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OSCE (22.09.2011) / HRWF (22.09.2011) - <http://www.hrwf.net> - The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Ažubalis, welcomed today's agreement in Moscow to resume official '5+2' negotiations on the Transdniestrian settlement.

"This is a key step for progress in the Transdniestrian settlement process.

I am personally committed to and will maintain the OSCE efforts in facilitating a compromise solution. Today I am very happy that we have been able to contribute to reaching this agreement," said Ažubalis. "I would especially like to congratulate Russian Minister Lavrov whose unceasing attention to this issue has been instrumental in achieving the progress we have today".

The meeting in Moscow was chaired by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for Protracted Conflicts, Ambassador Giedrius Čekuolis who welcomed the constructive approach by the sides: "Today's progress is the start of a new phase in the talks on the Transdniestrian settlement. On behalf of the OSCE Chairmanship I have invited participants to come to Vilnius for a first official 5+2 meeting".

The participants have agreed that the next official meeting of the "Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiating Process for Transdniestrian Settlement" would be devoted to a discussion of principles and an agenda for the official negotiating process. Today's meeting in Moscow was closed by the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin.

The OSCE Chairmanship believes that in parallel to discussing the political issues in the '5+2' format, it is vital to continue addressing urgent practical problems people on both sides of the Dniestr/Nistru River are facing.

The "5+2" format consists of the sides, as well as mediators and observers representing the OSCE, Russian Federation, Ukraine, the US, and the EU. Official negotiations were broken off in 2006. Informal talks have continued under the OSCE aegis. Today's meeting was a continuation of an informal round of consultations in the '5+2' format held in Moscow in June, which was suspended under a 'stopping the clock' procedure.
