

STATEMENT ENGLISH only
by H. E. Mr. Iurie LEANCĂ, Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova,
at the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council
(Athens, 1-2 December 2009)

Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to join the previous speakers in expressing our sincere appreciation to the Hellenic Chairmanship for its work over the past year and for its excellent organization of this Ministerial Council.

Mr. Chairman,

We highly value the merits of the OSCE in promoting a climate of security and cooperation on the entire Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian areas, as well as the uniqueness of this model of cooperation, founded on the conviction that the security goes hand in hand with democracy, human rights and rule of law. It is our strong belief that the OSCE role as an indispensable actor in the European security landscape should be further strengthened. In this regard, we praise the consistent efforts made by the Greek Chairmanship, particularly by initiating and managing the Corfu process. We do consider that the Corfu process should address real security issues. We need a comprehensive but well focused debate in this framework on our security *acquis*, on the current state of play of European Security and on the relevant OSCE mechanisms, which will allow us to better address traditional and new challenges. A substantive outcome toward this end require an adequate political will from all participating States to foster an indivisible, comprehensive and cooperative security, to honest implementation of basic Helsinki principles and commitments assumed within the OSCE framework.

We fully share the view expressed by most ministers both in Corfu and here in Athens that unresolved conflicts and the contested regime of conventional weapons in Europe are at the core of the current disturbances. These complex security challenges require coherent, comprehensive and multilateral responses. Full respect for the principles of international law, particularly those pertaining to sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders, as well as for the principle of host State's free consent for foreign military presence must be in the very essence of our approach. The practice of "double standards" is one of the basic causes of the distrust and is the main enemy of any commitment or agreement. In this context, we fully share the position pointed out by the High Commissioner for National Minorities, Ambassador Vollebaek, that the presense of kin-State's citizens on the territory of another state must not be used as a justification for infringement of the principle of territorial sovereignty of that State.

Mr. Chairman,

As you may recall, the April Parliamentary elections in Moldova fell short of international standards and norms. Then, the anti-democratic behavior of the communist government questioned the very foundations of democratic institutions in the Republic of Moldova.

At the same time, the April events were a milestone for Moldova's democratic forces and its civil society. They triggered a far-reaching movement for societal and political change, which brought to power, as a result of early elections in July, democratic and reform-minded parties that created a governing Coalition called Alliance for European Integration. We are grateful to the international community and most of all to the OSCE for closely monitoring the situation and enabling democratic transfer of power and change in leadership after 8 years of Communist rule.

The new Government has put forward an ambitious, but pragmatic agenda. We have a vision for Moldova and are determined to make that vision a reality. We want Moldova to be a democratic, prosperous, reunited and European state, at peace with itself and its neighbors. We want to turn Moldova into a state where economic opportunities are available to all and not only to the selected few.

For this government, therefore, the priority objective is domestic reforms and modernization. Our task is to create an enabling framework in which Moldova's society can make that breakthrough. On top of our to-do list is opening up the economic environment, ensuring the independence of the judiciary, the rule of law, respect for human rights and freedom of the media, with a special focus on the independence of public broadcasters.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to turn to another key challenge – the Transnistrian conflict. We are well aware that the policy on this file will be an important litmus test for the new Government. Being determined to give a new impetus to the settlement process, the new Government increased the status of the coordinator of this file to the level of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Advancing on the path of European Integration and far-reaching domestic reforms is key for transforming the internal context of the settlement and facilitating the reintegration of Moldova. Apart from this, we are committed to promote various confidence and security building measures between the two banks. We also plan to intensify dialogue and contacts with various actors in the Transnistrian region, revitalize the joint Working groups and continuously support the population and companies from the region. We will continue to insist on the removal of existing obstacles in the way of the free movement of people and goods between the two banks.

At the same time, we call for prompt resumption without preconditions of negotiations in the 5+2 format, the only recognized international mechanism aimed at identifying a comprehensive, lasting and viable solution to this problem, by ensuring a special status for the Transnistrian region based on the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. We duly appreciate the efforts of the Greek OSCE Chairmanship in organizing the two informal meetings in the 5+2 format on 6 and 9 November. We also highly value the work of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine.

At the same time, we reiterate our deep concern with the continuing foreign military presence on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. We are confident, that the complete withdrawal of the remaining Russian Federation's troops and munitions, in accordance with the relevant 1999 Istanbul Summit Decisions, will facilitate resolving the crisis around the CFE Treaty and will constitute a major confidence and security building measure facilitating the conflict resolution. Cognizant of the contribution that was made by the current peacekeeping arrangement in securing stability in the region, we consider that now it is high time to start negotiations on its transformation by a multinational mission of civilian observers under international mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

We remain fully committed to work constructively with all participating States to reach a substantive outcome of this Ministerial Council, to help restore the needed trust and confidence.

We welcome the initiative of the incoming Kazakh Chairmanship to hold an OSCE Summit next year. We believe that such a high level reunion, for the first time in more than 10 years, might contribute to the revitalization of our Organization and advancing the dialogue on topical European security issues. We hope that following months the participating States will be able to agree on the agenda of this very important event.

Finally, I would like to wish success to the future Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, our Kazakh colleague, Minister Kanat SAUDABAEV, assuring him of our sentiments of solidarity and full support in carrying its mandate.

Thank you for your attention.