



**SÜDOSTEUROPA-  
GESELLSCHAFT**

## **International Workshop**

### **Shaping the Future in Moldova: Civil Society and Lessons Learned from the Balkans**

**Munich / Germany, 4 – 6 June, 2010**

## **Program**

### **Conference venue:**

#### **Hotel Golden Tulip & Tulip Inn Munich City**

Domagkstrasse 26

80807 Munich

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### **Conference Committee:**

**Johanna Deimel**, Deputy Director, Southeast Europe Association, Munich

**Wim van Meurs**, Radboud University Nijmegen, Member of the Board Southeast Europe Association, Nijmegen

**Hansjörg Brey**, Executive Director, Southeast Europe Association, Munich

**Conference language:** English

## Background

Currently, Moldova is charting its course for the next and crucial phase of economical, political and societal reforms. The present crossroads for Moldova may be compared to the momentous strategic decisions the countries of the Western Balkans faced a decade ago. As much as these countries profited from the positive and negative experiences of the countries of EU Eastern enlargement, Moldova may find the reform experiences and lessons learned from the Western Balkans particularly relevant. Arguably, both the presence of unresolved conflicts of state sovereignty and the enhanced role of civil society in reform processes set the Western Balkans apart from East-Central Europe. Being a small country, its belated reform drive, the parallel processes of transition and Europeanization as well as its identification with South-East Europe all makes comparing notes with reformers and civil-society activists from Belgrade, Skopje or Zagreb a persuasive agenda for Moldova for 2010.

The first two workshops in the Southeast Europe Association's present series "Shaping the Future in ..." dealt with Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In both of these polities, relations between politics and society are hindered by a major gap between political parties and state bureaucracy, on the one hand, and civil-society and advocacy organisations, on the other hand. Politicians tend to invest heavily in key issues of state sovereignty and constitutional reform, whereas civil-society organisations advocate much more pragmatic and tangible agendas of reform. Since 2007, the EU has promoted the role of civil society in the democratisation processes and has set respective new priority areas within the framework of both, of the EU enlargement as well as of the EU neighbourhood policy. In the Balkans, Serbia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in consequence initiated governmental strategies for cooperation with the civil society sectors. Yet, despite agreements on cooperation between the governments and the civil society sector, the impact of the latter on decision making and monitoring mechanisms remains limited.

Most of the smaller Balkan polities, however, have witnessed a phase of fusion between politics and civil society, too. Typically, many of the best and brightest civil-society representatives entered the political sphere and, paradoxically, thereby weakened the critical and autonomous democratic function of civil-society for any government. And after the inclusion of civil society actors into politics in the late 1990s in some Balkan countries, the gap between civil society and politics seems to widen again today. In Moldova, however, the present constellation is one of close cooperation between civil society and politics, with the National Council in place since February 2010. As far as the trade-offs of civil-society's role, the Balkan experiences may be food for thought for Moldova in the present situation.

Another obvious similarity between Moldova and the Western Balkans concerns the window of opportunity to implement an ambitious reform agenda in the difficult circumstances of a belated and protracted transition process. The „Rethink Moldova“ strategy has set ambitious priorities for the next four years – responsible governance; economic recovery and human capital, with a view to developing a knowledge-based, competitive economy. Challenges concern the need to produce tangible results at short notice – not only to uphold domestic trust in the reform agenda but also international credibility – without compromising long-term sustainability. Belgrade, Zagreb or Skopje all faced similar reform dilemmas in 1999-2000. Difficult issues such as reform in justice and home affairs require a firm measuring of the reform progress, monitoring of the legislation and ensuring effective and sustainable implementation of that legislation. Civil society has a key role to play as advisor, watchdog and mouthpiece for concerns of groups in society.

Keeping together a political coalition in the process of turning a shared agenda of regime change into a realistic and detailed reform program may well be the foremost political challenge. All the more so for a now-ruling coalition held together previously by the shared self-conception of political opposition against the Communist Party, while lacking common visions, and failing to reach compromises, to use legislative power in an effective way and to modify government proposals. In this respect, the Western Balkans provides both positive and negative lessons learned for reform coalitions rooted in a shared oppositional past rather than an elaborate joint plan of action for the future.

