



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Head of the EU Border Assistance Mission on the Moldovan-Ukrainian Border

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 25, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

The United States warmly welcomes General Banfi back to the Permanent Council. We thank him very much for his detailed report on the activities of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine.

The United States is encouraged by the ongoing cooperation between Ukraine and Moldova in implementing their bilateral customs protocol. This cooperation has clearly resulted in a more thorough enforcement of the rule of law along the common border. This is in part exemplified by the registration with the Moldovan government of 265 companies in Moldova's Transnistria region in order to qualify for tax reimbursement.

The EU Border Assistance Mission has played a major role in helping Ukraine and Moldova in this implementation process. The Border Assistance Mission is to be commended for a flexibility that has allowed it to change its focus as circumstances require, and for its focus on capacity-building in both countries through training and the provision of equipment.

We congratulate General Banfi for maintaining the Border Assistance Mission's role as a neutral and objective observer, while at the same time assisting Moldova and Ukraine to improve their investigative abilities, and to sign a series of information exchange protocols. Implementation of the latter will enhance the flow of relevant information so that customs officials can act in a timely manner.

Once again, the United States rejects any allegations that Ukraine and Moldova have instituted an "economic blockade" on the Transnistrian region. We welcome the ongoing commitment of Ukraine and Moldova to enforce the rule of law, and reiterate that the implementation of a fair bilateral accord does no harm to any legal commercial entities that comply with the law.

General Banfi's report is very valuable in helping us understand the situation on the ground. Given the strong work being done, we certainly hope the EU member states, along with Ukraine and Moldova, will support extending the mission's mandate beyond November. We thank General Banfi again for coming this morning. We wish him and his staff all the best in their ongoing assistance to Ukraine and Moldova.

Thank you.