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ADDENDUM 2

Functioning of democratic institutions in Moldova

The following texts were submitted for inclusion in the official report by members who were present in the Chamber but were prevented by lack of time from delivering them.

Functioning of democratic institutions in Moldova

Mr ILAȘCU (*Romania*) – From the beginning, I would like to stress the quality of the document that the rapporteurs have produced. It is a good and well-balanced document which reflects the situation of the functioning of democratic institutions in the Republic of Moldova. The report shows that there is still a lot to do in order to build a fully democratic society in this country and many obstacles to pass, both internal and external.

One of these obstacles is the well-known Transnistrian issue. For 14 years, this issue has destabilised the development of the democratic process in the region. Again, this issue was artificially created under the influence of outside forces, more precisely the imperial ambitions of the Russian Federation.

Today it is clear for all what happened in 1992 on the right bank of the Dniestr River. A direct aggression of the Russian army against the young state of Moldova was then provoked and initiated, with the aim of maintaining it by force on its sphere of influence.

We are still witnessing today attempts to describe that Moldova-Russian war as an internal conflict of Moldova. But the European Court of Human Rights, through its decision on 7 July 2004, clearly ruled that the responsibility for the control of Transnistria and the violations of human rights in this region devolves upon the Russian Federation. In other words, this territory, torn from the Republic of Moldova, is, in principle, an occupied territory.

As long as this occupation lasts, as long as the territory of the Republic of Moldova continues to be divided in two, any decision regarding the finalisation of the democratisation process is premature.

Non-democratic influences from the separatist Transnistrian territory – such as smuggling, banditry, illegal criminal structures dealing with weapons, human beings, organs or drugs trafficking, money laundering networks – infiltrate the other part of territory of the Republic of Moldova. This situation will continue to exist as long as the Russian army stays and controls and sustains the Smirnov's marionette regime.

Deliberately ignoring the ECHR's decision to release my two colleagues, the political prisoners Andrei Ivantoc and Tudor Petrov Popa, the leaders of the Russian Federation categorically refuse to implement it.

I must say with regret that as much as we would like to conclude the monitoring process of the Republic of Moldova, the Council of Europe should continue to survey the functioning of democratic institutions, especially in the eastern regions, in Transnistria, where basic norms of democracy and human rights keep being violated. The Council of Europe should continue to help Moldova in the future in freeing its territory from foreign troops and building a democratic society.

Antti KAIKKONEN (*Finland*) – While the European strong powers, the EU and Russia, are more or less fighting for their power in the ex-communist states in the Central and Eastern Europe, the citizens of Moldova have been forgotten. On the European Union highest political level, Moldova is rarely ever even mentioned. Russia cares, but mainly because of the rights of the Russian population in Moldova. The European Union does not care even that much. It is very important that we are debating this topic here in the Council of Europe.

I do not mean that the EU or Russia should somehow rule Moldova but together these strong political powers, especially the European Union, could give signals to the citizens of Moldova that they are remembered and there is a hope for a bright future in the country. In the heart of Europe, Moldova has great possibilities to develop into a gateway between Russia, Ukraine and the European Union. If everything goes as planned, and Romania joins the European Union, Moldova will have great possibilities to develop its relations to the Union also that way.

Nevertheless, the leaders of the country and the leaders of the European Union and Russia are in key positions. Without democracy and freedom of speech and opinion the development of Moldova is impossible. The role of the national government and president, as well as the role of the Russian and EU leaders is to share power equally among every citizen of Moldova. The conflict in Transnistria must be solved by giving decision-making powers to normal citizens, not to those people who want the ethnic tensions to grow in the region.

I wish all the best to the citizens of Moldova. I suggest that the leaders of the European Union and Russia meet at a round table with citizens of Moldova to discuss the possibilities and problems of the region. Moldova and the Transnistrian conflict could be an excellent example of effective cooperation between the Kremlin and Brussels.

A lot has been done, but certainly there is still a lot to do. The Council of Europe should focus especially on the serious situation of trafficking in human beings and organs. The report says that the prime risk group is the 100 000 women and girls in Moldova aged between 16 and 24. Victims are sold multiple times as slaves for prices ranging from \$200 – \$20 000. Trafficking happens usually through Transnistria. We really cannot close our eyes to these problems.

Moldova and its citizens are worthy of our great attention now.

