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Tiraspol – the Border City of Eastern Latinity

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Abstract: *The paper focuses on the Moldovan border city – Tiraspol, belonging to the Eastern extremity of Latinity; de facto, being situated in the secessionist region of Transnistria. Tiraspol has developed next to the ruins of the ancient Greek city Tyras, founded about 600 B.C. by people from Miletus. Tiraspol is analysed as a border city of Eastern Latinity, following its legal status, name, geographical position, history, people, demographics, ethnic structure, international relations, cross-border relations, EUBAM mission. The city is presented through the prism of the Transnistrian conflict, an artificial and frozen conflict, which affects the natural socio-economic development of Moldova and afflicts the security of Europe in this region of the continent. From the geographical, historical and cultural points of view, the Europeaneity of Tiraspol can play a crucial role in developing an appropriate matrix at the border of Eastern Latinity.*

Keywords: *border city, Europe, international / cross-border relations, Latinity, status, Tiraspol*

Introduction

Tiraspol as the border city is the focus of this research from various perspectives: legal, historical, etymological, geographical, demographic, economic, cultural, international and cross-border relations. The research employs a critical approach towards Tiraspol to reveal the generalities and the peculiarities as a border city in Eastern Europe.

In dealing with the design, it is worth analysing the concept of border city. The concept of border city implies proximity to the boundaries between two states or regions, i.e. the nearness to state borders. This means that the border city is at the same time like a protecting “wall” between two different countries, cultures or civilisations; and a place of unmeasured influences between and among cosmopolitan communities. The border city can also be a flashpoint for interstate, regional and international conflicts, being the case of our city, too. All these happen due to the fact that the border is a space of disparity and dependence. Maria Duenas Vinuesa emphasizes that it is possible, because “the border is an *interzone* between countries, languages, cultures and sensibilities, and the history of its people is one of oppression and struggle”³.

When treating the border as an open-close concept, including the borderlands and the border cities, scholars Mircea Brie and Ioan Horga state that “the cultural perspective gives birth to debates on the notion of European civilization unity and on the relationship

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³ Maria Duenas Vinuesa, “Border Studies: An Annotated List of Cultural and Academic Web Sources,” *Revista Estudios Ingleses* [Journal of English Studies] 16 (2003): 9.

between geography and culture”⁴. The border city Tiraspol encompasses the cultural dilemma on European civilisation unity, because of the symbolic heritage for Latinity as the fissure appears between cultural and geopolitical layers.

Border cities display both advantages and disadvantages of their geographical position in performing legal or illegal cross-border economic activities, these being the sources of either welfare or risk. Challenging issues for Tiraspol as the centre of the secessionist territory in Moldova are export of secessionism in the region, terrorist threats and cross-border trafficking in illicit goods, arms, and drugs, chemical and biological weapons. The inability to transform disadvantages in advantages seems to be poignant for Tiraspol. Tiraspol has to face this problem, for social frontiers are characterised by “ideological”⁵ concerns. The European Union is interested in communicating its policies to its neighbours in order to diminish socio-economic disparities in the bordering countries. Thus, scholars Ioan Horga and Ariane Landuyt argue that the “opinions and attitudes of people situated on the other side of the golden curtain of wealth have a great significance, because they influence the delivery of the EU’s economic and foreign policy objectives”⁶. The moves *to* and *from* are crucial for Tiraspol in relation to both Chişinău and Bruxelles.

Usually, border cities have major symbolic value for borderlands (borderlanders) and bordering countries (residents). Accounts of Tiraspol’s past and present evoke its significance for Transnistrian borderland, for Moldova and for Ukraine, too. That reality matters, because all those conceptual differentiations explain internal and external perceptions. Maria Duenas Vinuesa argues that “in their struggle for maintaining an identity in their own land but under an alien sovereignty, people along the border have merged influences, developing a particular cultural and social environment with distinctive styles, social organizations and local economies”⁷. Thus, the borderlands (borderlanders) constitute a specific culture as such.

The study of Tiraspol as the border city phenomenon, conditions of the people living in Transnistria, generated an intellectual quest under border studies, attracting the interest of various research perspectives. It is indicative that the study of Tiraspol as the border city is oriented towards the pertinent research and is open to follow-ups.

