



## EUROPEAN UNION BORDER ASSISTANCE MISSION TO MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE (EUBAM)

### ACHIEVEMENTS OF EUBAM

#### ***Increased transparency about import/export flows from the Transnistrian region of Moldova***

Our most important achievement to date has been to contribute towards the implementation of the Joint Declaration (JD) which introduced the new customs regime (signed by the Prime Ministers of Moldova and Ukraine on 30 December 2005). Under this regime companies based in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova ("TN") may only export to and via Ukraine with official Moldovan stamps. From 2006-2007 increasing numbers of companies based in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova registered with the Moldovan authorities in order to receive customs stamps. Subsequent to this, in 2007, the Mission provided technical advice to assist the Moldovan authorities with the implementation of amendments to Moldovan government decree No 815, which provided the same possibilities to obtain preferential trade certificates to companies registered temporarily as those registered on a permanent basis. The changes were necessary for the Republic of Moldova to comply with its international obligations in foreign trade matters.

The customs regime increased transparency about flows of good to and from "TN". For example, large amounts of meat are imported into the Transnistrian region of Moldova. In the six months from October 2005 to March 2006, there were almost 40 thousand tonnes of chicken meat imported into "TN" This was the equivalent of 67 kilogrammes per person; the average consumption in Germany in 6 months is around 5 kilogrammes per person. Much of this meat is re-exported from 'TN' to Ukraine and other regions of Moldova. The profits to be made and the consequent losses to the state budget are very large; smugglers can make a profit of around €750 on every 1 tonne of smuggled foodstuffs. The potential loss to the Ukrainian state budget is estimated at €43 million.

EUBAM has been able to play a useful role as a neutral observer of the situation at the border. It has also monitored the Reimbursement and Registration system which is a key part of the JD. We were able to provide impartial and reliable information to confirm the observations of our Moldovan and Ukrainian counterparts.

#### ***Increased surveillance and border control***

We have noted improvements in the checking of vehicles, goods and people at the BCPs. This is at least, in part, due the advice and presence of our advisers.

The availability of specialist advisers from EUBAM has contributed to the number of detections of illegally trafficked vehicles.

In response to our recommendations, surveillance of the green border has been stepped up. Together with the enhanced control performance of our counterparts this has contributed to the recent discoveries of large-scale meat-smuggling.

#### ***Building up capacities***

The Mission and the counterpart services prepared actions plans to implement the recommendations made in EUBAM's Needs Assessment Report which was produced May 2006. In autumn 2007 the Mission's new Action Plan for Phase 5 of the Mission (December 2007-November 2008) was jointly developed with the partner services at working level.

In September 2006 the EC-financed project called BOMMOLUK aimed at improving management at the Moldovan-Ukrainian state border was established. The project is implemented by the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine who identified the needs for equipment together with the partner services.





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The overall BOMMOLUK budget amounts to 9.9m EUR of which 3.3m EUR have been released for the first phase till November 2007. 2,2m EUR of this sum have been spent for procurement of equipment for the border guard and customs services of Moldova and Ukraine.

During March 2006 – October 2007 in the framework of the BOMMOLUK project were twelve study tours organised for Moldovan and Ukrainian officials. So far there have been visits to Greece, Austria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Turkey and Finland. Further tours to Poland, Belgium, and the United Kingdom are planned.

The project also contracted short term experts in the following areas: Human Resources and Legal Questions concerning Risk Analysis, Border Management, Anti-corruption, IT in Customs Information Exchanges, and Training. They work within the Mission and provide assistance in relevant areas to the counterparts.

### ***Improved cooperation between border agencies***

The Mission has been working to increase cooperation between national agencies involved in border issues and also between the border services of Moldova and Ukraine. It has encouraged, assisted and monitored 4 cross-border operations in 2006-7.

As a result of the operation in April 2006, more smuggled goods were seized in 10 days than in the whole of first three months of that year.

The fourth operation – FOCUS - was successfully implemented in October 2007 with the participation of the Ukrainian and Moldovan border and law enforcement services, neighbouring EU Member States and EU agencies (FRONTEX, OLAF) as well as the SECI Centre in Bucharest. It was the most successful of the operations so far. The results on both sides of the border illustrate the benefit of inter-agency and cross-border co-operation and co-ordination. During the targeted operations the counterparts discovered several large-scale cases of smuggling of meat and goods, illegal migration and vehicle trafficking, in many cases of which the Transnistrian segment of the joint border was used by the criminals. 223 seizures were made and the smuggled goods detected during the Operation were worth 1million US Dollars.

### ***Improved information exchange***

One of the most valuable lessons learned from the cross-border operations was the need for a fast and effective system for information exchange. On 21 November 2006 separate agreements between the customs services and between border guards of Moldova and Ukraine were signed at the Fifth Trilateral Meeting on Border Issues (Moldova, Ukraine and the EC) held in Brussels. These agreements were warmly welcomed by the Mission as having the potential to make a significant step forward in improved cross border cooperation. To maintain the momentum created by the signature of the protocols, the Mission offered its assistance in the implementation of these agreements, and has provided advice, training and computer hardware and software. Clearly these agreements, which are listed below, have significant impact on inter-agency co-operation:

The Protocol between the State Customs Service of Ukraine and Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova on the organisation of preliminary information exchange on goods and vehicles crossing the state border of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

The Protocol on exchange of statistical and operational information between the Border Guard Service of the Republic of Moldova and the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine at all the levels.





## EUROPEAN UNION BORDER ASSISTANCE MISSION TO MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE (EUBAM)

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An agreement was also signed between the four services and EUBAM according to which they a Combined Monthly Assessment Report on Border Security on Moldova-Ukraine state border. The Monthly Assessment is contributing significantly to an improved analytical overview of border security.

### **Identification of revenue losses**

The Mission has helped to draw the attention of the Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities to a number of scams which are depriving their state budgets of revenue. These concern forged certificates of origin, car importations and meat-smuggling.

### ***Plans for future***

The mandate of the Mission, which began in November 2005, has been extended up to the end of November 2009. This will allow it to develop deeper cooperation with the border services and law enforcement agencies of Moldova and Ukraine, ensuring

- Further progress towards European standards at the border
- Enhanced cooperation between Moldovan and Ukrainian border services and law enforcement agencies
- Strengthened links between Moldovan and Ukrainian border services and law enforcement agencies and EU Member States & institutions
- Legitimation of trade in the European neighbourhood
- Thorough investigation of cases leading to successful prosecutions
- Progress in national reform programmes for Integrated Border Management
- Delivery of technical assistance

*November 2007*