Irrespective of their assessment of the prospects of the 5+2 negotiations for the Transnistrian issue, most domestic and international analysts have come to accept enhanced reform efforts on the right bank of the Dniester as the most promising and sustainable strategy for Chişinău (along with the “three D’s” of democratisation, demilitarization and decriminalization for the left bank). Arguably, the current reform drive in Chişinău flanked by domestic public support and international assistance constitutes a viable strategy for the Transnistrian issues, too. Correspondingly, sharing the lessons learned from the Balkans, the workshop tries to include civil-society representatives from both right- and left-bank Moldova.

In sum, making good use of the new political constellation and agenda, the Moldova workshop is geared towards the upcoming challenges and dilemmas inherent to the present window of opportunity as far as synergies between politics and civil society are concerned.

## Workshop Program

<b>Friday, 4 June 2010</b>
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### **17:30 hrs      Opening / Welcome**

*Gernot Erler*, MP, former Minister of State, President of Southeast Europe Association, Berlin

### **18:30 hrs      Key Notes**

*Patricia Flor*, Ambassador, Special Envoy for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, German Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

*Monica Luisa Macovei*, MEP, former Minister of Justice of Romania, Chair Moldova Delegation of the European Parliament, Strasbourg / Brussels

\*\*\* 20:00 hrs: Dinner \*\*\*

<b>Saturday, 5 June 2010</b>
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### **09:00 hrs      PANEL I: REFORM STRATEGIES**

#### **Economic strategy / social policy and reforms**

Since the late 1990s, Moldova's macroeconomic key data have been quite remarkable. Recently, however, the global economic crisis has demonstrated the extent to which the economic growth has been superficial and unsustainable. Due to the crisis, the remittances from migrant workers in East and West, much needed to keep the local economy afloat, have decreased substantially, exacerbating the disruptive social consequences of the excessive out-migration of the workforce and brain drain. The glaring social disparities between the winners and losers of the chequered transition process have become all the more apparent and unbearable. Unemployment is on the rise and lead to a significant increase of expenses. At the same time, a number of structural reforms are both necessary and unpopular.

Turning know-how into a beneficial process of exchange on problems and solutions is crucial for Moldova at present. What lessons can be drawn from the economic reforms in the Balkans? Similar to the countries in Southeastern Europe, foreign direct investment to Moldova seriously decreased as an impact of the global economic crisis. Balkan experiences suggest that much depends on the performance of the government and the political climate in order to attract FDI. What offers can be made to stimulate a substantial and sustainable influx of investments – what did the countries in the Balkan countries do to restore investors' confidence and to create an attractive environment for domestic and foreign investors? How did the Balkan countries react to the global economic and financial crisis? Did the countries instigate a “crisis response package” to cope with shrinking remittances and tax revenues, rising unemployment without rolling back structural reforms? Moldova recently received an exceptionally large amount of financial assistance (2.6 billion USD) from the EU and international financial institutions to boost the economy – a chance, but also a responsibility.

The present Moldovan state authorities face manifold challenges, e.g. the consequences of a delayed and miss-managed transition process, understandable reform anxieties on the part of the voters, widespread corruption – in adverse international circumstances. European integration is a strategic priority for Moldova and the Western Balkans. Since January 2010

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the EU has lifted visa requirements for Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro. How can Moldovan authorities be advised and supported in their efforts to negotiate visa free travel with the EU? Does the EU enlargement fatigue affect the motivation of civil society actors? Both the Western Balkans and Moldova are members of CEFTA, and the latter intends to negotiate a free trade agreement with the EU. How can civil society help provide impetus and a societal basis for further reforms?

Issues to be discussed:

- employment/unemployment; entrepreneurship; the role of the shadow economy, incomes and prices
- social policy / social cohesion
- visa issues / freedom of movement
- EU integration process
- impact of the global economic crisis

Short contributions by:

*Milica Uvalić*, Department of Economics, Finance and Statistics, Faculty of Political Science, University of Perugia (Italy); Member of the UN Committee for Development Policy

*Jelica Minić*, Deputy Secretary, General of the Regional Cooperation Council, Sarajevo

*Alexandru Oprunenco*, International Programs Director, Expert-Grup Think Tank, Chişinău

*Mihail Bologan*, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, University Lecturer, Coordinator of “iDEA!” Club, Chişinău

Chairs: *Andreas Wittkowsky*, Senior Analyst, European Integration Strategy Association, Berlin / *Franz-Lothar Altmann*, University Bucharest, Member of the Board Southeast Europe Association, Munich

