THE ALLIANCE FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE TRANSNISTRIAN CONFLICT SETTLEMENT¹

The Transnistrian region broke away from Moldova at the beginning of 1990s. Its actual independence was sealed by a victory over the parent state in a brief war in 1992. However, Transnistria is not recognized internationally and is still formally a part of Moldova. The Transnistrian conflict is one of the most serious problems facing Moldova today. It contributes considerably to the state's economic problems, its political vulnerability, and hinders its political and socio-economic transformation. Previous Moldovan authorities have all unsuccessfully tried to reintegrate the state. The Alliance for European Integration (AEI) – the present ruling coalition, which came to power in mid-2009 – will be no exception.² Critically, it has a fresh approach to the Transnistrian conflict settlement. Its methods seem more promising than policies of the AEI's predecessor, the Party of Communists, in power from 2001 to 2009 and headed by the then Moldovan president, Vladimir Voronin.

THE COMMUNIST AUTHORITIES AND THE TRANSNISTRIAN PROBLEM

Communist policy on the Transnistrian problem was widely recognized for its ineptitude, particularly in its dealings with Transnistria and the other international

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¹ This article is partially based on field research conducted in Moldova (in September 2009 and November 2010) and in Transnistria (in September 2009). The author would like to thank all persons interviewed, as well as William Schreiber and Andrey Devyatkov for comments on the paper.

² The Alliance for European Integration was established in the aftermath of July 2009 parliamentary elections by four parties: The Liberal Democratic Party, The Liberal Party, The Democratic Party and Our Moldova Alliance. It was renewed after the November 2010 early elections to the legislative body of Moldova by the first three parties. The last listed did not manage to cross the electoral threshold and did not enter the parliament.

actors involved in the conflict settlement.³ These international actors include primarily Russia, Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), as well as the European Union and the United States of America. Along with the two opposing claimants, they form the so-called “5+2” negotiation format (established in 2005, when the EU and the USA joined the previous five-sided format as observers).

Moldovan policy toward its breakaway region was generally confrontational in its approach. It involved a heavy use of sanctions and making decisions unilaterally on matters concerning Transnistria, without taking into account the interests of the quasi-state. Voronin simply wanted to annex Transnistria as soon as possible, thus establishing himself as second only to Stephen the Great in the pantheon of Moldovan history. As it turned out, Moldova did not succeed in forcing the quasi-state to reintegrate, or even to make major concessions in the conflict-settlement process. Moreover, the Transnistrian authorities used Moldova’s confrontational policies as evidence for the domestic population and the international audience of the hostile or even genocidal intentions of the parent state. It made for a powerful argument in favour of keeping Transnistrian independence. Meanwhile, the Moldovan authorities either did not seek or were unable to mitigate the negative image of their activities and lost the struggle for public opinion, especially within Transnistria and its allies.

Communist policy toward states and international organizations engaged in the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict was inconsistent. Moldova let each of the actors down, loosing their trust, goodwill, and often political support. For example, Moldova initially approved reintegration plans presented by aforementioned international actors but later either withdrew its support or adopted regulations that affected negatively their ability to be implemented. Furthermore, it transpired that Moldova had been engaged in secret – or at least, not very transparent – negotiations with Russia behind the other actors’ backs.

PRINCIPLES OF AEI POLICY

The Alliance for European Integration seeks to create predominantly positive on-the-ground conditions, which can then facilitate Moldova and Transnistria reaching the final conflict settlement. The term “positive” implies that the conditions and their development must be accepted by the Transnistrian authorities, or at least not perceived by them as a direct and serious threat. With regards to a time table, the AEI wants conditions established gradually and does not define a timeline for the conflict resolution.⁴ More spe-

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³ Interview with a former Western diplomat to Chisinau, June 2009. S. Hensel, *Moldova Strategic Conflict Assessment*, London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2006, pp. 16, 25, 34. I. Boțan, ‘The negotiation process as a way to postpone the solution’, in *Moldova–Transnistria: Working Together for a Prosperous Future. Negotiation Process*, ed. D. Matveev, et al. (Chisinau: Cu drag Publishing House, 2009), pp. 121-133.

