Cristina Lesnic discussed with the EU representative within the 5+2 format for the Transdniestrian settlement process

The Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration, Cristina Lesnic, had a discussion today with the Head of the European External Action Service, Richard Tibbels, within the 5+2 negotiation format for the Transnistrian conflict settlement.

Cristina Lesnic stated that although a positive trend was settled during her previous mandate, throughout the last months the relationship between Chisinau and Tiraspol is eroding and strained, due to the artificial movement restrictions imposed by the Transnistrian side. The chief negotiator from Chisinau appreciated the importance of the European Union's expertise on the Transnistrian file, mentioning the need for a general assessment of the situation. Therewith, Cristina Lesnic expressed the need to establish a communication channel with the EU.

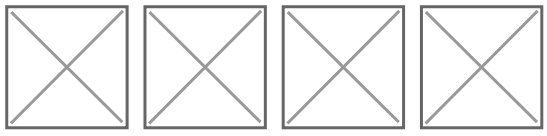
The Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration thanked the European Union for the financial support to accommodate the medical personnel from the Transnistrian region working in the localities on the right bank of Nistru, and for donations to manage the Covid-19 health crisis for the population on both banks. Doctors and/or medical personnel were unable to commute to work, being forced to self-isolate after crossing the administrative line.

“The Government's tactic was to promote positive measures meant to stabilize the situation in the Security Zone. We did not apply movement restrictions. On the contrary, we facilitated the import procedures of medicines, food and agricultural items – all this to bring the population on both banks of Nistru closer together. But any relationship involves two parties, and Tiraspol responded by illegally installing 37 checkpoints and by limiting the right to free movement of the population on both banks”, said Cristina Lesnic. She specified that the checkpoints cannot be considered

sanitary, as stated by Tiraspol, because there are uniformed “border guards” present there, who assume control and verification duties and block the movement of people in the area.

The official expressed Chisinau’s concern not only about free movement restrictions, but also about human rights in general, including freedom of expression and access to health care services. In this context, Cristina Lesnic mentioned that the public statements of the Transnistrian side cannot be verified on the spot. Therefore, the real situation in the region cannot be assessed objectively.

In turn, Richard Tibbels expressed the openness to cooperate on the Transnistrian file and inquired from the first source about the current situation on the eight priorities package, the vision and potential solutions. Richard Tibbels mentioned that the European Union contributes to building confidence between the inhabitants on both banks of Nistru and supports initiatives for improving the living conditions of the population.

The officials also exchanged views on other topics of common interest. They agreed to continue communicating and exchanging information.

The Heads of diplomatic missions in the Republic of Moldova and the EU participated in the discussions as well.