



Moldova

A Defence Sector Reform Assessment

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Sammanfattning

Moldaviens försvarsministerium och den moldaviska försvarsmakten har trots de, i förhållande till andra europeiska länder, mycket låga försvarsanslagen (mätt som procent av BNP) ändå gjort vissa framsteg i ansträngningarna att reformera försvarssektorn. Likväl återstår mycket att göra innan ministeriet kan börja implementera sin ambitiösa försvarsreform. Internationella givare har olika alternativ för att bistå i denna process.

Denna rapport avser att ge den svenska Försvarsmakten en överblick över reformbehoven inom den moldaviska försvarssektorn. Den kan i sin tur fungera som ett underlag för att vägleda Försvarsmakten i beslut om vilken typ av reformstöd man vill ge till den moldaviska försvarsmakten framöver.

Rapporten analyserar fem specifika områden inom den moldaviska försvarssektorn, nämligen förvaltning, träning, militärtekniskt samarbete, logistik och professionell utveckling.

Rapporten avslutas med ett appendix innehållande särskilda förfrågningar om svenskt stöd som kommunicerats till författarna av Moldaviens försvarsministerium.

Nyckelord: Moldavien, försvarsmakt, försvarssektor, försvarsreform, Ryssland, Nato.

Summary

The Moldovan Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Moldovan Armed Forces have, despite its very low defence allocations compared to other European countries (measured as per cent of GDP) made real progress in their efforts to reform the defence sector. Yet, much remains to be done before the MoD can implement its ambitious defence reform agenda. As such, international donors have various avenues in which they can give assistance.

This report seeks to provide insights that will allow the Swedish Armed Forces to attain a better understanding of the reform needs within the broader defence sector. This information can make it easier to determine within which specific areas to provide assistance to the Moldovan defence sector.

The report analyses five specific areas of the defence sector, namely management, combat training, technical military cooperation, logistics and professional development.

The study includes an appendix with specific reform assistance requests for Sweden communicated to the authors by the Moldovan Ministry of Defence.

Keywords: Moldova, armed forces, defence sector, defence reform, Russia, NATO.

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Abbreviations

AF	Armed Forces
CoE	Council of Europe
CPRM	Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
DCB	Defence and Related Security Capacity Building
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DEEP	Defence Education Enhancement Programme
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GS	General Staff
IPAP	Individual Partnership Action Plan
JCC	Joint Control Commission
MAASR	Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDS	National Defence Strategy
NLO	NATO Liaison Office
NSS	National Security Strategy
OGRF	Operational Group of Russian Forces
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARP	Planning and Review Process
PDM	Democratic Party of Moldova
PG	Partner Goal
PLDM	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova
PMR	Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic
PSRM	Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova
SDR	Strategic Defence Review
SPS	Science for Peace and Security
SSC	Supreme Security Council
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar

Foreword

This report on Moldovan defence reform is the third and final one in a series that seeks to assess and map international support to defence reform. The authors have previously written similar reports on Ukrainian¹ and Georgian² defence reform needs, respectively.

The authors are very grateful to the Moldovan Ministry of Defence, NATO, OSCE, EU and other diplomats and international experts interviewed in the process of making this report.

We would also like to give a special thanks to our reviewer, who prefers to remain anonymous, and who provided valuable input on an earlier version of the report. Needless to say, all errors remain those of the authors.

Finally, we would like to thank the Swedish defence attaché Peter Lidén and the Swedish embassy in Moldova for their kind help in assisting us in the preparations for our visit to Chisinau.

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Stockholm 18 November 2016

¹ Lins de Albuquerque, Adriana and Hedenskog, Jakob (2015) *Ukraine: A Defence Sector Reform Assessment*, FOI-R--4157--SE, December.

² Lins de Albuquerque, Adriana and Hedenskog, Jakob (2016) *Georgia: A Defence Sector Reform Assessment*, FOI-R--4306--SE, October.



1 Introduction

The Swedish government has been collaborating with the Moldovan government on defence sector reform since 2014. Wishing to assist in continued promotion of the future development of the Moldovan defence sector, the Swedish armed forces has tasked the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) to conduct an analysis of the Moldovan defence sector and a mapping of international assistance towards defence sector reform efforts in the country.

Purpose of Report

This analysis provides an overview of the Moldovan defence sector with the aim of identifying future reform needs for the purposes of long-term and needs-based reform objectives with regards to military capacity building. The primary purpose of the report is to serve as a source of information that the Swedish Armed Forces can use in planning their future assistance to Moldovan defence reform. As such, the report looks at a number of key areas within the Moldovan defence sector and surveys whether there are related reform projects supported by international donors affiliated with these. In addition to mapping international donor assistance to Moldovan defence reform, the report also discusses the extent to which Moldova is coordinating these reform efforts with international donors as well as whether international donors are coordinating their support amongst themselves.

Scope Conditions

For the purposes of this report, we focus exclusively on military capacity reform needs within the Moldovan defence sector. This means we do not assess reform needs from a security sector reform perspective.³ Although there are a multitude of aspects relevant to military capacity building, due to the open nature of this report and the information available, reform needs with regards to military hardware, intelligence, and carabineer troops are determined to be beyond the scope of this report. Instead, we limit our analysis to management, combat training, technical military cooperation, logistics, and professional development. Given the scarcity of information regarding some of these areas, the space devoted to each in the report varies.

Method and Sources

Information used to analyse the research task at hand was obtained through secondary sources and field interviews conducted by phone or in person while in Chisinau, Moldova, 17-21 October 2016. Interviews were conducted with numerous diplomats, civilian experts of Moldovan defence reform, as well as

³ For more on what a security sector reform perspective entails see Lins de Albuquerque and Hedenskog (2015).

representatives of the Ministry of Defence and General Staff in order to obtain as broad a perspective and a multiplicity of views as possible. Interviews were also conducted by phone with international experts located outside of Chisinau. In order to protect the anonymity of these sources, no names or affiliations are listed within the report.

As noted above, we analyse reform needs within five specific areas of the defence sector. In order to do so, we assess the extent to which the current organization and capabilities within each area are capable of achieving their purpose as intended.

Finally, the Moldovan requests for specific reform aid from Sweden (see Appendix) are based on direct input from Moldovan Ministry of Defence representatives, and should not be considered representative of Moldovan public opinion, the government at large, or that of the authors.

Outline of Report

The report consists of eight chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 give a brief introduction to Moldova and the national political and security context that the country operates in. The next chapter discusses the Moldovan Armed Forces. Chapter 5 provides a brief overview of previous and current defence reform, with an emphasis on the latter. Having done so, Chapter 6 gives a more detailed overview of five areas of military capacity, namely combat training, management, technical military cooperation, logistics, and professional development. When doing so, the reform status and needs of each area as well as ongoing related reform projects supported by international donors are discussed. This chapter concludes by discussing coordination of international support for defence reform with a special focus on military capacity building. Chapter 7 provides a brief summary of the current state of defence reform in the areas discussed in the previous chapter. The final chapter includes some concluding remarks. Specific Moldovan assistance requests for Sweden, as communicated to the authors by the Ministry of Defence, are outlined in the appendix.

2 Brief Country Background

The Republic of Moldova is an Eastern European country, sandwiched between Romania and Ukraine. It has an area of 33,851 square km and a population of approximately 3.6 million. The majority (75.8 per cent) of the population is Moldovan, with the largest minorities being Ukrainian (8.4 per cent), Russian (5.9 per cent) and Gagauz (4.4 per cent).⁴

For almost two hundred years, 1359-1538, Moldova was a principality on its own after rejecting Hungarian authority. In 1538, the Ottomans defeated the Moldovan army and Moldova became a vassal state to the Turks.⁵ After the Turkish-Russian War, 1806-1812, Russia annexed Bessarabia, the eastern part of the former principality, i.e. the region between the Prut and the Nistru (Dniester) rivers.⁶ As a result, the people living in Moldova were isolated from the nation- and state-building processes taking place in the rest of the Principality of Moldova and Wallachia, which were unified in 1881 to form the Kingdom of Romania. This had a huge impact on the identity of the residents of Bessarabia. At the same time, the Russian authorities introduced a programme of intensive Russification in the newly annexed areas.⁷

The chaos brought by the Russian revolutions of February and October 1917 resulted in a national council being created in Chisinau, the capital of Bessarabia. In December 1917, the assembly declared the creation of an autonomous republic within Russia. However, the turmoil in Russia also gave the Kingdom of Romania a chance to acquire the territory taken from the former principality and re-unite Bessarabia with Romania. An independent Moldovan Democratic Republic of Bessarabia was proclaimed on 24 January 1918, but with Romanian troops already in Chisinau, the newly-established republic declared a union with Romania only two months later, on 27 March 1918.⁸

After the establishment of the Soviet Union, in December 1922, the Soviet government decided to create a Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR), in 1924, on the Ukrainian territory on the left bank of the Nistru. The secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, in 1939, gave Stalin and the Soviets free hands to occupy Bessarabia, which they did in June 1940. On 2 August

⁴ C.I.A. World Factbook "Moldova" <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/md.html> (accessed September 22 2016).

⁵ King, Charles (2000) *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture* (Hoover Institution Press: Stanford) p. 15.

⁶ Ibid. pp. 19-21.

⁷ Calus, Kamil (2015) *In the Shadow of History: Romanian-Moldovan Relations*. Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw, p. 10.

⁸ King (2000), pp. 34-35.

1940, the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (Moldovan SSR) was established. During the war, Romania, now allied with Nazi Germany, managed to recapture the annexed territory of Bessarabia and press across the Nistru river into Transnistria, as well. In occupied Bessarabia and Transnistria, the Romanian troops, together with their German allies, deported more than 100,000 Jews to concentration camps. The Soviet troops recaptured the lost territories again in 1944, and the Paris Treaty, in February 1947, fixed the Romanian-Soviet border to the one established in June 1940.⁹ The Soviet authorities embarked on policies of *de-Romanianisation* and *Moldavianisation* of the Moldovan SSR, including large-scale repression, and deportations to Central Asia as part of *de-kulakisation*, for political and religious reasons. Another tool for breaking social resistance was the great famine that struck the Moldovan SSR in 1946-47, which, alone, claimed between 150,000 and 200,000 victims (about 6-7% of the population).¹⁰

In the climate of Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost*, in the late 1980s, questions regarding identity and culture received attention in Soviet Moldova. The Popular Front organized a number of large demonstrations, which led to the designation of the Moldovan language as the only official state language of the Moldovan SSR, on 31 August 1989, and the return to the Latin alphabet.¹¹ On 23 June 1990, Moldova declared its sovereignty, and on 27 August 1991, the parliament in Chisinau adopted a declaration of independence, which Romania acknowledged the same day.¹²

The festival of Romanian national revival in Moldova was met by firm opposition from representatives of the Russian-speaking minorities living in Moldova, who feared marginalisation and a possible merger with Romania. This resistance took particular intensity in the Gagauzia and Transnistria regions, which have predominantly Russian-speaking populations.¹³ In 1990, these regions declared themselves to be Soviet republics belonging to the USSR and independent of Moldova. In March 1992, full-blown armed hostilities (preceded by minor skirmishes) began between Moldovan forces and Transnistrian volunteers, supported by Russian troops stationed in the region. The subsequent five-month struggle, which claimed the lives of at least 650 people on both sides, represented a defeat for the government force.¹⁴ On 21 July 1992, in Moscow, the Moldovan president, Mircea Snegur, signed an agreement with Russian president Boris Yeltsin, which provided for the cessation of hostilities, the creation of a security

⁹ Ibid. pp. 91-93.

