First meeting this year of the political representatives in the negotiations process for the Transnistrian settlement

20 January 2020, Chisinau – The first working meeting this year of the political representatives from Chisinau and Tiraspol in the negotiations process for the Transnistrian settlement took place online from the headquarters of the OSCE Mission in Chisinau and in Tiraspol, with participation of Ms. Olga Cebotari and Mr. Vitalii Ignatiev as Chief-negotiators. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the "5+2" negotiation format.

The introductory speakers welcomed the resumption of meetings in this format after a break of approximately six months and expressed the readiness to maintain a constructive dialogue in order to boost the negotiation process and determine the priority directions for the near future.

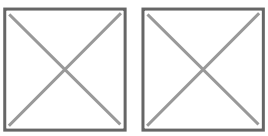
Discussions then focused on evolutions of the commitments agreed under the so-called Berlin Plus Package. The current situation, existing issues, positions of the parties and the necessary actions to be taken in the future to fully implement the protocol decisions signed during 2017 -2018 (such as bridge between Gura Bâcului and Bâcioc villages, good functioning of the Latin-script schools, agricultural land in Dubasari district, apostille of neutral model diplomas, documentation of vehicles with neutral plates, telecommunications) were also highlighting. Solving the problem of free movement and compliance with the procedural requirements in force when managing the activity of the competent law enforcement bodies were also underlined.

Distinct attention was paid to the sectoral working groups dynamics in 2020 (26 meetings took place, compared to 21 in 2019), to achievements and difficulties encountered, specifying the need to boost their activity as to increase efficiency and identify viable technical solutions to the current problems faced by the inhabitants on

both banks of Nistru. The availability of taking necessary measures on convening in the near future the sectoral experts was also agreed.

It was mentioned that the negotiation process in 2020 resulted with 4 signed documents, while other draft sectoral protocol decisions remain on the agenda and need to be coordinated and finalized, including on removing the technical barriers to trade and consumer rights protection.

The Chief-negotiators exchanged views on other current issues, which were tackled in the recent correspondence between the offices of the political representatives. Chisinau presented the steps and procedures required to be undertaken in accordance with the rigors in force.

In planning the processes for the current year, the priority directions were drawn for the near future. The political representative from Chisinau emphasized the need to maintain an active dynamic in all existing negotiation formats, thus creating premises for resuming the official rounds in the "5+2" format, for implementation of the Berlin Plus Package and for finding solution to pressing issues of the population. Promotion of new positive humanitarian initiatives, elimination of barriers to free movement, assistance on protecting fundamental human rights and freedoms, common measures to effectively fight the Covid-19 pandemic, with the involvement of specialists from both banks of Nistru, were also listed.

The political representatives agreed that they would maintain a permanent interaction and focus on achieving tangible results. They reiterated the existence of an express political will to engage and advance in solving the primary problems of citizens, and mentioned the need for productive consultations with the Special Representative of the acting OSCE Presidency, who will pay a working visit to the Republic of Moldova by the end of this month.