Some geopolitical data

Name. The toponym Tiraspol is of Greek origin, consisting of two words: *Tyras* – the ancient name for Dniester River and *polis* – a city. Tiraspol has developed as an urban

⁴ Mircea Brie and Ioan Horga, “The European Union External Border. An Epistemological Approach,” *Revista Română de Geografie Politică* [Romanian Journal of Political Geography] XI-1 (2009): 17.

⁵ Mircea Brie and Dana Pantea, “The Social Frontiers of Europe,” *Eurolimes 17, The Social Frontiers of Europe*, ed. Mircea Brie et al. (Oradea: Oradea University Press, Spring 2014), 5-7; Mircea Brie and Ioan Horga, “The European Union External Border. An Epistemological Approach,” *Revista Română de Geografie Politică* [Romanian Journal of Political Geography] XI-1 (2009): 15-31; Ioan Horga and Mircea Brie, “Europe: A Cultural Border or a Geo-cultural Archipelago,” *Eurolimes 5, Religious Frontiers of Europe*, ed. Sorin Şipoş et al. (Oradea: Oradea University Press, Spring 2010), 155-169.

⁶ Ioan Horga and Ariane Landuyt, “Communicating the EU Policies beyond the / Its Borders,” in *Communicating the EU Policies beyond the Borders*, ed. Ioan Horga et al. (Oradea: Oradea University Press, 2013), 7.

⁷ Duenas Vinuesa, 8.

setting near the site of the ancient Greek city Tyras, which was founded about 600 B.C. by colonists from Miletus.

Geographical position. Tiraspol is situated on the left bank of the Dniester River. Latitude value is 46.84028 and longitude value is 29.64333. The distance between Tiraspol and the mouth of the Dniester River is about ten kilometres. Tiraspol has a mild weather, a humid continental climate with warm summers (with average temperatures around 21°C) and cold winters (with average temperatures around – 3°C). Average precipitation is nearly 500 mm per year.

Legal status of Tiraspol. Tiraspol is internationally recognised as a Moldovan city located in the Eastern part of the country, being the second largest city in Moldova. Article 110, Administrative-territorial organisation of Moldovan Constitution stipulates that “(2) Places on the left bank of the Dniester River may be assigned special forms and conditions of autonomy according to the special statutory provisions adopted by organic law”⁸. During a two decades period, the Moldovan Parliament has not legislated yet on the status of Tiraspol and Transnistria. The *status quo* of the region is uncertain from the legal point of view.

De facto, Tiraspol is the capital and administrative centre of the secessionist unrecognised region of Transnistria backed by Russian authorities. Tiraspol has its own red and green flag with diagonal blue and yellow waves of the river, which are separated by white colour.

Tiraspol has its own coat-of-arms that is a shield in red, yellow and green colours, depicting the river with the symbols of grapes and industry on the sides. The symbols refer to the city’s wine and light industries. The inscription of the year 1792 relates to Alexander Suvorov’s military campaign in the Balkans admittedly founding the city even it has a more ancient history.

History and people. Since ancient times Romanian Moldovans have inhabited the lands beyond the Dniester River. In 1455 the Moldovans govern the Lerici fortress situated near the mouth of the Dnieper River. The Moldovan flag with a buffalo head had waved above this garrison, announcing merchants who reached this part of the world that the fortress is Moldovan and customs taxes are paid to Moldovan rulers.

The region between the Dniester River and the Bug River would be called until after 1810 the Oceacov region, its administrative centre being the town of Oceacov, which the Moldovans would call Vozia and the foreigners considered it a part of Moldova. Travellers include Oceacov in Moldova, for example, Gian Lorenzo d’Anania, an Italian theologian and cosmographer, in his book *Universal System of the World of Cosmography* (Venice, 1596); Giovanni Botero in *Universal Relations* (Venice, 1596); Giovanni Antonio Magini in his *Two Wallachias* etc.⁹. Travellers who pass through Oceacov talk about it as a Moldovan town, noting its numerous Moldovan population.

In the sixteenth century the territory between the Dniester and the Dnieper was part of Lithuania; as well as Lithuanians were not enough to fill the huge space between the Baltic and Black Seas, they allow the displacement of the Moldovans over the Dniester. In those times Ukrainians had lived around the Don and the bends of Dnieper near its sills. One of the biggest sills of the Dnieper was called Voloshki that is Moldovan. In the following centuries, the lower part of Dubăsari below was called the Edisan Country, the

⁸ “Constituția Republicii Moldova,” [Constitution of the Republic of Moldova] *Monitorul Oficial* [Official Journal] 1 (1994): Art. 110.

