

Rights of recruits and servicemen discussed at International Conference

Special points of interest:

- Rights of recruits and servicemen discussed at International Conference
- Youth civic participation - the way to strengthen democracy in Moldova
- Promoting Volunteering in Transnistrian Region
- The road to civilization is paved with tin cans

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The rights of recruits and servicemen in the Eastern Region of Moldova is virtually a taboo issue for the authorities in Chisinau, as civil society has undertaken to ring alarm bells on the illegalities and difficult situations faced by them. Young men are recruited and enrolled forcibly in illegal paramilitary units, and once there, they are humiliated and often subjected to inhuman treatment, without being able to defend their most basic rights. This formed a key part of discussions at the International Conference titled **“The Rights of Recruits and Servicemen in Moldova's Eastern Region: A Parallel with other Conflict Areas in the CIS”**, which took place in Chisinau on **September 8**.

According to Ion Manole, the director of the Promo-LEX Association, the Republic of Moldova is a unique state. “There are three different kinds of

armed forces on its territory: the legitimate armed forces (The National Army), the Russian Army (which is stationed against the will of the Moldovan authorities and at variance with the commitments assumed at the international level by the



Russian Federation), and the illegitimate paramilitary forces. This leads to severe violations of human rights of thousands of people living in the region. On one hand, the region's administration has been violating the legal norms and human rights for twenty years now, while the Moldovan authorities have limited themselves to monitoring the situation, thus neglecting their

positive duty to protect the rights and interests of the people living in the area. This amounts to discrimination of over 500,000 people by the Moldovan authorities”, said Ion Manole.

Attending the event, Brig. Gen. Iurie Dominic, Chief of the General Staff and Commander of the National Army, emphasized the importance of establishing a dialogue between the armed forces and civil society and the necessity of undertaking joint initiatives to raise awareness and understanding of human rights among both the military and civilians. The conference participants also spoke about the army reform processes in the CIS countries, the conflict regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and about the status and observance of the rights of military personnel, with information presented by



representatives of the Moldovan Ministry of Defense as well as civil society members from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Armenia and Tajikistan.

In an attempt to explain the legal status of military forces in the Eastern Region of Moldova, Prof. Valeriu Cuşnir, Habilitated Doctor of History, said that the non-state military formations in the region were formed in contravention of the national and international law. “According to the Constitution of the Moldavian SSR, only the Supreme Soviet, as the highest organ of state power, was authorized to adopt measures within the limits allowed by the Constitution for the state's defense and security. Any other authority, body or person had no legal power in the field of state defense and security, including the authority to set up military units. In other words, the paramilitary formations created on the eastern side of the Nistru are illegal in essence; moreover, they pose an increased social threat to national security”, said Valeriu Cuşnir. Maj. Gen. (res.) Victor Gusleacov said the paramilitary forces in the Transnistrian region were established under the 1992 Ceasefire Agreement between Moldova and Russia. As the document was never ratified by the Moldovan Parliament or by the Russian Duma, as dictated by international norms, it remains illegal, and so is the presence of the paramilitary forces.

Pavel Shmakov, an independent expert based in Khabarovsk, Russia, after visiting one Russian military unit stationed in the Transnistrian region, highlighted the deficiencies in the local norms that are supposed to protect the rights of military personnel. According to him, a very serious issue is that servicemen are unable to get effective remedy for abuses and violations.

Concerning the rights of the military in the Transnistrian region, lawyer Alexandru Zubco of Promo-LEX stated: “The young recruits in the Transnistrian region, who are in fact citizens of

Moldova, are forced, on the territory of Moldova, to serve an illegitimate regime by being enrolled into illegal paramilitary units. If they refuse 'enrollment', they are prosecuted, penalized and sentenced to prison. According to unofficial statistics, each year over 400 young men become wanted persons for 'draft evasion'. Conscripts often complain of physical abuse, ill treatment, extortion and other forms of violence in the military units based in the Eastern Region. According to the lawyer, the phenomenon of 'forcible enrollment' essentially amounts to kidnapping.

International experts and civil society members from the countries participating in the Conference highlighted the importance of such an event for consolidating efforts and capacities to promote international standards for the observance of recruits' and conscripts' rights.

The event was attended by representatives from the Moldovan Parliament, the National Army, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor General's Office, Military Centers and District Military Division, as well as by international experts and civil society members, including from the Transnistrian region.

The conference was held as part of the trans-border cooperation project titled “The CIS Human Rights Network for Conscripts” funded by the European Union through its European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The project is implemented by the London School of Economics and Political Science and the Promo-LEX Association as one of the local project partners.