¹⁰ Calus (2015), pp. 12-13.

¹¹ King (2000), p. 120.

¹² Calus (2015), p. 16.

¹³ The Gagauz are Christian Orthodox people who speak a Turkic language. During the Soviet period, the mainly rural Gagauz minority became largely Russified. See King (2000), pp. 213-214.

¹⁴ Calus (2015), p. 16-17.

zone and the deployment of a tripartite (Moldovan, Transnistrian, Russian) peacekeeping force.¹⁵

The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova came into force on 27 August 1994. According to the Constitution, the political system in Moldova is a parliamentary republic with autonomous, executive and judicial branches. The president is elected by Moldovan citizens and acts as head of state. The president appoints a prime minister as head of government. The parliament has 101 members elected for 4-year terms in direct elections. After a constitutional revision, in 2000, direct presidential elections by popular vote were scrapped in favour of indirect presidential elections by the parliament. In March 2016, however, the Constitutional Court deemed the 2000 constitutional revision unconstitutional, and direct presidential elections, for the first time in 20 years, were set for 30 October 2016, with a second round two weeks later.

Complications following the 2014 parliamentary election – particularly the disclosure of a bank scandal that involved the misuse of \$1 billion, an eighth of the country's economic output – and continued disagreements between parties caused several changes of government during 2015. Despite the Socialist Party's (PSRM) coming out first in the elections, with over 20 per cent of the votes, a minority government of two pro-European parties, the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM) and the centre-left Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM), was formed in February 2015. The government needed the support of the Communist Party (CPRM) to appoint the PLDM candidate Chiril Gaburici as Prime Minister. Following accusations that Gaburici had falsified his academic records, he resigned as Prime Minister in June.¹⁶

This resulted in the forming of a coalition government by the PLDM, PDM and the pro-Romanian Liberal Party (PL), under the helm of Valeriu Strelet (PLDM) as Prime Minister, in July. When PLDM leader and former Prime Minister Vlad Filat was arrested on charges of fraud, the parliament pushed through a non-confidence vote against the Prime Minister. This in turn resulted in the dissolution of the government, leaving the Prime Minister's post vacant until January 2016, when Pavel Filip of the PDM was made Prime Minister, a consequence of PDM's achieving a parliamentary majority with support of Communist and PLDM defectors. Filip is a close friend and business associate to Vlad Plahotniuc, the powerful oligarch and informal leader of the PDM. Although he has no formal official position in the state system, Plahotniuc has great influence over the

¹⁵ King (2000), p. 196.

¹⁶ Hedenskog, Jakob (2015) *Utvecklingen i EU:s östra närområde*, [The Development in EU's Eastern Neighbourhood] FOI-R--4132--SE, pp. 66-67.

government, the parliament, the judicial system (including law enforcement agencies) through his associates as well as media through ownership.¹⁷

The presidential elections of 2016 resulted in a victory for the pro-Russia Socialist Party leader Igor Dodon. In the second round of the election, on 13 November, he won 52.1 per cent, defeating Maia Sandu (47.8%) from the pro-European Action and Solidarity Party, who ran on an anti-corruption ticket.¹⁸

Moldova was rated as “partly free” by the democracy-ranking research institution Freedom House, in 2016. The country received a downward trend arrow due to evidence of government dysfunction, including revelations of mass fraud and corruption, and the enormous influence of powerful businessmen on politics and governance.¹⁹ Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (2015) ranked Moldova 103 of 167 countries, with the score 33/100 (0 being highly corrupt, 100 being very clean).²⁰

Moldova is the poorest country in Europe, and in 2015 had a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of \$1,840 (in current USD) (which can be compared to Sweden’s GDP per capita of \$50,300).²¹ Its economy is dependent on remittances of 1.6 billion USD from Moldovans working abroad, and it has a large external debt.²² Moldova is particularly dependent on Russian energy, and has a 5 billion USD debt to Gazprom, the Russian natural gas supplier.²³ Moscow demands that the cost of Transnistrian gas consumption, which is beyond Chisinau’s control, should be charged to Moldova.²⁴ In an attempt to break Russia’s monopoly on gas supplies, a new pipeline between Moldova and Romania was inaugurated in 2014, but as long as this pipeline is not connected to the national gas distribution system it does not represent an alternative for gas imported from Russia.²⁵

¹⁷ Hedenskog, Jakob (2016) “A weakened Moldova enters the Russian orbit,” *RUFBS Briefing*, No. 33, January.

¹⁸ RFE/RL (2016) “Moldovans Protest Election of Pro-Russia President,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 14 November, <http://www.rferl.org/a/moldova-presidential-election-dodan-sandu-russia-protests/28116385.html> (accessed 15 November 2016).

¹⁹ Freedom House (2016) “Freedom in the World: Moldova,” <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/moldova> (accessed 31 October, 2016).

²⁰ Transparency International (2015) “Moldova,” *Corruption Perception Index 2015*, <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015> (accessed 7 November 2016).

²¹ World Bank (n.d.), World Development Indicators, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/moldova/overview> (accessed September 16 2016)

²² C.I.A. World Factbook “Moldova” <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/md.html> (accessed 22 September 22 2016).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Hedenskog (2015), p. 40.

²⁵ Lupusor, Adrian et al. (2015) *Republic of Moldova 2015: State of the Country Report*, Expert-Grup and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Chisinau, p. 37.

Being a neutral country (see more below), Moldova is not a member of either the EU or NATO. Officially, the country wishes to become an EU member and in 2014 signed an Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), with the EU. This move towards Europe provoked Russia, which proceeded to ban the sale of Moldovan wine, and threatened to cut off natural gas.²⁶ Moldova is cooperating with NATO within the Partnership for Peace framework, which it joined in 1994. The country joined NATO's Planning and Review Process (PARP) in 1997. Moldovan cooperation with NATO is outlined in an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), the specifics of which are renewed every two years.²⁷

²⁶ Kristof, Nikolas (2014) "Moldova: The Next Ukraine?" *New York Times*, 24 April, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/24/opinion/kristof-moldova-the-next-ukraine.html?_r=0 (accessed 15 November 2016).

²⁷ NATO (2016) "Relations with Moldova," 14 June, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49727.htm#, (accessed 16 September 16 2016).

3 The National Political and Security Context

The political situation in Moldova continues to be very unstable. The pro-European parties that have ruled since 2009 have to a large extent discredited themselves and the whole European integration project. The support from the Moldovan public for EU membership was halved, between 2009 and 2015, from 63 per cent to 32 per cent, according to a poll in April 2015.²⁸ The bank scandal caused a rapid fall in the national currency, the leu, and raised consumer prices and energy tariffs, dealing a powerful blow to Moldovans' standard of living. National GDP, which is already very low, dropped 2 per cent in 2015. Large anti-government demonstrations kept central Chisinau blocked during several months in 2015. The political crisis and economic collapse gave rise to the pro-Russia parties – the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) and Our Party (*Partidul Nostru*) – which also benefited from propaganda on Russian television.²⁹

The victory of the Socialist leader, Igor Dodon, in the 2016 presidential election may lead to some shift in Moldova's foreign policy priorities, and strengthening of the pro-Russian vector, at the expense of relations with the EU, NATO, Ukraine and Romania. During his election campaign, Dodon pledged to restore full-fledged economic relations with Russia, have the EU Association Agreement cancelled through a referendum and develop the country while relying on the Orthodox faith as "the moral fibre of Moldovans." Dodon has also proposed the idea of federalization of Moldova in a way similar to the one proposed by Russia for many years (more on this below). He has called for a trilateral commission of the US, EU and Russia to stand for the guarantees of Moldovan neutrality. Further, since Dodon had earlier said that Crimea belonged to Russia, Ukraine may tighten the transit of Moldovan goods to the Russian market through its territory. After the first round of the presidential election, when Dodon received 48.7 per cent of the vote, Ukraine immediately recalled its ambassador in Moldova to Kyiv for consultation.³⁰ However, it is also important to remember that the president, in the Moldovan Constitution, has mainly ceremonial duties and cannot dissolve the parliament on his own. Even if a potential victory of the pro-Russia parties in the 2018 parliamentary election would further strengthen Russian vector in Moldovan

²⁸ Institute for Public Policy (2015) *Barometer of public opinion*, <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=156&id=733> (accessed 7 November 2016)

²⁹ Hedenskog (2016).

³⁰ Solovei, Igor (2016) "Prorossiiskii revansh v Moldove. Ukraina i ES prigotovitsia" [Pro-Russian revenge in Moldova. Ukraine and Russia will have to prepare], Lb.ua, 4 November, http://lb.ua/world/2016/11/04/349890_prorossiyskiy_revansh_moldove.html (accessed 9 November 2016).

foreign policy, a total redirection of priority towards Russia is not likely since it would counter the Moldovan oligarchs' – and particularly Plahotniuc's – interests.

The Transnistrian Conflict

The Moldovan Constitution of 1994 gave substantial autonomy to the separatist region of Transnistria. However, the conflict remains unresolved, as the self-declared separatist republic, Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic (*Pridniestrovskaja Moldavskaja Respublika*, PMR), has been unwilling to accept anything but complete independence. Although the PMR's declaration of independence has not been recognized internationally, the separatist regime remains *de facto* independent.

