

STATEMENT

**by H.E. Mr. Andrei Galbur, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs
and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova,
at the 23rd meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
(Hamburg, 8 December 2016)**

Mr. Chairman,
Dear colleagues,

I wish from the outset to join the previous speakers and warmly thank Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and the German Federal Government for the excellent conditions that have been put in place for this Ministerial Council.

Mr Chairman,

Each year adds new items to the list of challenges, while older ones are still not resolved and are smoldering. Protracted and ongoing conflicts, terrorism, radicalization, refugee crisis have already left deep scars on security and cooperation system in Europe. Return of geopolitics and rise of populism have caused a change to the rules-based order in Europe. This trend worries us because we rely much in our foreign policy on international rules and principles respected by all. I believe a certain reset is needed to stop this tendency.

Mr Chairman, let me turn to what concerns my country specifically - the unresolved Transnistrian conflict and its related implications.

First of all we share overall positive assessment on the resumption of the negotiations in the 5+2 format after a two years break and I would like to use this opportunity to express our particular thanks to the German Chairmanship and its Special Envoy for their tireless efforts in promoting this process during the year. The Protocol signed at the 5+2 round in Berlin is outlining the further important steps in various areas such as transportation, education, environment.

However, these steps have to be synchronized with the overall efforts aimed at moving ahead the political settlement process. On our side – the Moldovan Government is committed to work out during the next year a concept document on the Transnistrian conflict settlement including its political aspects. I believe it is in the interest of all to start overcoming the *status quo* and gradually move towards a political solution. Our vision is rather clear on that – we see that this solution should be based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders and a special status for the Transnistrian region within the reintegrated country. We welcome that this approach is shared by

mediators and observers involved in the negotiations and we count on their redoubled efforts towards achieving that goal.

While noting the positive momentum of the settlement process, we should keep monitoring the security situation on the ground. We remain concerned with the lack of progress on withdrawal of the Russian forces and armaments from the Transnistrian region. We are also worried about the increased number of military exercises, conducted lately together with the breakaway Transnistrian armed forces. Therefore, I wish to reiterate our longstanding position on the need to complete the withdrawal of the Russian forces and military equipment from the territory of the Republic of Moldova. We also consider that the current peacekeeping operation has fulfilled its mission and time has come to transform it into a multinational civilian mission under a relevant international mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

On arms control - while we remain concerned with the continuing stalemate around the CFE regime, we believe that our joint efforts should be aimed at finding the way out of this state of play. I was mentioning in the beginning about the need for a reset – and it seems to us that a useful step in this direction would be starting a structured dialogue at the OSCE premises on security issues so that concerns of all Participating states could be discussed. Conventional arms control is an area to be part of such talks. At the same time any possible discussions on a new conventional arms control regime can not start from the scratch and will have to take into account those elements and commitments of the existing arrangements that have proved their efficiency over time.

We regret that despite the tireless efforts of the FSC Chair, consensus on reissuing Vienna Document on CSBMs could not be reached during the year. We believe that the work on further strengthening of the Vienna Document should continue.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, we believe that the resolution of the conflict in Ukraine and of the protracted conflicts should be based on full support for the principles of independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty within internationally recognized borders of the affected countries. These should remain key issues on the post-2016 agenda.

Liebe Kollegen,

Wir sollen über Hamburg hinausblicken und uns darauf einsetzen Kontinuität während der anstehenden Österreichischen und Italienischen OSZE-Präsidentschaft zu vermitteln. Unser Dialog in Sicherheitsfragen soll ausführlich und inklusive gepflegt werden.

Haben Sie vielen Dank fuer Ihre Aufmerksamkeit.