



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Schools and the Political Settlement Process in Moldova

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 21, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Since the last regular Permanent Council meeting on September 30, there has been some progress toward ending the schools crisis in the Transnistria region of Moldova. The Moldovan-language, Latin-script school in Rybnitsa was allowed to re-open in temporary facilities, and we welcome this long overdue development.

However, the school in Tiraspol remains closed, without a building in which to hold classes. The building that the school used to occupy was appropriated by the Transnistrian authorities, who, according to the reports that we have seen, ransacked and damaged it to such an extent that it is now uninhabitable.

Mr. Chairman, we remain deeply concerned over this ongoing situation. There has been progress, yes, but let us not have any illusions: the crisis has not been fully resolved by any means.

Another ongoing issue that the Permanent Council should not ignore is the Transnistrian militia's continuing illegal occupation of the train station in Bender.

The international community must continue to put pressure on the Transnistrian regime. We again call on Russia and on Ukraine -- as well as all other OSCE states -- to respect Moldova's authority to grant or deny customs certification for Transnistrian enterprises.

The United States welcomes the joint statement signed by the mediators in Sofia on October 13, and we strongly urge both parties to the conflict to accept the invitation of the mediators to hold consultations as soon as possible.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.