⁹ Cf. *Călători străini despre Țările Române* [Foreign travellers about Romanian countries], ed. Maria Holban (București: Editura Științifică, 1968).

pastures of the Nogai Tatars and the upper part was called Podolia and was a part of Poland.

Schollars consider that the Moldovan population is actually attested in the steppe between the Dniester and the Bug earlier than other peoples. The Moldovans are the oldest in these parts. The Moldovans are native inhabitants of this land. Until 1792 the towns beyond the Dniester bear Moldovan names: Balta, Nani (which became Ananiev), Ocna, Bârză (Birzula), Movilău (Mogilev-Podolsky), Moldovca, Dubăsari, Râmnița (Râbnița), Vozia (Oceacov) Moldovanca around which Odessa would rise, Sucleia (Tiraspol). All travellers who cross the space between the Dniester and the Bug till 1792 speak of Moldovan and Tartar localities and none mentions Russian or Ukrainian villages. What creeps from time to time in the old chronicles is that these villages were systematically burned by the Cossacks who arrived from the other bank of the Dnieper sills. Foreign travellers crossing the space between the Dniester and the Bug in the medieval period speak of it as a continuation of Moldova and none as a continuation of Russia. After 1791, when the Tatars are withdrawn in Crimea, the Moldovans remain for years the only inhabitants of these extensive plains.

In 1792 Catherine II reached with her army the Bug. The Tatar country, Edisan, with the later Tiraspol, was conquered by the Russians in 1792. The next year Russia will also occupy the upper Transnistria, called Podolia after the second division of Poland.

In 1792, Tiraspol was just a Moldovan village, Sucleia, located on lands of the Moldovan nobleman. Until 1792 Tiraspol had a hundred percent Moldovan population. Catherine II ordered Field Marshal Suvorov to think about a new strategic plan for the defence of the new border by potential invasions from the other side of the Dniester. Suvorov developed this plan, which was accepted and Petersburg. Fortress construction began on June 22 (July 6) in 1793 and completed at the end of 1795. The fortress was built according to all rules of fortifications. Initially, according to the project, the fortress had to look like a rectangular building and finally to take the shape of a building with eight corners / bastions. On the territory of the fortress it was built the church dedicated to Saint Andrew, three parks of artillery, gunpowder cellars, barracks, military hospital, a house for commander, stables for horses. The fortress was provided with the most modern weapons the Russian army was equipped to keep defence in the event of a potential threat by the Turks.

The fortress of Tiraspol, which had three gates, was built by Moldovan volunteers, who served in Suvorov's army, not on a waste place, but on the place of a Moldovan fishers' village, Sucleia Veche (Old Sucleia), an ancient settlement¹⁰. Why here? It's simple. On the opposite bank it was Tighina, the strong Moldovan fortress, occupied by the Turks and called by them Bender with the customs across the Dniester; on many occasions the Turks and Tatars crossed the river and devastated the Moldovan village.

The fortress was built with the help of Moldovans here, hoping to find refuge in eventual Turkish-Tatar attacks. The fortress is called Sucleia de Mijloc, i.e. the Middle Fortress; then, on January 27, 1795, after an imperial order, the burg of Sucleia is called Tiraspol, the city on Tyras, the old Greek name, and receives a town status. In 1795 the town's population was more than 2500 people¹¹.

The Military Congress of October 21-28, 1917, which took place in Chișinău where the autonomy of Bessarabia was declared, the Transnistrian representatives asked not to be left: "Our brothers and our kins that we Moldovans are of the same blood, whom

¹⁰ Nicolae Dabija, *Moldova de peste Nistru – vechi pământ strămoșesc* [Moldova beyond the Dniester – old ancestors' land] (Chișinău: Hyperion, 1990), 19.

