

Inițiativa Euro Atlantică



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COMMON POSITION PAPER

I. Introduction.

Fifteen years after proclaiming its independence, the Republic of Moldova is still a divided country. The Moldovan Government does not control a fifth of national territory, an area known as Transnistria. The separatist regime, established in the region in early nineties, proclaimed Transnistria an independent country, which was not recognized by any Government. The "negotiations to identify a final solution to the Transnistrian crisis" in the format of “5” lasted for more than ten years. These negotiations format included the two parties: the Moldovan Government and the authorities of Transnistria, and three mediators: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The current format, established in 2005, is called “5+2”, the United States of America and the European Union being added with a status of observers. During the last years, a few plans for solution of the conflict have been proposed to be discussed, but still was not identified an efficient solution in order to preserve the integrity and ensure rule of law in the mentioned area.

In this situation the international opinion is focused on urging the solution of a conflict that poses serious threats to the stability and security not only for Moldova, but generally the Black Sea area. Meanwhile the negotiations have collapsed due to Tiraspol’s conditions of legalization of external economic activity of the Transnistrian region. The representatives of Tiraspol at negotiations demanded that the Moldovan authorities sign the document that ensures the mechanism of external economic activity of Transnistria proposed by the Russian officials before they accept to restart the negotiations.

In this situation some actions are required:

1. urgent approaches with involvement of all interested bodies, including experts from neighboring countries that have a certain experience and knowledge in this matter;
2. developing policies and position papers for the improvement of the actual status of Transnistrian crisis, as well in order to influence the actual system of decision making and planning.

The European Union and the Republic of Moldova will share a common border starting with 2007, and the EU is interested in peace and stability at its eastern border line. The OSCE chairmanship has proposed the deployment of E.U. troops for a peace consolidation operation in Moldova, specifically in its breakaway enclave of Transnistria. The priority of international institutions on the issue is that the primary focus must be on the political negotiations, without which discussions on different options for peace consolidation risk becoming purely academic. To reach such an agreement will require that both parties to the conflict assume



their full responsibility.

The European Union is undertaking with regard to the eventual peace consolidation force under the aegis of the OSCE is at this preliminary stage to study the different options available. The EU has already declared its full readiness to assist in implementing any peace agreement, which includes considerations also in the field of possible military and civilian contributions. There is a broad consensus in the EU to engage more strongly with Moldova, the idea been confirmed at different events, conferences, seminars by EU officials, and especially after the EU involved directly in the negotiation format.

The integration of Romania in the EU and its declared policy towards European integration of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine require the adjustment of development policies of these countries to the European standards, including those on securing the borders. These objectives can be achieved through cooperation and partnership in political, economical and social fields.

By the same time, NATO has the same interest for the settlement of the conflict, being already a border country with Moldova, and as the “war against terrorism” still remains the main problem of the Alliance, there are certain doubts about the Transnistrian origin of the arms and munitions provided to different organizations considered to be terrorist.

Being an organization seeking to cooperate with NATO and EU in vital matters concerning the security role of those international organizations, YATA representatives in Romania, Ukraine and Moldova have detailed the common issues and calls for support of their initiative for other YATA organizations.

II. Challenges

II. 1 Military level

- The crisis continues due to the presence of the Russian troops on the left bank of the river Nistru, despite the existence of OSCE Istanbul Summit Resolution (17-19 November, 1999);
- Russian Federation holds the monopoly of peacekeeping in the conflict area, despite being directly involved in military actions according to the Decision of the Grand Chamber of European Court for Human Rights in the case “Ilie Ilașcu and Others against Moldova and the Russian Federation” (4 July, 2001).

II.2 Political level

- The military conflict started due to the establishment of a separatist regime, and it’s further existence maintains the crisis;
- The separatist regime is imposing the isolation of the region (media, political, economic, social and cultural) from the rest of the Republic of Moldova, the existence of a propaganda mechanism and a deficient civil society; all of them are obstructing a peaceful and sustainable solution of the crisis.



II.3 Economical level

- Inefficient border costumes surveillance, incapacity for intervention of the Moldovan financial control authorities, lack of transparency of the investments in region, conducts to existence of a criminal economy being the main source of financing of the separatist regime;
- Maintenance of the “status quo” allows the Transnistrian authorities to profit from trade (legal and contraband) in such products as fuel, cigarettes, liquor and otherwise standard goods, as well from trafficking cars, arms, drugs, and human beings and from money laundering;
- The economic state of being is convenient to influent persons from Moldova, Ukraine and Russian Federation that have financial interest in region.

II.4 Social level

- Transnistria is recognized as being a region with substantial problems concerning human rights, such as: freedom of speech; access to information; free movement of people; freedom to vote and political expression; to choose education, etc.

II.5. International involvement

- The lack of international attention and practical involvement make it impossible to have effective conflict resolution process;
- International regulations related to Transnistrian crisis can not effectively counter Russian Federation “interests” in crisis settlement;
- OSCE and Ukraine are not capable to counter the Russian and Tiraspol’s influence in the negotiation process;
- The actual negotiations format (5+2) did not encounter the expectations, falling to resume the negotiation process.

III. Opportunities for crisis settlement

- Increasing interest of international bodies:
 - The Moldova/Transnistria issue was raised at the G-8 Political Directors and Foreign Ministers’ Meetings in Moscow (29 June, 2006), and at NATO Summit in Riga (28-29 November, 2006);
 - NATO has a firm position in not ratifying the Adapted CFE Treaty until Moscow fulfils all of its 1999 Istanbul Summit commitments, including Russia’s pledge to withdraw its forces from Moldova;
- The conflict has ethnic and linguistic elements, but it is not rooted in those divisions;
- The crisis is not laden with deep disputes over history, and there are comparatively few serious traumas from the short period of fighting;
- Virtually all Transnistrian enterprises have registered with Chisinau.



IV. What We stand for:

Organize petition campaigns such as:

Call for the support of the international community to:

- make Russia fulfill their obligations with respect to the removal of troops;
- urge Russia to refrain from helping the Transnistrian regime consolidate its power;
- establish an international security presence under an OSCE mandate, led by the EU, to take over from the current trilateral peacekeeping forces;
- make efforts to eliminate the so called Security zone, which is “outdated”;
- expand targeted sanctions to key supporters of the regime from the business community, as well as against individuals and companies involved in criminal activities and human rights abuses in the region, like freezing assets and a “refusal to deal”;
- avoid the recognition of any forms of statehood of Transnistria (driving plates, currency, passports, etc.);
- contribute to the building of a civil society in Transnistria and to assist Moldova in finding ways to settle the crisis;
- assist Moldova in informing the population on the both sides of the river on conflict resolution issues.

Organize events and informing campaigns such as:

- awareness-raising advocacy campaigns;
- seminars, conferences, workshops (especially at international level) regarding the Transnistrian crisis;
- involving youth in democracy building projects and youth exchange;
- increasing the dialogue and cooperation with NGO’s from countries that deal with conflict issues (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cyprus, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina).

V. Conclusion

Therefore We support the settlement of Transnistrian crisis based on sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, respecting the democratic principles and human rights.

There must be find a consensus of involved parts regarding concrete actions in order to fulfill the principles of fair resolution.

By this position paper We are standing for strengthening youth involvement which evolves from our days decisions.