



## EUROPEAN UNION BORDER ASSISTANCE MISSION TO MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE

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#### High-Level Panel V

Border Surveillance – Common and Standardized European  
Equipment Inevitable  
Dr Ferenc Banfi, the Head of EUBAM

Mr Chairperson,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to participate in this very distinguished gathering of EU security experts. I would like to thank the organisers and especially General Reimar Scherz for the excellent organisation and for offering me to speak about border surveillance in the capacity of the Head of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM).

Allow me to say few words about the launching of EUBAM, its mandate and main activities having in mind that it directly refers to our topic on border surveillance. The Mission came to work in Moldova and Ukraine as the EU's response to a request made by the Presidents of Moldova and Ukraine in June 2005. They requested EU's assistance to enhance border management capacities and to approximate border control practices to international standards, including on the Transnistrian ('TN') segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian state border.

It was a sign of the EU's interest in and support to Moldova and Ukraine that within two months from the initial request, on 7 October 2005, the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Moldova, Ukraine and the European Commission providing a basis to establish the Mission. In less than two months the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine opened its doors in Odesa.

It is an evidence of the continued support and commitment of the EC and the two governments that they agreed in early 2007 to extend the Mission until the end of November 2009.



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The Mission is an advisory technical body. It has no executive power. Its purpose is to assist its Moldovan and Ukrainian partners – the border and customs services of the two countries - in their efforts to up-date border control systems, procedures and infrastructure, with ultimate goal of modern integrated border management systems such as those prevalent in the EU Member States.

The Mission is also mandated to strengthen border control and surveillance to address possible security threats.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding the Mission ‘makes a positive contribution towards the settlement of the conflict in the Transnistrian region of Moldova.’

As a neutral arbiter, the Mission provides technical advice on solving border and customs related issues. Mission’s advice and recommendations aim to improve the ‘TN’ business community’s interest to conduct legitimate business activity and at the same time to enjoy international trade preferences granted to Moldova. It is believed that improved economic relations between Chisinau and the ‘TN’ business community is an important aspect of confidence building contributing towards the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. The overall objective is to ensure transparent, predictable and non-discriminatory management of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border in accordance with EU standards.

The Mission contributes towards the implementation of the Joint Declaration (signed in 30 December 2005) which introduced the customs regime between Moldova and Ukraine. The customs regime came in force in March 2006 and provides that companies based in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova may only export to and via Ukraine with official Moldovan stamps. By the end of September 2008, over 470 economic operators were registered on a permanent or temporary basis with the Moldovan authorities. The registration grants the company the status of a regular Moldovan economic operator, with access to the EU trade preferences. The ‘TN’ based companies are also able to enjoy the preferential trade regime with other countries covered by GSP<sup>1</sup> arrangements and bilateral agreements with Moldova (e.g. EFTA<sup>2</sup>, CEFTA<sup>3</sup> and CIS countries).

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<sup>1</sup> GSP: Generalized System of Preferences

<sup>2</sup> EFTA: European Free Trade Association’s members are: Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

<sup>3</sup> CEFTA: Central European Free Trade Agreement’s members are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo).



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According to the Memorandum of Understanding between Moldova, Ukraine and the EC, the Mission 'contributes to the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict by strengthening border control and surveillance in Moldova and Ukraine.' The purpose of this activity is to reduce possible security threats originating from the region.

The Moldovan-Ukrainian border covers 1,222 km and the central segment (the Transnistrian segment) is 453.9 km long. Controls on the central segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border are made difficult due to the fact that Moldovan authorities are not present there. The porosity of the border together with an unclear legal environment allows criminal groups to carry out illegal activities. Consequently, the Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border is characterised by a large-scale smuggling of goods, trafficking in human beings and drugs trafficking. On the basis of the available information, EUBAM cannot confirm the existence of significant weapons trafficking; although neither can the Mission comprehensively rule this out.

Strengthening border control on the Moldovan-Ukrainian border brings more income to the Moldovan and Ukrainian state budgets in taxes and duties, as well as reduces risks to health from falsely certificated products and inadequately transported food. In addition, improved border management and surveillance helps to fight corruption at border guard and customs services.

Together with Moldovan and Ukrainian border guard and customs services, EUBAM applies a comprehensive approach to strengthening border control and surveillance including:

- Introduction of Integrated Border Management;
- Capacity building of partner services to detect, counteract, and prevent cross-border crime including trafficking in human beings;
- Development of risk analysis systems in the border guard and customs services of Moldova and Ukraine;
- Exchange of pre-arrival customs information;
- Common border security assessment;
- Joint Border Control Operations;
- Coordinated Criminal Investigations;
- Technical assistance.

Progress in the partner services has been noted during these three years. EUBAM contributed to the technical development of the Moldovan and Ukrainian border services. Partners have appreciated the training and equipment that was provided during these years. Importantly, cooperation between the Moldovan and Ukrainian border services has improved as well as interagency cooperation



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within the two countries. Similarly, international cooperation with their European neighbours and EU agencies such as FRONTEX has become stronger. Border guard services of both countries have signed cooperation agreements with FRONTEX.

To conclude, let me say that a lot was achieved over these years, but we are not complacent about Missions' achievements. A good deal remains to be done, as signified by the extension of the Mission's mandate until November 2009. Organised criminal activity, including smuggling of goods and trafficking in human beings, and the persistent challenge of corruption, are still present. This means that we must carry on, developing our own skills and capacity. We have to build a stronger cooperation with the partner services to provide professional guidelines and support in their pursuit of a greater professionalism and European standards. Our team is highly motivated and intends to work towards this goal, based on the Mission's core values: transparency, neutrality, reliability, result, and service.

Thank you for your attention!