



SÜDOSTEUROPA- GESELLSCHAFT

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and



International Conference

“European Perspective for the Republic of Moldova”

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Conference venue: DGB Bildungsstaette, Niederpoecking,
at Lake Starnberg

**REPORT WORKING GROUP III:
HARD AND SOFT SECURITY**

Moderators:

- **Dr. Claus Neukirch**, OSCE Mission in Moldova, Chisinau
 - **Nicolae Chirtoaca**, Director of the European Institute for Political Studies, Chisinau
 - **Wim van Eekelen**, Member of the Dutch Senate, Member of the Dutch delegation to the WEU and NATO, former Dutch Minister of Defence, The Hague
 - **Dr. Oleg Serebrian**, President, European Movement from Moldova, President of Social –Liberal Party, Chisinau
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The Working Group III on Hard and Soft Security Issues concentrated its discussions on the Transdnestrian problem. The presence of Russian troops and Transdnestrian paramilitary forces in the region was identified as the most serious military threat Moldova faces. One participant emphasized that the presence of these forces constitutes also a major obstacle to democratic development in Moldova. The impact of smuggle and criminal activities emanating from the Transdnestrian region was identified as a major non-military threat to Moldova's security. One participant stressed that the "black hole" Transdnestria could be contained if all the neighbors would work together to this end

Participants recalled in the discussions that the EU has declared its interest to build a ring of friends, of stable and well-governed states in its neighborhood. Tackling the hard and soft security threats stemming from the Transdnestrian region is consequently also in the EU's interest. The EU should therefore work together with Romania, Russia, Ukraine, the OSCE and the Council of Europe towards a final settlement of the conflict. The proposal to freeze the conflict and to concentrate on Moldova's internal developments was rejected with the argument that such an approach would strengthen the separatist forces and would not result in higher security. However, there was agreement that political and economic reforms on the right bank are necessary to make reunification more attractive for Transdnestrians.

There was also general agreement that an international monitoring of the Transdnestrian section of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, if not on the whole border, would be an important contribution to the settlement process.

The majority of participants supported the point of view that Russia has to be on board in the settlement process. As Russia is part of the OSCE, this organization should continue to play its role in the settlement process. At the same time participants called for a greater involvement of the EU and the NATO.

The majority of participants rejected the idea of a final separation of Transdnestria as a possible solution, but agreed at the same time on the position that no solution to the settlement process is acceptable which would block Moldova's European aspirations. Whether or not a federalization of Moldova would be an acceptable solution was highly disputed among participants. From the discussions surrounding this question it emanated that there is support among civil society for a

federal solution as this would also mean decentralization of Moldova at a whole, but that such a support would depend finally on the exact solution proposed. The Kozak-Memorandum brokered by Russia in November 2003 as a final settlement document was deemed unacceptable by Moldovan and non-Moldovan participants.

Participants felt that Romania continued to play an important role in the conflict resolution process, especially when it would become a member of NATO. Another participant argued that Ukraine was more important for a solution of Transdnjestria than Russia, the area having been part of Ukraine in the past. Touching alleged US acquiescence in a Russian role in Moldavia one participant stressed that there is no evidence of US policy wishing to "compensate" Russia for developments in Georgia and that the US actually opposed the Kozak-Memorandum

The working group discussed also security sector reform in Moldova to which all Moldovan participants attached great importance. One participant stressed that without transparency in the security sector it would not be possible to participate in international co-operation. He hoped that civil society would press for this as the government did not function democratically. Another Moldovan participant claimed that in Moldova the security service worked for the ruling political elite and the ministry of defence had no civilian minister and no civilian experts. Others mentioned how former KGB officials had become ministers in Transdnjestria and were linked with the underground economy. The secret service in Tiraspol had connections with both Moscow and Odessa. Organised crime was behind everything and even in Moldova it would take years to normalise the situation.

Finally, the working group touched also the role of minorities in Moldova.