According to the PMR authorities' census in 2004, which was held separately from Moldova's census that same year, the majority of the population in Transnistria is Slavic – of Russian (30,3%) and Ukrainian (28,8%) descent – although Moldovans made up the largest single ethnic group (31,9%). The total population of the PMR was 555,500 people.³¹

The Transnistrian ceasefire is currently under the auspices of a peacekeeping mission – the Joint Control Commission (JCC) – composed of three battalions, one each from Moldova, Russia and Transnistria, with a maximum of 500 troops each (in reality estimated to be around 350-500 men each). Since 1998, the JCC also includes 10 observers from Ukraine. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) also participates in all meetings of the JCC. The main contingent of the Russian peacekeeping battalion, consisting of approx. 400 men, is based in Bender, and covers the southern part of the security zone (see map on page 8).³²

Mediation efforts, primarily by the OSCE, have so far failed to produce substantive results. The most far-reaching proposal for solving the conflict was the so-called *Kozak memorandum*, proposed by Russia to Moldova in November 2003. The proposal – promoted by the Russian politician, Dmitry Kozak, a close ally of President Putin – aimed at a final settlement of the relations between Moldova and Transnistria, within a united, asymmetric, federal Moldovan state. The memorandum allowed the right of PMR secession and recognition of PMR independence, in the event of a decision to unite the federation with another state,

³¹ Olvia Press (2004) "Oglashenyi predvaritelnye itogi pridnestrovskoi perepisi naseleniia" [The preliminary results of the Pridnestrovian census is announced], <http://www.olvia.idknet.com/ol37-09-05.htm> (accessed 1 November). Another separate census was carried out in 2015, but the official results have not yet been announced.

³² Barabanov, Mikhail (2015) "Military Situation in Transnistria," *Moscow Defence Brief*, Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies: Moscow, No. 3, p. 24.

and a formula that gave the PMR a veto of all federal laws. Also according to the proposal, the Russian troops had the right to remain in the region for 20 years.³³ The Kozak memorandum led to large demonstrations in Chisinau. The EU and US were critical of the memorandum and the Moldovan president, Voronin, finally rejected it, which made the Russian president, Putin, cancel a trip to Chisinau at the very last minute.³⁴

In 2005, the so-called 5+2 mediation format was established, when the EU and US joined the negotiations of Moldova, Transnistria, Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE, with observer status. Following the collapse of these negotiations, in 2006, President Voronin (of the Communist Party) instead engaged in bilateral talks with Russia. That same year, a Transnistrian referendum, which was not recognised by the OSCE nor the EU, found that 98 per cent of the population voted for independence and possible future integration into the Russian Federation. Russia has never recognized this request. Voronin's efforts to bring Moldova's policy in line with Russia's on the issue were halted, however, following the Communist Party's loss of power to pro-European parties in the Moldovan election of 2009. Following 2009, international pressure for further talks on the issue has increased, with formal 5+2 negotiations resuming in November 2011, and continuing periodically since then.³⁵

The Russian military presence – approximately 1,200 troops of the Operational Group of Russian Forces (OGRF), formerly remnants of the Soviet 14th Guards All Army, which had been stationed in Moldova since 1946 – within the territory is problematic from Moldova's perspective, given Russia's support for Transnistria during the conflict. The Moldovan political leadership has repeatedly expressed concern about the presence of Russian troops on its territory, and reiterated the need for these to withdraw. The demand for unconditional withdrawal of Russian military forces, in line with the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit decision, as well as the Russian armament depots in Cobasna, from Transnistria, remain a priority for Moldova. The Moldovan government's proposal – supported by the OSCE and the Council of Europe (CoE) – is that the Russian

³³ Full text of the Kozak Memorandum in Russian at Regnum.ru, <https://regnum.ru/news/458547.html> (accessed 31 October 2016).

³⁴ Sharp, Jane M.O. (2000) *Striving for military stability in Europe* (Routledge, London), p. 198.

³⁵ OSCE (2016) "Press releases and statements related to the 5+2 negotiations on Transdnistria," OSCE, <http://www.osce.org/cio/119488> (accessed 16 November 2016).

forces will be replaced by a multinational civilian observer mission.³⁶ This is also stated in Moldova's Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO.³⁷

The Cobasna arms depot consists of an estimated 19,000-21,000 tonnes (originally estimated at 42,000 tonnes) of stored Soviet ammunition, which is guarded by the OGRF. Russia started evacuating its military property in the early 2000s, and had managed to remove nearly half of the stocks, about 20 000 tons of ammunition and heavy equipment, when the work was suspended, under the pretext that the PMR authorities allegedly did not permit it. During all these years, inspectors from the OSCE have been allowed to visit the depot only once.³⁸

Following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, in March 2014, the military-political situation in Transnistria has taken on renewed importance to Moldovan national security. Days after the annexation, the PMR authorities reiterated their appeal to join Russia. Russia, again, did not respond to this request. Yet, recent developments have increased the tensions. After the Ukrainian parliament's decision, in May 2015, to suspend all military cooperation with Russia, which also included cancelling military transit rights through the Odesa region to Transnistria, Russia was forced to transfer supplies by air to its base, through Moldovan territory.³⁹ Although this has given the Moldovan authorities some more leverage in controlling the rotation of the Russian peacekeeping troops at the Chisinau International Airport, it has also led to some dissatisfaction with the Russian declarations. For instance, there have been cases where people have been entering as tourists, but then turned out to be a commander of a military unit.⁴⁰

In November 2016, the defence ministers of Moldova and Ukraine met in Odesa and agreed to open a "green corridor" to Russian OGRF forces and ammunition to be withdrawn from Moldova territory. The Russian response from the Deputy Prime Minister and special presidential representative for Transnistria, Dmitry Rogozin, was, however, that Moldova and Ukraine should have consulted with Moscow and Tiraspol first.⁴¹

³⁶ Vlas, Christi (2016) "Moldova Defense Minister at NATO summit: Russian peace-keepers from Transnistria should be replaced, *Moldova.org*, <http://www.moldova.org/en/moldova-defense-minister-nato-summit-russian-peace-keepers-transnistria-changed/> (accessed 16 November 2016).

³⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Individual of the Republic of Moldova (2014), *Partnership Action Plan (IPAP). Republic of Moldova – NATO for 2014-2016*, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/nato-en/individual-partnership-action/> (accessed 30 October 2016).

³⁸ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

³⁹ Hedenskog (2015), p. 38.

⁴⁰ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

⁴¹ Gamova, Svetlana (2016) "Rosssiiu vydvoraiut is Pridnestoviia" [Russia is sent out of Pridniestrovie], *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 8 November, http://www.ng.ru/cis/2016-11-08/1_6853_pridnestrovie.html (accessed 16 November 2016).

To complicate the situation further, not only has Moscow recently accused Moldova of detaining and deporting Russian soldiers, but Russia and Transnistria are also claiming that Ukraine and Moldova are *de facto* imposing an economic blockade against the region.⁴² Following these developments, the Transnistria leadership appealed to Putin to come to their rescue “in case of emergency.” In response, Rogozin, told the PRM regime that “Russia will always be there.”⁴³ Furthermore, during the summer of 2016, several military exercises of Transnistrian and Russian OGRF troops in the Transnistrian region led to complaints from the Moldovan Foreign Ministry to Russian diplomats.⁴⁴ The exercises, which were officially held under an anti-terrorist scenario, also included an exercise which entailed crossing the Nistru River.⁴⁵

The Russian forces in Transnistria have continued to support the Transnistrian Armed Forces, regarding personnel, logistics, training, planning and so forth. The bulk of the Transnistrian Armed Forces today are composed of four motorized infantry brigades, each consisting of three to four battalions. In peacetime, the strength is around 8,000 troops and the mobilization reserve is around 80,000 to 90,000 troops. The military hardware, almost all received from the 14th Army in 1992, include tanks (T-64), armoured infantry vehicles (BMP-1), armoured combat vehicles (BTR-60, BTR-70) and artillery (for instance, *Grad* multiple rocket launchers). Added to this, the PMR internal law enforcement agencies – the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Committee (known as KGB) have a total number of more than 8,000 personnel. The Ministry of Internal Affairs have a special-purpose brigade, named “Dniester” (Internal troops), and a motorized militia battalion, as well as subordinated Cossack regiment (1,000 troops). A minimum of seven battalions of people’s militia are subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The KGB forces include a border guards’ detachment and special operations centre “East.”⁴⁶

Given the strength of the Transnistrian forces relative to the Moldovan forces (see Chapter 4) and, not least, the Russian support of Transnistria, it is evident that the situation in Transnistria remains of utmost concern for Moldovan security. Nevertheless, there are tendencies that indicate that the Transnistrian conflict has

⁴² Hedenskog (2015), p. 38.

⁴³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (2015) “Dmitry Rogozin: In a difficult moment Russia will always support Pridnestrovie,” <http://mfa-pmr.org/en/qCs> (accessed 31 October 2016).

⁴⁴ RFE/RL (2016) “Moldova Protests Russian Military Exercise in Transdnierster”, <http://www.rferl.org/a/moldova-protests-russian-exercises-transdnierster/27931559.html> (accessed 31 October 2016).

⁴⁵ Vlas, Cristi (2016), “Transnistria and Russian troops had a joint anti-terrorist exercise on the Nistru river,” *Moldova.org*, <http://www.moldova.org/en/transnistria-russian-troops-joint-anti-terrorist-exercise-nistru-river/> (accessed 31 October 2016).

⁴⁶ Barabanov (2015), pp. 25-26.

become ‘normality’ for Moldovan society, political elites, and international actors. The main goal in this area has been gradually reduced to one of just avoiding a new armed conflict, rather than solving the conflict and reintegrating the country. This approach and practice lead to the preservation of the current defective status quo and moved it even further away from a conflict settlement.⁴⁷

Constitutional and Conceptual Framework

The President of the Republic of Moldova is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Upon prior approval of the Parliament, the President is entitled to declare partial or general mobilization of the Armed Forces. Also, in case of armed aggression against the country, the President shall undertake the necessary steps to repulse the aggression, as well as to declare the state of war and notify the Parliament whereupon. The President can take other measures to ensure the national security and public order, according to the law and within its limits, according to the Constitution (Article 87).⁴⁸

The President is also Chairman of the Supreme Security Council (SSC). The SSC is a consultative body which analyses the work of the ministries and department in the sector of ensuring the national security, and presents the Moldovan president recommendations on issues of the state’s domestic and foreign policy.⁴⁹

The MoD exercises authority, direction and control over the main public defence sector through the central apparatus and executes political and military management of the National Army through the Main Staff. The current minister of defence is Anatolie Salaru (since 30 July 2015), representing the Liberal Party in the coalition government. The General Staff (GS) of the Armed Forces is established based on the National Army Main Staff as soon as the mobilization of the Armed Forces is announced. The GS is the main body to assist the High Command (headed by the President as the Commander-in-Chief) in commanding the Armed Forces. The Chief of the National Army General Staff and Commander of National Army is Brigadier Igor Cutie (acting since March 2016, and officially installed in October 2016).

Armed Forces components are National Army and Carabineer troops, although the latter routinely report to the Ministry of Interior. Carabineer troops cooperate with

⁴⁷ IPP (2015) *The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova Civil Society Debate*, IPP: Chisinau, p. 4.

⁴⁸ The Presidency of the Republic of Moldova (2013) “The Status and the powers of the president of the Republic of Moldova,” <http://www.president.md/eng/statutul-si-atributiile#sthash.NwV8vAY2.dpuf> (accessed 1 November 2016).