¹¹ Ibid.

would you leave us, Moldovans who are torn from Bessarabia's bone and live on the other side of the Dniester? Brethren, let us not forget us not?"¹². Transnistrian Moldovans decided to organise a congress of their own in Tiraspol. The first Congress of Moldovans of the other side of Dniester took place on December 17-18, 1917. At the Congress, the Country's Council delegate, G. Mare, handed Transnistrian Moldovans the three-coloured flag saying, "This is the flag of our Romanian nation and we all fight for victory in these times of great changes. Our nation that has so far pressed by foreigners must not to be henceforth anyone's slave. Long live our whole nation". On the second day of the Congress, everybody took pictures with the three-coloured flag. The delegates ask for unification of Transnistria with Bessarabia. "We want to be united with Bessarabia", said the speakers. They also want the language of instruction to be their mother tongue; court's trials to be held in the "language of the people"; to have medical assistants etc.¹³ But in the four years of civil war and afterwards firstborn Congress delegates of Moldovans were mostly assassinated as traitors. On October 12, 1924, as a sign of Moldovan presence in Transnistria, the Stalinist regime decided to create in the western part of the territory between the Bug and the Dniester the Moldovan Autonomous Republic with the administrative centre in Balta, in the composition of the Ukrainian SSR. The newly created Republic had 11 districts with a population of 545 500 inhabitants. From 1929 the new capital of the republic became Tiraspol.

Moldovan Pedagogical Institute, Moldovan Institute for Teachers' Training, Moldovan Institute for Horticulture and Viticulture, theatres, Moldovan schools, artistic groups, creative unions (including the Writers' Union founded in 1934 and assassinations of its members in the coming years), Moldovan newspapers, publishing houses, libraries etc., all these were suggesting that Tiraspol was a Moldovan capital, that it contributed the way it could to the development of the Left Dniester Moldovan people's culture. In 1940, the capital was moved to Chişinău together with its administration and the majority of inhabitants.

Especially beginning with 1917, Transnistria was the object of a policy of denationalisation, Russification and colonisation. At the moment when the Romanian administration exerted its competences between the Dniester and the Bug the Moldovan population was about 250,000 out of the total of 1,200,000 (August 19th 1941)¹⁴. Most Moldovans lived in the villages around the Dniester. Nicolae Iorga describes Moldovan settlements according to a German map (Gotha) in 1917 as "a series of meanderings to North-East from Dubăsari and outspreading across Balta to Sofievca, a compact mass, which passes by Grigoriopol in the Southern part, (...) leading to the other colony from the time of Catherine II, Tiraspol, to lengthen afterwards until Maiac of the Dniester estuary, throwing a strand towards the Northeast. All these without large patches, which are spread the territory across the Bug, too"¹⁵.

Transnistrian Moldovan population was thinned by the Soviets through deportations and after the outbreak of World War II – by evacuations. In 1941 there were 89 Moldovan villages (24 in Râbniţa district, 5 in Balta district, 12 in Ananiev district, 29 in Dubăsari, 3 in Golta district, 13 in Tiraspol district, 1 in Berezovca district and 2 in

¹² Ibid., 21.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Olivian Verenca, *Administrația civilă română în Transnistria* [Romanian civil administration in Transnistria] (Chişinău: Editura Universitas, 1993), 33.

¹⁵ Nicolae Iorga, *Românii de peste Nistru* [Romanians beyond the Dniester] (Bucureşti: Editura Excelsior, 1990), 28.

Ovideopol district). There were 50 mixed villages (with Russians, Ukrainians) and 36 villages with the population of other ethnic groups, but where there were living Moldovans as well, about 2,000 families¹⁶. Tiraspol was a county of exclusively Romanian population, excepting the town of Tiraspol that in 1905 had not a one hundred percent Romanian population. The ethnic structure of Tiraspol developed as follows: in 1897, Russians - 44.3%, Hebrews - 27.1%, Ukrainian - 11.7%, and Moldovans - 11.4%¹⁷; in 1926, Russians - 54.8%, Hebrews - 29.4%, Ukrainians - 11.9%, Moldovans - 1.4%¹⁸; in 1989, Russians - 41.3%, Ukrainians - 32.2%, Moldovans - 17.6%¹⁹.

On June 28, 1940, the USSR occupied and annexed Bessarabia (process ended on July 3, 1940). The occupation of Bessarabia by the USSR took place as a result of signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939. After drawing the new border lines on November 4, 1940, the strip of Transnistria became a whole with the newly created Moldovan Republic on August 2, 1940. The decision of border tracing was based on the ethnic criterion. Moldovan Republic, established by the occupation regime on the territory of Bessarabia, was deprived of Ismail, Akkerman, and Hotin counties under the pretext that the Ukrainian population would prevail numerically and received in exchange a strip of Moldovan territory of Transnistria where the Moldovan population was a majoritary one.

