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RESOURCE AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER FOR TRANSNISTRIA

Training - "Writing Project Proposals"

Recently, the subject of civil society in the Transnistrian region has become a source of heated debates at both regional and national levels. At the same time, non-governmental organizations from the region remain at a low level of development. Efforts aimed at the professional development of civil society representatives in the region are thus very welcome, and represent practically the only opportunity available to the majority of NGO representatives to benefit from specialized instruction.

The Promo-LEX Association, therefore, constantly carries out activities aimed at assisting and instructing Transnistrian-region NGOs through the NGO Department of the Resource and Development Center for Transnistria. The training programs

offered by Promo-LEX focus on the primary needs of NGOs from the region, and promote the active involvement of local organizations in addressing regional problems, along with democratic values and norms.

In this context, on 24-25 April 2010, the Promo-LEX Association organized a training entitled "Writing Project Proposals". The event was held at the 'La Popas' centre in the village of Cocieri. Twenty representatives of NGOs and initiative groups from the Transnistrian region took part, including people from the city of Tiraspol, the towns of Bender, Dubasari and Ribnita, and from the rayons of Slobozia and Grigoriopol.

Sessions at the training were aimed at improving the participants' theoretical knowledge and developing their practical abilities in connection with writing and implementing projects. The program of the training was developed according to the learning needs of the participants that had been identified at the previous training. The participants learned what the basic elements of a project are, how to identify problems and objectives, what the logical framework of a project is and how it is elaborated, and how to draw up a project budget. Participants were also given instruction in project management.

Theoretical sessions were complemented by practical exercises (group work, presentations, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and case-study commentaries). Participants also talked about the hardships faced by NGOs in carrying out activities, referring in particular to the difficulties which appear in the process of fund-raising. The problem of having to receive grants through NGOs from the right bank of the Nistru was raised, as was the fact that there exist very few donors to whom civil society representatives from the region can apply. The subject of narrative and financial reports for projects was also addressed. In this context, participants emphasized that donors' requests should be adjusted to take into account the reality in the region. Further recommendations of NGOs in the region were also drawn up concerning the priorities established by donors for finance programs, but also concerning the fact that for many organizations the conditions necessary to write a project proposal simply do not exist (the lack of permanent premises, equipment, etc.) - this being the reason why institutional grants are the type of grant most sought after by beneficiaries in the region.

An analysis of the participants' evaluation forms showed that such a kind of training is extremely welcome, since it offers the opportunity for each participant who has prepared a draft project to finalize it, and ultimately to discuss it with colleagues from the region.

The training was organized as part of the ongoing instruction program for civil society representatives from the Transnistrian region, realized through the Resource and Development Center for Transnistria, a project financed by the National Endowment for Democracy.

Olga Gordila
NGO Department Coordinator, RDCT
Promo-LEX

World Movement for Democracy /Sixth Assembly

Between April 11-14, 2010, the World Movement for Democracy held its Sixth Assembly in Jakarta, Indonesia, under the heading 'Solidarity Across Cultures: Working Together For Democracy'. Close to 600 participants took part, representing over 110 countries from around the world.

During the Assembly, a series of plenary sessions and workshops were organized on various topics of importance to democracy movements, including civil society, youth actions, democracy promotion, and human rights. Draft reports were made following each session, detailing the challenges that had been identified in the given area, and listing the recommendations put forward by participants. In this edition of the CRDT Bulletin, the Promo-LEX Association -which was present at the Assembly - reproduces some of the draft reports that will be of interest to individuals and organizations working to promote democracy and human rights in the Transnistrian region of Moldova. The reports address, primarily, the issues of how activists working under the conditions of a repressive administration may be protected from intimidation and persecution, and how democratic change may be promoted in closed societies.

Topical Workshop Addressing attacks on Human Rights Defenders and Independent Media: How can cross-border solidarity Help?

Workshop presenters discussed their experiences of working as human rights defenders, as well as the human rights situations in their countries. From the discussions, it was clear that almost all human rights defenders around the world are at risk of torture and prosecution. Governments use very similar strategies to curtail people's rights to enjoy freedom of speech, participation and information.

