



Institute for  
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## MOLDOVA'S FOREIGN POLICY STATEWATCH

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# THE UK AND SLOVAKIA WILL SUPPORT MOLDOVA IN ACHIEVING ITS EU ASPIRATION

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Moldova's Foreign Policy Statewatch represents a series of brief analyses, written by local and foreign experts, dedicated to the most topical subjects related to the foreign policy of Moldova, major developments in the Black Sea Region, cooperation with international organizations and peace building activities in the region. It aims to create a common platform for discussion and to bring together experts, commentators, officials and diplomats who are concerned with the perspectives of European Integration of Moldova. It is also pertaining to offer to Moldova's diplomats and analysts a valuable tribune for debating the most interesting and controversial points of view which could help Moldova to find its path to EU.

### NEXT TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

*Problem of Moldova's  
Ownership in Ukraine  
and Moldova's troubled  
sovereignty*

**D**emocratization, overcoming the socio-economic crisis and integration into European Union are the key priorities of the Moldavian Government. In order to achieve these goals it is vital that domestic reforms should implement eighth European standards. Due to a number of populist measures undertaken by the former Communist authorities, the Republic of Moldova has made limited progress in implementing effective reforms in the last couple of years. Gaps in reforms have been increased, behind legislative developments. Country passed into a social and economic crisis and it has limited chances to overcome it without foreign support. Moldova was a beneficiary of a large spectrum of foreign assistance during the last years. The UK is one of the main donors supporting Moldova through bilateral technical assistance via DFID constituting over £20 million since 1991. The Government of Moldova has been beneficiary of support on improving governance and the institutional environment for poverty reduction. Moldova became one of the priority countries under the Medium-Term Strategy of Slovak Development Assistance for the years 2009-2013. In light of the bilateral cooperation, Slovakia will assist Moldova in particular via development programmes in support to local non-governmental organisations, activating local communities, regional development, human rights advocacy activities.

## Cooperation at a glance.

The British Government recently confirmed its availability to provide necessary assistance, particularly through offering expertise and methodological advice on such priority areas as Economy and Finance, Security and Defence, Justice and Home Affairs for Moldova in its EU's aspiration. The United Kingdom is willing to consider the possibility of providing necessary assistance in the preparation of Moldovan experts to negotiate future deep and comprehensive free trade agreement with the EU.

Moldova will receive from the European Commission and the Department of External Relations of the United Kingdom, about 2.4 million Euros and 4.5 million GBP. The amount of 110 million Lei will be used to cover public social compensation. This support is significant alongside with the willing of the UK to assist in various aspects of cooperation in domestic affairs, aiming, in particular, police reform, combating organized crime, human trafficking and corruption. The UK assistance is necessary for Moldova in terms of reform implementation related to local democracy, decentralization, social cohesion and human rights as well as to improve the rule of law. There are prospects of launching a Moldovan-British bilateral dialogue on facilitating the visa regime for Moldovan citizens, as the UK is not a member to the Schengen Agreement.

Slovakia newly declared its availability to supports European aspirations of the Republic of Moldova within the Eastern Partnership. Under the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, the Slovak development assistance<sup>1</sup> is delivered in many fields important for Moldova; one of them is to increase the capacity of civil society, sharing Slovak transformational experiences and knowledge of the reform process. Also, a strong point in favour of Moldova is that the Slovak Republic has numerous experiences with peacekeeping operations led by the UN or other international organisations. The bilateral cooperation with the Slovak Republic can build a constructive background of mitigation the conflict in Transdniestria in terms of post conflict reconstruction, stabilization efforts and abilities to implement values of peace, solidarity, social justice, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in post conflict zones.

Further, in the meeting on June 2010, within the Visegrad Group, along with other members as the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, Slovakia can offer diplomatic support to Moldova on its European integration. The Czech Presidency proposed to develop a new format along the lines of the existing V4+, which enabled the four countries to invite to their meetings one non-V4 guest to discuss V4 cooperation with this country. Moldova participated as Eastern Partnership (EP) member at an enlarged meeting of the foreign ministers of the Visegrad Group's countries (V4+) in March 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> Slovakia provides development aid in conformity with Act No. 617/2007 Coll.

## Geopolitical background.

Moldavian Government has to take in advance the strong points commenced by the UK in its foreign policy. First, UK has the influence through the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and the European Parliament within the EU. Second, it is a member of the UN Security Council. Third, it is a member of the exclusive Group of Eight. The UK has developed a strong partnership with the USA. It is a nuclear power and major arm seller in the world. One of the main priorities of UK in the world is the prevention and conflict resolution through an international system. Eventually, cooperation with the UK is an advantage for economic growth via foreign direct investments and for poverty reduction underpinned by human rights, democracy and good governance. European enlargement has increased the UK economy and put it in a strong position dealing with other growing economies. London has become dominant power on the European financial markets. Therefore, cooperation with UK in terms of trade and industry must be the main focus of the Moldavian Government while striving to overcome the socio-economic crisis.

Slovakia was one of the original members of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) that factually served as a preparation for full European Union membership. Slovakia is one of the members of Visegrad Group, having strong cooperation with Ukraine and Belarus. It participated actively in the creation and implementation of the EU's common foreign and security policy. Western Balkans and Ukraine are the main strategic focus on security policy for Slovakia. Hence these syntheses are positive in order to identify areas where Slovakia could be helpful to Moldova through the project of the Eastern Partnership. First, Slovakia has actively supported a more ambitious Eastern dimension of the EU external policy because it believes in a strong capacity of Eastern Partnership to bring EU and East European neighbouring countries closer together. Second, as mentioned by official representatives, Slovakia rejects forcing of outworn concepts of hostility, or blocs in Europe. Third, Slovakia is determined to actively contribute to the fulfilment of tasks of the Partnership. Slovakia is interested in the resolution of the conflict in Transdnistria on the base of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova. In this process, Moldova should create a strong partnership with the Slovak Republic, taking in consideration its experiences in the process of transition and European integration.

## Prospects and recommendations.

On one side, the UK and Slovakia and other European countries will be willing to consider the possibility of providing necessary assistance in Moldova, and expect from her a strong responsibility and transparency in its decisions concerning the European Integration. On other side, the acceleration of European integration depends on internal reforms of Moldova, its capacity to implement them in various sectors. There is a substantial need to overcome the economic and social crisis and to mitigate the conflict in Transdniestria. On EU's eastern flank there is still a number of unresolved conflicts, where Transdniestria is a risky factor for regional geopolitics of EU and Moldova has to have a major role on its mitigation by local initiatives to support the key sectors of economy in particular region such as communication, transport and logistics infrastructure, drinking water supply and landscaping, etc. The conflict is a bona fide, dynamic factor of Moldova's domestic politics and it has to be a part of all implemented reforms at national level. In this way, the Government of Moldova has to guarantee the constituents of democracy, as well as to assure the respect of human rights, social equality and the rule of law.

The Slovak potential assistance can be used in increasing the role of civil society as a watchdog of monitoring the government performances in reforms on democracy, good government, stability, economic integration, public policies and fulfilment with the EU standards. It is expectable to increase efforts, including on confidence-building measures geared at improving grass-roots dialogue with the population in Transdniestria.