Rapporteurs: *Wim van Meurs*, Radboud University Nijmegen, Member of the Board Southeast Europe Association, Nijmegen / *Vadim Pistrinciu*, Deputy Minister of Labour, Family and Social Protection, Chişinău

**11:00 hrs** Coffee Break

**11:30 hrs Political reforms**

Southeastern Europe as a whole is a case in point to argue that any form of Europeanization (with or without EU membership perspective) requires qualitative improvements in governance and enhanced functional capacity of state institutions. Combating political corruption, transparency and professionalization of decision-making and accountability are basic but crucial first steps. Restoring the credibility of the national government – both vis-à-vis international organisations and domestic constituencies – has often proven decisive as trust-building initiative for Southeast European countries with a chequered track record of rule of law and good governance.

Moldova today is committed to fundamental changes and focuses on public governance

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reforms in full partnership with civil society. Similar to Serbia after the fall of Milošević, Moldova is emerging as a Europe-oriented state. But time is of the essence for the Filat government to deliver on its reform promises. On 16 June, parliament will dissolve and elections are expected in fall 2010. How can civil society be a partner in the current critical situation for Moldova and offer its expertise as to how to meet the present challenges of good governance, while at the same time acting as a facilitator between the government and the public?

Issues to be discussed:

- good governance
- transparency and accountability of police and judiciary
- fight against political corruption; rule of law
- constitutional changes
- administration; “professionalization” of public services / institutions
- decision making / policy making on central and local level / decentralisation

Short contributions by:

*Milan Pajević*, Chairman of the International Advisory Board of the International and Security Affairs Centre Fund, Belgrade

*Antoinette Primatarova*, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Programme Director, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia

*Igor Munteanu*, Executive Director, Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) “Viitorul”, Chişinău

Chairs: *Gernot Erler*, MP, former Minister of State, President of Southeast Europe Association, Berlin / *Anneli Ute Gabanyi*, Senior Expert, Member of the Board Southeast Europe Association, Munich

Rapporteurs: *Sonja Schüler*, Senior Expert, Munich / *Ruslan Codreanu*, Head of Policies, Strategic Planning and Foreign Aid Department, State Chancellery, Chişinău

**13:00 hrs Lunch**

**14:00 hrs Conflicts past and present**

Like in the Balkans, Moldova’s processes of state and nation building still do not go unchallenged. Moldova today is at the crossroad. It needs to regain the trust of its citizens in the state, in its political and administrative institutions – irrespective of their ethnic, linguistic, regional or religious backgrounds. Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia have faced and to some degree still are facing similar problems.

Over more than a decade most analysts inside and outside Moldova have argued that the “frozen conflict” of the Dniester issue could be contained but not resolved. International mediation efforts and various Moldovan foreign-policy strategies on the issue have thus far failed to prove otherwise. As much as the much-cited 3D-strategy for the left bank – democratisation, demilitarisation and decriminalisation is bound to remain an illusion with the current Tiraspol regime, at least right-bank Moldova may now become more of an appealing alternative.

For better or worse, there are a number of lessons to be learned from the tenacious intra-state and inter-state conflicts of former Yugoslavia, including the crucial role of neighbours like Ukraine and Romanian in the case of the Dniester issue or the bridge-building function of civil-society actors in long-term conflict management. The main, lesson, however, is definitively not to let the unresolved issue absorb the much-needed political energy and societal dynamics and rather give priority to an agenda of domestic reforms and improved international standing.

Issues to be discussed:

- good neighbourly relations
- impact of frozen conflicts on internal and external relations
- role of international actors
- prospects and limits of mediation
- cooperation of civil society / sector networking

Short contributions by:

*Ivan Kuzminović*, Helsinki Committee on Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade

*Ševko Bajčić*, Public Relations Manager, Civil Society Promotion Centre (CPCS), Sarajevo

*Juan Armando Diaz*, Director, CSSProject for Integrative Mediation in South Eastern Europe, Berlin

*Vladlena Lisenco*, National Legal Adviser, OSCE Mission to Moldova, Tiraspol

Chairs: *Hans Martin Sieg*, Coordinator, German-Moldovan Forum; Foreign and Security Policy Advisor to Manfred Grund, MP, German Bundestag, Berlin / *Wim van Meurs*, Radboud University Nijmegen, Member of the Board Southeast Europe Association, Nijmegen

Rapporteurs: *Florentina Harbo*, Special Adviser, Norwegian Centre for Strategic Studies (SEFOSS), Oslo / *Johanna Deimel*, Deputy Director, Southeast Europe Association, Munich