Efforts have been made by civil society organizations to work on the protection of defenders everywhere to ensure that the safety of the defenders is considered, and to promote information and solidarity networks across the world. This is done through efforts to provide resources and opportunities for people in exile if need be. It includes relocation of the defender to a different country -especially if the life of the defender is at risk in his mother country- as well as trainings on the security of defenders, conferences and forums where activists meet to address and discuss their challenges and achievements, and the use of the Internet and

audio visual media as means of communication in order to create solidarity for their work.

To some extent, these initiatives have been successful. In Poland, civil society groups are offering training to journalists and students on how to document human rights violations and report them using community radio, and how they have supported neighboring countries by reporting their issues and situations. There are several organizations which have been promoting the use of conferences and sites to share information - for example Witness, an NGO based in Europe that provides equipment, training and video hubs for using video material. These are opportunities that the workshop participants can draw on, among others, to ensure that the issues and challenges facing human rights defenders are discussed at a global level.

In situations where dictatorial and military governments are operating, defenders are always at a higher risk of being tortured and prosecuted by the governments. In Somalia and Abazaijan, for example, where media freedom is restricted by the governments, many defenders are tracked down and their every action monitored. Sadly, some lose their lives. In many situations, the media in these countries is run by the government and used as a propaganda instrument.

Participants agreed that human rights defenders need protection through the development of innovative means of communication, and more specifically by drawing on innovative ideas proposed by young people, and by using the expertise of professionals in public relations and communications.

Challenges

The challenges facing human rights defenders in the world are diverse and vary according to the local context. In the discussions, these challenges were put within the context of human rights defenders working in areas of armed conflict and political oppression. Challenges identified by the workshop participants included:

- Harassment and intimidation,
- Defamation,
- Arbitrary arrests and detention,
- Targeted killings,
- Disappearances,
- Legal restrictions like national laws that criminalize the activities of HRDs e.g. sexual minority defenders, Civil Society Proclamation in Ethiopia,
- Governments' persistent failure to comply with treaty obligations under international law,
- Increased insecurity in many regional countries,
- Insufficient financial resources to carry out planned activities,
- Insufficient networking among HRs organizations.

Recommendations

- Strengthen the capacity of human rights defenders to make use of audio visual reporting and monitoring (i.e. use of video, films and documentaries);
- Start a campaign for the promotion of the Internet to communicate and organize democracy work;
- Delegate people to work directly and specifically with journalists and activists to address their challenges at a regional and EU-level;
- Work with diaspora groups;
- Use UN information on how governments vote on issues at the United National General Assemblies and take this information as a basis to organize for accountability;
- Lobby donors to support initiatives to protect human rights;
- Develop a global human rights network to build on the efforts of regional networks;
- Learn from public relations and communication experts about information dissemination strategies, etc.;
- Develop a standard template that can be used to organize national and international campaigns in support of prosecuted HR defenders;
- Promote a culture of tolerance and solidarity through trainings;
- Develop mechanisms for the legal protection of defenders at all levels and for their safety during trials, especially at the international court;
- Promote education and mentoring projects for schools, learning institutions and journalists to promote innovations and upcoming technologies in securing Human rights;
- Promote the innovative ideas of young people in the context of reporting, monitoring and developing campaigns on human rights.

Topical Workshop

Strategies for Effecting Change in Closed Societies

This workshop focused principally on sharing experiences and identifying common issues and strategies used to advance human rights and democracy in closed societies. Instead of focusing on specific countries, participants sought to extract from their experiences common themes, tools, lessons learned, and strategies. Perspectives from a range of countries were offered, including from North Korea, Cuba, Burma, Syria, Iran, Vietnam, and Tibet among others.

Common Characteristics of Closed Societies

In order to develop effective strategies for countering authoritarian regimes, it is essential to understand the nature of the regime itself and its means of state repression. Some common characteristics that were identified are as follows:

- The use and manipulation of ideology and nationalism to maintain control of state power and to justify authoritarian rule.
- The use of and reliance on linkages and relationships among authoritarian regimes to support and protect each other from pressure and scrutiny in regional and international forums; to provide opportunities for trade and commerce, including access to banking, commercial transactions, as well as trade in illicit goods; to provide alternative models for development and state structure; and to share tactics and methods for controlling civil society and opposition.
- State control of the media, security and intelligence apparatus, and the economy.
- The use of democratic tools, such as referendums, elections, and government-controlled NGOs (GONGOs), to provide the guise of legitimacy and public support, and to hide the nature of the regime itself as well as to spread state propaganda.

