



**Statement of the Honorable Alcee L. Hastings, Co-Chairman  
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

**Hearing  
on  
“Democratic Change and Challenges in Moldova”**

**January 21, 2010**

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your convening today’s hearing as part of the Helsinki Commission’s ongoing monitoring of developments in the Republic of Moldova. I am particularly pleased to welcome Prime Minister Filat to Washington for his first visit since his selection in September. Welcome.

Much of our attention following independence was focused on the continued presence of foreign troops and military equipment on Moldovan territory. The Commission continually pressed for implementation of related commitments agreed to at the 1999 Istanbul OSCE Summit and remains steadfast in its support for core principles, including territorial integrity and sovereign equality, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

As President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I was pleased to support the work of the Assembly’s Parliamentary Team on Moldova, a group of fellow parliamentarians dedicated to promoting peace, stability and the rule of law in Moldova while encouraging dialogue across a wide spectrum of the Moldovan population.

While Moldova has faced a myriad of external pressures over the years, our focus today is on the current political impasse following last year’s parliamentary elections. Popular sentiment of change was evident last spring when thousands of Moldovans took to the streets to have their voices heard following the April balloting. Those protests attracted large numbers of young voters savvy in the use of new technologies and united in their demands for change in their country. The political stalemate and street violence following the spring elections led to a fresh round of parliamentary elections in late July. The result was a coalition of opposition parties led by the Prime Minister’s Liberal

Democratic Party. The current impasse results from the inability of any party or group in parliament to muster the 61 votes required by the Moldovan constitution to elect a new president. Meanwhile, a host of domestic issues remain largely on hold awaiting a resolution of the deadlock.

Amid a global economic downturn, Moldovans face particular challenges, including a sharp reduction from remittances from relatives previously working abroad. Corruption remains a significant concern along with trafficking in small arms and human beings, mainly for commercial sexual exploitation.

While the United States has been supportive of Moldova's aspirations for further integration into western organizations, especially the European Union, it will be up to country's political leadership to chart a course of action that moves Moldova beyond political and economic stagnation and holds out the prospect for real change.