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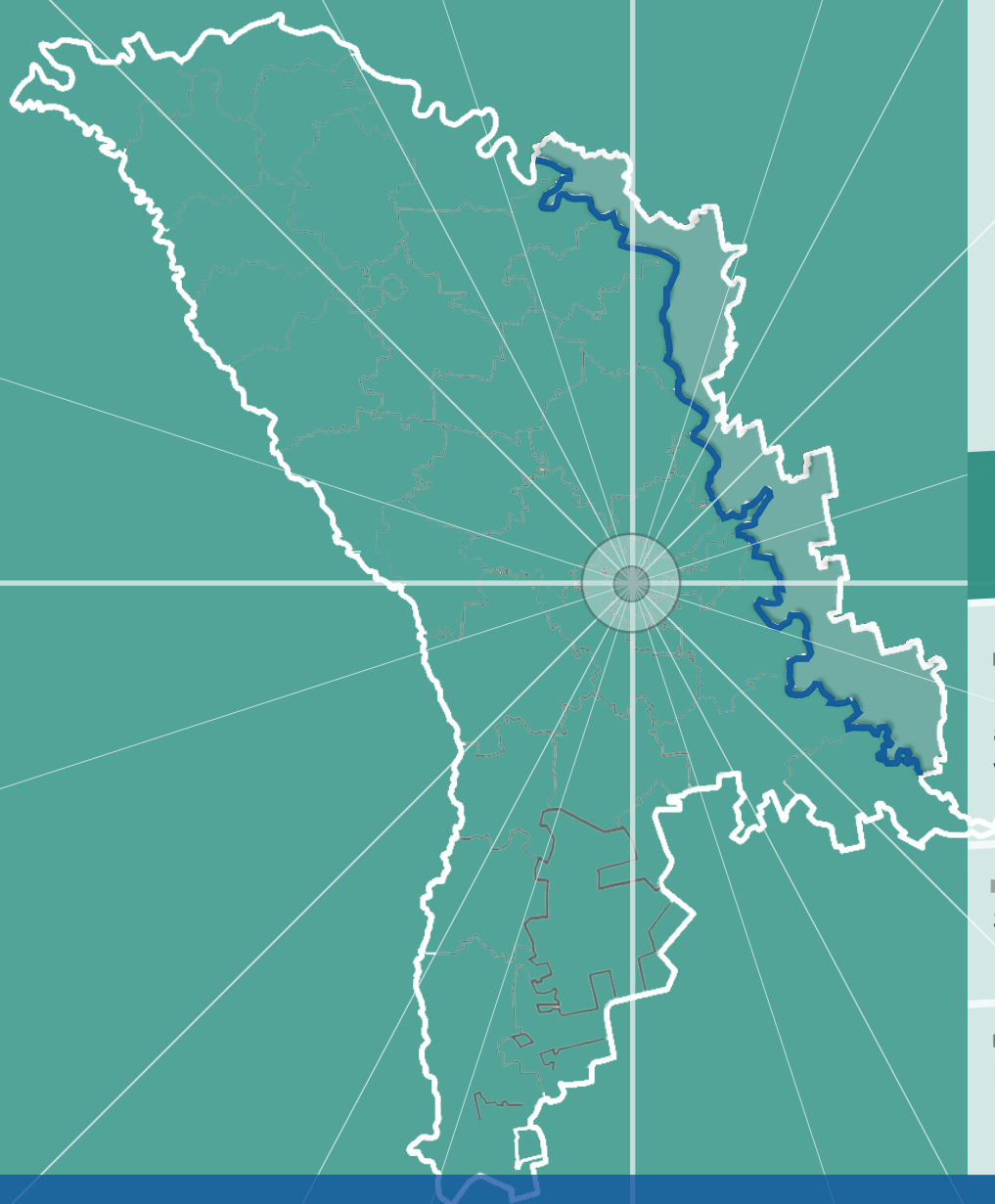


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DNIESTRIAN REALITIES

NEWSLETTER

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■ editorial

In Moscow and Brussels visions differ



The Summit in Vilnius raised serious problems for the Transnistrian conflict settlement – the further involvement of Russia, Ukraine’s orientation. Participation of Transnistria in the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. To help us find answers to these questions, the Conflict Management Initiative (CMI) organized a visit to Moscow, Brussels and Paris of a group of experts from both banks of the Dniester. In Moscow the experts had meetings with the Russian think tanks’ representatives – Russian International Affairs Council, Russian Institute of Strategic Studies, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, the journal “Russia in Global Affairs”. In Brussels and Paris there were meetings both with the representatives of European centers of analysis – Institute for Security Studies and European Policy Centre – and high European officials from European Commission DG External Relations and the Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Moldova.

