# The bridge that links gura bacului and bacioc localities after 4 years since the protocol decision of november 3, 2017 was signed



The bridge, first put into service in 1982, was severely damaged and impossible to be used after the explosions during the military actions 30 years ago.  Due to an international support project, the damaged segment was renovated and strengthened in 2000, but road traffic was allowed only in the second half of November 2017, after the Protocol Decision providing for the vehicles' free movement to the extent allowed by the technical parameters was signed on November 3, 2017 by the political representatives and after the on-site meeting of the Prime-Minister of the Republic of Moldova and the Leader from Tiraspol (November 18, 2017).

At first the circulation of vehicles weighing up to 3.5 tones was allowed after a primary assessment of the bridge capacity. Later, however, following a deeper additional inspection at the end of January 2018 vehicles weighing up to 10 tones were also allowed to cross the bridge.

Because both inspections were incomplete and further measurements and verifications of the underwater sections of the bridge piers requiring special equipment were necessary, the final assessment was made in August 2019 with the support of the OSCE Mission in Moldova with further submission of the expertise report to the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure of the Republic of Moldova in November 2019.

Despite the availability of budget funds committed for bridge renovation, modernization and rehabilitation works, and of a special fund committed through an EU confidence building measures project, those funds could not be allocated since 2019, because of failure to address the barriers to free movement created by Tiraspol structures, which installed an unauthorized checkpoint at the entrance to Bacioc village exactly on the day the free circulation over the bridge was expected to be

relaunched, restricting the free movement of people, goods and vehicles and practically fully conditioning bridge crossing between March 16, 2020 and April 30, 2021.

The multiple efforts undertaken on the dialogue platform of the political representatives in the negotiation process for the Transnistrian settlement and interventions of the delegation of the Republic of Moldova to the Joint Control Commission, who reiterated  the indispensability of evacuation of the unauthorized checkpoint near Bacioc village and approval of a Commission’s decision to confirm the commitment to ensure free movement while complying with Security Zone regime, have yielded no results. This indicates an incomplete achievement of the agreement included in the so-called Berlin + package.

Removal of existing barriers to free movement on the bridge and on the roads adjacent to it and obtaining written guarantees from Tiraspol will contribute not only to the fulfillment of earlier commitments, but also to the complete renovation and modernization of the bridge infrastructure with budget financing and external assistance, with possible further extension to a wider regional level attracting consistent investment perspectives; development of road corridors and restoration of the single space in the field of transport and road infrastructure.

