

*„Ante Portas – Studia nad Bezpieczeństwem”  
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**MINISTRY’S OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF PRIDNESTROVIAN  
MOLDAVIAN REPUBLIC COMMENTS FOR  
“ANTE PORTAS – SECURITY STUDIES”**

**Scientific inquiry**

Scientific research is usually worthless without reaching the origin of the problem, finding the source, using documents, papers, letters, eye-witnesses’ interviews and testimonies. Without the background and broaden inquiry the research is shallow, deficient and incomplete. This conclusion concerns every branch of science, including security studies.

In order to deepen the research the Editorial Board of “Ante Portas – Security Studies” decided to reach the source, and what sort of source would be more suitable for the “Moldovan” issue that an interview with the most interested players in the region – Moldova, Gagauzia and Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic? Wanted to be impartial we sent three separate letters to:

- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Republic of Moldova;
- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic;
- the Governor (Bashkan) of Gagauzia.

Our wish was to collect all three answers, publish all together, analyze and draw conclusions. Unfortunately, only one of the inquired offices answered our questions - the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic. Even though our scientific mission failed wish to publish both the list of questions sent to above mentioned recipients and the official answer made by the PMR Foreign Affairs.

Questions asked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Republic of Moldova:

- 1) *May the result of the presidential elections in Moldova and the choice of Igor Dodon for president of the Republic of Moldova be interpreted as a germane move towards tightening the Moldovan-Russian relations and binding these two states with political-military alliance?*

- 2) *May the result of the presidential elections in Moldova and the choice of Igor Dodon for president of the Republic of Moldova influence the relations of the Republic of Moldova with its neighbours – Ukraine and Romania?*
- 3) *Can the federalization of Moldova be the sustained solution for the problem of Transnistria and Gagauzia?*
- 4) *What are the prospects of the Republic of Moldova's integration with the NATO and EU's structures in present geopolitical reality?*
- 5) *Can the Republic of Moldova recognize the independence of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic in the foreseeable future?*
- 6) *Does presently Moldova not exclude the return to the model of the unification with Transnistria based on the so-called Kozak Memorandum?*
- 7) *What is the official stance of the Republic of Moldova as concerns current political-military situation in Ukraine, including territorial changes that de facto have taken place on Ukrainian territory?*
- 8) *Is Moldova interested in tightening its relation with Poland at present?*
- 9) *How Moldovan authorities relate to the tightening cooperation in the triangle Warsaw-Bucharest-Kyiv?*
- 10) *What is the attitude of Moldova's authorities toward lately announced and implemented plans of closing military relations between Romania and Ukraine?*

Questions asked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic:

- 1) *What is the official stance of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic vis-à-vis current political-military situation in Ukraine, including territorial changes that have taken place within Ukraine?*
- 2) *Does state's policy of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic assume the possibility of reintegration with the Republic of Moldova, and if so, on what particular principles?*
- 3) *What are the official political and military relations between the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and the Russian Federation?*
- 4) *What is the official status of the Russian 14<sup>th</sup> Army stationing on the territory of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic?*
- 5) *Does the government of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic currently strive for international recognition of Transnistria and what are the current prospects of success in this matter?*
- 6) *Does the government of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic keep relations with the Autonomous Gagauz Territory and what is its stance toward the concept of the Republic of Moldova's federalization?*

Questions asked to the Governor (Bashkan) of Gagauzia:

- 1) *Was the official attitude of the Autonomous Gagauz Territory's authorities as to the current political-military situation in Ukraine, including changes of state borders that de facto took place on Ukraine's territory, determined, and if so, what is it?*
- 2) *What is the official stance of the Autonomous Gagauz Territory as for the pro-independence endeavours of Transnistria and does the Autonomous Gagauz Territory keep relations with the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic?*
- 3) *What is the Autonomous Gagauz Territory's authorities toward the idea of Moldova's membership in the European Union and NATO?*
- 4) *Do nowadays either the Autonomous Gagauz Territory's authorities or the social or political groups representing the Gagauzian nation endeavour to form an independent Gagauzian state?*
- 5) *What – according to your opinion – are the prospects for Gagauzia's future?*

We hope that our readers will find the lecture of this letter interesting, and inspiring for further research or – perhaps – for further inquiries.

