

Transnistria presents conditions for renewing negotiations with Chisinau

After informal multilateral consultations within the so-called '5 + 2 format' concerning the conflict in Transnistria, which took place on 14-15 February in Vienna, Tiraspol has publicly stated its conditions for resuming formal talks. Its position indicates that no real progress should be expected in resolving the conflict between Moldova and Transnistria.

Formal talks on settling the Transnistrian conflict, within the multilateral '5 + 2 format' specially created under the aegis of the OSCE (with Moldova and Transnistria as parties to the conflict, Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE as intermediaries, and the United States and the European Union as observers), were halted in March 2006. Last year, Tiraspol agreed to resume informal consultations. Resumption of the formal negotiations is now the main objective of the EU and the Moldovan foreign ministry, which see in this the main avenue for making some progress towards settling the conflict. Meanwhile, Tiraspol has raised the restoration of its ability to export Transnistrian goods without supervision by Moldova as a precondition. At present, Chisinau allows companies in Transnistria to export goods subject to customs formalities in Chisinau, charging only a token fee for doing so. This procedure was introduced under EU influence, in order to ensure the transparency of commercial operations. At the same time, Tiraspol has openly declared that it will negotiate with Moldova only in order to "normalise" bilateral relations and not to reintegrate Transnistria with Moldova.

The tactic employed by Tiraspol (and Russia, which supports it) is to make a mere formal concession (agreement to enter formal negotiations) in exchange for extracting a real concession from Moldova (granting Transnistria the right to conduct foreign economic relations). <wrod>