



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Michael Scanlan, and to the Head of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine, Mr. Francesco Bastagli**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
October 16, 2014

The United States warmly welcomes both Ambassador Scanlan and Mr. Bastagli to the Permanent Council, and we thank you for your comprehensive reports.

The United States strongly supports the OSCE Mission to Moldova. The Mission performs a crucial role in efforts to broker a comprehensive settlement to the Transnistria conflict by facilitating direct dialogue between the sides through the official negotiations in the 5+2 format and by supporting confidence-building measures that address concerns in all three OSCE dimensions. We have been deeply disappointed by the repeated postponement of the 5+2 talks this year. All sides need to show that they are ready to move forward and engage in meaningful discussions within the 5+2 format with the aim of finding a comprehensive settlement that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova and with a special status for the Transnistrian region.

Nonetheless, Ambassador, as you have reported, the successful dismantling of the dangerous industrial cable car network spanning the Dniester River demonstrates that cooperation between the two sides and among all interested parties is still possible. It is imperative that cooperation on smaller projects like this contribute to, rather than distract from, the primary goal of a resolution to the conflict.

The OSCE Mission to Moldova has an important role to play in supporting Moldova's reform program and providing reporting on the political and security situation, including in the Transnistrian region. The Mission serves as the eyes and ears of the international community. The conduct of observation patrols is specifically written into its mandate to bring to light any problems with the free movement of goods and people and to provide insight into security concerns. We are concerned that Transnistrian authorities continue to undermine the Mission's ability to provide unbiased reporting on the situation throughout the country by refusing OSCE monitors unfettered access to Transnistria. The Mission must have unrestricted access to all of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region, to perform its activities and fulfill its mandate. All participating States should vocally support the Mission's mandate for full access.

The United States supports the Mission's continued efforts to complete the withdrawal and destruction of ammunition and armaments from the Transnistrian region. 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 welcome the Mission's efforts to draw attention to Gagauzia and to provide the joint working group between Chisinau and Comrat with the analytical tools to resolve difficulties before they escalate. The Mission's assistance to Moldova to address rights of members of minority groups will help promote cooperation between ethnic groups and the central and local governments throughout the country, and we urge you to continue your efforts in this regard.

We also strongly support the Mission's efforts to promote implementation of recommendations by the High Commissioner on National Minorities regarding the Moldovan-administered, Latin-script schools in Transnistria. While the two sides were able to agree to keep the schools open, we renew our call that the underlying issues threatening their long-term viability be resolved quickly.

Allow me to underscore my government's strong commitment to our partnership with Moldova. We remain committed to Moldova as it pursues reforms and continues on its path to European integration.

Turning to your report, Mr. Bastagli, we commend the invaluable work of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM). We support EUBAM's continued provision of technical advice and capacity building to both countries in areas ranging from effective customs control and border surveillance to the fight against trafficking in human beings and weapons smuggling. The EU's engagement has contributed to improvements in the effectiveness of border monitoring and to confidence-building initiatives in the Transnistria conflict settlement process through technical proposals that foster economic cooperation between Chisinau and Tiraspol. We welcome the role of EUBAM in facilitating an agreement for the resumption of passenger and freight railway traffic across Transnistria. We also appreciate the flexibility EUBAM has shown in its staffing and deployment patterns, in order to ensure its teams are well-equipped to help address increased tensions in the region.

Thank you both for your reports and your hard work.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.