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**Speech delivered by
Mr. Vasile Tarlev
Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova
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„Moldova and Europe: Bridging the Gap”

Chişinău, April 26-27, 2005

**Dear colleagues,
Dear audience
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Allow me on this occasion to thank our German partners for the initiative to reunite the representatives of the European political and academic spheres not only to debate the issues concerning Moldova, but first of all undoubtedly, to suggest proposals with a practical value.

Incontestably, bringing every member of the European family to the system framework it is a part of, will essentially contribute to the consolidation of Europe as a whole. In this sense, I would like to reiterate the opening of Moldova to deepening and enlargement of cooperative relations with the European partners with the view to ensure prosperity and peace for Europe as well as for all of us.

The skeptic voices for the pro-European choice of Moldova, which were still heard in the beginning of 2004, when the first conference of this kind has been organized, belong today to the past. Only one path is open for Moldova- the path towards Europe and European integration.

Although we are only at the beginning, in a relatively short period of time we made important steps in this direction, as on the internal as well as on the external aspect.

With this view, during the past 3 years the structural and functional dimensions of the European integration policies were consolidated: the National Commission for the European Union continued its activity, setting the priority directions of the European integration policy, the institutional capacities of the Department for European Integration, of the responsible subdivisions for integration from ministers and other institutions were strengthened, a special attention was paid to the training of civil servants in the field of European integration, the inter-ministerial commissions for coordinating the implementation of the Moldova-EU Action Plan were created.

The successful implementation of the Plan and of the European Neighborhood Policy will depend on a serious fulfillment of the taken commitments by all the parts, and not separately by Moldova or European Union, because the Action Plan needs consolidated efforts.

Complete and efficient implementation of the Action Plan undoubtedly will constitute one of the major objectives of Moldova. Its adoption through a Government Decision at the first session of the new Government confers to its provisions obligatory character and priority at the national level.

In order to initiate as fast and efficient as possible the implementation of this document, the country's authorities worked with National Program for Implementation of the Action Plan, which includes concrete actions for its fulfillment, deadlines and responsible institutions. National program was drawn up as

a basis for implementation of the issues stipulated, for monitoring of this process and identification of the priorities for financial and technical assistance in different fields. On February 22 within the meeting of the Moldova-EU Cooperation Council, the Moldovan delegation presented this document for consulting avis to the European Commission, and right now is expecting relevant commentaries

Moldova considers the implementation of the Action Plan and preparation for improvement of the level of our contractual relations with EU as complementary processes. The implementation of Action Plan stipulations constitute for Moldova one step more towards insurance of necessary conditions for obtaining the EU association status at the end of the Action Plan implementation period.

Moldovan authorities are determined to use maximally the opportunities offered by the EU recent enlargement with the view to strengthen and promote stability, security and prosperity both at internal and regional level. We are aware of the fact that speed and quality of implementation of Action Plan stipulations depends, to a large extent, on Moldova. That is why we will concentrate on reforms achievement and on meeting the commitments, which we assumed.

We consider that official entrance into force of Action Plan will serve as an additional impulse for granting assistance in the process of its implementation for EU member-states and for representatives from European academic sphere. We established a European agenda for the next years, which we are determined to achieve successfully with our European partners and friends.

Our trust is based on positive results which have already obtained in the Action Plan implementation: concrete measures were undertook for implementation of Free Trade Agreements signed within Stability Pact, efforts for implementation of Energy Treaty for South-Eastern Europe stipulations were intensified considerably, for the beginning Moldova was accepted with observatory status in the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECF). In this sense, we hope and request, concomitantly, the support for obtaining the full membership status. We are also mentioning that on February 17 the Parliament ratified Palermo Convention against transnational organized crime, included also in the Action Plan.

And for these reasons Moldova wants the full intensification of the benefits of the Action Plan, conferring a special attention to following aspects:

- Intensify contacts with the European experts in the areas of reference
- Access as soon as possible to the communitarian programs foreseen by the European Neighborhood Policy.
- Launch in the closest future the discussions concerning the issue of facilitating the visa regime and possibility for the Commission to have the mandate to negotiate this issue.

- Intensify the cooperation in the transport and energetic sector, including with the participation of the Republic of Moldova in the energetic market of South East Europe, in the projects for extending the transeuropean transport axis, as well as access to the financial assistance of the European Bank of Investments, which will contribute undoubtedly to the fulfillment of the Action Plan objectives so as to advance to a more significant degree of integration.
- Establish in Chişinău the Delegation of the European Commission, which will constitute only the beginning of a more active EU presence in Moldova, important not only in the process of fulfilling the internal transformations.

Moldova supported from the beginning the importance of the differentiation principle concerning the issue of obtaining benefits of the Action Plan. The functioning of this principle was demonstrated with clarity in the negotiation period of the document and in the evolution of the EU relations with the states included in the first wave and we intend to benefit from the advantage it offers.

At the same time, remarkable successes were achieved in enlarging and deepening the regional cooperation with Moldova, valuable not only in political terms, but economic as well.

Thus, I would like to mention that under the auspices of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe there are 3 projects in process of implementation in Moldova, co-financed by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. Also, in the framework of the social initiatives of the Stability Pact between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova and of the Hellenic Republic a credit agreement was signed. A regional project “The harmonization of the threat and reduction of the seismic risk in the countries influenced by Vrancea area” is still ongoing, Moldova being the initiator and the leader of the project.

In this context, I would like to emphasize the importance Moldova pays to the participation in the Treaty establishing the Energetic Community in South-Eastern Europe and to its connection to the regional and European infrastructure networks. We hope that we would obtain in the closest future an answer for the projects on the development of the infrastructure presented to the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

With all these achievements and plans for the future, in my opinion, a closest cooperation it is needed, as well as the capitalization of the existent potential maximally.

The stimulation of investments and competitiveness, improvement of the business environment, reorganization of the national economic sectors, including the harmonization of the national legislation to the European legislation, adaptation of the commercial policies with the ones of the European Union, development of an

efficient and competitive agricultural sector, connection of the transport and energetic infrastructure with the European networks, creation of the conditions for a further economic progress will include activities which will have as a basis the modernization of the economy.

Moldova shares the European cultural values and the principles of a modern state organization. Pluralism, separation of powers, the freedom of expression, respect of human rights, and social consensus are the defining characteristics of Moldovan democratization. Moreover, the consolidation and the promotion of the democratic and rule of law values constitute not only a priority of the internal policy but also an objective of main importance to the international and regional cooperation of Moldova.

Undoubtedly, the settlement of the Transnistrian problem and the country's reintegration will remain the constant concern of the state authorities. We count on the contribution of the EU Special Representative for Moldova in the peaceful settlement of this artificially created conflict, in conformity with the principles of international law, of territorial integrity and state sovereignty, as well as on the increased interest of our regional partners, including of Ukraine and Romania.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Moldova pays a special attention to the Action Plan, as a dynamic mechanism for finalizing the full implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Our country welcomes the final objective of the European Neighborhood Policy, in particular not to create new dividing lines in Europe, although considers that the European Neighborhood Policy doesn't replace the aspirations of European integration.

Moldova has elaborated the European Strategy, which was conceived to include an analysis of the legislative and institutional framework from each area, as well as the problems, short and medium term priorities, which originate from the analysis of the institutional and normative aspects. Taking into consideration the perspective of European integration of Moldova, the European Strategy reflects the conditions from all the social spheres of activity, and priority directions for reform.

We are determined and open for a more efficient cooperation, for joint actions in the name of creation and prosperity of our common house – Europe.

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