⁴⁹ The Presidency of the Republic of Moldova (2013) “The Supreme Security Council,” <http://www.president.md/eng/componenta-consiliului-suprem-de-securitate#sthash.HhVjAzLt.dpuf> (accessed 1 November 2016).

or, in crises, operate together with the National Army under the control of the Ministry of Defence. The MoD and other forces of the defence system responsible for defence are expected to cooperate under Presidential direction, as required, in peace, crisis, or war. But, the MoD and National Army have the ultimate constitutional responsibility for defence of national sovereignty.

Moldova's national security and defence objectives are set out in the National Security Strategy, from 2011, the Action Programme of the Government of Republic of Moldova for 2016-2018, the Association Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Moldova, from 2014 and the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO, from 2014. These documents underpin the activity and objectives for security and the national defence area.

The National Security Strategy is based on national interests, responds to threats and risks affecting the national security, establishes objectives of the national security system, and identifies means and ways to ensure national security. Vital national interests of the Republic of Moldova, according to the National Security Strategy, are to ensure and uphold the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inalienable state borders, and public safety, and the respect and protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as the strengthening of democracy that will allow the developing of a state of law and market economy.⁵⁰

The Action Programme of the Government of the Republic of Moldova 2016-2018 underpins the activity of the government and has as its main objective to increase welfare, safety and quality of life of citizens by economic development, eradication of corruption and ensuring rule of law, personal security, national defence capacity building, accessible and cost-effective public service, and social protection for vulnerable people. The surest way, according to the Action Programme, to achieve these objectives is through EU integration and the implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU.⁵¹

The IPAP between the Republic of Moldova and NATO for 2014-2016 stresses that Moldova, as a neutral state, does not pursue the implementation of the IPAP

⁵⁰ Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (2011) *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova*, pp. 1-2.

⁵¹ Government of Republic of Moldova (2016) *Action Program of the Government of Republic of Moldova for 2016-2018*, http://www.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/government_of_republic_of_moldova_action_programme_of_the_government_of_republic_of_moldova_for_2016-2018.pdf (accessed 23 October 2016).

with the objective of gaining NATO membership, but to optimize the process of reformation and modernization of its national security and defence sector.⁵²

Among the IPAP's objectives within the field of defence and security reform are development of a military strategy based on the National Security Strategy and other relevant policy documents.⁵³ A revised version of the National Security Strategy was drafted in 2016 and has been published for public debate. According to this draft, the national interests of Moldova are: ensuring the sovereign, independent, unitary and indivisible state; providing stable and sustainable development of the state; European integration; territorial reintegration; prosperity and well-being; and participation in international security.⁵⁴

Threat Assessment

According to its Constitution, the Republic of Moldova has proclaimed "permanent neutrality" (Article 11). The same article also prohibits the stationing of any foreign military troops on its territory.⁵⁵ Thus, the declaration of neutrality in the Constitution is a very strong assertion of security policy, from which it is difficult to step back, both politically and technically. The young Moldovan state hoped that the principle of permanent neutrality, fixed in the Constitution and main strategic documents, would reassure both Russia and Transnistria and help to minimize the threats to the small state's security.⁵⁶ At that time, neutrality appeared to have been a wise option for at least two reasons. The first reason was that as the new state had to establish its armed forces from scratch following independence, permanent neutrality was seen as a substitute for a strong army. Permanent neutrality became the cheapest and most convenient means to defend the sovereignty and independence of Moldova. It can also be seen as a strategy to survive between two stronger neighbours and as a response to Russia's pressures to include Moldova in various security designs. The second reason for state neutrality was the presence of Russian troops on the left bank of the Nistru river. The constitutional provision served as an additional argument in favour of the

⁵² Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova (2014) *Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) Republic of Moldova – NATO for 2014-2016*, http://www.mfa.gov.md/img/docs/2014-2016_an_ipap_en.pdf (accessed 23 October 2016).

⁵³ Ibid. p. 25.

⁵⁴ Ministry of Defence (draft 2016) National Security Strategy, p. 3.

⁵⁵ Presidency of Moldova (n.d.) *Constitution of the Republic of Moldova*, <http://www.presedinte.md/eng/constitution> (accessed 2 November 2016).

⁵⁶ Kirvelyte, Laura (2009) "Moldova's Security Strategy: the Problem of permanent neutrality", *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review*, pp. 162-163.

withdrawal of the Russian soldiers and military equipment from the Moldovan territory.⁵⁷

Today, however, more than two decades later, the Transnistrian conflict is still unresolved and Moldova encounters the same threats to its national security. The Russian military in Transnistria and the Russian support for its military forces show clear disregard for and represent an infringement on Moldova's permanent neutrality.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, permanent neutrality still has rather broad public support – 41 per cent of the population supported it, in a poll in April 2015 (25 per cent wanted to join the Collective Security Treaty Organization, CSTO, and 21 per cent, NATO).⁵⁹ But critics point out that Moldova does not have even the minimal requirements for upholding the national security of a neutral country. Since neutrality has not been guaranteed by any other external power, nor recognized by the international community, these critics call Moldova's neutrality strategy not so much a strategy of "balancing" as a strategy of "inaction."⁶⁰ Some even say that Moldova's "guaranteed neutrality" seems more an invention of the Russian Federation, which would like to have guarantees that Moldova would never join NATO.⁶¹

The permanent neutrality of Moldova is mentioned in the current National Security Strategy, from 2011, which says that this status will be taken into account in the process of promoting the national interests of Moldova. The strategy also says that Moldova's cooperation with NATO complies with the limits of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace, which does not affect the constitutional status of permanent neutrality of the country and does not exceed the rules inherent in the Constitution.⁶²

In contrast, the 2016 draft of the new National Security Strategy does not mention the permanent neutrality of Moldova.⁶³ However, the 2016 draft of the new National Defence Strategy does mention permanent neutrality when mentioning the country's intensifying and deepening relations with NATO, but states that this

⁵⁷ Marandici, Ion (2007) "Moldova's neutrality: what is at stake?," Institute for Development and Social Initiatives "IDIS Viitorul," <http://viitorul.org/doc.php?l=en&idc=296&id=866&t=/IDIS-Studies/International-relations/Ion-Marandici-Moldovas-neutrality-what-is-at-stake> (accessed 7 November 2016).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ IPP (2015) *Barometer of public opinion*, <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=156&id=733> (accessed 7 November 2016)

⁶⁰ Kirvelyte (2009), pp. 158, 162.

⁶¹ Socor, Vladimir (2006) "Voronin's six point plan to Putin: a calculated risk," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Issue 183, 4 October, <https://jamestown.org/program/voronins-six-point-plan-to-putin-a-calculated-risk/> (accessed 8 November 2016).

⁶² Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (2011) *Parliament Decision No. 153 from 15.07.2011 to approve the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova*, unofficial translation.

⁶³ MoD, National Security Strategy (2016 draft), unofficial translation.

cooperation exists “while respecting the status of neutrality stipulated in the Constitution” (Article 2).⁶⁴

The 2016 draft of the new National Security Strategy (NSS) stresses that Moldova is a European country with deep historical ties to Europe. The draft mentions both NATO’s importance as the political and military alliance with the most powerful military and technological capabilities, and the common values and the close ties between Moldova and the EU, established by the Association Agreement. The draft distinguishes external, transnational and internal risks and threats of the Republic of Moldova. The primary external risks and threats are connected to the instability and conflict in Ukraine and the risk of the conflict’s spreading to Moldova.⁶⁵

Likewise, the 2016 draft of the new National Defence Strategy, which is based on the NSS and the Action Program of the Government of the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2018, is more explicit about the threats and risks to Moldova. First and foremost, the significant military potential of separatist armed forces in the Transnistrian region is highlighted, as “multilaterally supported from the outside” and with “the military formations of the Russian Federation, illegally stationed in the territory of the Republic of Moldova”, which together “can create an interventional capacity.” The use of tools of information propaganda, attacks on the information and communication infrastructure, instability and conflict in the territory of Ukraine, illegal migration, illicit traffic of arms and terrorist activity are also mentioned as the most prioritized threats and risks to Moldova.⁶⁶

Romania and Ukraine are considered to be the strategic partners of Moldova, first in supporting Moldova’s European integration process and modernizing the defence system, and secondly in reforming the security sector and the Transnistrian settlement. The defence strategy emphasizes increasing collaboration with the EU, UN and OSCE in the process of ensuring global security. The biggest partners in defence relations are the US, Romania, Ukraine, Germany, China, Sweden, France, Italy, and Lithuania, but also the Russian Federation with regards to problems of common interest.⁶⁷

Given the above-mentioned uncertainties in foreign policy of the state, there are most likely substantial changes to be made in these drafts.⁶⁸ The new president, Igor Dodon, has mentioned that he supports substantial re-writings of the drafts

⁶⁴ MoD, National Defense Strategy (2016 draft), unofficial translation, p. 3.

⁶⁵ MoD, National Security Strategy (2016 draft), unofficial translation, p. 10.

⁶⁶ MoD, National Defence Strategy (draft 2016), unofficial translation, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁷ Vlas, Cristi (2016) “Moldova Defense ministry launches the National defense strategy,” Moldova.org, 23 August, <http://www.moldova.org/en/moldova-defense-ministry-launches-national-defense-strategy/> (accessed 27 September 2016).

⁶⁸ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

for the National Security Strategy and National Defence Strategy.⁶⁹ Therefore, in coming versions of the strategic documents the importance of European and Euro-Atlantic vectors in Moldovan security policy will probably be devalued in favour of the ties to Russia. The potential Russian threat in connection to Transnistria will also likely be omitted.

⁶⁹ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

4 The Moldovan Armed Forces

The National Army of Moldova is composed of the Ministry of Defence, the Main Staff of the National Army, the Land Forces Command, and the Air Forces Command. The Special Forces Battalion, Combat Service support and Service support (logistic) under operational command of the General Staff, Communication and Signal units, and the Military Training Base of the National Army, are directly subordinated to the Chief of the General Staff as independent units. The combat and combat support units are subordinated to the service commands (Land and Air Forces), while the Main Staff is supported by an Operational Command Centre, for command and control of operations in-country and abroad, as well as the Mobilization Resources Management Centre.⁷⁰

Set against an authorized strength of 6,500, the Moldovan Armed Forces (AF) consist of approximately 5,350 troops including 3,250 in the Army, 800 in the Air Force and Air Defence and 1,300 in the organs of military command and control and logistics. Paramilitary forces (Carabineer troops) count for 2,400 men.⁷¹ The AF are manned through conscription and enlistment. Conscription in Moldova is a 12-month draft. The Moldovan AF have nominally 58,000 reservists. However, since 1992, citizens discharged from active service and placed in the reserve have not attended refresher courses.⁷² The National Army is significantly under-strength compared to its authorized strength figure, which leaves it incapable of carrying out military combat and support tasks in defending the country's territory. Moreover, not only have the vast number of reservists not been trained for almost 25 years, but the equipment or weapons to equip them in times of mobilization is insufficient.⁷³

The Main Staff of the National Army is delegated full power and authority to plan combat and other actions, maintain and improve combat readiness and mobilization capacity, as well as prepare staff for battle and mobilization. To accomplish its responsibilities for the direction of the national defence missions of the National Army, the Main Staff is in charge of strategic planning of the National Army's troop deployment in combat actions and other operations; commands forces engaged in these actions; and plans and prepares commanders of National Army Commands and military units of the army for their missions. The Chief of the Main Staff, the National Army Commander, runs the activity of independent directorates and departments of the Main Staff directly, or through his Deputy

⁷⁰ MoD (n.d.) "General Staff," <http://www.army.md/?lng=3&action=show&cat=119> (accessed 2 November 2016).