The main issue for Russia, which was constantly approached by experts in Moscow, refers to the ability to maintain the status quo in the region. Russia, in their opinion, is a country of the status quo (S. Markedonov, F. Lukianov). It is true that this status quo differs in different regions – in South Ossetia and Abkhazia the status quo involves recognizing these two regions’ independence, while in Transnistria – not recognizing it. At the same time, experts are beginning to admit that this status quo can not be maintained after Vilnius (A. Zagorschii, P. Kandel). The decisions taken at the summit determined the key players to make decisions that have already radically changed the situation within the region and a return to the initial position may hardly be imagined. P. Kandel maintains that Moldova and Transnistria will continue to move in different directions but there will be no more status quo and a new arrangement will have to be found. The most radical views were expressed by the experts of the Russian Institute of Strategic Studies (Guzen-

kova, Kashirin) who, following Rogozin’s statements, criticized severely Moldova for its choice and predicted a quick divorce between Moldova and Transnistria. Another set of ideas of Russian experts related to the responsibility for the status quo deterioration. This time, there was a quasi-unanimous opinion – although experts admitted that Russia was not always inspired in its foreign policy – and the main blame for the situation created was put on the European Union. Moreover, Russian experts were very skeptical about the EU’s ability to have a clear policy in the region.

During the discussions with the European think tanks, the experts confirmed a lack of vision by the European Union for this area, but this does not exclude the emergence of such a vision (H. Kostanyan, A. Paul). In fact, European experts lean towards an approach in which Russia’s interests will further be partially accommodated in East-European policy, without allowing them a veto power in this area (to stop “the black and white approach”). There were also listed the five European countries, led by France and the Netherlands, who are reluctant to the EU enlargement and Germany’s reserved position in this issue (H. Kostanyan).

The meetings with European officials emphasized their concern for Transnistria’s inclusion into DCFTA. At the same time, the Commission representatives deny vehemently the existence of geopolitical considerations in Brussels’ thinking. In their opinion, the relation between Chisinau and Tiraspol resembles an “old-fashioned catholic conjugal relation that does not allow divorce”. Transnistria’s inclusion into DCFTA is the only chance Tiraspol has to save its economy and to this end attention should be paid on three directions – a) improving the certification of origin procedure of goods produced on the left bank, b) standardization of the production process and solving the problem of quality testing laboratories; c) changing the tax system in Transnistria by introducing VAT. Some western experts, however, have advanced other views, calling for a more nuanced approach of this issue and only a partial inclusion of Transnistria into DCFTA. ■

Russia seeks to maintain the situation in the South Caucasus and Eastern Europe through two types of policies: a) creating a climate in which democracy could not manifest; b) governments should be weak and corrupt. At the same time, Russia claims monopoly over unsettled conflicts. Therefore, the region can move either towards capitulation to Moscow or the neo-imperial policy of Russia will fail, which could occur solely in the context of European Integration. An example of this would be the Western Balkans, where Serbia and Kosovo are heading in the same direction.



Svante **Cornell**,
Research Director of the
Central Asia-Caucasus
Institute and Silk Road
Studies Program, USA

There have not been so bas relations between Russia and the EU since the Cold War. Russia pushes Ukraine into a rigid coalition, forcing it to make a strategic choice in its favor, with no alternative. Any strategic choice of this kind triggers strong resistance. At the same time, the high degree of mutual dependence does not permit us to divorce. Russia bases on the principle - we can not separate. Our move in relation to the region and the EU occurs within the limits of a corridor of real opportunities. From this point of view, Transnistria is a test both for Russia and the EU.



Irina **Busygina**,
Russian International
Affairs Council

70% of Transnistrian exports are directed either to the European Union or to Chisinau. At the same time, it is hard to believe that Transnistria will totally accept the DCFTA. Under these conditions, we need flexibility from the EU in order to allow the Transnistrian goods to be exported.



Martin **Sieg**,
Strategy Advisor to the
Prime Minister of the
Republic of Moldova

Invoking geopolitical considerations in discussing the Eastern Partnership is entirely artificial. The European Union does not attempt to compete with anyone. We have to solve a very practical issue - DCFTA. Transnistria is becoming ever more dependent on its exports to the European market. The European Union is firmly committed to make both banks of the Dniester enjoy the benefits of the DCFTA.



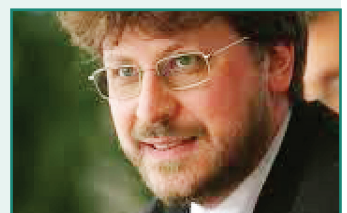
Pirka **Tapiolla**,
Head of the EU Delegation
to the Republic of Moldova

Russia is a country that maintains the status quo. However, it understands its way this status quo. In Abkhazia and South Ossetia the status quo means the situation created after 2008. In Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia is interested in cooperating with the West in order to solve the conflict. At the same time, Russia is not ready to recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria. Thus, Russia promotes a policy of "selective revisionism".



Moscow
Sergey **Markedonov**,
Director of International
Relations Department at
the Institute for Political
and Military Analysis in

Russia is able to block efficiently but it has not learn yet to build. The bulk of Russia's successes in the field of foreign policy are a consequence of others' failures. But these are tactical not strategic victories. Russia is interested in maintaining the status quo in Transnistria.