Transnistrian “Conflict”. Tiraspol has a special place in the Transnistrian war or the Dniester war, Chişinău officials preferring a more neutral terminology, the Dniester military conflict or warfare to defend the integrity and independence of Moldova (1991-1992). Tensions between Chişinău and Tiraspol, which marked the start of the secessionist conflict in Transnistria, began long before March 2, 1992, the official date of commencement of the Transnistrian war.

It is senseless to come back again to the chronology of events, which are very well described by historians. Moreover, it is not the design of this research. In fact, it is not a conflict, Transnistria is an occupied Moldovan territory by Russian troops that instituted and have supported the so-called Tiraspol administration in the geopolitical games of Russia so far.

International and cross-border relations

Tiraspol's international relations are relatively scarce. Tiraspol is the member in the “International Assembly of CIS Countries' Capitals and Big Cities” (MAG), the “Black Sea Capitals' Association” (BSCA). Tiraspol hosts several international organisations: Office to OSCE Mission in Moldova and other organisations.

There are also consulates of the following countries – Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus – and of the following unrecognised secessionist entities – Abkhazia / Georgia, South Ossetia / Georgia. Another dimension of international relations is town twinning. Tiraspol has twinned with the following cities: Bălţi, Comrat (Moldova); Eilenburg (Germany); Trondheim (Norway); Odessa, Ternopol, Mykolaiv, Ismail, Belgorod, Kherson, Cherkassy (Ukraine); Volgograd, Kaluga, Kursk, Severodvinsk (Russia); Minsk (Belarus); Sukhumi (Abkhazia / Georgia); Tskhinvali (South Ossetia / Georgia).

¹⁶ Verenca, 33.

¹⁷ Constantin Ungureanu, “Populația R.A.S.S. Moldovenești (1924-1940)” [Population of MASSR (1924-1940)], *Caiete de istorie* [Notebooks of history] 12 (2004): 10.

¹⁸ Constantin Ungureanu, “Populația Transnistriei (1926-1989)” [Population of Transnistria (1926-1989)], *Destin românesc* [Romanian destiny] 3-4 (2003): 115.

¹⁹ Ibid. 133; Victor Bârsan, *Masacrul inocenților* [Massacre of the innocents] (București: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1993), 20.

It is worth mentioning that the international relations of Tiraspol are primarily oriented towards other secessionist regions and Eastern Slavic countries, thus limiting deliberately the opportunities to develop open cooperation with other parts of the continent and of the world. Tiraspol imports top foreign relations from far Eastern Europe that are self-destructive for it and the whole region. Tiraspol is to focus on peace-building strategy to avoid geopolitical targeting that is totally harmful.

Despite the socio-economic function of border²⁰, Tiraspol seems to be reluctant in developing cross-border relations with Ukrainian adjacent regions. The situation reflects that the conflict “is now sustained by political and economic factors”²¹ of the distant supporter. The population of Tiraspol and Transnistria has sceptical attitude on cross-border cooperation. Cross-border cooperation is made impossible without the “green light” or at least tolerance of Tiraspol’s political class. Probably, peace-building and reconciliation activities are developed in which NGOs and people play an important role. Cross-border cooperation is limited to personal contacts in various areas. The discussion forums of young people are developed by older and newer NGOs in the region thus establishing bridges of communication.

Intergovernmental cooperation went down in 2006 without any light of favourable change in the future. The working groups have had multiple informal meetings with no immediate tangible results for further necessary negotiations. The year 2012 marked a stage in resetting confidence-building policy with a special focus on socio-economic issues. After a considerable break the freight train started to circulate from Moldova to Ukraine via Transnistria. A couple of bridges connecting the banks of the Dniester River still remain closed borderlanders and international travel. The situation of Romanian schools in Transnistria is uncertain yet. Upgraded telephone connectivity lacks openness. The secessionist Tiraspol administration promotes import taxes for Moldovan and Ukrainian goods, thus paving the path of an isolationist policy towards cross-border cooperation. The provisions are not applicable, for example, for Russian goods.