⁴ Iulian Frunțașu, one of the Moldovan Prime Minister Vlad Filat’s advisors, told an interesting anecdote trying to explain the reasoning of the AEI’s policy on the Transnistrian conflict settlement. When one Transnistrian top official came to Vienna a few years ago, it turned out that his baggage had been lost during the trip. So he went together with the storyteller to the proper office to report it. When he was filling out the document, the Moldovan noticed that he put the Republic of Moldova as his address instead of Transnistria. Filat’s advisor drew this lesson from the incident: “The man has lost a suitcase and then has found his homeland. It means that people are opportunists by nature”. He pointed out that this observation should be used to establish the conditions facilitating the conflict settlement. The anecdote is not fully appropriate, as the AEI’s policy is to share or give an additional bag to the Transnistrian authorities rather than to take one away. Speech given by Iulian Frunțașu at a round table on Moldova’s foreign policy, organized by informational-analytical portal AVA.MD, Chisinau, 11 November 2010.

cifically, the AEI plans firstly to (re-)build and strengthen ties between Moldova and Transnistria, enhancing their mutual confidence and security. Objectively, this policy is targeted at relations between central and local authorities, officials, experts and ordinary people. In a more abstract sense, it addresses the non-political, practical issues important in the daily life of the Moldovan and Transnistrian populations. Secondly, the ruling coalition intends to win over inhabitants and politico-economic elites from Transnistria. The Europeanization of Moldova is considered to be crucial in this regard. Finally, the AEI seeks support for its activities from states and international organizations directly or indirectly involved in the Transnistrian conflict settlement. This objective is in harmony with general Moldovan foreign policy, which seeks to be balanced, consistent and responsible.⁵

An example of “negative” conditions opposed by Transnistria is the Moldovan coalition’s demand for the full withdrawal of Russian troops and arms from the quasi-state under the so-called Istanbul Commitments taken by Russia in 1999. The Alliance for European Integration would also like to transform the trilateral peacekeeping mission – consisting of Russian, Moldovan and Transnistrian soldiers – into a fully international, civilian mission.

WHY HAS THE AEI CHOSEN SUCH A POLICY?

The Alliance for European Integration has chosen these policies for at least seven reasons. They vary in importance, but are complementary.

Firstly, bearing in mind that Voronin’s negative policy failed, many in the AEI felt that it was time to try something new, cooperative and stabilizing, etc. Moreover, in order to move the conflict settlement process ahead, the present ruling coalition has to rebuild what was destroyed or disturbed as a result of the confrontational and inconsistent policy of the Communists. Additionally, the AEI’s positive approach gives more chances to reach a sustainable and viable settlement.

Secondly, the Alliance for European Integration has pushed the Transnistrian problem into the background in a bid to delay its final resolution; in short, it is employing stalling tactics. The approach of the AEI therefore buys time, stabilizing relations between Moldova and Transnistria, as well as better securing the interests of the Moldovan ruling parties and the state. The point here is that the AEI finds other problems to take priority over the Transnistrian conflict settlement. It pays considerable attention to them and puts many resources into their resolution or advancement. This mainly applies to European integration and the retention and consolidation of power in Moldova. The coalition parties lack a few votes in the Parliament needed to choose the president. The election of the head of state has been a cause of a serious political crisis in Moldova and has twice led to a dissolution of the legislature and early parliamentary elections within a period of one and a half years. It should also be mentioned that the Transnistrian authorities find

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⁵ See: *Transnistrian Conflict Settlement: Towards a Genuine Reintegration of Moldova*, lecture given by Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova Victor Osipov, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., 3 May 2010, <http://csis.org/files/attachments/100503_osipov_speech.pdf>, accessed 18 January 2011; ‘Молдова представила ЕС свою Стратегию по приднестровскому урегулированию’, *Interlic*, 9 June 2010, <<http://ru.interlic.md/2010-06-09/moldova-predstavila-es-svoju-strategiju-po-pridnestrovskomu-uregulirovaniju-16168.html>>, accessed 18 January 2011; ‘Приднестровье – деликатный вопрос, требующий большой дипломатии’, interview with Eugen Carпов, Deputy Prime Minister of Moldova for Reintegration, *Europa Liberă*, 16 January 2011, <<http://www.europalibera.org/content/article/2278017.html>>, accessed 18 January 2011.