⁷¹ IISS (2016), *Military Balance*, p. 188.

⁷² Barabanov (2015), p. 27.

⁷³ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

Chief, the Director of the Main Staff, that runs the above-mentioned structures' activity. The Chief of the Main Staff, the National Army Commander, directs troops and logistics supply units through Land Force, Air Force and Logistics Commands.⁷⁴

The Land Forces Command consists of three motorized brigades, the 22nd Peacekeeping Battalion, one artillery battalion, and combat support units, such as an HQ battalion, an engineer battalion and a Military Topographic Centre.⁷⁵ Manning within land units varies from 65 per cent to as low as 21 per cent. The equipment, which is almost totally Soviet, does not include tanks, and is based on armoured personnel carriers such as BTR-80, BTR-60, BTR-70 and TAB-71, airborne infantry fighting vehicles of BMD type and artillery (2A36 *Giatsint-B*, 2S9 *Anona*, 9P140 *Uragan*, etc.).⁷⁶

The Air Force Command consists of one air base and one air defence missile regiment directly subordinated to the Air Force Command. Aircraft include An-2 *Colt* single-engine biplanes, An-72 *Coaler* transport aircraft, Yak-18 trainer aircraft, MI-8 MTV1 and MI-8PS transport helicopters.⁷⁷

Moldova's defence expenditures in 2015 amounted to 458.6 million lei (\$22.9 million). This figure is equal to about 0.41 per cent of GDP (121.8 billion lei).⁷⁸ Moldova's defence expenditures in 2016 amounted to 580.9 million lei (\$29.06 million). According to the medium-term budgetary framework for 2017-2019, defence expenditures were estimated at 489.9 million lei (\$24.5 million) in 2017, 491.1 million lei (\$24.55 million) in 2018 and 493.5 million lei (\$24.65 million) in 2019 (see graphs below).⁷⁹

In 2015, Moldova contributed a small number of personnel to UN missions in Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Ivory Coast (UNOCI), Liberia (UNMIL), and South Sudan (UNMISS). In addition, it contributed 41 troops to the NATO mission in Kosovo (KFOR) and 28 observers to the OSCE mission (SMM) in Ukraine.⁸⁰

With regard to popular trust in the AF, a poll from April 2015 reports that 7.4 per cent of respondents trust the army "very much," 32.9 per cent have "some" trust

⁷⁴ MoD (n.d.) "Duties," <http://www.army.md/?lng=3&action=show&cat=159> (accessed 1 November 2016)

⁷⁵ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

⁷⁶ IISS (2016) *The Military Balance*, p. 188.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

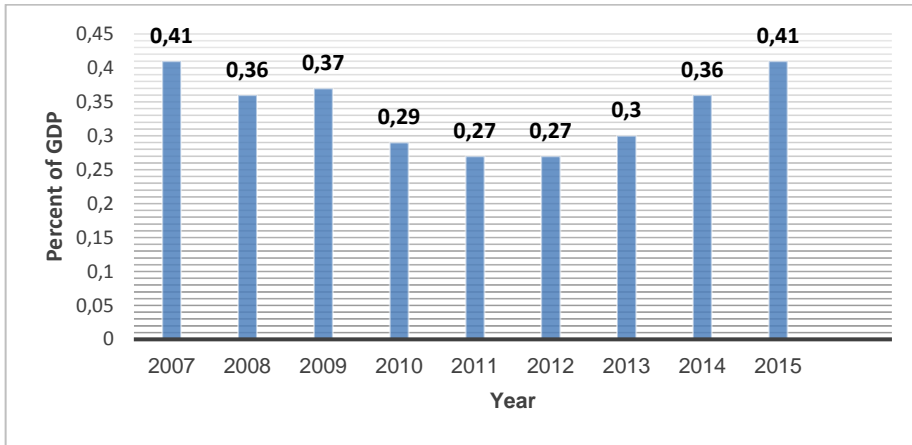
⁷⁸ DCAF

⁷⁹ Ministry of Finance (2016) "*Cadrul bugetar pe termen mediu*" [Medium-term budgetary framework] (2017-2019) <http://mf.gov.md/files/files/CBTM%202017-2019.pdf>, p. 55 (table 24). (Accessed 1 November 2016).

⁸⁰ IISS (2016) *The Military Balance*, p. 188.

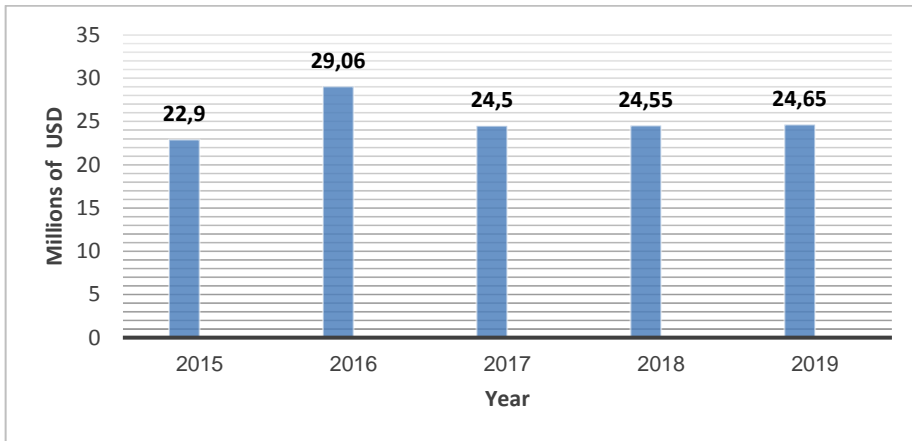
in the army, whereas 23.8 per cent have “not so much” trust in it, and 26.5 per cent have “no trust” at all in the country’s AF. Despite these low numbers, the army was still significantly more trusted than the government, the president and political parties.⁸¹

Moldova’s Defence Budget as percent of GDP, 2007-2015



Source: DCAF (2015) p.59.

Moldova’s Defence Budget in Millions of USD (2017-2019 projected)



Source: Ministry of Finance

⁸¹ IPP (2015) *Barometer of public opinion*, <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=156&id=733> (accessed 7 November 2016)

5 Defence Reform

Defence sector reform has been ongoing since Moldovan independence. It is also something that is discussed in important strategic documents such as the Concept of Military Reform (2002), the National Security Concept (2008), the National Security Strategy (2011), and the draft of the National Defence Strategy (2016).

The Concept of Military Reform outlined an ambitious 12-year plan organized in three stages. Stage one (2002-2004) focused on developing and improving the legal framework for defence matters. Stage two (2005-2008) sought among other aspects to improve the command and control system and to reorganize the MoD and GS according to Western standards. The final stage (2009-2014) was to focus on modernization, but was postponed due to lack of financial resources.⁸²

The National Security Concept (2008) mentions the following specific reform goals relating to the Moldovan AF:

“a) Achieving sufficient defensive capabilities, through the setting up and permanently maintaining forces that are credible, quantitatively sufficient and trained according to the modern standards, able to adequately react to the existent and potential risks and threats;

b) Restructuring and modernizing the military force...”⁸³

The manner in which the Concept proposes doing this entails “re-dimensioning of the AF,” “professionalizing military personnel, [and] modernizing and standardizing the training for performing military missions,” as well as “[m]aintaining functional capacity of the armament and existent equipment and increasing its quality both through modernizing it and through acquiring new modern equipment.”⁸⁴

Meanwhile, the National Security Strategy (2011) lists “resizing the qualitative and quantitative of the national security sector, strengthen[ing] the capacities of analysis and response of the national security sector” and “ensuring civilian control of the national security sector” as key national security sector reform objectives.⁸⁵

With regard to how to go about achieving these reform objectives, which in turn strive towards “Euro-Atlantic standards and practices,” the document outlines a reform plan on two levels, the political and the technical level. It does not go into exact detail about how reform on the political level is to take place or exactly what

⁸² Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

⁸³ MoD, National Security Concept (2008), no page, unofficial translation.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

it will entail. The focus for reform on the technical level is on “improving the standard of competence, to strengthen the operational capacities of the institutional and personnel, as well as the functionality of the structures of the national security sector.”⁸⁶

When it comes to the specific task of reforming the AF, the document notes that priority should be placed on a number of efforts. Some of the most important ones entail reviewing the structure of the AF, “switching to defence planning based on the existing capabilities and capacities and those required for participation in any operation,” “modernization of human resources management, increas[ing] the quality of staff life and deep improvement of training and military education” and “develop[ing] a national program for the modernization of military hardware and armaments.”⁸⁷

More recently, the 2016 draft NDS lists developing military capabilities as a key defence sector reform priority, but also mentions the need to revise the structure of the AF to be better prepared to withstand an enemy using hybrid tactics. The draft National Defence Strategy also mentions the need to enhance command and control and otherwise improve mechanisms of cooperation between different parts of the AF. Like the documents discussed above, the draft also emphasizes the need to enhance fighting capability and mobility in combination with modernizing and replacing outdated equipment.⁸⁸

As mentioned above, it is unlikely that this document will be adopted by the incoming president, Igor Dodon. Hence, the specific reform objectives outlined in this document may not be representative of the government’s current defence reform agenda.

Having said that, strengthening military capability more broadly is likely to remain the most urgent reform objective from the perspective of the MoD and Moldovan AF. The MoD says that the most challenging part of the reform process is to update their arsenal of outdated hardware with the modern equipment needed to abide by Euro-Atlantic interoperability requirements.⁸⁹ Whether the overall objective to invest in reforming the defence sector is shared by the political leadership of Moldova, however, is doubtful.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ MoD, National Defence Strategy (draft, 2016), no page, unofficial translation.

