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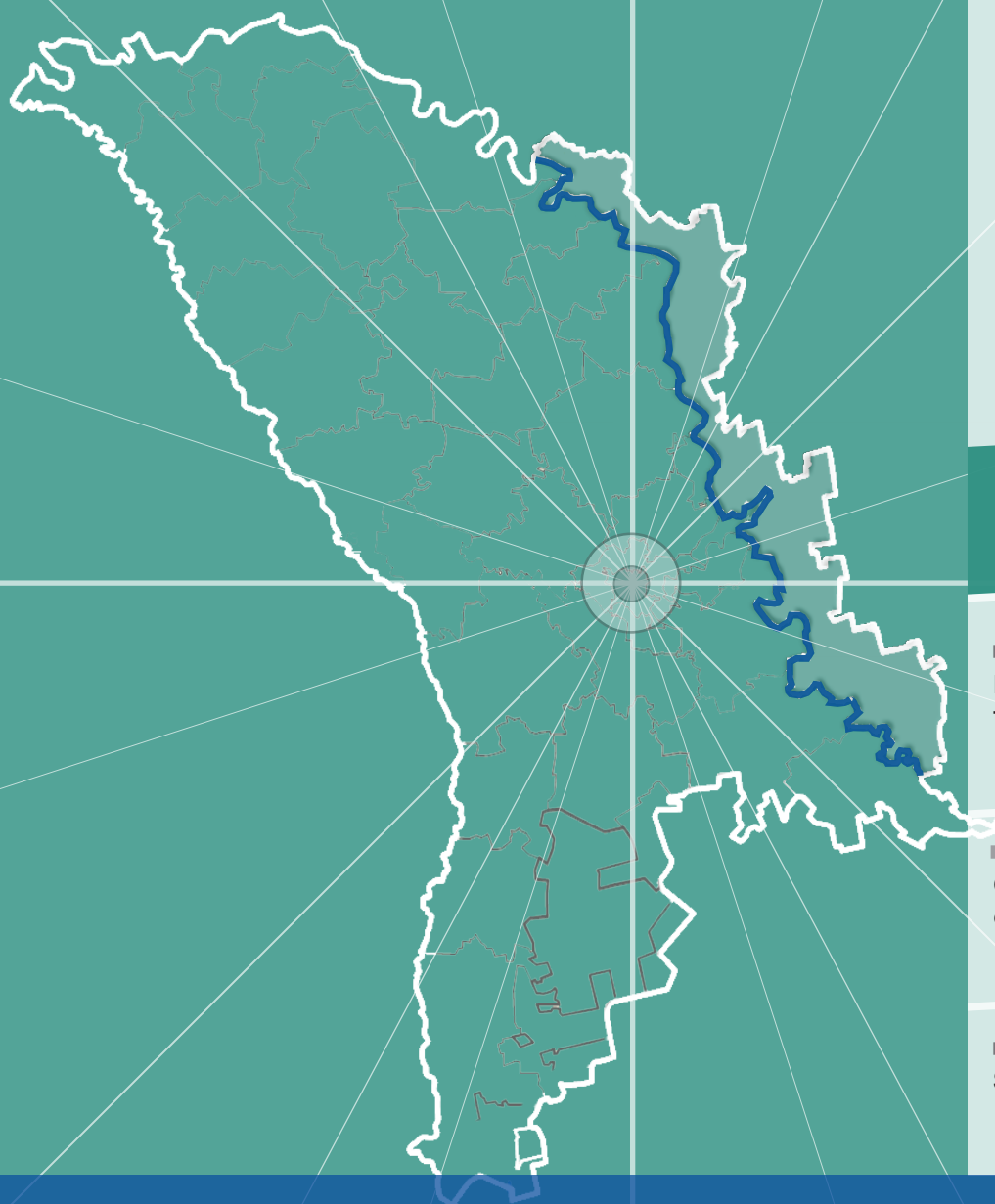


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DNIESTRIAN REALITIES

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■ editorial

Railways and the maturity test



Eduard
TUGUI

Railways were one of the technological inventions that spurred the emergence of the European nation states in the 19th century, allowed the creation of the United States of America due to the railroads that drove the modernity towards the west and south of the American continent and shaped the modern capitalism when railroads or tram lines construction involved local governments, economic agents and capital market in forging the American dream. Another was the case of the territories between the rivers Bug and Prut because the railways network built in the second half of the 19th century oriented the commercial flows of Bessarabia towards the imperial capital in the east and did not lead to the emergence of a nation state just like it did not permit to the Moldovan economy to absorb the effects of the late industrial revolution in the east of Europe.

