

Opening speech at the OSCE Mission to Moldova annual event, by Ambassador Michael Scanlan, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, on the occasion of the 26th Anniversary of the Signature of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, Chisinau, 22 November 2016

Your Excellencies,
Dear colleagues and friends,
Good evening and welcome!

As is the tradition, embassies dedicate their annual reception to their national holiday. In the case of the OSCE, we have no national day per se, but we do have one day that marks the joint aspirations of the 57 participating states. This is the day in Paris, in November 1990, when the then 34 members of the OSCE, at that time called CSCE, signed the Charter for a New Europe.

In the Paris Charter, the participating states undertook “to build, consolidate and strengthen democracy as the only system of government”, and, in doing so, to abide by the human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are “the birthright of all human beings, inalienable and guaranteed by law”. Out of this, flowed the establishment of the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, to help states work towards those ideals. In that context, in 2016, ODIHR deployed for Moldova’s presidential elections an observation mission to assess the election’s compliance with the principles of equality, transparency, and political pluralism that participating states strive to meet.

The Charter refers to democracy as “the best safeguard of freedom of expression and tolerance of all groups of society”. This goal is embodied in the OSCE by the High Commissioner on National Minorities that works with participating states to help promote tolerance, not only in order to prevent tensions over national minority issues, but also to promote an inclusive and resilient society. In 2016, the High Commissioner visited Chisinau and Tiraspol to encourage such an inclusive approach to education issues. During the visit, HCNM welcomed the activity of the Joint Working Group between the central authorities and Gagauzia to improve the functioning of the autonomy. The bylaws of the Working Group cite the OSCE as a partner in this important endeavour. HCNM has also encouraged the Government to promote a resilient and inclusive society through the adoption of a strategy for consolidation of inter-ethnic relations in Moldova.

The OSCE’s Representative on Freedom of the Media strives to help participating states abide by their commitments to freedom of expression. This year, at the request of the authorities of the Republic of Moldova, RFoM provided an expert opinion on the proposed amendments to the Broadcasting Code to help ensure that the draft media regulations are in line with said commitments.

Within the OSCE family, the Mission to Moldova has been in charged by the participating states to promote the settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict, in partnership with the Chairmanship-in-Office, and in close cooperation with our fellow Mediators and the Observers. This year, the 5+2 negotiation process was restored after a two-year hiatus. More importantly, the protocol signed in June in Berlin affirmed an output-based process, in which the Sides have committed to clear objectives and actions that deliver practical solutions to the benefit of the people on both banks. The commitments outlined in the Berlin Protocol fully

adhere to the endorsed parameters by the participating states, which of course includes the Republic of Moldova, for the final settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict.

I would also like to note this year's important milestone in line with the anti-discrimination spirit of the Paris Charter. In 2016, Moldova officially held its first Holocaust Remembrance Day and in July, it set out the goal of drafting, by the end of the year, an Action Plan on education and remembrance of the Holocaust for the purpose of promoting the spirit of tolerance, humanism, and mutual respect.

On behalf of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, I want to express gratitude to all our partners this evening for their cooperation in 2016. And please join me now in a toast to the Paris Charter for a New Europe and to our relentless effort to make it a reality.

Mulțumesc, Спасибо, and Thank you!