



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Address by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Philip Remler

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 14, 2011

The United States warmly welcomes you to the Permanent Council, Ambassador Remler.

We strongly support the OSCE Mission to Moldova, which continues to play a central role in efforts to broker a comprehensive settlement to the Transnistria conflict. The Mission helped last year to establish a more robust settlement process, with five informal meetings of the 5+2 – which includes the Sides and representatives of the mediators and observers – and regular meetings of the Sides' chief negotiators. This year, the process has continued, and the Sides are closer than ever to resuming formal negotiations in the 5+2 format.

The United States looks forward to the soonest possible resumption of these negotiations and remains committed to a settlement that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova and provides for an agreed status for the Transnistria region. We also remain committed to the implementation of measures to promote freedom of movement and to reduce tensions in the security zone. We commend the tangible results achieved thus far, including the resumption of passenger rail traffic between Chisinau and Odessa, and hope to see further concrete achievements, in particular through the expert-level working groups. We believe that although no shots have been fired in more than a decade, continued demilitarization of the conflict and enhanced transparency regarding military forces in the region must remain a priority.

The OSCE Mission to Moldova provides valuable assistance in a variety of other areas. We attach high importance to the Mission's efforts to promote the fulfillment of remaining commitments on the withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldova. We commend the Mission's work in promoting transparent elections and free access to polling stations, particularly in the disputed village of Corjova. We encourage the government of Moldova to take steps to ensure the June 5 local elections meet OSCE and international standards. We also continue to encourage a responsible, constitutional resolution of domestic political uncertainties. The OSCE should also continue to promote observance of the rule of law.

Turning to another matter, Ambassador Remler, we appreciate and encourage the Mission's regular monitoring of the cases of Ernest Vardanean and Ilie Cazac, who were convicted of high treason by Transnistrian courts and sentenced to lengthy prison terms. We urge the relevant authorities to demonstrate respect for the human rights of all individuals and for due process under the law and to review these cases in a manner consistent with OSCE and international standards.

The United States greatly appreciates the work of you and your staff, Ambassador Remler, in supporting Moldova as it progresses toward its stated goal of integration into European institutions. Respect for the full range of OSCE and international commitments will continue to be a key element in this process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.