A visible cross-border cooperation project is the Dniester Euroregion, co-financed by the European Union. In fact the Dniester Euroregion is an association of local authorities of Moldova and Ukraine. The Dniester Euroregion is formed by Vinnitsa Region (Ukraine) and seven Moldovan districts: Ocnița, Dondușeni, Soroca, Rezina, Florești, Șoldănești, Dubăsari (two Transnistrian districts, Camenca and Rîbnîța, being under negotiations). The Dniester Euroregion covers a territory of 34,218 km² and a population of 2,05 million people. The goal of the Dniester Euroregion is “the implementation of programs for harmonised and complex development of territories adjacent to the river Dniester”²². The Dniester Euroregion has the following objectives: “organization, coordination and developing relations in the sphere of economy, science, education, culture, tourism, sport; implementation of joint projects concerning environmental protection, ecological improvement of Dniester river basin; realization of common cross-border investment projects; implementation of regional projects (programs) for reducing unemployment among the population of border areas by increasing the

²⁰ Abel Polese, “The Socio-Economic Function of Borders, Evidence from EU Neighbourhood Countries,” *Eurolimes* 16, *Cross-border Governance and the Borders Evolutions*, ed. Alina Stoica et al. (Oradea: Oradea University Press, Autumn 2013), 40-49.

²¹ Donnacha O. Beachain, “The Role of the EU and the OSCE in Promoting Security and Cooperation in the South Caucasus and Moldova,” in *Security and Cross-Border Cooperation in the EU, the Black Sea Region and Southern Caucasus*, ed. Ayça Ergün and Hamlet Isaxanlı (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2013), 52.

²² Dniester Euroregion, “About us,” accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.dniester.eu/en/479>.

economic potential; organization of contacts with international organizations, funds, institutes, agencies and other organizations”²³. Definitely, the Dniester Euroregion focuses on joint cross-border projects.

Among the partners can be mentioned the following institutions: Businessmen Club (Ukraine), Dondușeni Council (Moldova), Dubăsari Council (Moldova), EUBAM (EU), Florești Council (Moldova), Institute for Development and Expertise of Projects (Moldova), Institute for Stability and Development (Czech Republic), **International Centre for Democratic Transition (Hungary)**, Ocnîța Council (Moldova), PACT (USA), Rezina Council (Moldova), Șoldănești Council (Moldova), Soroca Council (Moldova), Ukraine-Poland-Germany International Society (Ukraine), Ukraine National Initiatives to Enhance Reforms (Ukraine), USAID (USA), Vinnitsa National Technical University (Ukraine), Vinnitsa Regional Association of Local Authorities (Ukraine), Vinnitsa Regional Council (Ukraine), Vinnitsa Regional State Administration (Ukraine).

The framework of the Dniester Euroregion reveals attractiveness both for Moldovan and Ukrainian borderlands, including the secessionist Transnistrian region with a favourable geographical position between the Moldovan districts and the Ukrainian region to be explored for the benefit of all borderlanders.

Fig. 1. *The Dniester Euroregion.*



Source: Dniester Euroregion, “About us,” accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.dniester.eu/en/479>.

²³ Ibid.

EUBAM Mission. Transnistria is included in the border monitoring by the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM). The EUBAM was established in 2005 with the *mission* “to make a sustainable contribution to the development of border-management procedures that meet European Union standards and serve the legitimate needs of Moldovan and Ukrainian citizens, travellers, and trade, which in turn enhances regional security and supports economic development”²⁴ *in response to illicit cross-border activities. The EUBAM is fully funded by the European Union within the framework of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, and with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The EUBAM has advisory and technical competences to enhance border management capacities for 1,222 km state frontier, consisting of 955 km of “green” (land) border and 267 km of “blue” (river) border out of the same border 453 km not helped by the secessionist region of Transnistria under Tiraspol control. The EUBAM has six field offices, 3 on the Moldovan side and 3 on the Ukrainian side, including the adjacent Transnistria.*

The EUBAM aims to “contribute to enhancing the overall border and customs management capacities and the abilities of Moldova and Ukraine to fight against cross border and organised crime and to approximate the standards of the border and law enforcement authorities to those of the EU; assist Moldova and Ukraine in fulfilling their commitments under the European Neighbourhood Policy Action plans and partnership cooperation agreements; contribute to a peaceful resolution of the Transnistrian conflict”²⁵.

