



PRESS RELEASE

Project IMPACT

The international conference “Confidence building measures as a path to sustainable socioeconomic development in Moldova-Transdnistria”, held in Odessa on 28 - 29 May 2009 completed the first phase of Project IMPACT. As part of this phase, cooperation was activated between independent analytical NGOs and individual experts from both banks of the Nistru / Dniester River, as well as from Russia, Romania and Ukraine.

More than 80 experts on political, economic and social aspects of Moldova-Transdnistria settlement took part in the conference, coming from Chisinau, Tiraspol, Bender, Ribnita, Odessa, Kyiv, Moscow, Kherson, Cluj-Napoca, London, Bologna and Washington. Among the experts who gathered to discuss the results of Project IMPACT were a delegation from all members of the “5+2” official negotiation process, coordinators of official Working Groups on confidence building, representatives of the EUBAM mission and the Chisinau diplomatic community.

Project participants set for themselves the goal of conducting a joint analysis of the social and economic impacts of the ongoing political conflict on society, and developing a series of recommendations on how these issues could be addressed. They plan to advocate their innovative concepts to decision makers dealing with Transdnistrian settlement and to society at large.

A key element of the first phase of the project was a series of dialogue meetings between experts, which were held in Vadul lui Voda (Moldova), Tiraspol, Odessa and Lazurnoe (Ukraine). These were aimed at strengthening mutual understanding, joint analysis and cooperative problem solving approaches within the IMPACT participants group.

Research conducted as part of the project demonstrated that after the conclusion of the armed phase of the Transdnistrian conflict - which had caused human losses and material destruction – the conflict parties continue to suffer losses from the conflict. In place of armed confrontation now comes economic confrontation which has caused costs which are significant in scale, and not subject to compensation, as a result of actions by both sides which have harmed the economic interests of each other. The numerous conflicts between Chisinau and Tiraspol involve primarily the social sphere, business, trade and infrastructure (transport, energy, telephony). These fields are not only the most sensitive to conflict, but are also the most significant “problem areas” for the economies of both sides. Without taking into account such costs of the conflict and without reducing the pressure in economic relations between the sides, the attempts to resolve the Transdnistrian conflict become ineffective.

The experts involved in the project consider that efforts should be directed to consolidating the economic interests of the two banks of the Nistru / Dniester, and to developing cooperation between them in those fields where the costs of confrontation are the greatest. They come to the conclusion that the benefits from joint action to develop infrastructure, improve the conditions for trade, business management, investment activities, have a principal importance for the economic stability and security of not only the right and left banks of the Nistru / Dniester, but also to the broader South-Eastern European region.



Outputs of the Project from its 2007-2009 phase include:

- Collection of Essays titled “Working together for a prosperous future”, in 3 thematic volumes focused on: Economic Aspects, Social Aspects and the Negotiation Process of the Transdnestrian conflict. The collection contains an analysis of the impacts of the drawn-out conflict and of potential methods for resolving them for all sides,
- Documentary Film about the human story of the socioeconomic cost of the conflict in Moldova-Transdnestria, and untold stories of peacebuilding from the last 20 years, titled “Transdnestria: When the Guns Fell Silent”. The film is the first to bring together journalists and film-makers from both banks to work together,
- Sociological Report based on a unique opinion poll conducted on both banks of the Nistru / Dniester, focusing on the “Social and economic wellbeing of the population of both banks of the Dniester / Nistru in conditions of frozen conflict”,
- Economic Analysis Report, focusing on the “Costs of the Transdnestrian conflict and benefits of its settlement”.

The project’s partner organisations are: International Peace Institute PATRIR (Cluj-Napoca), Centre for Strategic Studies and Reforms “CISR” (Chisinau), Independent Centre for Analytical Research “New Age” (Tiraspol), Joint Committee for Democratisation and Conciliation (Chisinau), RIA “New Region – Pridnestrovie” (Tiraspol) and the Centre for Independent Television (Chisinau).

The experience of cooperation, harnessed from the first phase of IMPACT by the expert participants from both banks of the river, will serve as a foundation for ongoing cooperation – in future as a joint virtual think tank. Project participants are also open to providing expert support to the Working Groups on confidence building measures – the functioning of which, together with the “5+2” negotiation process, form the cornerstones of the Moldova-Transdnestria peace process.

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