Jakub Źak  
Editor-in-Chief

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**Ministry's of Foreign Affairs of Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic comments for "Ante Portas – Security Studies"**

*What is the official stance of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic vis-a-vis current political-military situation in Ukraine, including territorial changes that have taken place within Ukraine?*

The Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic is historically closely interconnected with Ukraine. The first statehood on the territory of Pridnestrovie was formalized in 1924 in the form of the Moldavian Autonomous SSR as part of the Ukrainian SSR. In addition, about one third of the PMR population is ethnic Ukrainians, as well as dozens of thousands of residents in the republic possess Ukrainian citizenship.

Pridnestrovie has always highly valued relations with Ukraine as one of the most important trade and economic partners of the republic. To date, a significant share of imports is coming to the republic from Ukraine. In the past, a significant share of Pridnestrovian exports went to the Ukrainian market, but this indicator, due to the Ukrainian crisis and the subsequent destabilization of the socio-economic situation in Ukraine, as well as the general deterioration in our bilateral relations, has decreased greatly.

Ukraine is also one of the key participants in the Moldovan-Pridnestrovian settlement process, since it has the officially fixed status of the guarantor and the mediator in the 5+2 negotiation process. It should be noted that at the first stage of the peaceful negotiation process for the conflict settlement, the position and actions of Ukraine contributed to a high degree to the normalization of relations between Moldova and Pridnestrovie, development of compromise solutions between the parties. In addition, the Ukrainian side refrained from steps, which worsen the socio-economic situation in Pridnestrovie, thus contributing to optimal atmosphere of dialogue in the negotiations on the settlement of Moldovan-Pridnestrovian relations.

Today, decades later, Ukraine's position in the negotiation process has a completely different, negative denominator. Despite this, it should be emphasized that Pridnestrovie conducts a balanced and consistent foreign policy that takes into account the objective reality and many years of experience of the past. In this regard we realize commonness of history and culture, which connects us with our neighbors, appreciate such ties and strive to protect them as much as possible from the influence of the current political conjuncture that has developed in the regional space. We are convinced that sooner or later it will change. Thus, we are striving to build friendly, mutually beneficial relations with Ukraine and are interested in restoring comprehensive ties in trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres. The importance of relations with Ukraine is reflected in the Foreign Policy Concept of the PMR.

Along with this, we have to admit that, as already mentioned, the position of Ukraine itself with regard to Pridnestrovie has significantly transformed in recent years in a negative way. Back in 2006, under the pressure of Moldova and the European Union, Ukraine became an accomplice in the blockade of Pridnestrovian exports, which led to the enormous economic losses by Pridnestrovie, which already exceeded \$ 450 million. Since 2014 Pridnestrovie has faced a number of new restrictions on the part of Ukraine, including in respect of import of excisable goods and free movement of citizens.

In 2017 Ukraine supports Moldova's intentions to establish joint Moldovan-Ukrainian customs and border control along the entire Pridnestrovian-Ukrainian border. Implementation of this extremely destructive measure will lead to new significant economic losses by Pridnestrovie and threatens the country with a humanitarian catastrophe, and can also provoke a sharp escalation of tensions as Moldovan and Pridnestrovian security forces will be in close

proximity to each other outside the Security Zone controlled by joint peace-keeping forces. The Pridnestrovian side is also alarmed by permanent bellicose rhetoric in Ukraine regarding Pridnestrovie, heard from high-ranking representatives of official authorities, among others.

We have to state that relations with Ukraine have deteriorated significantly since 2014, this is not the choice of the Pridnestrovian side, but a consequence of the markedly transformed position of the Ukrainian leadership, which contradicts both the interests of protecting rights and freedoms of ethnic Ukrainians living in the PMR, and, in general, the principles of good neighborliness and mutually beneficial cooperation. Pridnestrovie is making every effort to build a normal interaction with Ukraine, but has not met a clearly expressed counter-interest so far.