Strategies for Challenging a Regime's Power Base

Political activists working in closed societies have used a variety of methods and strategies to challenge the regimes' control of power. Before discussing specific actions, participants identified issues that should be considered in order to develop effective strategies:

- Identify “free windows” or opportunities that can be exploited to create space for civil society to raise awareness and mobilize opposition to advance democratic reform.
- Develop strategies based on reality and a sound understanding of the regime and the major loyalties that prop it up, including economic, military, and international.
- Recognize the distinction between tactics and strategy. Tactics alone are not enough. How do your tactics serve or fit into both short and long-term goals for advancing democracy? For example, one participant warned that you may achieve success in completing a difficult action but if the success of that action ultimately serves to undermine your objectives, do you have a Plan B?
- What is the relationship between the exile community and inside activists? Who has the capacity and access to do what? Many in the exile community left their home countries because they were at the forefront of the movement against these authoritarian regimes so they can still play an important leadership role; however, it's very important to maintain unity with activists inside as well as recognize the limits of the exile community. Participants also observed that it is important for the opposition movement to ensure that it is representative of different ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in the society, particularly since regimes often try to undermine the legitimacy of exile movements.
- Know your audience and develop messages carefully. Some suggested

avoiding language that may be counterproductive, such as explicit reference to democracy and human rights, and instead use terminology that appears less threatening to the regime, including focusing on lack of transparency and accountability; issues of corruption; etc.

Strategic Opportunities for Advancing Democracy in Closed Societies

1. Challenging the State Monopoly on Information

- There are multiple mediums for disseminating information in closed societies, including radio, satellite TV, print publications, CDs/VCDs, USBs, and advanced technologies.
- Activists should keep in mind new technologies, working with citizen journalists, social networking (e.g. Facebook and Twitter), as well as using traditional forms of journalism and person-to-person linkages and via activist networks inside the country ('diffusion democratization').
- It is important to probe openings and opportunities and not necessarily default to the exile community as the only means for independent news and information. Participants encouraged finding creative mechanisms for working within the existing media environment despite its restrictive nature.

2. Elections in Highly-Controlled Environments

- The choice to participate is not necessarily black and white. The challenge is to identify when elections present an opportunity for strengthening the democratic opposition in a closed society rather than serving to legitimize the regime and the process itself. This very question confronts the Burmese democracy movement in upcoming elections in 2010.
- In the case of Iran, people did not treat it as an ordinary process (e.g. register, campaign, vote) but more as a tactic and an opportunity to advance the demands of various sectors, mobilize the opposition, and to bolster the reformist candidate. The reaction of the government to the campaign served to strengthen the movement and further delegitimize the regime (message changed from 'return stolen votes' to 'down with the dictator').
- Some factors that could make the elections an opportunity: Could participation serve to exploit differences and factions within the regime and support an alternative candidate? Could elections be an opportunity for organizing and engaging various sectors and constituencies?

3. Regional and International Advocacy

- While participants acknowledged that change in closed societies must come from within, international efforts play an important role in providing solidarity, raising awareness, and maintaining pressure for reform. It can force governments to make concessions (releasing and supporting political prisoners, implementing reforms, etc.) and give activists protection. International scrutiny can save lives.

