



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement in response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova Ambassador Kelly Keiderling

As for delivery by the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna Yuriy VITRENKO
to the 1519th meeting of the Permanent Council,
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Mr. Chairperson,

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered under this agenda item by the Delegation of the European Union. But I would also like to add several remarks in my national capacity.

The Delegation of Ukraine welcomes Ambassador Kelly Keiderling to the Permanent Council and thanks for her report.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to reiterate our full support to the Mission's mandated activities aimed at comprehensive, peaceful, and sustainable settlement of the Transdnistrian conflict, based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders.

The 5+2 negotiation format remains fully dysfunctional because of the destructive role of the aggressor-state – the Russian Federation. This format was established to negotiate a special status of Transdnistria within the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Moldova. But due to the destructive Russian position there was no consensus to include this point in the 5+2 agenda during the last couple of decades. Moscow's participation in any peacebuilding initiatives in current situation is not possible.

Meanwhile, the Mission's efforts aimed at supporting the dialogue between Chisinau and Tiraspol in the 1+1 format are important and instrumental for solving different issues in a peaceful manner.

It is crucial to avoid various artificial pretexts and uphold the principle of rotation, so that the meetings are convened in Chisinau, Bender and Tiraspol with the relevant participation from both banks.

Russia did not reject its plans to destabilize the Republic of Moldova. Having orchestrated the energy crisis in the Transdnistrian region of Moldova, Moscow has turned people there into hostages of its malign activities in the region, which pose additional challenges to already fragile security situation.

As reflected in the report, it was only thanks to efforts of Moldovan officials, who prioritised the welfare of residents from both banks and valuable support by the European Union, that the humanitarian catastrophe in the Transnistrian region was prevented.

According to the report, the security situation in and around the Security Zone remained stable.

At the same time Russia keeps restricting the freedom of movement in the Security Zone for the diplomatic staff members, accredited in the Republic of Moldova, with groundless stops and inspections, carried out by the Russian military personnel at the checkpoints of the Joint Peacekeeping Force.

The report does not provide any information whether the Mission suffers from such restrictions. It would be useful to clarify this aspect.

But for sure these restrictions are not in action for the Russian diplomats in Chisinau, who, according to the Security and Intelligence Service of Moldova, used a diplomatic vehicle to illegally transport a former Moldovan parliamentarian Alexandr Nesterovschi to the Transdniestrian region in March.

In this way Russia allegedly helped this person to avoid detention by the Moldovan law-enforcement for illegal financing of the pro-Russian political party "Shor", for which Nesterovschi was convicted to 12 years imprisonment in a closed-type penitentiary.

Before the escape he was hiding in the Embassy of Russia in Chisinau.

It is mentioned in the report that the Russian peacekeepers undertook unilateral military exercises on 24 December and 29 January, and these exercises had the potential to elevate the threat perceptions in the Security Zone and beyond.

Russia continues the destructive practice of conducting such exercises, including with the use of blank ammunition and armoured personnel carriers, in violation of the established regime of the Security Zone and relevant regulations of the Joint Control Commission.

As for the mentioned case of 24 December, it is important to note, that it happened on the day of inauguration of the President of the Republic of Moldova. This is nothing else but a provocation and an act of pressure on the highest Moldovan leadership by Russia.

Meanwhile, the Republic of Moldova continues to experience the negative spillover effect of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Since 2022 there were 21 registered incidents when the Russian missiles and long-range assault "Shahed" drones used to break the Moldovan airspace, including above the Security Zone, and parts of them fall at the Moldovan sovereign territory.

Briefly summarising these developments and facts we can hardly share the conclusion presented in the report about the current level of security situation in the Security Zone.

Meanwhile it is obvious what are the motives behind the Russian ignorance of Moldova's clear request to immediately withdraw the Russian military units and munitions from the Moldovan sovereign territory.

Mr. Chairperson, Dear Colleagues,

Ukraine will continue playing an active role in the Transdniestrian settlement process. The final goal of this process is full re-integration of the Transdniestrian region into the Republic of Moldova. And this core aspect should be kept in mind every time we have a relevant discussion, including here, at the Permanent Council.

We encourage the OSCE Mission to provide all necessary support to Chisinau in implementing its policy of gradual re-integration of the Transdniestria region into the Moldovan legal framework, namely in terms of economic and social issues. This task is even more important as the Republic of Moldova is doing its homework on adjusting this framework to the relevant international agreements and commitments.

We once again reiterate, it is the compliance by Tiraspol with the relevant Moldovan legislation, that is crucial for both solving the practical issues and re-integration of the Region. Not vice versa.

Problems in this process are rooted in Russia-fuelled unwillingness of Tiraspol to really reintegrate the Region into Moldova.

Mr. Chairperson,

Ukraine once again underlines the urgency of the issue of withdrawal of military units and munitions of the Moscow war criminal regime from the sovereign territory of the Republic of Moldova as Russia recommitted to do at the 1999 Istanbul Summit and as it was requested by Chisinau itself on numerous occasions.

The participating States should exert additional pressure on Russia to provide the OSCE Mission to Moldova with the possibility to monitor and report on the situation at the munition depot in Cobasna as it is envisaged by its mandate, the scope of which was expanded by the PC Decision №329/99.

Considering destructive position of Russia within OSCE, which, inter alia, resulted in cutting the term of the OSCE Mission's to Moldova mandate from 12 to 6 months, OSCE's leadership and participating States have to secure this OSCE field operation from pressure exerted by the Russian Federation.

In terms of finding a peaceful and comprehensive solution to the Transdnestrian conflict in all its aspects, Ukraine will continue to be standing firmly on its position, based on full respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders with ensuring the functionality of the reintegrated state.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.