As for the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, here Pridnestrovie proceeds from the “do no harm” principle. It is necessary to understand that in a situation where the conflict intensity is high enough, all international actors should avoid assessments and positions that could harm the process of establishing a sustainable peace. Thus, our principled position is that the conflict must be resolved as soon as possible on the basis of unconditional consideration of the will of residents whose interests it violates. We believe that in a modern democratic state no decision taken against the will of the people can be viable.

***Does state’s policy of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic assume the possibility of reintegration with the Republic of Moldova, and if so, on what particular principles?***

The Pridnestrovian side, within the framework of the negotiation process with the Republic of Moldova, has never made commitments to participate in any “reintegration” processes. The course of foreign policy of Pridnestrovie is very clearly and unambiguously defined by the people of the republic during the 2006 referendum, is enshrined in the Foreign Policy Concept and is to strengthen the independence of the Pridnestrovian state and achieve international recognition.

The negotiation process to date is being conducted solely with the aim of resolving the pressing issues between Pridnestrovie and the Republic of Moldova in the social, economic and humanitarian spheres, which if solved would contribute to the improvement of people’s lives. This position was repeatedly expressed at various venues by the President of the PMR Vadim Krasnoselsky: “I have always been a protagonist of an idea that our independence is the basis of our security. We are ready to discuss with our Moldovan counterparts any issues – economic, cultural, and humanitarian. That is what we are doing. But

in no case will the issues of political status be put on the agenda. Political status is determined by the people. This is independence”<sup>1</sup>.

***What are the official political and military relations between the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and the Russian Federation?***

In accordance with the Foreign Policy Concept, Pridnestrovie regards the Russian Federation as its main strategic partner, and the development of systematic and comprehensive interaction with Russia is of a priority nature. The leadership of the republic is pursuing a focused policy on the integration of the PMR into Eurasian integration associations dominated by the Russian Federation. This, in particular, is the Eurasian Economic Union.

Dozens of bilateral cooperation agreements have been concluded between the PMR and the Russian Federation, including inter-ministerial memoranda of cooperation between specific bodies of state authorities. Russia is providing invaluable support to Pridnestrovie in improving the welfare of the people by implementing projects in the social, economic and humanitarian fields. In the republic, among other things, a simplified procedure for accession to Russian citizenship is being implemented, Russian pensions for Russian citizens living in the PMR have been paid, and Russian educational standards have been introduced. Some social infrastructure objects (schools, hospitals, kindergartens), important for the PMR, have been built in the recent years by the ANO Eurasian Integration.

In addition, a unique in its effectiveness and legitimacy peacekeeping operation has been operating for 25 years under the auspices of Russia, thus, the Russian Federation actually ensures the physical security of our citizens.

***What is the official status of the Russian 14<sup>th</sup> Army stationing on the territory of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic?***

The 14th guards combined-arms army of Russia ceased to exist in 1995. At the moment only Russian peacekeepers are stationed in Pridnestrovie whose combat tasks are reduced to maintaining peace in the Security Zone regulated by the documents of the negotiation process (together with Moldovan and Pridnestrovian peacekeepers), and the limited Operational Group of Russian Forces is stationed here with functions to guard military ammunition depots in the village of Kolbasna, remaining on the territory of the PMR since Soviet times, as well as to ensure regular rotation of service personnel of the peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation. The peacekeeping operation, in turn, is maintained with the approval of the United Nations and with the participation of the OSCE.

According to the Pridnestrovian side, taking into account the military aggression unleashed by the Republic of Moldova in 1992, the Russian peace-

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<sup>1</sup> <<http://president.gospmr.ru/press-sluzhba/novosti/onf.html>> (01.06.2017).

keeping contingent is a factor of maintaining stability in the entire region and a guarantee for physical security of the PMR's population as well as a warning for "hotheads" from Moldova not to take revenge in the conflict and force Pridnestrovie to renounce its independence violently.

