The review of the year 2021 in the activity of the Bureau of Policies for Reintegration and the priorities for 2022



The current year has been completed with new developments and achievements in the work of the Bureau for Policies of Reintegration and the Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration, in the context of promoting the government's desire to reintegrate the country, and for a broader picture in this regard, we highlight the following examples.

Thus, following the previous practices the financing of 41 sustainable development projects with a major socio-economic impact amounting to 15 million MDL was ensured in the perimeter of the Security Zone, due to the allocations approved by the Government through the Program of activities for reintegration of the country for 2021 (we will provide more information on this topic).

Major results were marked in the field of immunizing the population and strengthening the medical system against the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and Chisinau was very proactive in this area, directing a big amount of humanitarian aid with high-performance medical appliances and 375 thousand doses of anti-COVID-19 vaccine to the inhabitants of the Eastern part of the country. Jointly with WHO, trainings of medical professionals in the field of effective implementation of clinical protocols and vaccination process management were organized.

But even more important is the fact that it has been possible to generate a unique model of a vaccination confirmation certificate throughout the country, including in electronic format, with data collection in a centralized information system and connection to internationally recognized quality standards, and at the request of the person domiciled in the east of the country, the validity of these certificates can be reconfirmed at the medical centers on the right bank.

As of April 30, as a result of consistent efforts, the free movement of citizens to / from the left bank of the Dniester River has been restored, and this has positively impacted hundreds of thousands of people who have been stranded in the region since March 16, 2020 and until the date already indicated as a result of artificial self-isolation under alleged pandemic pretexts and the intensification of the infrastructure of unauthorized checkpoints in the Security Zone, also excluding restrictions on medical staff living in the region with jobs on the right bank, as well as cancelling the mechanism of prior written notifications regarding officials and civil servants of the Republic of Moldova making private visits or passing through localities in the Transnistrian region. Unfortunately, Tiraspol maintains lists of undesirable people in the region, some of whom do not have basic access to their own homes, families, close relatives. Also it is worth noting that human rights promoters, journalists from the right bank of river Nistru, civil servants exercising their duties cannot travel to the region.

In the field of population and means of transport documentation, statistical indicators speak for themselves: over 343 thousand of the region's inhabitants were registered in the State Population Register, 309 thousand of them hold biometric passports and 278 thousand hold identity cards of the citizen of Republic of Moldova, 40 thousand hold Moldovan driving licenses, 9 thousand non-commercial vehicles were registered with neutral licence plates and tens of thousands of vehicles of different categories received usual Moldovan licence plates.

The facilities offered by Chisinau and Brussels in internal and foreign trade have attracted more than 2210 companies in the region to register with the Public Services Agency, almost 56% of exports of goods from the region are made in EU member states, more than 2300 certificates of origin of the goods were issued by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry to economic agents on the left bank of the Dniester and Bender municipality, and in addition the same entrepreneurs enjoy several years of tax exemptions on imports of goods in the region provided for exclusive local consumption and written commitments to that effect.

The good functionality of the 8 schools teaching in Romanian in the region was ensured, farmers from Dubasari district were helped to solve pressing problems. Thanks to the adjustment of the legislative framework made by the Government, the said farmers enjoy a simplified regime of passing of their production through the

internal customs control posts in Dubasari district.

Places with budgetary financing were provided in the educational institutions on the right bank of the Dniester for the graduates of the institutions from the eastern districts of the country. In the academic year 2020-2021 only in universities and academies this figure constituted 736 students who studied without payment of fees. Additionally, qualifications obtained in many specialties are confirmed and formalized in a simplified manner, according to the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Research, in order for students to continue studies or employment throughout the country or abroad. More than 460 neutral model diplomas, issued by the Taras Shevchenko University of Tiraspol, have been authenticated by the Ministry of Justice, according to the requirements of the legislation in force and the agreements stipulated in the Protocol Decision of November 25, 2017.

On the segment of the administrative line, the continuous provision of public services was carried out by the territorial subdivisions of the national authorities assigned to the localities in the region (social and medical insurance, issuing of identity documents and others).

A permanent attention is given to the cases of human rights violations that have become known to the Bureau, mobilizing joint efforts with law enforcement agencies, human rights promoters, foreign partners and stakeholders of the "5+2" negotiation format to restore infringed rights, providing the necessary assistance and guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms.

The authorities of the Republic of Moldova are always active in advancing the completion of the national goal of reintegrating the country, removing barriers between the two banks of river Nistru, solving the pressing problems of the citizens and increasing the quality of essential services provided to the population.