The unifying role of railways became current again in the Republic of Moldova when two years after the start of negotiations on the Transnistrian conflict settlement both the greatest achievements (maybe the only ones) and the greatest dissensions were related to the field of transport. Thus, on 30 March 2012, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova in that period Vladimir Filat and the Tiraspol leader Yevgeny Shevchuk signed the Protocol decision on principles of plenary resumption of freight trains circulation, in the context where the freight trains circulation through the Transnistrian region was halted in 2006. Initially the protocol was concluded for a period of 6 months, then, on 26 September 2012, was signed an additional agreement to extend the deadline for another 12 months.

The expiry of the agreement on freight trains circulation prompted mainly the meeting between the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova Iurie Leanca and the separatist leader Yevgeny Shevchuk on 23 September 2013. In the hotel "Russia" in Tiraspol (a very suggestive venue otherwise) the meeting lasted for more than three hours but all that was achieved was the signing of a protocol decision on the extension of the mechanism relating to the freight trains

circulation through the Transnistrian region for a 1 year and 3 months. Apart from this constructive moment, the other topics were discussed in a contradictory atmosphere, including at the final press conference where the two interlocutors did not manage to conceal the tensions. We do not know to what extent Iurie Leanca succeeded in persuading Shevchuk that it is the right time to discuss the Transnistrian region status within the Republic of Moldova as the Moldovan Prime Minister declared prior to the meeting but during the discussions with the media the Tiraspol leader repeated a stanza from the "Eurasian poem" mentioning that after the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine have signed the Association Agreement with the EU, he will request the international recognition of Transnistria.

Therefore, the 15 months period provided for by the protocol will be the maturity test for the entire negotiation framework on the Transnistrian conflict settlement. Will this protocol mean a premise of a neo functionalist endeavor of European integration where the technical sectors will require political settlement in a common European course or will it mean again an uninspired attempt to connect the Moldovan economy to (only) an unpredictable Eurasian market? Will this protocol spur the implementation of common projects seeking to modernize and connect the railroads of the Republic of Moldova to the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T), financed with the assistance of development partners, related infrastructure projects to provide employment for workers on both banks of the Dniester or is it the agreement under whose shelter Tiraspol (or Moscow) is preparing the international recognition of Transnistria? These are fundamental questions that have to be answered during this period "permitted by the protocol", otherwise the development of the Republic of Moldova does not depend on those 10 million USD that like Shevchuk claims will be gained by the economic agents on both banks of the Dniester as a result of the agreement. ■

■ interviews

Official talks and citizens expectations



Viorica Țîcu,
Lecturer ULIM,
Chisinau

— How do you comment on the result of the meeting between Iurie Leanca and Yevgeny Shevchuk?

— It should be emphasized from the start that, de facto, the stake of the meeting was the advance of the negotiations on the Transnistrian conflict settlement. However, the meeting in Tiraspol between the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova Iurie Leanca and the leader of the separatist region Yevgeniy Shevchuk, has proved one more time that the parties still have completely different opinions on the Transnistrian region future, particularly owing to the Republic of Moldova rapprochement to the European Union. As it was expected, the topics debated provoked many contradictions, including those related to Package III, the political one and the status of the region within the Republic of Moldova. Given these realities I have to mention that currently the Chisinau authorities are not ready to face these challenges. Moreover, there are no signs that there would be a plan in this respect or substantial intentions in politics dominated by the Kremlin administration. Under these conditions, Chisinau and Tiraspol are, simply, “condemned” to live side by side and build their relations taking into account this reality.

— How will the extension of the protocol decision on resumption of a full-scale freight railway service through Transnistria influence the negotiations?