the resolution of the Moldovan internal crisis one of the prerequisites for the resumption of official, full-scale negotiations on the conflict settlement, which was interrupted in early 2006. Moreover, the ruling pro-European parties realize that prompt reunification with the pro-Russian and authoritarian Transnistria will be a source of serious problems for Moldova. It will hinder its cooperation with the West as well as its democratic and free market reforms taken within Moldova's Europeanization process. Additionally, these more pro-Western parties are afraid that Transnistria's population will vote against them in elections within an unified state.⁶

Thirdly, the Alliance for European Integration thinks that Europeanization of Moldova will make it more attractive to the Transnistrian population and its politico-economic elites. It could encourage them to support the idea of reintegration with the parent state, in a kind of "beauty contest." The profound political and economic reforms introduced in Moldova within the Euro-integration process would lead to a significant increase in its standard of living. This would undoubtedly have a great influence on the Transnistrian residents, who live in a very poor region where much emphasis is placed on social and economic privileges. This focus on economic utility is complemented by the fact that, at the micro-level between individual residents of Moldova and Transnistria, there exists no ethnic or religious hatred.

The example of Northern Cyprus, another quasi-state existing since 1975, proves that such a scenario is possible. In a referendum in April 2004 its inhabitants supported the reintegration of the region with the richer parent state, the Republic of Cyprus, which itself was practically a member of the European Union already (although in the event, the referendum failed because the residents of Cyprus voted against it).

The introduction of democratic and free market reforms in Moldova would guarantee that its central authorities would obey political freedoms and freedom of economic activity. It would be important for Transnistrian politico-economic elites, who are in opposition to the unchanging Transnistrian leader Igor Smirnov. It ought to be noted that reintegration could also bring economic and political benefits to these elites. It is about stabilization of economic activity, the possible legalization of property and the expansion of political influences, including taking over power in the whole reunified state. The AEI believes that strengthening ties and cooperation between Moldova and the EU – resulting, for example, in visa free movement or enhanced economic relations – could also be appreciated by Transnistrian population and its politico-economic elites.

Fourthly, the AEI's policy choice has also been influenced by the obstructive behaviour of the Transnistrian authorities. The problem is that they constantly strive to maintain Transnistria's independence from Moldova, so it is almost guaranteed that any political plan of reintegration accepted and/or presented now by the Moldovan ruling coalition will be dismissed by Transnistria. However, the quasi-state becomes active in the conflict settlement process when talks concern non-political, mainly socio-economic issues; the AEI wants to use this incentive to keep the negotiations alive. Furthermore, the alliance hopes that joint work on practical issues will in the future create conditions that allow political problems to be dealt with. It is also worth mentioning that the AEI's policy does not limit Transnistrian politico-economic elites, who may present a more constructive approach towards the conflict resolution, in their struggle for power with the Smirnov regime.

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⁶ See: А. Сафонов, Что нас ждёт на Днестре, Материк, 19 February 2010, <<http://www.materik.ru/country/detail.php?ID=8782>>, accessed 10 January 2011; В. Кулик, 'Приднестровское урегулирование: «радужные» перспективы', Зеркало недели, 30 January 2010, <<http://www.zn.ua/newspaper/articles/59056#article>>, accessed 10 January 2011.

Fifthly, it is doubtful whether the political parties forming the Moldovan government would be able to jointly elaborate settlement provisions. The problem is that the coalition is a rather diverse, internally incoherent structure, glued together by the idea of Moldova's European integration (it was also previously united by a negative attitude towards the Party of Communists). A policy of small steps, taken in cooperation, allows the ruling parties to effectively dilute the problem. The AEI has not even decided to cancel the law passed by the Parliament in July 2005, containing Moldova's vision of the Transnistrian conflict settlement, which is not recognized by Transnistrian authorities. If the ruling parties tried to cancel it, they would probably meet harsh criticism from the opposition. This would be highly undesirable during this time of political crisis and struggle for power within Moldova.