⁸⁹ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

The Role of NATO in Moldovan Defence Reform

NATO has been an important partner in supporting Moldovan defence reform efforts. Reform projects specifically outlined in the PARP include training, management, logistics, and improving command and control structures. Moldovan defence reform objectives outlined in the PARP are updated every two years in the IPAP and through the PARP Partnership Goals (PGs).⁹¹ The latest IPAP (2014-2016) and the latest PGs emphasize that efforts will be taken to implement reform objectives outlined in the NSS, and that special attention will be placed on increasing the role of the SSC in its role of coordinating security and defence sector-related affairs. Another important aspect mentioned in the IPAP is the need to continue developing the framework and strategic planning document. The IPAP also mentions ambitions to establish a defence planning framework, amongst other initiatives.⁹² A new IPAP plan is in the process of being revised.⁹³

Following a request from Moldova, it was decided at the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014 that the country should become a recipient of assistance, advice and support through the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) Initiative. This NATO program seeks to support recipient nations with defence capacity building, and focuses on providing primarily advisory assistance on defence reform. Some financial assistance may also be available through a DCB Initiative Trust Fund, to which NATO member and partner countries contribute on a voluntary basis. NATO views the DCB Initiative as “key tool[s] to contribute to the international community’s efforts to project stability beyond the territory of NATO.”⁹⁴ Moldova is one of four countries that are receiving DCB Initiative packages (the others are Georgia, Iraq, and Jordan), which are tailored to fit the specific needs of the recipient country.⁹⁵

In June 2015 a specifically tailored package of assistance based on Moldovan requests was endorsed by NATO defence ministers. The package is meant to assist Moldova in “strengthening and modernising the country’s armed forces and reforming its national security structures.” In addition, NATO will assist Moldova in its efforts to create “modern, mobile, high-readiness, well-equipped and cost-

⁹¹ NATO (2016) “Relations with Moldova,” 14 June, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49727.htm#, (accessed 16 September 2016).

⁹² Ibid. p. 4.

⁹³ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

⁹⁴ NATO, Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative, 27 June, 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132756.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed 27 October, 2016).

⁹⁵ Ibid.

effective” NATO-interoperable forces.⁹⁶ The different focus areas for DCB Initiative assistance are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

There are two phases to the DCB Initiative. Phase one, currently underway, focuses on NATO assisting with the “establishment of a national security strategy, defence plans, force structures and capability requirements.” This assistance primarily takes the form of expert advisors who work together with Moldovan counterparts to assist in the reform effort in different areas.⁹⁷ The MoD describes its four focus areas as: 1) development of land and air forces; 2) education (which also includes training courses and peacekeeping); 3) cyber; and 4) United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, which focuses on women, peace and security. There is no particular timeline listed for the program; there is no stated end date for the program; nor is it clear exactly which NATO member or partner countries will assist Moldova in the focus area.⁹⁸ The overall goal of phase one is to come up with an appropriate force structure suitable to Moldova’s national security needs and defence budget.⁹⁹

According to NATO, phase two of the program will continue to provide advice and assist with specific elements of the transformation of Moldova’s AF and relevant institutions.”¹⁰⁰ The MoD, however, interprets phase two as focusing on “developing military capabilities.”¹⁰¹ This reading seems to suggest that the MoD is expecting to get more concrete financial and material assistance than NATO may actually be able to deliver in phase two. It is possible that these two interpretations are actually mutually reconcilable. But if they are not, this poses a problem since Moldova may be expecting more than is intended from this NATO package.¹⁰² Such a mismatch of expectations could potentially cause a strain within the NATO-MoD relationship, which could have implications for future cooperation.

This potential problem is especially important given Moldova’s low defence budget, which means that Moldova is largely dependent on foreign donors to make progress towards reform. Hence, whereas the MoD made very clear that the implementation of the DCB Initiative is a central part of their defence reform

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Phone interview, 7 November 2016.

¹⁰⁰ NATO, Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative, 27 June, 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132756.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed 27 October 2016).

¹⁰¹ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹⁰² Ibid.

agenda, suggesting that the political will within this ministry is there,¹⁰³ little headway will be possible without substantial foreign donor assistance.

Several experts we spoke to emphasised the extent to which security is not at all a priority for the government, however, a fact apparent by the very low funding directed towards national defence.¹⁰⁴ The government's lack of political will to invest and prioritize the defence sector is likely to influence international donors' willingness to provide funds to defence reform. This is because without political will at the highest political level and a subsequent decision to provide more national resources to remedy the underfunding of the defence sector, international donors are unlikely to believe that Moldova is serious about defence reform. Such perceptions among donors are likely to make it harder to motivate providing funds to Moldovan defence reform, since they suggest such assistance will be unable to have the intended effect.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, 7 November 2016.

6 Particular Areas of Defence Reform

As noted above, we focus exclusively on military capacity reform needs within the Moldovan defence sector, defined as the MoD and Moldovan AF.¹⁰⁶ More specifically, we limit our analysis to management, combat training, technical military cooperation, logistics and professional development. In discussing these areas we also describe whether there are ongoing reform projects supported by international donors devoted to each, respectively.

Combat Training

The training of military personnel is central to Moldova's ambitions to develop its military capacity, a reason why it is often mentioned as a priority in strategic documents outlining reform objectives. Since the Russian annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas, there has been an increased sense of urgency in the Moldovan Armed Forces with regards to thinking about mobilization, as well as learning how better to handle "hybrid threats."¹⁰⁷ However, experts note that there appears to be no real political will to make any substantial changes, despite NATO having given clear recommendations with regards to this.¹⁰⁸

In addition to developing armed forces capable of defending the country, the IPAP 2014-2016 also mentions that Moldova needs to focus on developing peacekeeping forces capable of being deployed abroad.¹⁰⁹ A key aspect of doing so entails continuing to develop and modernize the National Army Military Training Base in order to make it capable of hosting international peacekeeping exercises.¹¹⁰

The Moldovan AF uses multinational exercises as an opportunity to gain much needed training and experience working with international partners. Another such opportunity is provided by the pre-deployment training for soldiers serving in peacekeeping operations. Although this type of training is not always directly applicable to Moldova's national security setting, the MoD says exercises and pre-

¹⁰⁶ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova (2014) Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) Republic of Moldova – NATO for 2014-2016, http://www.mfa.gov.md/img/docs/2014-2016_an_ipap_en.pdf (accessed 23 October 2016), p. 6.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

deployment peacekeeping training gives their soldiers crucial opportunities to increase their interoperability with international partners.¹¹¹

Some experts say that the MoD seems to put minimal effort into the training of conscripts, but that there are signals that this is about to change. With regard to military-to-military exercises, the same experts said that opportunities for training are abundant, with the problem being that the MoD does not have enough people to send, rather than vice versa.¹¹² At the same time, another expert with insight into the Moldovan AF described the national military training system as “obsolete.”¹¹³

Ongoing related reform projects supported by international donors

Moldova receives combat training through NATO as part of the country’s participation in the defence alliance’s Operational Capabilities Concept, which aims to assist Moldovan troops in achieving full interoperability with NATO forces.¹¹⁴ It also receives assistance with training bilaterally, primarily from the US, but also from Romania and Turkey. The US applies most of its assistance to Moldovan defence reform to training and has been doing so since 1994. In 2017, the Moldovan AF will participate in 25 national and international exercises, 8 of which will take place in Moldova.¹¹⁵

Management

Ministry of Defence

According to several international experts, the appointment of Anatolie Salaru as Defence Minister has resulted in the longest period of stability at the MoD in some time. But these experts also pointed out that it is unclear if this will continue if there is reshuffling of the government following the election of the new president.¹¹⁶ Despite being one of the weakest ministries and therefore least politically desirable for career politicians, some experts say the Minister of Defence nevertheless has a clear agenda on the importance of building international partnerships. However, another expert sharply disagreed, claiming that the minister is more concerned about attending to his public persona than managing the MoD.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ NATO (2016) “Relations with Moldova,” 14 June, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49727.htm#, (accessed 16 September 2016).

¹¹⁵ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

With regard to civil servants at the MoD, experts say they tend to be overrepresented by former military personnel.¹¹⁸ This is not ideal from a civil-military relations perspective, although it is of course useful in the sense that this staff has good insight into national security matters. One international expert noted that the MoD does not see the skewed civilian-military balance in the MoD as a problem.¹¹⁹

One of the defence reform objectives mentioned in the IPAP 2014-2016 is the need to stimulate the employment of civilians within the MoD and also to develop recruitment mechanisms that allow the ministry to attract the most suitable candidates.¹²⁰ Another related obstacle in the MoD is retention. International experts interviewed told us that most people within the MoD leave after they get international experience. Both recruitment and retention are affected negatively by the fact that salaries within the MoD are lower compared to the public sector. This issue becomes especially urgent when it comes to the ability to recruit and retain civilians, since they receive a lower salary than the military personnel in the MoD.¹²¹

A 2015 report that focuses on democratic governance of the defence sector, states that there is “insufficient politically appointed staff to support the Minister of Defence as political leader, manager and national defence co-ordinator.”¹²² The same study also concludes that there is an “inability of the political leadership to provide consolidated governance of the security and defence sector” and chronic lack of will and know-how to implement [strategic documents].¹²³

A EU Joint Analysis report from September 2016 concludes that the Moldovan defence sector “[l]eadership is poor and lacks the experience to carry out reforms or even existing functions” and that the “higher leadership is politicised, with little cohesion, which hampers the construction of a professional military administration.”¹²⁴ Other experts describe the MoD as being very top-heavy and unwilling to delegate decisions to civil servants at the lower levels. This is

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova (2014) Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) Republic of Moldova – NATO for 2014-2016, http://www.mfa.gov.md/img/docs/2014-2016_an_ipap_en.pdf (accessed 23 October 2016), p. 6.

¹²¹ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹²² DCAF (2015), “Strengthening the Democratic Governance of Defence in Moldova,” p.8.

¹²³ Ibid. p. 8.

¹²⁴ European Union Joint Analysis (2016), “Programming in the Republic of Moldova until 2020,” September, p.42, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/joint_analysis_0.pdf (accessed 26 October 2016).

described as a cultural vestige of the old Soviet structure, and something that NATO is allegedly seeking to push MoD to reform.¹²⁵

Moldovan Armed Forces

The greatest problem with management in the Moldovan AF is recruitment and retention. This is since the military neither pays well nor provides a viable social package; it is especially hard to retain a professional military.¹²⁶ Due to the way the conscription system is set up, the vast majority of conscripts are from some of the poorest municipalities. Whereas the military may offer these young men some prospects of a professional career that they would be unable to obtain through other means, the military pay structure is nevertheless very bleak.¹²⁷

According to one expert with insight into the MoD, the way the Moldovan AF has tried to ameliorate this problem is to “pay young officers in rank,” instead.¹²⁸ This practice has resulted in the MoD being very top-heavy. International experts estimate that 25-45 per cent of military personnel in the Moldovan AF have a rank of officer or higher, a force structure that is not ideal.¹²⁹ In addition to a large officer corps, the practice also means that officers are promoted without having the type of experience normally expected from someone of this rank.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, when asked about the number of senior positions within the Moldovan AF, the MoD told us that the rank structure is actually more normal than that of most EU countries, and also that the number of officers in the Moldovan AF has decreased significantly since 2009.¹³¹

Yet, the practice of paying officers in rank only has limited effect in retaining military personnel with senior positions in the Moldovan AF. According to a study written in 2015, “the number of officers leaving at an early stage of their military career is growing, and some officers and NCOs look for a second job to help the family budget.”¹³² The same study also mentions that there is a “[d]ecline in the use of objective criteria for career promotions, which opens opportunities for nepotism in favour of classmates and co-servicemen,”¹³³ which may be another reason why officers feel that there is limited ability to get promoted beyond their current rank. The IPAP 2014-2016 stresses the importance of improving the Moldovan AF personnel management system so as to better “provide a framework

¹²⁵ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² DCAF (2015), p. 60.