- International forums, including the Universal Periodic Review at the UN, often provide the only platform for civil society to directly confront their government with documentation about the human rights situation in the country. Civil society should use the UPR as an opportunity to raise awareness. It also needs to be prepared to counter regime efforts to undermine this opportunity by monopolizing discussion in these forums.
- It is important to pursue both regional and international advocacies since often regimes protect and support each other's interest in various forums. In some regions, the regional human rights mechanisms have more teeth than the UN.
- There is no golden rule on sanctions, tourism boycotts, and other strategies for isolating authoritarian regimes. While isolation may be important in certain cases, it can also prevent opportunities for tourism, trade, and student exchange which can help undermine the regime's monopoly on information and power.
- Businesses investing in closed societies should be made aware of whom they are doing business with and encouraged to provide constructive criticism while engaging with repressive regimes. While they may be reluctant to discuss sensitive issues outright, such as human rights, they may be willing to tackle issues specific to their work such as labor rights.
- Authoritarian regimes often use professional lobbyists to advocate on their behalf and cleanse their global image. Participants discussed the idea of getting progressive PR firms to offer pro-bono services to democracy groups, in the same way that lawyers offer pro-bono services.

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NGO IN DETAILS

Selection for participants for the European Partnership Fair for Civil Society Organizations from Moldova

15 – 16 June, 2010
Chisinau, Moldova

The European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), the East Europe Foundation (EEF) and the Promo-LEX Association are announcing a selection for non-governmental organizations from the Republic of Moldova to participate in the **'European Partnership Fair for Civil Society Organizations from Moldova'**.

The event will take place in Chisinau, Moldova, between 15-16 June 2010.

Aim of the event: To help consolidate civil society in the Republic of Moldova

(including the Transnistrian Region) through exchanging experience, creating partnership-relations between NGOs from the countries of the CIS and European Community, and attracting funds for civic initiatives.

Who can apply?

1. Representatives of civil society from European countries, CSI countries, and from the Republic of Moldova (including the Transnistrian region);
2. Organizations that are active in the following areas: mass-media, human rights, democracy, European integration, social issues, youth, and the environment;
3. Organizations with experience in implementing international projects;
4. Organizations that wish to establish partnership-relations with foreign NGOs in order to carry out joint projects.

Program:

The event will allow participants from both abroad (Europe and the CIS) and from Moldova to establish contacts and discuss with representatives of donor organizations. The participants will have the opportunity to discuss and make project- and initiative-proposals focused on forming partnership-relations in the fields indicated above.

The event will be focused on the following key areas:

1. Human rights, mass-media and fundamental liberties;
2. Social advocacy, youth and the environment;
3. European Integration.

Working languages: English, Romanian and Russian (translation will be available).

Application process: A completed Registration Form should be sent to the e-mail address crdt@promolex.md no later than 21 May 2010. Selected organizations will be announced before May 28, 2010.

The preliminary version of the Work Programme of the event and the Registration Form can be downloaded from the website: <http://www.promolex.md/index.php?module=announcements&cat=0&item=261>

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ACTUAL

The Republic of Moldova and The Russian Federation – defendants once again at the European Court of Human Rights regarding torture and illegal deprivation of liberty in the Transnistrian region

On 1 April 2010, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) decided to examine as a priority the case of Boris Mozer v Moldova and Russia nr.11138/10, submitted to the Court on 24 February 2010 by Alexandru Postica, Doina Ioana Straisteanu and Pavel Postica, lawyers at the Promo-LEX Association.

The respective governments were given until May 27, 2010, to explain the legality of the arrest and detention of Boris Mozer as part of a criminal case instigated at the request of SC Interdnestrcom, where he was employed. The governments should in particular provide answers to two important questions – 1. if the arrest and detention of the applicant (Moser) by the Transnistrian region administration was made by a competent and empowered court (bearing in mind that the 'courts' of the TMR do not form part of the judicial system of the Republic of Moldova), and; 2. if the liability for the maltreatment of the applicant at the hands of the 'MGB' falls upon the defendant Governments. A violation of the right to family life was also invoked, given the fact that the applicants' relatives were not granted access to see him, and a meeting with a counselor was refused.

The case of Boris Mozer is the second application to the ECHR this year after the Matcenco case, being similar to the case Ilaşcu and others vs. Moldova and Russia (decided upon on 24 June 2004), and similarly highlighting serious human rights violations in the Transnistrian region of Moldova. Promo-LEX has criticised the governments of Moldova and Russia on numerous occasions for the negligence with which the complaints of people living on the left bank of the Nistru are treated – even in cases of murder, rape, torture, and illegal condemnation and deprivation of liberty.