The EUBAM mandate allows to “be present and observe customs clearance and border guard checks; (...) examine border control documents and records (including computerised data); provide assistance in preventing smuggling of persons and goods; request the re-examination and re-assessment of any consignment of goods already processed; make unannounced visits to any locations on the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, including border units, customs posts, offices of transit, inland police stations, revenue accounting offices and along transit routes; move freely within the territories of Moldova and Ukraine; use all roads and bridges without payment of taxes and dues; cross the Moldovan-Ukrainian state border with only strictly necessary control and without any delay; have access to appropriate telecommunications equipment; import and export goods which are for official use of the Mission”²⁶.

Moldovan and Ukrainian officials are responsible to “appoint senior members of their customs and border administrations to liaise with the Mission, and ensure that appropriately qualified staff are available to work alongside the Mission staff; authorize Mission staff to request the head of the relevant customs or border unit to order the re-examination of certain cargoes and passengers in case of doubt; authorize Mission staff to perform unannounced inspections at all relevant locations, including border crossing points, inland customs houses, transit points and locations along the ‘green’ and ‘blue’ border; make available basic office facilities for the local offices of the Mission; provide all possible assistance to solve unforeseen problems which the Mission may face”²⁷.

The legal background for the EUBAM consists of the following acts: Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of Ukraine on the European Commission

²⁴ EUBAM, “Background,” accessed March 26, 2015, <http://www.eubam.org/en/about/overview>.

²⁵ EUBAM, “Mandate,” accessed March 26, 2015, http://www.eubam.org/en/about/what_we_do.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and to Ukraine, 10/07/2005; European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans between the EU and Moldova and between the EU and Ukraine; Partnership and Cooperation Agreements between the EU and Moldova and between EU and Ukraine; Remarks by Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP, 12/02/2005; EUBAM – Declaration by the Presidency of the European Union, 11/30/2005; Council Joint Action 2005/776/CFSP of 7 November 2005 amending the mandate of the European Union Special Representative for Moldova; The Commission’s RRM financing decision on the establishment of EUBAM C(2005) 4231 of 28 October 2005; The information note on the establishment of EUBAM from the Commission to the Council, 10/27/2005; Council Regulation (EC) 381 of 26/2/2001 establishing the Rapid Reaction Mechanism²⁸.

The cross-border cooperation between the EUBAM, Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities help enormously to prevent Tiraspol and the secessionist region of Transnistria in becoming an irrecoverable black hole of Europe. In this way, the EUBAM helps Tiraspol and the secessionist region of Transnistria to develop confidence-building measures in the borderland and among the borderlanders. Moreover, the EUBAM works together with competent regional actors for regional security and economic development in this area of Eastern Europe.

Final remarks

Tiraspol – as a border city – is characterised by very complex and complicated processes since its foundation. First, geographically and culturally it is the most Eastern city of Latinity. Such situation has given birth to life-death clash between civilisations that have lived or have migrated through this space. Secondly, the city belongs to a secessionist territory with dislocated foreign occupation troops, i.e. Russian soldiers neither have a mandate according to international law nor Moldovan national law. It jeopardizes the competitive development of the city and of the secessionist territory in general. At the same time, it raises security issues in the region that presume more actors, especially international actors. Thirdly, it is situated at the Eastern border space of the European Union that implies real opportunities of development and changes for better via cross-border cooperation.

Considering global competition for the European Union, professor Ioan Horga underlines the crucial importance of the relationships that are build outside at European borders, especially with Eastern partners: “the European Union should not allow a loss in interest for the Europeanisation process from the Eastern partners. However, this is a mutual relationship (...). Immediate and tangible results in different areas are necessary in order to create a new impetus in this relationship. Visa facilitation and trade privileges can become motivations for the Eastern partners, because they can offer tangible solutions for citizens”²⁹.

Immediate and tangible tools of EU programmes can contribute to sustainable development of Tiraspol as a border city, on the one hand. But, on the other hand, Tiraspol

²⁸ EUBAM, “Legal Basis,” accessed March 26, 2015, http://www.eubam.org/en/knowledge/legal_basis.

²⁹ Ioan Horga, “European Union between the Constraint of Borders and Global Competition,” in *European Union between the Constraint of the Borders and Global Competition*, ed. Ioan Horga and Adrian-Claudiu Popoviciu, supplement of *Eurolimes* (Oradea: Oradea University Press, 2011), 7.

has to share the same openness to international partners in order to build a space of security, peace and prosperity in the region.

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