A sixth tenet of the AEI's policy is that international actors are of great importance for the Transnistrian conflict settlement. Russia is a major sponsor of the quasi-state. It should be emphasized that the Smirnov regime becomes active in the conflict settlement process mainly under the influence of Russia. Due to their common border, Ukraine serves as Transnistria's window to the outside world. Furthermore, due to its ambivalent and sometimes ambiguous policy toward the conflict settlement, Ukraine can be thought of as a *de facto* supporter of Transnistrian independence. Thanks to their international reach, the EU and the US can influence behaviour of the conflicting sides as well as other actors involved in the Transnistrian conflict resolution. The OSCE also plays a substantial role with its expert capability and experience and as a discussion platform for the Eastern and Western states. Finally, it must be underlined that all actors – both Eastern and Western – would need to unanimously accept any settlement plan so that it could be successfully implemented. The bottom line is that each side remains too weak to impose its own version of a settlement, but strong enough to block any opposing proposal.

A seventh factor is that by taking an approach that emphasizes stability and cooperation, the AEI earns the appreciation of the European Union. Moldova, seeking to enhance its cooperation with the EU and ultimately to join it, tries to accommodate its opinion, including in relation to the Transnistrian problem. The EU is becoming the main sponsor of the AEI's policy, providing expertise and financial assistance; what is important is that a considerable level of support can be raised when needed.

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS OF THE AEI'S POLICY

(Re)building and strengthening Moldova–Transnistria ties. Winning over Transnistria's population and elites

Firstly, with the object of building and strengthening ties between Moldova and Transnistria, as well as winning over both the quasi-state population and the politico-economic elites, the AEI has reactivated Voronin's initiative of joint Moldovan and Transnistrian working groups on confidence-building measures. These working groups, dealing with socio-economic issues, were re-launched in February 2010 with the aim of discussing common problems, seeking their solutions (including through joint projects), and raising the standard of living in Transnistria. However, it has turned out that these groups have not been able to work particularly efficiently.

Secondly, at the request of the Moldovan government, the European Union has suspended the travel ban imposed on the Transnistrian leadership in 2003.

Thirdly, the Moldovan chief negotiator on the conflict solution – Victor Osipov – managed to establish an effective and regular working relationship with his Transnistrian counterpart – Vladimir Yastrebchak – on both a bilateral and multilateral basis.⁷ The same relationship is likely to be continued with Eugen Carpov, who replaced Osipov in January 2011.

Fourthly, due largely to the AEI's new approach, meetings in the "5+2" format were resumed in November 2009, after three and a half year break. However, it must be noted that these are only informal consultations and not official negotiations. Nevertheless, the two sides have had an opportunity to discuss freedom of movement issues and the mechanisms guaranteeing the settlement process.

Fifth, Moldovan Prime Minister Vlad Filat had two (unexpected) meetings with the Transnistrian leader Igor Smirnov in August and September 2010. These meetings have been referred to as "football diplomacy", since they took place during football matches held in the FC Sheriff Tiraspol stadium. Several decisions were made then, including the resumption of railway passenger transportation between Chisinau and Odessa through Transnistria that had originally been interrupted in 2006. The resumed service has been running since 1 October 2010 and viewed as a great achievement and a sign of long awaited, substantial progress by all the actors involved in the Transnistrian conflict settlement.⁸ However, this initiative has probably received far more attention than it deserves. Mini-bus services have successfully operated on the Chisinau–Odessa route since the trains were suspended and they remain the primary reason for the unprofitability of the newly-resumed rail connection.

During the same meeting, Filat also promised to facilitate the external economic activity of Transnistrian companies, a move that would clearly be crucially beneficial for the quasi-state's economy. Consequently, the Moldovan government released them from their obligation to renew their registration in Chisinau each year. Under this agreement, Transnistrian firms should have been also allowed to export their production to the EU directly through the quasi-state railway section, reducing transport expenditures. This has not happened and it seems unlikely to be realized as the sides have different views on the details of regulation and implementation.

Additionally, leaders decided to re-establish the fixed-line telephone connection between Moldova and Transnistria, which was broken in 2003. But there have been no results so far. Filat and Smirnov also reached an agreement on the continued access of Moldovan farmers to fields situated in territory under Transnistrian control.