**15:30 hrs** Coffee Break

**16:00 hrs PANEL II: CIVIL SOCIETY**

### **The conditions for civil society and the media**

Substantial differences in the organisations strength and traditions of civil-society go a long way in explaining the differences in reform processes and progress in Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Albania. Typically and not unlike some of the smaller Balkan countries, Moldova has a highly professional civil society sector – focussed on advocacy and policy advice. It strictly limited human resources and its almost exclusive concentration in the capital city (plus the repression of NGOs and free media on the left bank) pose serious issues. These issues are currently exacerbated by the outflow of key civil-society representatives to administrative and governmental positions, a trend well know from small countries like Slovenia.

The Balkans has experiences to share on how to manage the scarce human resources effectively and how to keep close links between state administration and civil-society

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organisations without losing sight of their distinct roles and responsibilities. Thus, the conflicting roles of civil society as watch dog, mediator of social groups and auxiliary of governmental reform strategies come to the fore today. Serbia in the post-Milošević era constitutes a positive example of productive relations and exchange of personnel between the state and civil society, whilst upholding the critical role of media outlets and NGOs as watchdog vis-à-vis reform strategies and party politics.

Therefore, the government has every interest and a special responsibility to provide a legal and institutional framework for the proper functioning of civil society in its multiple roles. Positive steps and experiences from Southeastern Europe for Moldova include legal safeguards for the media, the abolishment of generic libel laws, financial sustainability of non-partisan newspapers and the liberalisation of the media outlets in general. Romania, Kosovo and Serbia have witnessed protracted debates and legal battles on these issues for years. Conversely, several Balkan countries have made positive experiences with media self-regulation despite a high level of media politicisation and strenuous relations between social groups and/or ethnic communities. Moreover, in recent years Southeast European and East-Central Europe countries have set up special arrangements and forums to stimulate civil-society input in political decision-making processes without bypassing or devaluing democratic representation. In recent months, Moldova has begun to remedy some of the blockades and reform deficits from the past in order to facilitate the role of NGOs and the media.

Issues to be discussed:

- civil rights, freedom of associations, freedom of speech / legal and institutional framework
- political culture; freedom of political debate
- freedom of the media
- cooperation between media and civil society
- media self-regulation

Short contributions by:

*Željko Ivanović*, CEO, independent daily newspaper VIJESTI, Podgorica

*Verica Kelava*, Program Manager, Youth Communication Center, Banja Luka

*Doina Costin*, Coordinator of the Department for Media Law and Policy, Independent Journalism Center, Chişinău

*Petru Macovei*, Executive Director of Association of Independent Press from Moldova (API), Chişinău

*Alina Radu*, Director of the "Ziarul de Garda", Chişinău

Chairs: *Hansjörg Brey*, Executive Director Southeast Europe Association, Munich / *Dietrich Schlegel*, Member of the Board, Southeast Europe Association, Erfstadt

Rapporteurs: *Petra Bläss-Rafajlovski*, former Vice-President of the German Bundestag, Senior Expert, Member of the Board Southeast Europe Association, Berlin / *Victoria Boian*, Program Coordinator, European Institute for Political Studies from Moldova, Chişinău

**18:00 hrs Policy making and the multiple roles of civil society**

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Short contributions by:

*Jovan Teokarević*, Professor; Faculty of Political Sciences, Belgrade

*Daliborka Uljarević*, Executive Director, Centre for Civic Education, Podgorica

*Marijana Dinek*, Executive Director, BH Women's Initiative Foundation, Sarajevo

*Sorin Mereacre*, President of East Europe Foundation (Moldova); Chairman of the National Participation Council, Chişinău

*Victor Chirila*, Executive Director, Foreign Policy Association (APE), Chişinău

Chairs: *Wim van Meurs*, Radboud University Nijmegen, Member of the Board Southeast Europe Association, Nijmegen / *Johanna Deimel*, Deputy Director, Southeast Europe Association, Munich

Rapporteurs: *Hansjörg Brey*, Executive Director, Southeast Europe Association, Munich / *Stela Mocan*, Advisor to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Chişinău

**20:00 hrs Dinner / End of the Workshop**

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**6 June 2010: Departure of Participants****Conference Team:**

Ms Gudrun Kuhlmann, Administration

Ms Viktoria Somogyi, Assistant