Alexandru Postica, lawyer and Executive Director of the Promo-LEX Association, states, "The fact that within the space of 15 days two cases from the Transnistrian region have been made a priority demonstrates that the human rights situation in the region is particularly critical and that the authorities are obliged to intervene. If the Moldovan authorities and those of Russia are not willing to seek ways to ensure respect for human rights in this region, we will continue to do everything possible to change this state of affairs through the mechanism of the European Court".

Doina Ioana Straisteanu, a Promo-LEX lawyer and expert in human rights, affirms that, "In the Mozer case we have also invoked a violation of Article 17 of the [European] Convention for the fact that the administration in the region has been allowed to establish for itself a 'system of force and justice bodies' which it uses to intimidate inhabitants of the region through the use of torture and the deprivation of liberty in unofficial places of detention in inhuman and unsanitary conditions, deliberately violating all human rights and liberties, which are guaranteed by the legislation of both defendant States and by the provisions of the Convention".

The Promo-LEX Association notes that, on 15 March 2010, the defendant governments were contacted regarding another case that has been given priority status, presented by lawyers at Promo-LEX, which in principle raises the same problems of human rights violations.

Legal Department,
Promo-LEX Association

Promo-LEX recommends Government to appeal to The Hague Court

2010-04-21/ The public association Promo-LEX recommends the Moldovan constitutional authorities to use the International Law and appeal to the International Court of Justice in the Hague as the rights of the residents (who are citizens of different countries) cannot be protected efficiently and within a reasonable period of time, the association's head Ion Manole told Info-Prim Neo.

According to Manole, Promo-LEX is concerned about the human rights situation in Moldova's Transnistrian region and regrets that the efforts made by the constitutional authorities and international players to enforce the law in the region did not contribute to the improvement of the situation of the human rights there.

Ion Manole said the Government of Moldova can and should lodge an interstate application with the International Court of Justice in the Hague, which is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations and is commonly referred to as the World Court. He stressed that Promo-LEX has experts in public international law who can examine the possibility of appealing to The Hague Court and prepare the necessary legal documents so that the Court gives a decision about the responsibility and positive obligations of Moldova and Russia as regards the Transnistrian region.

Ion Manole also said that the Transnistrian residents expect that the Government will take effective steps. "They deserve enjoying the same rights and freedoms as the other citizens of the county. We are ready to help the Government of Moldova

in this initiative as the experts of Promo-LEX have unique experience in using the public international law.

Info-Prim Neo Note: The main functions of the International Court of Justice are to settle legal disputes submitted to it by states and to give advisory opinions on legal questions submitted to it by duly authorized international organs, agencies, and the UN General Assembly.

www.info-prim.md

Criminal cases, persecution and fines for persons who refuse to join Transnistrian army

2010-04-30/ The young men in the Transnistrian region continue to be persecuted for the refusal to enroll in the military units of the unconstitutional regime. Those who oppose the draft are fined, arrested, announced wanted and face legal action. The situation of the young persons who are persecuted by the Transnistrian regime was discussed at public debates at Info-Prim Neo on April 30. The event formed part of the series of public debates "Current problems in areas of vital importance: convergent and divergent views", launched by the National NGO Council.

"The military service is equal to detention as when the young people are caught by the Transnistrian authorities they are forced to choose between prison and army. The people living in the region are thus scared," said the head of Promo-Lex Association Ion Manole. According to him, more than 40,000 of the about 55,000 possible victims of the military system of the region are citizens of Moldova.

Ion Manole said the young people who want to avoid the Transnistrian army ask to be taken under the supervision of the Ministry of Defense of Moldova, often through the agency of Promo-Lex Association, trying thus to protect themselves from persecution. In order to deprive the young men of such a possibility, the Transnistrian authorities start to supervise them when they are at school so as to draft them when they reach the required age.

The head of the Reintegration Office Ion Stavila said the problem of forced enrollment of the young people will be solved when the Transnistrian region is granted a special status, as integral part of Moldova. "It is hard to help these persons. We are now looking for solutions," said the official. He stressed that the persecution of this group of people is part of the intimidation campaign carried out in the region, which is targeted mainly at the civil society. Ion Stavila referred to the case of journalist Ernest Vardanyan, who was arrested over 'betrayal of the state', the case of the Bender town resident Ilie Cazacu, who was arrested 40 years ago under the same charges, and other cases.

