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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 735th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

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Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council on the Republic of Moldova

The European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 13 October 2008 on the Republic of Moldova.

“1. The EU welcomes the recent increase in the pace of its relations with the Republic of Moldova. It is ready to have a deeper relationship in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and to negotiate a new and ambitious agreement with Moldova soon. This agreement will go beyond the current Partnership and Co-operation Agreement and will include the aim of a comprehensive and deep free-trade area, to be put in place when the Republic of Moldova is ready to sustain the effects of full liberalization of its trade with the EU. The aim of the agreement will be gradually to bring the Republic of Moldova and the EU closer together. The Council recalls in this connection the facilitation agreement on visas which lays down the introduction of a visa-free travel regime for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova as a long-term perspective.

2. The Council would recall that the pace and quality of reforms in the Republic of Moldova will affect the nature of its relations with the EU. In this context, it would encourage the Moldovan authorities to make the necessary efforts to strengthen the rule of law and to implement their commitments on human rights and fundamental freedoms. The EU attaches particular importance to the parliamentary elections in the spring of 2009 being conducted in a democratic manner.

3. The EU will increase its engagement in efforts to resolve the conflict in Transnistria and reaffirms its attachment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. The Council would recall that the “5 + 2” negotiating format is the only guarantee of the transparency and legitimacy needed to find a lasting solution. It calls on all the parties concerned to resume negotiations in the “5 + 2” format. It encourages the parties to the conflict to work together on confidence-building measures and stresses the contribution made by assistance from the Community and the Member States in supporting and facilitating this process.”