

MOLDOVA REALITY CHECK

5 November 2013

Venue: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania

Vilnius, Lithuania

In the early months of 2013, Moldova plunged into the most serious political crisis since its independence, revealing what seems a systematic weakness in the country's political system. Moldova withstood the crisis without early parliamentary elections mostly due to the upcoming Vilnius Summit and European influence, while the new government's leadership is the ever pro-European Prime Minister Leancă. Instead of "success story" of Eastern Partnership, the country sees increased campaigning toward the Russia's crafted Customs Union.

The second Moldova Reality Check event is organized after the first hundred days of Leancă's government and only few weeks before the Vilnius EaP Summit. Gathering most renowned Moldovan and international analysts the second Moldova Reality Check's objective is to review factors influencing the country's politics, both internal and external, taking stock of steps on the ground in order to look for a realistic policy line for the EU for the Summit and beyond – the crucial period before the 2014 parliamentary elections.

The "Reality Check" is a policy review process aiming to gather insights from top domestic and international analysts, practitioners, diplomats and policy-makers working in and on the EaP countries, with the ambition to discuss these behind closed doors. The first such a review was the Belarus Reality Check enacted in Vilnius, Lithuania October 2012.

AGENDA

**all panels and discussions are off-the-record*

09:00 – 09:15 OFFICIAL WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

**Joint session with the Georgia Reality Check*

09:15 – 10:45 FIRST PANEL: POLITICAL UPDATE

Key topics and questions:

- What impact did the crisis have on the country's political system?
- Assessment of political power and influence: who now controls which branches of power (legislative, executive, and judiciary) and what are their interests and motivations? State and policies of the opposition.

- How do Moldovans perceive and assess situation in their country after the crisis? Impact of the crisis on the public moods and perceptions.
- What do the current polls say and how are the trends in terms of political support developing? How did political preferences change after the crisis and what are the trends in the run-up to the 2014 elections?

10:45 – 11:00 COFFEE BREAK

11:00 – 12:30 SECOND PANEL: ECONOMY AND ENERGY

Key topics and questions:

- What is the current Moldova's economic outlook? What impact will have the Russia's wine ban on Moldova's economy?
- What are the arguments for the Customs Union? What are the economic costs and benefits of the Customs Union for Moldova and Transnistria?
- What are the economic costs and benefits of the DCFTA for Moldova and Transnistria? What impact will the DCFTA have on the main sectors of Moldova's economy (agriculture, industry, services)? How will the DCFTA influence Transnistria?
- How should the EU deal with key economic stakeholders and what is their relationship with them?
- Gas politics: Russian debt, consequences of the Ungheni-Iasi gas interconnector

12:30 – 13:45 BUFFET LUNCH

13:45 – 15:15 THIRD PANEL: EXTERNAL (F)ACTORS

Key topics and questions:

- What is the current strategy of Russia towards Moldova and in what ways is it likely to change after the Vilnius summit (and AA/DCFTA adoption)? Who are Russia's major partners/allies/advocates in Chisinau and Tiraspol and why?
- What are the positions, interests and true motivations of Germany, Romania and other individual EU member states in Moldova?
- What is the role and interest of Ukraine in the region?

- Where and how do Transnistria and Gagauzia fit into this? What are their relations with Russia and the EU? What will the Moldova's European path mean for them? What do the elites and the general public think in these regions? What are the implications for Moldova proper? How much would reintegration of Transnistria cost the West?

15:15 – 15:30 COFFEE BREAK

15:30 – 17:00 FOURTH PANEL: EU EFFORTS

Key topics and questions:

- What are the expectations from the Vilnius Summit – in the EU, in Moldova and among the general public in Moldova? How should the "success" be defined?
- What have been the most important achievements and mistakes of the EU in Moldova? Assessment of the EU activities, positions and impact. Evaluation of the EU assistance and effectiveness thereof.
- What is the perception of the EU in Moldova: among the political and economic elites, among the civil society and the general public? What do Moldovans think about the EU?
- What should be the EU's strategy towards Moldova after the Vilnius Summit? What should be done about Transnistria?
- Prospects of the AA, DCFTA and visa liberalisation for Moldova and their immediate and longer-term impacts on Transnistria.

17:00 – 17:30 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



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