¹³³ Ibid p. 60.

for personnel development, [and] promote [sic] individuals based on a fair and transparent evaluation system.”¹³⁴

For those who have nevertheless committed to a military career, there is currently a lot of concern about pension reform for military personnel. Until 2010, it was possible to receive a pension after 20 years of service. The new requirement is 25 years of service, which according to the MoD poses certain problems both in terms of military personnel feeling compelled to find employment elsewhere, and also in terms of attracting people to a military career in the first place.¹³⁵

Ongoing related reform projects supported by international donors

As far as the authors can discern there are no ongoing related reform projects related to management that are supported by international donors.

Technical Military Cooperation

Moldova sees the purchasing and updating of military equipment as a priority with regard to assistance requested by international donors. Although military hardware is not a defence reform area analysed in this report, some of this assistance can nevertheless be categorized as falling under technical military cooperation. It is therefore discussed to some extent in this section of the study.

Having said that, given the open nature of this report, we were unable to obtain information about bilateral programmes related to sensitive technical military cooperation to the extent desired. The only internationally supported aid related to technical military cooperation discussed here in detail is therefore of a more open nature, and often given within the context of NATO.

Ongoing related reform projects supported by international donors

Moldova is a participant in NATO's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme. This participation involves cooperation related to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material. For example, one particular SPS project seeks to enhance capability to counter biological agents such as anthrax. This entails amongst other things training and the setting up of a mobile laboratory.

The SPS Programme also includes cooperation on cyber defence, border security and terrorism. In addition, the SPS Programme is assisting Moldova with establishing a cyber laboratory. The laboratory is intended to work as a training centre for civil servants and military officials working within the MoD and related

¹³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova (2014) Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) Republic of Moldova – NATO for 2014-2016, http://www.mfa.gov.md/img/docs/2014-2016_an_ipap_en.pdf (accessed 23 October 2016), p. 6.

¹³⁵ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

national security institutions.¹³⁶ This project was formally launched in late October, 2016, and is related to the launch of the e-Research and Education Laboratory for Cyber Defence, at the Moldova Technical University. The project is supported by NATO, Estonia and the US.¹³⁷

Another NATO project launched in late October, 2016, related to technical military cooperation, is the creation of a Computer Emergency Response Team. The team seeks to counter cyber threats and to increase the electronic protection of critical military infrastructure. Working together with NATO Computer Incident Response Capability, the project seeks to increase the ability of the MoD and GS to support their national computer incident response capability against cyberattacks by amongst other things sharing best practices.¹³⁸

Moldova is also co-leading SPS workshops devoted to discussing border security challenges as well as threats of foreign fighters in Eastern Europe.¹³⁹

Other internationally supported aid related to technical military cooperation is assistance with destruction and storage of old pesticides and dangerous chemicals which is decontaminating parts of the country. This aid has been provided primarily through a NATO Trust Fund which has been financing and supporting this effort since 2007.¹⁴⁰

Moldova is also receiving support from Austria with the implementation of a course devoted to ammunition and weapons stockpile management. The course has been taught since 2014 and will go on until 2017. The cooperation is part of a MoU between the MoD and OSCE related to the implementation of the Complex Program on Small Arms and Light Weapons, signed on 28 October 2010.¹⁴¹

Finally, Moldova is cooperating with Georgia and Latvia on Strategic Communications. This is also an area of cooperation Moldova has with Romania, who also is a partner in experience-sharing with regards to anti-aircraft and artillery capability.¹⁴²

¹³⁶ NATO (2016), "Cooperation between Moldova and NATO," 19 October, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_135696.htm?selectedLocale=en, (accessed October 27, 2016).

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹⁴² Ibid.

Logistics

The MoD views logistics as an important reform area, and especially sees the procurement of equipment related to logistics, such as peacekeeping and communications equipment, as areas where Moldova is in particular need of donor assistance. The MoD is also seeking partners to help it establish a fully integrated information system for crisis management. (For specific MoD assistance requests, see the appendix).

In addition to these specific requests, Moldova is also looking to reform the entire logistics system through a standardization and codification process,¹⁴³ a potentially huge and ambitious undertaking that would require substantial resources and expertise that Moldova currently does not have. Any efforts to implement such reform would therefore be dependent upon international assistance.¹⁴⁴

Currently, Moldova relies on partner countries to provide the logistics infrastructure needed for the country's participation in peacekeeping operations. This includes strategic airlift, amongst other aspects of logistics.¹⁴⁵ Some international donors told us that many of the Moldovan logistics assistance requests are directed towards the strategic level, but that they found it more productive to work with Moldova at the unit level instead.¹⁴⁶

Ongoing related reform projects supported by international donors

Moldova is receiving assistance with reform of logistics from primarily the US. The US is not only providing vehicles and technical assets as well as goods and material, but also education and training related to logistics. Romania is also providing logistics-related education and training to the Moldovan AF, which is also assistance that is provided to Moldova through NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Finally, China is helping Moldova with technical assets, goods and materials related to the country's logistics capability.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Professional Development

Professional development is a central aspect of Moldovan defence reform and includes several different aspects. For the purposes of this report, three particular areas are discussed: Professional military education, anti-corruption and incorporating a gender perspective within the defence sector.

Professional military education

The IPAP 2014-2016 mentions military education as central to developing an efficient defence system capable of meeting Euro-Atlantic standards. Of particular importance, according to this document, is the education of military leaders. Therefore, the continued development of the AF Military Academy, *Alexandru cel Bun*, is deemed a key reform objective.¹⁴⁸ The MoD describes military education as a serious reform challenge, given that Moldova did not have any military schools prior to independence. Currently, the Military Academy offers a 4-year bachelor's degree, a master's degree course, and even a doctoral program.¹⁴⁹ However, current resources dedicated to officer education are out of balance with other efforts, such as non-commissioned officers' professional development. In addition, the academy enjoys full manning, compared with the chronic under-manning experienced in the brigades.¹⁵⁰

Ongoing reform projects related to professional military education supported by international donors

NATO is an important partner for Moldova with regard to professional development, and in particular the Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP). For example, NATO experts are working with two key institutions devoted to military education and training, namely the Military Academy and its Continuous Training Centre. The Master's degree-level course offered at the AF Academy has been supported by experts from Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. More specifically, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, and France are assisting in English language training. France and Greece are also supporting specialized training at the Military Academy.

A large number of Moldovan officers are given the opportunity to study abroad in partner countries such as the US, Romania, the Baltic states, Germany, France,

¹⁴⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova (2014) Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) Republic of Moldova – NATO for 2014-2016, http://www.mfa.gov.md/img/docs/2014-2016_an_ipap_en.pdf (accessed 23 October 2016), p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

China and Turkey. Finally, Sweden is assisting Moldova in the development of the Continuous Training Centre curriculum.

NATO and several partner countries are also assisting Moldova with the drafting of various strategic documents. In addition, NATO experts will be assisting the MoD with military strategic planning, and more specifically assist in assessing the state of Moldova's current defence capacity and identifying areas in particular need of development.

Much of this cooperation with NATO member and partner countries is done within the context of DEEP. Through DEEP, Moldova is also receiving input on how to construct and reform security-related educational institutions.

Given the support Moldova is receiving through this program, it is not surprising that the MoD emphasized how important DEEP is to defence reform in the country. At the same time, there appears to be an abundance of assistance in this particular reform area, a fact made evident when a MoD representative we interviewed told us that, "we have so much support, sometimes we don't have enough candidates."

Anti-corruption

Another aspect of professional development is anti-corruption. As mentioned above, corruption is a serious problem in Moldova. According to representatives in the MoD, anticorruption will be given special emphasis in the next IPAP. It was already included as a new goal in the current IPAP. In line with NATO recommendations, all the national security and defence institutions have conducted a self-assessment evaluation that will supposedly make it easier to pinpoint particular challenges to anti-corruption within these.¹⁵¹ Yet, a study has critiqued this accomplishment, alleging that "the mapping of integrity risks has been done by applying a questionable methodology and does not provide a sound basis for building an integrity strategy."¹⁵²

Ongoing reform projects related to anti-corruption supported by international donors

Since 2013, Moldova has been a participant in NATO's Building Integrity programme, which focuses on strengthening transparency, accountability and good governance in the defence sector. The self-assessment evaluation mentioned above has been collected by NATO, which analysed the data and proposed numerous recommendations. These recommendations have now been approved by

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² DCAF (2015) p.8. The same study also notes that with regards to the defence sector, "[c]orruption's center of gravity is the dysfunctional mechanism of recruiting conscript soldiers, involving so-called medical commissions." Ibid.

the Moldovan Inspector General, and Moldova is now in the process of implementing them. The country is getting assistance in doing so through a NATO Trust Fund which will be available during the two years the implementation phase is planned to take. Building integrity is also an important part of the DCB Initiative package.¹⁵³

Incorporating a gender perspective within the defence sector

With regard to incorporating a gender perspective within the defence sector, Moldova has committed to implementing UNSCR 1325, which seeks to promote the role of women in peace and security. The MoD has also created a gender unit which is tasked with harmonizing the military legal framework with the national strategy on Gender Equality. Finally, similar to the self-assessment evaluation done for corruption, national defence and security institutions have also conducted a similar assessment for gender equality.¹⁵⁴

Ongoing reform projects related to incorporating a gender perspective in the defence sector supported by international donors

Although Moldova has been working with NATO on promoting UNSCR 1325 for some time,¹⁵⁵ in late October 2016 Moldova and NATO officially launched a project focused on assisting the Moldovan government and civil society to develop a National Strategy for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.

The program implementation will be supported by the MoD, the US-based Inclusive Security Institute, and the Information and Documentation Centre on NATO (a non-governmental organization based in Moldova). These will use the findings of the self-assessment evaluation to plan how best to implement reform efforts. To facilitate the implementation process, there will be numerous NATO-led workshops seeking to promote a regional exchange of best practices when it comes to strengthening the role of women in peace and security.¹⁵⁶

Funding for the implementation process is already guaranteed for 2017. Despite receiving this assistance, the MoD expressed an interest in having Sweden support Moldova with classes about UNSCR 1325.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹⁵⁵ NATO (2016) "Relations with Moldova," 14 June, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49727.htm# (accessed September 16, 2016).

