

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**



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**Russian MFA Information and Press Department Commentary Regarding  
Referendum in Transdnistria**

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On September 17, residents of Transdnistria will take part in a referendum, the seventh in the last sixteen years. The question of a priority orientation for further development of the region is put to the national plebiscite by decision of the Supreme Council.

Chisinau and a number of European capitals have hastened to declare the upcoming vote "illegitimate" and "provocative," indicating unwillingness to recognize its results, although a striving to ascertain the population's attitude regarding principled issues directly concerning their fate is perceived in recognized democratic states as an important legal basis for civil society building.

The decision by Transdnistria's leaders to consult with their people ought to be viewed in the context of the overall developments in the political situation within the region, where attempts have been noted recently to impose a unitary settlement model and arbitrarily replace the existing mechanisms for ensuring security. In so doing, political and economic leverage is being openly used in breach of fundamental OSCE principles and the understandings reached earlier as part of the negotiation process for Transdnistrian settlement.

The initiative for this referendum, put forward at the Sixth Congress of Transdnistrian Deputies at All Levels, was the logical upshot of the decision of Chisinau and Kyiv unilaterally to toughen the regime of access by Transdnistrian industrial plants to external markets and actually bring them into the legal field of the Republic of Moldova. The new customs rules have had an adverse impact on the Transdnistrian economy and put the region's economic and social programs in jeopardy that were financed solely out of its own budget and tax receipts from incomes of export-oriented enterprises. It was only thanks to the principled position of the Russian Federation, which lent urgent aid to the most socially unprotected strata of Transdnistria's population, that humanitarian catastrophe and dangerous destabilization were averted there.

Most Transdnistrians psychologically reacted to the situation that arose as an economic blockade, which for political reasons many in the world did not want to notice. Hence they in Tiraspol as an unrecognized subject of international law but an equal party of the negotiation process for political settlement decided through a national poll to "shout until they are heard" by the international community. In contemporary Europe it is hardly correct and politically far-sighted to ignore, even less so treat disrespectfully such a form of expression of the people's will.

The various statements about negative consequences of the plebiscite for the prospects of a solution to the Transdnistriian conflict distract from what matters most - the need for the soonest normalization of conditions for the foreign economic activity of Transdnistria, which the Russian side has been urgently calling for, and restoration of the negotiation process with the participation of Chisinau and Tiraspol to develop a comprehensive and sustainable political settlement model.

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