It should be noted that the Moldovan prime minister probably made the decision to meet the Transnistrian leader not only to resolve problems in the bilateral relations but also to secure his own political interests. Filat wanted to present himself as a strong, successful politician and gain extra support before the November 2010 parliamentary elections. Smirnov in turn decided to indirectly endorse him, as he perceived the Moldovan pro-Western ruling coalition as one of the guarantors of Transnistria's independence. This is because if pro-Russian political parties won elections, then Russia could strike a deal

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⁷ Interview with a member of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Moldova, Chisinau, November 2010. 'Глава МИД ПМР: политические контакты с РМ стали регулярными, но разблокировать переговорный процесс не удалось', РИА «Новый Регион» 2, 20 December 2010, <<http://nr2.ru/pmr/313868.html>>, accessed 22 December 2010.

⁸ See, e.g.: 'High-level attention devoted to Transdniestrian settlement process is an opportunity which should not be lost', interview with Philip Remler, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, *Info-Prim Neo*, 3 January 2011, <<http://info-prim.md/?a=10&nD=2011/01/03&ay=35801>>, accessed 14 February 2011; 'Moldova and Transnistria make progress in bolstering confidence – EU representative in Moldova', *Moldpres*, 12 October 2010, <<http://portal.moldpres.md/default.asp?Lang=en&ID=141178>>, accessed 20 December 2010.

with them and subsequently force Transnistria to reintegrate with the parent state. Furthermore, the Transnistrian authorities would still be able to frighten the quasi-state's population with the Moldovan, pro-Western government, which they could present as willing to merge Moldova with Romania or even restart the military campaign against the quasi-state.⁹ Another problem related to the Filat–Smirnov meeting is that the public opinion was not very well informed of its outcomes.

Additionally, in order to win over Transnistrian residents, the AEI supports the European Union's realization of socio-economic projects in the quasi-state. Moreover, the ruling coalition has started to Europeanize Moldova with much more dedication than the Communist government. First of all, it successfully and systematically enhances cooperation with the EU to the point that it has been considered its "darling."¹⁰ Negotiations on an association agreement, a deep and comprehensive free-trade agreement, and an agreement on visa liberalization are currently underway. Furthermore, as the Freedom House and the Heritage Foundation note, under AEI rule, the level of democracy and economic freedom in Moldova has improved modestly.¹¹ Progress has been made, particularly in terms of freedom of speech, including across the media. However, the Moldovan ruling coalition could not resist manipulating the Moldovan electoral code to resolve a political crisis and stay in power.

It should be emphasized that the principles and implementation of the AEI policy on the Transnistrian conflict settlement have been undermined and hindered by the speaker of Parliament and Acting President, Mihai Ghimpu, who held this post during the late-2009–2010 period. The source of the problem was his pro-Romanian, anti-Soviet and partially anti-Russian activity, undertaken mainly in mid-2010, soon after the rating of his Liberal Party had dropped. Establishment of Soviet Occupation Day to commemorate Bessarabia's forced incorporation into the Soviet Union under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the victims of the Communist totalitarian regime is a case in point (though this particular decision was prevented by the Moldovan Constitutional Court). Although Ghimpu's measures can, in many cases, be morally justified, they have had a destabilizing effect on the situation in the region. His activity has strengthened antagonism between Latin people and the pro-Russian national minorities living in Moldova, among the Moldovans themselves and between Moldova and Transnistria. The quasi-state has been extremely critical of Ghimpu's policies but, at the same time, the Transnistrian authorities have quietly approved of them behind the scenes. They have been able to make use of these policies to fuel the anti-Moldovan/Romanian and pro-independence propaganda machine, thus reinforcing Transnistria's statehood.¹²

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⁹ Interview with a Western diplomat (1) to Chisinau, November 2010. О. Сандуляк, Румынизаторы из Тирасполя, AVA.MD, 11 November 2010, <<http://ava.md/politics/09446-ruminizatori-iz-tiraspolya.html>>, 20 November 2010. А. Сафонов, Румынский подарок Приднестровью, РОСБАЛТ, 7 January 2011, <<http://www.rosbalt.ru/2011/01/07/806893.html>>, accessed 10 January 2011.

¹⁰ Interview with a Western diplomat (2) to Chisinau, November 2010. Speech of Jerzy Buzek, the president of the European Parliament, at a conference "Integrating Wider Europe after the Lisbon Treaty", Brussels, 3 February 2011, <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/president/view/en/press/speeches/sp-2011/sp-2011-February/speeches-2011-February-2.html>>, accessed 1 March 2011.