¹⁵⁶ NATO (2016), "Cooperation between Moldova and NATO," http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_135696.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed October 27, 2016).

¹⁵⁷ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

Coordination of International Support for Defence Reform

There appears to be varied coordination of international support for Moldovan defence reform between the MoD and donor countries, and even less within the international donor community. Although the MoD was extremely forthcoming with information to the authors about who was assisting them in various reform areas, other major international donors already cooperating with Moldova told us they often do not have this information. Some donors said MoD sometimes withheld such information, since they prefer to ask multiple donors for the same assistance, and overlap does not necessarily pose a problem. Yet others said that the reason the MoD doesn't have a coordinated approach has more to do with the fact that their needs are so great, given long periods of very low funding towards defence.¹⁵⁸

International donors also told us that coordinating within the broader donor community is scarce, but that they are hoping that the opening of a NATO Liaison Office (NLO) in Chisinau in 2017 may alleviate this. This is since the NLO is a natural focal point for NATO members and partners to de-conflict their assistance by sharing this type of information.¹⁵⁹ Yet, other experts with insight into defence reform believe this view is too simplistic. In contrast, they point out that most donor countries have little interest in either coordinating or being coordinated, but prefer to deal with assistance to Moldovan defence reform bilaterally with Moldova exclusively, instead.¹⁶⁰ If this is the case, then the establishment of an NLO office is unlikely to result in greater donor coordination. As part of the NATO DCB Initiative, a DCB coordinator's post was envisaged in order to deliver coherence, especially in phase two. However, to date, no ally or partner has offered a voluntary national contribution to the post.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Interviews, Chisinau, 17-21 October 2016.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Interview, 7 November 2016.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

7 Summary of Results

The Moldovan MoD and AF have, despite having had a very low defence budget for an extended period of time, made real progress in their efforts to reform the defence sector. Yet much remains to be done before the MoD can implement its ambitious defence reform agenda. International donors have various avenues in which they can provide assistance. Some areas of defence reform have made more progress than others. Likewise, the level of international support to different areas of the defence sector varies. In this report we have focused on five areas of the defence sector; management, combat training, technical military cooperation, logistics and professional development.

The MoD views combat training as an important priority, and seeks to take advantage of pre-deployment training by international partners in relation to peacekeeping missions as well as exercises to hone the skills of their military personnel. Although some of these experiences are not directly applicable to scenarios that are likely to face the Moldovan AF at home, they nevertheless give these forces a chance to learn from more developed militaries while also increasing their interoperability. International support for combat training appears to be in abundance, with the problem often being that there are not enough people to send than vice-versa.

The greatest challenge to management, both at the MoD and the Moldovan AF, is recruitment and retention. Neither career is viewed as attractive, largely due to the low salaries offered. This makes it hard to recruit and retain skilled staff, both within the MoD and the Moldovan AF, which in turn influences the effective management of the respective institutions. There are no directly related programs assisting Moldova with management issues, potentially because doing so is not always straightforward.

Moldova has a multitude of internationally supported reform projects related to technical military cooperation. These projects usually fall under the umbrella of NATO's SPS Programme, but Moldova also has bilateral cooperation with partner countries. Technical military cooperation is one area of defence reform where Moldova can seek assistance in acquiring technical hardware, equipment that the MoD and Moldovan AF cannot afford to purchase independently.

Logistics is another area of defence reform where Moldova can seek to get assistance from international donors towards much sought after equipment upgrades, especially as it pertains to communications gear. But the MoD is currently looking into reforming their entire logistics system through a standardization and codification process, something that experts say is overly ambitious given the resources available.

Professional development is a multifaceted area which includes professional military education, anti-corruption and incorporating a gender perspective within the defence sector. When it comes to professional military education, there appears to be an abundance of opportunities for especially military staff provided by international partners. Consequently, many senior officers in the Moldovan AF have received professional military education abroad. With regard to anti-corruption, some progress seems to be underway, with Moldova finalizing the self-assessment evaluation and focusing more specifically on building integrity in the next IPAP. Yet, corruption in Moldovan society is deeply entrenched and widespread, suggesting that this is likely to continue posing a particular challenge going forward. Finally, some steps have been taken towards implementing UNSCR 1325, but it seems clear that the MoD prioritizes other areas of defence reform higher than this particular aspect as being more important to enhancing defence capability.

There appears to be varied coordination of international support for Moldovan defence reform between the MoD and donor countries, and even less within the international donor community. Some donors hope that the establishment of a NATO NLO will ameliorate this, whereas others believe that it will make little difference since donors are generally uninterested in coordinating or being coordinated.

8 Conclusion

International donors wishing to assist Moldova with defence reform can do so in various ways. This report hopefully provides some insights that will allow the Swedish Armed Forces to attain a better understanding of the defence reform needs within the broader defence sector, information that may help in decision-making on specific areas in which to provide assistance.

Having said that, Moldova's national political context makes it less than straightforward for donors to ascertain how best to support Moldova with defence reform and whether such investments are likely to be put to the intended use. The MoD and GS are extremely committed to their defence reform agenda and urgently looking for international partners to help them modernize their armed forces after an extended period of having a very low defence budget and perhaps even being neglected by the political leadership. Yet, this sense of urgency is something that is not shared by the Moldovan government, which does not view the Moldovan AF as a priority, a fact evident in the extremely low budget allocations towards the defence sector.

The political leadership's low commitment or indeed interest in the MoD and Moldovan AF and ambivalence towards dealing with the conflict in Transnistria means that there has been no clear political direction or strategic roadmap for the MoD and Moldovan AF to follow to make sure they execute their mission in the best possible way. This low commitment could be attributed to a number of factors, though most likely the continuous lack of political will and interest in the defence sector within the political elite, which does not allow for firm guidance and support. This has led to a constant state of political inertia in dealing with defence and security issues. Hence, despite the MoD developing close relationships with NATO and other partners interested in assisting in the country's reform efforts, the potential for cooperation is hampered by the fact that the political leadership is not on board. Furthermore, Igor Dodon's presidency may potentially affect the current priorities in defence reform and cooperation with NATO, given his allegiance to Russia.

This means the MoD is caught somewhat in a Catch-22. On the one hand, they need to demonstrate to their international partners that they are serious about defence reform by drafting strategic documents and reform agendas. But on the other hand, both they and donors know that these documents are worth little without backing from the political leadership. Given the political divide in Moldova about whether to enhance cooperation with Russia, or the West, the situation is unlikely to become clearer anytime soon. The question is how donors are to engage with Moldova in terms of assisting the MoD in defence reform, given that political developments in the country are very much in flux.

A perhaps greater obstacle than the political direction towards East or West to Moldovan defence reform that is unlikely to change anytime soon, however, is that the political leadership's interest – no matter the political affiliation – in defence reform is low to non-existent. This is an unfortunate reality that international donors as well as the MoD must bear in mind when communicating with each other about defence reform assistance. There is no doubt that the MoD and GS need substantial assistance in modernizing the Moldovan AF, but the question remains to what extent donors will be willing to fund such reform efforts, when it seems doubtful that Moldova's political leadership shares the MoD agenda and enthusiasm for this endeavour.

The NATO DCB Initiative program is a clear indicator that there is substantial interest in supporting Moldovan defence reform. But donors are likely to be unwilling to continue doing so unless the Moldovan government demonstrates that it is also committed to this goal. One way of signalling such an intent in a manner deemed credible to donors is by increasing the defence budget. A slight increase in the defence budget should be possible, despite Moldova's dire economic situation. Such an investment has the potential to result in further international assistance and funds devoted to the Moldovan defence sector, as donors feel more certain about the prospects of Moldovan defence reform and feel less reluctant to provide the assistance to make it possible.

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Appendix: Specific Moldovan Assistance Requests for Sweden

The following assistance requests for Sweden were communicated verbatim by the MoD to the authors via email on September 16, 2016, hence prior to the presidential election. These areas are described as areas where the MoD is currently looking for assistance in general, and not just specifically from Sweden. For further information or clarifications, please contact the MoD directly.

- Development of the peacekeeping capability and training infrastructure.
- Development of the military medical capability.
- Creation of the Army backbone CIS network infrastructure, based on digital high-capacity LOS equipment. It should connect Ministry of Defence and General Staff with the National Army military units. It will provide redundancy and reduce dependency from the existent commercial contracted services.
- Development of the tactical communication system, based on TETRA technologies (digital modern radios). It will consist from the small size CIS nodes, mounted on vehicles, that will provide services in a required range of accessibility to the dismounted soldiers, as well as to the combat vehicles. Nodes should contain HF and VHF radios, act as a repeater and capabilities to connect to stationary Army CIS infrastructure. The system should also include portable and vehicular radios, compatible with tactical nodes.
- Development of the MAFCIRC (Moldovan Armed Forces Computer Incident Response Capability). It will consist of technical equipment and software tools capable of analyzing the information flow by preventing, detecting and reacting to cyber incidents (attacks). It should include establishment of a MAF CIRC with its test laboratory at MOD and provide specialized CERT training to the personnel.
- Development of the command and control capabilities of the Army Command Post, with Common Operational Picture of all hierarchical levels (strategic, operational and tactical). It will consist of technical and software tools capable of providing computerized planning aids and secure communications (voice, messages, chat, data exchange, etc.) for command, logistic and administration. Sharing Common Operational Picture through units should comply with real/near-real time BFSa (Blue Force Situation Awareness) capability.

This analysis is meant to provide an overview of the Moldovan defence sector with the purpose of identifying future reform needs with regards to military capacity building. The primary aim of the report is to serve as a source of information for the Swedish Armed Forces when planning the future assistance to Moldovan defence reform. The report looks at a number of key areas within the Moldovan defence sector and identifies related reform projects and international donors affiliated with these. The report also discusses the extent to which Moldova is coordinating these reform efforts with international donors as well as whether international donors are coordinating their support amongst themselves. Finally, the report presents specific reform assistance requests that the Moldovan Ministry of Defence (MoD) would be especially interested in getting assistance with from Sweden.

The report on Moldova is the third and final in a series of three that seeks to assess defence reform needs as well as map international support to defence reform. The authors have previously written similar reports on Ukraine and Georgia.

See also:

Lins de Albuquerque, Adriana and Hedenskog, Jakob (2015) Ukraine: A Defence Sector Reform Assessment, FOI-R--4157--SE, December.

Lins de Albuquerque, Adriana and Hedenskog, Jakob (2016) Georgia: A Defence Sector Reform Assessment, FOI-R--4306--SE, October.