— I believe that the extension, until the end of 2014, of the protocol decision “on re-



Dmitrii GAVRILOV,
Director Information
Resource Center “COMMON
HOME”, Tiraspol

— How do you comment on the result of the meeting between Iurie Leanca and Yevgeny Shevchuk?

— In my opinion the meeting of the political leaders from both banks was purely declarative and inefficient. We observe with a touch irony and mistrust the new common statements that “we have to meet more often, to discuss the concrete problems facing the population on the Dniester”. There is a new weird tendency to “freeze” the negotiations between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria. On the one hand, Moldova wishes to discuss first of all political issues and make progress through the policy of small steps towards reintegration, being supported by European partners. On the other hand, Transnistria refuses categorically to accept this idea and dreams of independence and joining Russia, which repeatedly expressed its disagreement in this respect. In other words, one party is willing to solve the problem as soon as possible while the second one defends itself. The result of this process will be most likely a complete failure of negotiations for both sides and the extension of confrontations between politicians from both banks. Yesterday Smirnov and Voronin met; today this is the turn of Leanca and Shevchuk. We can endlessly discuss minor issues and sign protocol decisions, dismantle Soviet aerial tramways, open bridges and invent vehicle registration plates. All these do not lead to the settlement of a single political problem. I think that treating cancer with brilliant green is useless and criminal.

sumption of a full-scale freight railway service through Transnistria" will not advance in any way the 5 +2 negotiations on the political settlement of the conflict. The so-called policy of small steps, started in 2012, that was to encourage confidence building through solving socio-economic problems, was reduced by Tiraspol and Moscow only to selective solving of economic problems they are interested in. We can not perceive any prospect on settling issues related to the political resolution of the conflict.

— What are the expectations of the RM citizens to negotiations on conflict settlement?

— The two decades of this „frozen" state of the conflict directly affects the population's perception of the negotiations on conflict settlement on the both banks of the Dniester. In spite of the great expectations, the unpredictable, tangled, „frozen" character of the conflict, the restrictions that still limit the economic freedom have a negative influence on the expectations of the RM population. If immediately after the conflict, the society was very sensitive to the events on the left bank and during those troubled days many volunteers fought to defend the independence and integrity of the country, then, nowadays, the Republic of Moldova population is rather impassive to the conflict. I think that as long as our leaders, those in government and in opposition will be in this uncertain situation, the Republic of Moldova citizens will continue to be apathetic towards this issue. ■

— How will the extension of the protocol decision on resumption of a full-scale freight railway service through Transnistria influence the negotiations?

— The signed agreement is a positive event, on paper and for the media. We will see to what extent will increase the amount of goods transported and what the situation will be after the Summit in Vilnius.

— What are the expectations of the RM citizens to negotiations on conflict settlement?

— Expectations of the population to the negotiation process are a dangerous and delicate matter that politicians in the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria are afraid to face. I can just express my personal opinion. People who have understood the essence of the problem and assessed the real terms of conflict resolution are leaving the country; while those who stay are fully unaware of the issue. My personal expectations can be expressed in the following formula: if Transnistria and Moldova do see a common bright future for them then they have to clearly define this future and only after that discuss the ways to achieve this goal. This is the so-called "common sense". What we see today is a huge disparity and imbalance between the opinions of politically unstable partners. However, my biggest desire is to see a constructive dialogue between politicians from both banks because ordinary people have already come to an understanding. ■

■ chronicle

September 2013

● **2 SEPTEMBER.** Russia's Deputy Prime Minister and special representative for the Transnistrian region Dmitry Rogozin paid an official visit to Chisinau and Tiraspol.

— „When signing the Association agreement with the European Union Moldova should not forget about Transnistria because it might lose it”, said Rogozin. He also added that Chisinau authorities have to consult the population on the left bank on the European vector of RM.

— On 3 September Dmitry Rogozin visited Tiraspol where he attended the opening of a hospital built with the Russian humanitarian funds.

● **2 SEPTEMBER.** Transnistrian region celebrated 23 years of the self-proclaimed independence (2 September, 1990), not recognized on the international arena.