***Does the government of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic currently strive for international recognition of Pridnestrovie and what are the current prospects of success in this matter?***

Achieving international recognition is a fundamental objective of the foreign policy of the PMR. The Pridnestrovian state has existed for more than 25 years and during that period it has proved its worth as a full-fledged participant in international relations, possessing all the attributes of an independent state, effectively controlling its territory and providing a decent standard of living for citizens in comparison with neighboring countries. To date, there is no objective basis to deny the Pridnestrovian people their desire to live independently.

All the claims of Moldova to the territory of Pridnestrovie are devoid of legal and historical grounds. Pridnestrovie has never had anything in common with the Moldovan statehood, except for a brief – according to historical standards – period in 1941-1990 of joint living in the Union Republic within the USSR. In this context, striving for return of Pridnestrovie to Moldova seems paradoxical, which cannot be regarded otherwise as an attempt of re-Sovietization of the entire region.

As you know, the borders of states are not a constant, but a dynamic thing. Today the number of newly formed and recognized states, including those founded through free expression of the people's will, is growing in the world. The examples of East Timor, Montenegro, Kosovo and Southern Sudan should not be left unnoticed. Legal recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Russia and a number of other states is illustrative for Pridnestrovie. The regional situation is dynamic, the process of the USSR collapse continues and the hastily "cut" 15 republics change their appearance. Therefore, we expect that over time, the international community will impartially assess the situation, having more fair and objective positions. The experience of Pridnestrovian participation in negotiations in the 5+2 format shows that we are a responsible participant in international relations. We are convinced that the recognition of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic will contribute to the peaceful and stable development of the entire regional space and facilitate building of sustainable security architecture, as well as protecting of the rights of the Pridnestrovian population.

***Does the government of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic keep relations with the Autonomous Gagauz Territory and what is its stance toward the concept of the Republic of Moldova's federalization?***

Relations with Gagauzia has been traditionally kind and friendly, due to the commonness of civil, cultural, scientific and educational ties. A number of bilateral cooperation agreements has been signed between the PMR and Gagauzia, including through the parliamentary communication. The population of the autonomy sees Pridnestrovians as their friends and partners and many of its residents come to Pridnestrovia to receive education in Russian, to do business. There is a large Gagauz diaspora in the PMR.

Officials of the Republic of Moldova are categorically against federalization. For example, as noted by Prime Minister of Moldova Pavel Filip during a meeting with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Sebastian Kurtz “federalization is not a good solution”<sup>2</sup>.

In return, Pridnestrovia has no objections regarding the state structure of neighboring Moldova with the possible formation of Gagauz, Bălți and other sub-federal entities as considers it as a purely internal issue of the Republic of Moldova, which has no relation to the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic.

МИНИСТЕРУЛ АФАЧЕРИДОР ЕКСТЕРНЕ АЛ РЕПУБЛИЦИИ МОЛДОВЕНЕШТЬ НИСТРЕНЕ		МИНИСТЕРСТВО ЗАКОРДОННИХ СПРАВ ПРИДНЕСТРОВСЬКОЇ МОЛДАВСЬКОЇ РЕСПУБЛІКИ
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18.05.14 г. № 01-19.2/334		
На № _____ от 22.04.14		Главному редактору научного журнала «Ante Portas – Security Studies» Я. Жаку
Уважаемый господин Жак!		
Свидетельствую свое уважение и в контексте Вашего обращения направляю официальный комментарий Министерства иностранных дел Приднестровской Молдавской Республики по тем вопросам, которые были обозначены в Вашем письме.		
Пользуясь случаем, возобновляю уверения в уважении.		
Приложение: Официальный комментарий Министерства иностранных дел ПМР на 6 листах в 1 экземпляре.		
Заместитель министра		А.П. Стешок

<sup>2</sup> П. Филип: Молдавские власти против федерализации Республики Молдова, <<http://www.moldpres.md/ru/news/2017/02/04/17000923>> (01.06.2017).