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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 818th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Vienna, 24 June 2010

In response to the address by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova

The European Union (EU) wishes to warmly welcome Mr. Osipov, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, to the Permanent Council and to thank him for his statement.

The EU attaches particular importance to its relations with the Republic of Moldova. It reaffirms its desire to deepen and strengthen its political association and its economic integration with the Republic of Moldova, *inter alia* within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. It welcomes the launching last January of negotiations with a view to the signature of a new association agreement between the EU and the Republic of Moldova, including the objective of a developed, comprehensive free-trade area.

The EU-Moldova Co-operation Council meeting in Luxembourg on 15 June reaffirmed the quality of our relations. It was the occasion, in particular, for launching a dialogue on the liberalization of visa regimes.

The European Union stresses the importance of respect for democratic standards and congratulates the Moldovan authorities on having consulted the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe when they were seeking a solution to the present constitutional deadlock affecting the Republic of Moldova. The EU hopes that the referendum on article 78 of the Moldovan Constitution, governing the procedures for the election of the President of the Republic, and the parliamentary and presidential elections to follow will enable political stability to be strengthened in the Republic of Moldova.

The EU welcomes the reforms undertaken by the Government of the Republic of Moldova. The action taken by the authorities to ensure respect for human rights, specifically freedom of expression and freedom of the media, as well as respect for the rule of law should be pursued rigorously. The EU urges the Moldovan authorities to continue to co-operate closely with the OSCE mission in Chisinau and with the OSCE institutions. It also hopes to continue its dialogue with the Republic of Moldova on human rights and its co-operation in the area of justice, freedom and security.

The EU appeals for a speedy and unconditional resumption of the formal negotiations between the parties in the "5+2" format, the only framework that will make it possible to

guarantee the transparency and legitimacy necessary for the negotiation of a lasting solution. To this end, the EU supports the efforts made by the Chairmanship and the OSCE mission.

The EU intends to play its full part in the quest for a peaceful solution in the Transdniestrian conflict based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, particularly through its Special Representative, Mr. Kálmán Mizsei, and by continuing the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM), which provides technical assistance for the control of the border between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine and plays a stabilizing role for the entire region. The EU recalls Ms. Ashton's statement of 17 May 2010 and its interest in the proposals submitted by the Republic of Moldova in its *aide-mémoire* on the Transdniestrian conflict. If a comprehensive political agreement were reached, the EU would give thought to the most appropriate manner of supporting its implementation on the ground.

The EU fully supports the Moldovan Government's outstretched-hand policy vis-à-vis the Tiraspol authorities. It was for this reason that it decided in February temporarily to suspend the ban on visas for certain Transdniestrian officials pending progress by Tiraspol in respect of personal mobility, the status of Romanian-language teaching institutions in Transnistria and the resumption of negotiations in the "5+2" format. The EU encourages the parties concerned to continue the efforts made in this direction.

The resolution of frozen conflicts in the OSCE must be a priority for all participating States in order to strengthen security in Europe. The EU hopes that the Corfu Process and a possible summit meeting will contribute to this.

The EU remains profoundly concerned by the developments in recent months in the region of Transnistria and, in particular, the arrest of the journalist Ernest Vardanian and the manoeuvres to intimidate civil society. It appeals once more for full respect for fundamental freedoms in the region.

In conclusion, the EU wishes again to thank the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova for his statement.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* and Iceland, the Stabilisation and Association Process countries and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Norway, as well as Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.