— The inhabitants of Transnistria were congratulated by the Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Sergey Naryshkin.

● **7-9 SEPTEMBER.** The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill visited Moldova (Chisinau and Tiraspol). The Patriarch gave a speech in Tiraspol, in front of hundreds of people.

— Yevgeny Shevchuk asked the Patriarch Kirill to pray for "the strong spirit of Transnistrians" facing "external pressure and economic hardships."

● **10- 11 SEPTEMBER.** Russian Foreign Ministry Ambassador at Large Sergey Gubarev visited Moldova. He met with

the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova Eugen Carpov, the head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Jennifer Brush and Yevgeny Shevchuk. The purpose of the visit was the organization of the next round of 5 +2 negotiations.

● **12 SEPTEMBER.** Political representatives for the Transnistrian conflict settlement, Eugen Carpov and Nina Shtanski had a meeting in Tiraspol where they discussed the agenda of the next rounds of 5 +2 negotiations.

● **16 SEPTEMBER.** Tiraspol representative, Nina Shtanski visited Chisinau to have talks with Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration Eugen Carpov.

— The two representatives signed a protocol which provides for "exchange of information, systematization and examination of criminal cases opened in Chisinau and Tiraspol" a document that has stirred discontent among Moldovan civil society representatives.

— At the meeting there were also discussed the details of the meeting between Iurie Leanca and Evgeny Shevchuk.

● **19 SEPTEMBER.** During his working visit to Chisinau Jean-Claude Mignon PACE President met in Tiraspol with Evgeny Shevchuk.

— Mignon: "We want the Transnistrian population to benefit from the Association Agreement with the European Union. I have full confidence that the OSCE will complete 5 +2 negotiations"

● **21 SEPTEMBER.** Nina Shtanski represented Transnistria at the international scientific-practical conference "Cross-border cooperation in the context of Eurasian integration" at the Russia's Institute of Strategic Studies in Moscow.

— Shtanski declared that the launch of the „Eurasian Region Transnistria" Tiraspol is an opportunity for Tiraspol to become a plateau by which Russia would promote the so called „soft power" in the border regions with Ukraine, but also in Gagauzia, Balti and other districts of Moldova.

● **23 SEPTEMBER.** The Prime Minister Iurie Leanca and the Transnistrian leader, Yevgeny Shevchuk had the first bilateral meeting in Tiraspol.

— Iurie Leanca and Yevgeny Shevchuk signed a document that extends the protocol decision on rail freight transport through the eastern region of the country.

— Yevgeny Shevchuk said that the Republic of Moldova Association Agreement with the European Union and the Free Trade Area will lead to strained relations between Chisinau and Tiraspol.

● **26-27 SEPTEMBER.** The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for Conflicts Ambassador Andrii Deshchytsia made a two-day visit to the Republic of Moldova and met with officials in Chisinau and Tiraspol.

WORKING GROUPS. There were held 4 meeting of the Working Groups.

● **5 SEPTEMBER.** At Tiraspol Office of the OSCE Mission to Moldova the Working Group on health meeting was held. During the meeting there were discussed several issues on the improvement of medical care services provided to the population of Transnistria, including access to emergency medical services that use modern methods of diagnosis and treatment.

● **11 SEPTEMBER.** In Chisinau was held the meeting of the Working group on telecommunications and postal services. At the meeting were addressed various issues related to the multi-channel MMDS television networks in Transnistria and the 2500-2690 MHz frequency band, which pursuant to international and regional normative acts is not meant for such networks.

● **13 SEPTEMBER.** Was held the meeting of the Working Groups on combating crime and emergency situations. The discussions referred to the exchange of information, systematization and examination of criminal cases opened in Chisinau and Tiraspol"

● **20 SEPTEMBER.** In Tiraspol the Working Groups held a meeting on social protection and humanitarian aid. At the meeting was jointly finalized the draft protocol that will govern the issuance and submission of documents necessary to establish state pensions and social allowances, resumption of payment of pensions and state allowances for people who have moved to live from one bank of the Dniester to another.

It was agreed upon the development of a cooperation mechanism between the guardianship authorities for the protection and safety of children.

 front page

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