Sergiu Vylkov, a member of the Join Control Commission (JCC) on behalf of the official Chisinau, explained that the Transnistrian delegation often opposes the inclusion of related issues in the agenda. "Even if the JCC works in the Security Zone, we do not have access to Transnistrian military institutions as many of them are located in the area illegally, including in breach of the Moldovan-Russian ceasefire agreement of 1992," said Vylkov.

According to Ion Manole, the situation is serious and can be overcome by applying international documents like the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, whose ratification has been delayed by the Parliament for 10 years. Viorel Barbanoua, a member of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, said that if the Rome Statute is applied both the constitutional authorities and the inhabitants of the region will benefit from additional instruments for fighting the human rights violations and other illegalities committed by the Transnistrian authorities.

According to the data of Promo-Lex, legal cases were opened in 2009 against 290 young people from Transnistria who refused to join the local army. Young persons of certain religions banning doing the military service were fined. A study made two years ago by Promo-Lex revealed several cases of death in the Transnistrian army.

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Rome Statute as instrument for ensuring observance of human rights in Transnistria

The civil society recommends the Parliament of Moldova not to delay the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court that was signed in 2000. It considers that the implementation of the Statute all over the country can provide additional levers for ensuring the respect for the human rights in the Transnistrian region, including by holding accountable the persons who are to blame for such violations, representatives of NGOs said during public debates centering on the problems faced by the Transnistrian young people, who are drafted into the military units of the unconstitutional regime by force, which were held at Info-Prim Neo Agency.

"The ratification of the Rome Statute will bring visible advantages to the Moldovan people, especially the residents of Transnistria that is controlled by the unconstitutional regime, in defending the rights and fundamental freedoms," said Viorel Barbanoua, a member of the National Coalition for the International Criminal Court. "Unlike such institutions as the European Court of Human Rights, which condemns the states for violating the human rights, the International Criminal Court that is also called the International Criminal Tribunal or the Hague

Court condemns persons for committing crimes and wrongdoings against the man and the mankind," Viorel Barbanoua stressed. According to him, the Transnistrian leaders can also be held responsible for their actions against the population and the law. The Hague Court delegates its own experts to the examined territories and has an important set of instruments for imposing its authority.

Ion Manole, the head of the association Promo-Lex, said the Rome Statute are a new guarantee for preventing military conflicts.

At the same time, the head of the Reintegration Office Ion Stavila considers that the Rome Statute does not represent a general panacea for remedying the situation of human rights in the Transnistrian region. "Moldova signed a number of conventions that cannot be applied in Transnistria because the Moldovan authorities do not have control over it," Ion Stavila said.

Viorel Barbanoua believes that Moldova postponed the ratification of the Rome Statute because it does not control the Transnistrian region. However, the given document could be adopted by the end of this year, he said.

The Rome Statute were signed by the Government of Moldova in 2000. In 2007, the Ministry of Justice submitted the document to the parliamentary commission for foreign policy and European integration for approval. The commission approved it. The ratification of the Rome Statute constitutes a point in the Moldova EU Plan of Action.

The Rome Statute was ratified by 111 countries and signed by 129 states. Presently, the International Criminal Court is examining a series of cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and is investigating three heads of state.

The National Coalition for the International Criminal Court that was founded recently by a number of NGOs calls upon the Moldovan authorities to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The National Council of NGOs launched a series of public debates themed "Current problems in areas of vital importance: convergent and divergent views". Representatives of the central and local public authorities and of the NGO sector, officials responsible for human rights, justice, education, youth, the Transnistrian conflict, the mass media and other fields will be invited to take part in the weekly debates that are aimed at informing the Moldovan population and the press as well as the foreign organizations about the problems faced by the society and at identifying possible solutions and joint actions.