¹¹ The Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2011*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/File/fiw/FIW_2011_Booklet.pdf>, accessed 16 February 2011. The Heritage Foundation, *The 2011 Index of Economic Freedom. Moldova*, <<http://www.heritage.org/index/Country/Moldova>>, accessed 16 February 2011.

¹² Moldovan, Transnistrian and Ukrainian participants in a scientific-practical conference on the Transnistrian problem, organized during the hey-days of Ghimpu's policy described here, came to similar conclusions (without justifying Ghimpu's steps). However, it should be noted that supporters of Moldovan right-wing, pro-Western parties were not present in the meeting. The conference Межрегиональное и трансграничное сотрудничество как фактор приднестровского урегулирования was organized by the South-Ukrainian Frontier Research Centre and Kherson State Technical University, Lazurnoe, Ukraine, 26–29 June 2010.

Gaining support from international actors

Due to its positive and increasingly transparent policy on the Transnistrian conflict resolution, as well as its diplomatic efforts, the Moldovan government has received considerable endorsements from Western actors. It has resulted, for example, in a greater attention to the Transnistrian problem on the international agenda, including the West–Russia dialogue.¹³ The issue was discussed between German chancellor Angela Merkel and Russian president Dmitry Medvedev in Meseberg, Germany, in June 2010. As regards to security matters, it was decided that “the EU and Russia will cooperate in particular toward a resolution of the Transnistrian conflict with a view to achieve tangible progress within the established 5+2 format.”¹⁴ Merkel suggested that it would be a test for plans of enhancing EU–Russian cooperation on security issues, as desired by Medvedev. The Transnistrian conflict was also discussed during the trilateral meeting between leaders of Germany, France and Russia in Deauville, France, in October 2010. Finally, in November 2010, Merkel persuaded Romania to sign the Treaty on the Regime of State Borders, Mutual Cooperation and Assistance on Border Issues with Moldova. For many years, the lack of a border agreement has been a strong argument from Transnistria’s point of view for the inevitability of Moldovan and Romanian reunification. However, the aforementioned document is only technical and not political. Another problem is that early-2011 revolutions in North Africa have distracted Western actors’ attention from the Transnistrian problem.

With regard to Russia, the AEI has not been successful in gaining substantial support. The Moldovan authorities have not even managed to temper Russia’s mistrust of them, which results from their pro-Western stance and close cooperation with Romania. Moreover, the previously described policies of Ghimpu have worsened bilateral relations. For example, it inclined Russia to impose economic sanctions on Moldova, which it saw as ruled by “anti-Russian and pro-Romanian bad guys.”

Similar issues can be seen concerning Ukraine, which is even more sensitive to everything related to Romania. Here an additional problem is that the AEI seems to underestimate Ukraine’s role in the Transnistrian conflict settlement process. In addition, Ukraine is not eager to support Moldova since the AEI is reluctant to solve problems bilaterally. The AEI’s attitude results from the fact that it could be accused of high treason by the opposition and, moreover, that its members would probably be unable to reach a consensus on these delicate issues. Unfinished exchanges of territory between Moldova and Ukraine are a case in point. Under a joint agreement signed in late 1990s, Ukraine ceded a part of its territory located on the Danube, to Moldova. This allowed it to build a port with an oil terminal there, and gave it an access to the Black Sea. In return, Moldova was supposed to transfer a portion of its land to Ukraine. The territory in question is about 7.7 km of road that is a part of the route between the two Ukrainian towns of Odessa and Reni. The road itself was handed over in 2002, but without the land underneath it, which is still demanded by Ukraine.¹⁵

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¹³ J. Dempsey, ‘Challenging Russia to Fix a Frozen Feud’, *The New York Times*, 27 October 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/28/world/europe/28iht-letter.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=merkel%20transnistria&st=cse>, accessed 20 October 2010. *Progress made during 2010 in the transnistrian settlement*, The Foreign Policy Association of Moldova, 11 November 2010, <<http://www.apf.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=152&id=1255>>, accessed 28 January 2011.