Fiodor **Luchianov**,
Editor in chief of the
journal "Russia in Global
Affairs"

Putin has a very clear picture of the world's order. This vision proves to be right for the time being. Among Putin's indisputable qualities, we can say that he never lies. At the same time, the notion of "political correctness" is completely foreign to him.

■ chronicle

November 2013

● **1 NOVEMBER. The Security from Tiraspol announced that Moldovan policemen working within the Security Zone have to be checked at the administrative border.**

— After that, the self-appointed prosecutor in Tiraspol told the Bender Police Commissioner that Moldovan policemen are forbidden to conduct investigation activities, detain and arrest individuals in the Transnistrian region.

— According to the news agency "Novy Region", Moldovan policemen, judges and prosecutors will be prosecuted if they do not comply with this requirement.

● **11 NOVEMBER. Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Eugen Carpov, met with OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Astrid Thors, who visited the Republic of Moldova as High Commissioner for the first time.**

— At the meeting were discussed the situation and functioning of the eight Moldovan schools on the left bank of the Dniester and the legal consequences of diplomas issued by educational institutions in the Transnistrian region.

● **12 NOVEMBER. In the OSCE Mission to Tiraspol was held a meeting of the political representatives Eugen Carpov and Nina Shtanski, with the participation of international partners in the "5 +2" negotiations.**

— At the meeting were discussed several current issues: the method of calculating pensions for citizens on both banks of the river, deciding to change their residence; access to agricultural land located beyond Râbnîța-Tiraspol route; current level of interaction between experts in the fight

against crime, as well as the dismantling procedures of the funicular between Râbnîța and Rezina.

— The representatives of Tiraspol and international partners have welcomed the decision of Chișinău to remove the administrative fines for Transnistrian residents traveling with foreign passports.

● **13-18 NOVEMBER. The Head of the Office for Reintegration Gheorghe Bălan met with mayors of the localities from the districts Anenii-Noi, Rezi-na, Dubăsari, Criuleni, Căușeni and Șoldănești, located within the Security Zone.**

● **15 NOVEMBER. Three of the six regional offices of the Bureau for Migration and Asylum at the checkpoints Hîrbovăț, Pîrîta and Criuleni started their activity.**

● **21 NOVEMBER. The European Commission Chief negotiator on trade liberalization with the Republic of Moldova Luc Devigne discussed in Tiraspol about the provisions of the free trade agreement with the European Union.**

— The representative of the EU for Eastern Partnership countries Dirk Schubel stated in an interview that the free trade agreement will be applied similarly on both banks of the Dniester: „Transnistria is part of the Republic of Moldova and we have established some rules in the Association Agreement, rules that have also been set with the participation of the representatives from the region.”

● **25 NOVEMBER. The tenth anniversary of the failed attempt to federalize the Republic of Moldova by the Kozak plan.**

— The spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry Alexander Bikantov declared that the so-called Kozak Memorandum is still relevant.

— The President of the Socialist Party of Moldova, Igor Dodon, presented a plan for a federal state with three components: Moldova, Gagauzia and Transnistria.

● **25-26 NOVEMBER.** In Kiev was held the final round of this year's negotiations on the Transnistrian conflict settlement in the 5 +2 format.

— At the meeting were signed protocol decisions on arrangements agreed in terms of pensions and social benefits, and also on the implementation of the wastewater treatment system rehabilitation project in Dubasari and Criuleni. There was also adopted a protocol decision on some aspects relating to the population's freedom of movement.

— The head of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova, Jennifer Brush, stated that she was pleased with the progress on freedom of movement, bringing closer the reopening of the bridge over the Dniester at Gura Bâcului. Brush has also stressed that the conflict settlement depends mostly on the two sides, Chisinau and Tiraspol."

THE WORKING GROUPS

● **5 NOVEMBER.** The working group on health care convened.

— At this meeting was signed the protocol from the previous meeting, were discussed is-

sues related to: health sector development priorities, development/strengthening of technical capacity and equipment for neonates, organization of workshops and trainings for medical staff on different areas, including information reporting, collaboration with the World Health Organization, etc.

● **18 NOVEMBER.** The working group on economy convened in Chisinau.

— During this meeting was debated the issue relating to the cultivation of agricultural land situated beyond the Tiraspol-Camenca highway. Experts from both banks agreed to discuss the opportunity of updating the current mechanism and solve this problem by the end of the year.

THE JOINT CONTROL COMMISSION

● **The Joint Control Commission (JCC) held its ordinary meetings.**

— The Moldovan delegation drew attention to the unilateral installation of some posts by the law enforcement structures (militia) within the Security Zone, without the consent of the Joint Control Commission.

— The Republic of Moldova delegation urged the Transnistrian delegation to refrain from actions that could create tensions within the Security Zone, between the police and jeopardize the entire peacekeeping operation.

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