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NOTE

Activities of the "Alexandru cel Bun" school in Tighina at renewed risk of being suspended

27.04.2010 / On 31 March 2010, the hygiene and epidemiology centre in Tighina, subordinate to the unconstitutional Tiraspol authorities, put forward a recommendation in which it notified that the activities of the "Alexandru cel Bun" school in Bender -which falls under the jurisdiction of the constitutional authorities and teaches in the Latin script- could be suspended after the 15 April 2010, on the pretext of alleged health-regulation violations. The recommendation was signed by medical chief D.G.Chirista, who has threatened the school administration that he will prohibit the use of its premises. Alongside the health regulations, the self-proclaimed authorities have also cited the fact that the school's curriculum does not correspond to the curriculum followed on the left bank of the Nistru.

Beginning on 4 April 2010, the hygiene and epidemiology centre in Bender, working jointly with the border services subordinate to the regional administration, have prohibited the delivery of food supplies to the school, along with other items and daily supplies required by the students. Food supplies at the school will soon run out, and the situation could become critical, in particular around the exam period. We cannot rule out the possibility that the regional administration could escalate the situation, repeating events of 2004, when institutions in the Transnistrian region under the jurisdiction of the constitutional authorities were evacuated, or their activities illegally suspended.

We must also point out that this pressure is coming at a time when students are registering for year I. We believe that these actions are deliberate and intended to provoke, aimed principally at reducing the number of students enrolled in these institutions. These actions can thus be seen as nothing other than a form of intimidation, repression and discrimination, and as a continuation of serious violations of the fundamental rights and freedoms of at least these groups of people (teachers, parents, students). Precisely because of the continuous harassment on the part of the illegal administration in the region, the number of students in class I in this institution alone fell from 250 in 1999, to 50 in 2009.

We are concerned by the alarming situation created artificially in the region, and in this context we are calling upon the Unified Control Commission (the single mechanism that can, and should, intervene in cases of human rights violations). We request that this issue be examined as a priority, even in today's hearing (April 15) and that the administrations in Tiraspol and Bender stop, immediately and unconditionally, their persecution and harassment of the school administration, and the discrimination against inhabitants of the Transnistrian

region through eliminating their possibility to choose freely for themselves the institution of study, language, and education programme for their children. We also seek the active involvement of the other actors with an interest in resolving the Transnistrian problem in preventing an escalation of the conflict surrounding the institutions teaching in the Latin script on the left bank of the Nistru.

The "Promo-LEX" Association recalls that on 9 June 2009, public hearings took place at the European Court of Human Rights against the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation following applications from groups of students, parents and teachers from 3 schools from the Transnistrian region that teach in the Latin script (the "Evricea" school in Rîbnici, the "Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt" school from Grigoriopol which at present is based in the village of Dorotcaia, Dubăsari, and the "Alexandru cel Bun" school in Bender). Until now the ECHR has not ruled on these applications, while the problems encountered by these institutions have neither been resolved nor treated seriously by the defendant governments. The original administrative building has not been returned to the "Evricea" school, while students and teachers at the "Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt" school in Grigoriopol continue to commute daily to Dorotcaia in the Dubasari raion so as to be able to study in their chosen language and according to the educational programme chosen by their parents. We request that discussions on all these issues be put on the agenda of the Unified Control Commission and of the Republic of Moldova and Russian Federation, the latter two being both responsible for the human rights situation in the Transnistrian region of Moldova.

On the 21 April 2010 the "border service at the Bender-Tiraspol customs post", subordinate to the regional administration, once again blocked the delivery of food provisions to the school. The reason given by the head of the service was "...the failure to resolve certain problems".

According to the director of the Liceu, Mrs. M.Roibu, "as of today nothing has yet been resolved, the school still remains without the food provisions needed daily to feed the pupils as a result of the ban placed on transporting them through the Transnistrian customs post". She mentioned however that she had been contacted by the head of the hygiene service in Bender, who told her that he did not intend to stop the school's activity.

According to representatives of the Office for Reintegration, "in the meeting of 20.04.2010, the Moldovan representative on the Unified Control Commission made a declaration concerning the situation of the Alexandru cel Bun school, which is to be examined at the next meeting of the Commission". They also added that on the day of the incident they sent a request to the negotiations representative for Tiraspol, Mr. Yastrebceac, to intervene to solve the dispute. For the moment, the 'Alexandru cel Bun' school remains without a guaranteed supply of food provisions.

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