This year, a continuous dynamic was ensured in all existing dialogue formats between Chisinau and Tiraspol, there was almost daily communication through the interaction channel of the main negotiators' offices, and the meetings at the level of political representatives tripled in number compared to 2019-2020.

The working groups for trust strengthening between the two banks of river Nistru met in 25 meetings (2019 - 21, 2020 - 26), the experts in the field of car transport being the most active (8 meetings), followed by fields like health care (5), education (2), rail transport (2) etc. Unfortunately, the meetings of specialists in the field of telecommunications, banking, agriculture and environmental protection failed.

Although no new round of negotiations was organized in the "5+2" format, active communication was ensured with all relevant international actors, key governmental goals were reported and a parliamentary committee for monitoring and control over the reintegration policy was set up. This parliamentary committee will formulate on its platform unanimously agreed positions promoted by the Moldovan delegation in the process of negotiations. The objective of forming a political and civic consensus on key elements of conflict resolution was reflected in the Government's Program of activity. Swift steps are being taken to restore control of the Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian state border, and the capacity to prevent and combat contraventions and crime in that segment is being strengthened, along with many other stringent actions.

On June 3, a working visit of the mediators and international observers in the "5 + 2" negotiation format was carried out in the Republic of Moldova, as well as several visits during the year by the incumbent President of the OSCE and its Special Representative, as well as multiple separate meetings with representatives of the stakeholders of the Permanent Conference on Political Affairs in the Transnistrian settlement process, during which interactive consultations were held, but also the need to relaunch the work of this format and to initiate consultations on the draft agenda was highlighted.

Chisinau's expectations of the "5+2" format are well known: conducting negotiations without imposing preconditions and unacceptable deadlines, conducting a consecutive and constructive dialogue, addressing issues from all negotiation baskets (socio-economic, humanitarian and human rights, institutional and political), with a clear perspective for advancing towards the central goal of this format’s creation, i.e. for achieving an all-encompassing, peaceful and lasting settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, inside the structure of a unitary and territorially indivisible state, Republic of Moldova, with respect for the borders recognized by the international community.

On the line of activity of the Joint Control Commission 38 meetings were convened, and the same number of meetings were held in the Joint Military Command, documenting multiple incidents related to the installation of so-called Transnistrian border guards and militia mobile posts, detention of citizens and illegaly blocking their free movement in the Security Zone, unauthorized movement of military columns, etc. Unfortunately, for reasons beyond the control of the Moldovan delegation, the work of the Commission is in a state of constant stagnation, because of the existing formula for approving decisions and reports based on consensus. The exponents of Tiraspol profit of this circumstance to delay and avoid for prolonged periods the finding of durable and constructive solutions to the actual problems on the agenda.

The joint statement of the sixth meeting of the EU-Republic of Moldova Association Council on October 28, 2021 reaffirmed its support for the regulatory model based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial unity of the country, and expressed EU readiness to continue to promote confidence-building measures with tangible results for residents on both banks of river Nistru.

Also, at the 28th meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, under the auspices of the Swedish Presidency, the Republic of Moldova obtained a new Declaration on the "5+2" format negotiation process on the Transnistrian settlement which reconfirmed the firm support of the OSCE participating States to achieve a comprehensive, peaceful and lasting settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, in the parameters of the sovereign and teritorially integrated state, within its internationally recognized borders.

Priority in the next period will be given to measures aimed at ensuring effective mechanisms for monitoring and protecting human rights in the Transnistrian region in the context of the very precarious situation in this regard and to the final settlement of all important cases in the so-called Berlin+ package (which concerns schools teaching in Romanian – providing them with adequate premises for their work, unconditional and unrestricted access to arable land for farmers in Dubasari district, removal of all barriers to free movement, restoring full functioning of the bridge between Gura Bâcului and Bâcioc villages), to ensuring optimal measures for healthcare, to maintaining of the work-prone and constructive spirit in the agreed dialogue formats so that the identified and implemented technical solutions merge into the objective of comprehensive regulation, to the continuous provision of essential public services to

the inhabitants on both banks of the river Nistru.

Attracting strengthened external support to aid Chisinau's vision on the settlement is an indisputable strategic line that needs to be developed in all directions, in as many international capitals as possible and in the vital interests of the united and indivisible, democratic and prosperous, functional and attractive state – the Republic of Moldova.

The settlement of the Transnistrian conflict is of major strategic importance, crucial to the full realization of all assumed domestic and foreign policy objectives, to the full and efficient functioning of all state mechanisms, to generating national and regional security and to sustainable development throughout the country.

