldova is facing two specific problems that are affecting its security and are on the agenda of the OSCE for more than ten years: the settlement of the transnistrian conflict and the withdrawal of the Russian forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

With reference to **the conflict settlement**, we might divide the process in two principle parts: before 2001 and everything that happened afterwards. The first period could be characterised as continuous policy of unilateral concessions made by Chisinau and perpetuating negotiations for the sake of the process but without any concrete results.

Obviously, such embarrassing situation could not continue indefinitely. That is why in September 2001 the new Moldovan leadership resorted to new approach to the settlement process, introducing new measures meant to curb financial revenues originating from the illegal activities that ensured the viability of the separatist regime and its intransigent position at the negotiations.

This new policy was supported by the OSCE community that in the relevant Porto Ministerial decision blamed the transnistrian administration for its obstructionist behaviour considered the major obstacle in view of political settlement. In the same context, the European Union and the United States of America have engaged to contribute to elimination of illegal activities linked to the conflict and have practically demonstrated this political will applying travel restrictions on the transnistrian leadership.

Consolidation of the control along the transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border would significantly contribute to bringing an end to illegal practices and would help to promote a political settlement. In this respect, the role of Ukraine as a mediator remains to be crucial. We welcome the commitment of the Ukrainian authorities to respect the integrity of the Moldovan customs territory, however, taking into account that fluxes towards the transnistrian region remain uncontrolled, we continue to insist on implementation of the joint border control mechanism.

In order to speed up the settlement process, the Moldovan President has launched a bold initiative to elaborate together with the transnistrian side a

new Constitution of the Republic of Moldova based on the federalist principle. This initiative that has opened a clear perspective for the conflict settlement was highly appreciated by all actors involved into the process. In order to fulfil this objective, a Joint Constitutional Commission has been created.

Unfortunately, fundamental differences on the issue of the nature of future federation continue to hinder the prospect of a successful outcome of the activity of the commission. Chisinau is in favour of an asymmetrical federation where the transnistrian region would benefit from a broad authority characteristic to a subject of a classical federation, whereas Tiraspol insists on creation of a confederative union.

In these circumstances, we are firmly convinced that political and economic pressure on the transnistrian regime should be intensified.

As for **the withdrawal of the Russian forces**, we welcomed the intensification of the process as a result of transnistrian decision not to hinder the withdrawal. That inspired optimism that the process would be fulfilled by the end of the year as Porto Ministerial document stipulated. Regretfully, a few days ago the withdrawal was stopped again by the Tiraspol administration claiming the writing off a considerable part of debt for gas consumption.

Welcoming the willingness of the Russian Federation to honour its commitments, we believe that it has all necessary leverage to ensure the cooperation of the transnistrian regime in order to complete the withdrawal by the end of this year.

We are currently examining the possibility of **a peace-consolidation force** as part of a system of post-conflict guarantees. The mandate and the composition of this force remains to be determined. We consider that this operation should be implemented under the OSCE auspices in conformity with the pertinent UN criteria, meaning that the respective forces have to be multinational and impartial.

It is obvious that in order to achieve the proposed objectives the Republic of Moldova needs continuous support from the participating states that would prove the ability of our Organisation to efficiently deal with concrete security challenges of one of its members. The determination of the Dutch Chairmanship in this sense is an encouraging and optimistic sign for which we express our gratitude.

Thank you.