¹⁴ Memorandum (Meeting of Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Dmitri Medvedev on 4–5 June 2010 in Meseberg), <http://www.bundesregierung.de/nsc_true/Content/DE/_Anlagen/2010/2010-06-05-meseberg-memorandum.property=publicationFile.pdf/2010-06-05-meseberg-memorandum>, accessed 10 February 2011.

¹⁵ Interview with a member of the Moldovan Parliament, representing one of the AEI’s parties, Chisinau, November 2010. В. Кулик, ‘Стабильная нестабильность Молдовы’, *Зеркало недели*, 11 September 2010, <<http://>

The fundamental principles of the Alliance for European Integration's policy on the Transnistrian conflict settlement seem to be good. Indeed, the gradual creation of positive conditions which could facilitate the problem's resolution can bring better results than the Communists' confrontational approach. But it should be noted, at least incidentally, that the motivations behind the policy are not fully honest. It also allows the Moldovan ruling parties to buy time and secure their interests. Moreover, implementation is not being conducted on a full and entirely transparent scale, and it is hindered by irresponsible behaviour of some of the AEI's politicians. Results of the Moldovan coalition policy on the Transnistrian conflict settlement are rather modest to date. But it should be kept in mind that they also depend on factors that the AEI cannot control, and that these are still early days.

Finally, it ought to be noted that despite a generally positive evaluation of the AEI's policy toward the Transnistrian problem, there are some pitfalls. Firstly, the policy strengthens Transnistria economically and, to some extent, politically. The problem is that the stronger the quasi-state is, the more assertive it can be during negotiations. Secondly, there are relatively tight limits of mutual concessions between regional actors, at least at the moment. Problems facilitating external economic activity of Transnistrian companies are an example. In other words, concessions are necessary to move the conflict settlement process forward. Thirdly, it seems that the AEI mostly uses the carrot, when judicious use of the stick could be complementary should incentives fail. Fourthly, the Smirnov regime could torpedo Moldovan efforts with relative ease if it feels endangered and could even launch a violent provocation. Even if the proper conditions fall into place, the two opposing sides are facing rather tough negotiations. It will be not easy, for example, for either side to share or give up full power. Another problem is that the AEI could disintegrate at any moment as a consequence of the increasing quarrels between its members. This political disaster could ruin any policy promoted by the AEI.

Summary

This article examines the policy of the Alliance for European Integration – the coalition government, ruling Moldova since mid-2009 – with regard to the Transnistrian conflict settlement. This paper presents the principles of AEI policy, the motivations behind it and its implementation, including results to date. The core of the Moldovan authorities' approach is identified as the gradual creation of positive on-the-ground conditions, which aim to facilitate Moldova and Transnistria reaching a final conflict settlement. In general, the AEI's policy is evaluated in a positive light, since it has potential to bring better results than the confrontational activities of the previous Communist government. However, the article also reveals some of the policy's shortcomings.

Keywords: Transnistrian conflict, Moldova, Transnistria, conflict resolution

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www.zn.ua/newspaper/articles/61034#article>, accessed 10 January 2011. Cf. V. Chirila, *Republic of Moldova's foreign policy under the aegis of AEI: Achievements and Prospects*, The Foreign Policy Association of Moldova, 6 October 2010, <<http://www.ape.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=173&id=1201>>, accessed 20 November 2010.

SOJUSZ NA RZECZ INTEGRACJI EUROPEJSKIEJ WOBEK KONFLIKTU NADDNIESTRZAŃSKIEGO

Streszczenie

W artykule poddano analizie politykę Sojuszu na rzecz Integracji Europejskiej – koalicji rządzącej Republiką Mołdowy od połowy 2009 roku – mającą na celu uregulowanie konfliktu naddniestrzańskiego. Przedstawiono jej założenia, determinanty, realizację i dotychczasowe rezultaty. Za najważniejsze zadanie władz mołdawskich autor uznaje stopniowe stwarzanie warunków, które mają ułatwić Mołdowie i Naddniestrzu ostateczne rozwiązanie konfliktu pomiędzy nimi. Polityka Sojuszu została oceniona zasadniczo pozytywnie. Może bowiem przynieść lepsze rezultaty niż konfrontacyjne działania poprzedniego rządu komunistycznego. W artykule wskazano również główne wady polityki prowadzonej przez władze mołdawskie.