

ENGLISH only

STATEMENT

delivered by H.E. Mr. Andrei STRATAN, Deputy Prime-minister,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova
at the 13th OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting
(Ljubljana, 5-6 December, 2005)

Dear Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to express my gratitude to the Slovenian Chairmanship for the excellent organization of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Ljubljana and I look forward to a fruitful activity during our meeting.

In my national capacity, I will refer to the aspects of the transnistrian conflict settlement and touch upon security concerns of my country.

This year, we witnessed important developments in the process of the political settlement. Important initiatives were launched by Ukraine, and the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted a set of documents that complement the Ukrainian settlement Plan. The mentioned documents emphasize the need for the democratisation and demilitarisation of the transnistrian region as a precondition for the settlement.

The adoption by the Moldovan Parliament of the *Law on basic principles of the special legal status of the localities from the left bank of the Nistru river (Transnistria)* represents an important step in the settlement process. This law provides for a settlement exclusively by peaceful means and specifies that the transnistrian region, being an inalienable part of the Republic of Moldova, is an autonomous territorial entity with special legal status. The process of defining region's status, including the delimitation of the competences between Chisinau and Tiraspol, will be carried out by the adoption of an additional Law, to be coordinated with the new, democratically elected, administration of the transnistrian region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The involvement of the European Union and the United States of America to the negotiations allowed the resumption of talks. We highly appreciate the participation of these two key actors at the first round of negotiations in the extended format, which took place on 27-28 October. We are hopeful that the enlarged format of negotiations will give impetus to the settlement process and will stimulate a more constructive approach on behalf of the participants to the process.

We would like to reiterate that the transnistrian conflict should be solved on the basis of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. The final objective of the negotiations should be the definition of the special legal status for the transnistrian region within the Republic of Moldova.

Regretfully, the October round of negotiations fell short of finding a solution to the longstanding problems in the Security Zone. We condemn the unilateral actions of the Tiraspol separatist regime aimed at destabilizing the already fragile situation in the Security Zone. The local population is deprived of the right to free movement and refused the access to its farming lots. On numerous occasions, we have informed the OSCE about the deplorable situation in the Security Zone and have requested the Chairmanship to launch an international monitoring mission.

The current tense situation in the Security Zone is also due to the inefficiency of the existent peacekeeping mechanism. This operation does not meet the requirements of an international peacekeeping mission. Moreover, it proved to be counterproductive to the whole process of conflict settlement. Therefore, Moldova has launched the initiative of transforming the current peacekeeping mechanism into an International Mission of Military and Civil Observers with an OSCE mandate.

We urge the OSCE to conduct an international inspection of the Russian Federation's armaments depots and those of the unconstitutional paramilitary units from the transnistrian region. We also consider it important to monitor the military-industrial enterprises in the transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova and support the Protocol proposed by the OSCE Mission to Moldova in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

An important factor in settling the transnistrian problem is ensuring an efficient control at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, in particular its transnistrian sector. I am pleased to inform the Council that, following a joint request of the Moldovan and Ukrainian Presidents addressed to the European Union, an EU Border Assistance Mission was launched on 1 December 2005.

We are hopeful that the EU Monitoring Mission will increase transparency at the border that would facilitate the fight against the negative phenomena at the frontier. These actions would ultimately lead to establishing a more secure regional environment. The EU Mission will have a positive impact on the process of political settlement of the transnistrian problem.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Republic of Moldova deeply regrets the lack of progress in the process of withdrawal of Russian troops. The Republic of Moldova calls on the Russian Federation to resume without delay and complete in a transparent manner the withdrawal process of its troops and ammunition from our territory in accordance with the OSCE Istanbul Summit Decisions of 1999. I have to emphasize that the Russian troops have no legal status on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. This military presence infringes the norms and principles of international law, and the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova.

The Russian military presence represents also a pressure factor in the negotiation process. This presence should not be used to impose externally a certain way of transnistrian conflict resolution. Such an approach does not meet our national interests, and is detrimental to the regional stability and security. We also believe that the complete and swift implementation of the Istanbul Decisions will facilitate progress in the process of entering into force of the Adapted CFE Treaty.

Distinguished Audience,

I hope the documents we are going to adopt tomorrow will reflect in a fair and pragmatic manner the issues of utmost importance for all of us – the need to settle unresolved conflicts and fulfil Istanbul commitments. Finally, dear colleagues, let me wish success to the incoming Belgian Chairmanship.

Thank you.