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Youth civic participation - the way to strengthen democracy in Moldova



In the period of 15 to 21 August 2011 it was organized the Summer School "Civic participation of young people in Moldova", activity which was held in Vadul lui Voda, at the summer camp "Romanita."

The main goals of summer school were:

- Increasing knowledge on youth civic engagement, especially at the local level;
- Developing skills organize activities on civic participation;
- Strengthening their own instruments to promote mobility of young people in their community.

19 young people aged 15-19 years in the north of the country (Soldanesti, Rezina Orhei) and tranistrean region (Ribnita and Camenca) participated at summer school. It should be noted that over 100 applications around the country were received within the organization, in this sense the priority being given to the project regions.

*“Young people
are not
tomorrow's
future, but
today's present”*

A particular interest within sessions were given to presentations of experts in political level, Ms **Ecaterina Ceban**, MA in Political Science, State University of Moldova; Law - Ms. **Ana Ciofu**, MA in Political Science, IDRAD; civic society - Mrs. **Galina Oltu**, PHD, NGO "Golden Lotus", International Relations - Mr. **Genadie Slobodeniuc**, MA in Political Science, and Mr. **Igor Goreacii** - MA Accounting and Auditing, an expert in economics.

During the seven days of summer school there were organized theoretical and practical activities: interactive games, workshops, presentations, contests and also good mood.

Participants remained with positive impressions, simultaneously accumulating theoretical information on

the most pressing issues facing society at national and international level, have exchanged their experience with young people on both sides of the Dniester River, became involved in activities proposed by experts, so that ultimately removed the communication barrier (in fact a linguistic one) and gained understanding and respect between them.

We believe that organizing such activities will help to strengthen the civic engagement of youth in their communities, thus mobilizing them and eventually – to come with their own



initiatives of productive change in a civic domain for the whole society.

“This summer school was organized in the frames of the project “Strengthening democracy through civic engagement: youth participation”, financed by the Royal Embassy of Netherlands in Kiev / Program Matra / KAP.

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Promoting Volunteering in Transnistrian Region



Chisinau hosted on **September 10** the final event of the *Promoting Volunteer Activities in the Transnistrian Region Project* – a presentation of video spots.

The event was attended by leaders of initiative groups, volunteers, civil society members from the towns of Bender, Dubasari and Grigoriopol and the villages of Dorotcaia, Malaiesti and Varnita.

It was a motivating event which we hope will inspire activities aimed at promoting individual freedom and will kindle in the youths' hearts a desire for self-development and will arouse understanding for community problems. By showing social video spots made by the project participants in a bid to depict and promote volunteer work in the Transnistrian region, the youths tried to convey to the public their message and their own interpretation of the two key concepts of the project – active citizenship and volunteering.

The event also included an awards ceremony for the winners of the photography competition “NO to Torture!”, organized by the initiative group from Varnita village. The organizers selected three winning photos which were used to make a leaflet that seeks to draw attention to the problem of torture in the Region.

The youths involved in the project implemented several activities:

- “NO to Torture!”- Varnita village ,
- “Change Starts with Yourself” - Malaiesti village ,
- “Saving Nature Saves You!” - Bender town.

The most active young volunteers were rewarded with USB flash drives.

The project aimed to raise the level of understanding and informal education of the youth and CSO leaders in the Transnistrian region on volunteer work, and to create a sustainable platform by

implementing common activities and providing alternative methods of community involvement.

Project outcomes:

- 20 leaders, civil society members were trained on volunteering and on how to develop ideas to promote volunteer work;
- The project participants developed critical thinking and communication abilities that will help them to implement new ideas;
- The participating youths engaged in concrete volunteer activities, presented solutions to solving problems through these activities and participated directly, attracting along persons from the native areas;
- The participating youths developed ideas on how to multiply the information presented at the volunteer school in order to develop a culture of volunteer work in the Transnistrian region;
- The participants learned how to create an advertising video that promotes volunteer work in order to popularize it and make it more visible to the citizens.

This project was implemented by the Initiative Group “The Youth Development Center”, Grigoriopol town, with the support of the “Promo-LEX” Association within the framework of the Small Grants Program for Civil Initiatives in the Transnistrian Region. The Small Grants Project is part of the “Strengthening Civil Society in Moldova’s Transnistrian Region” Project, funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kyiv through the Matra/KAP Program.

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“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.”

Marjorie Moore

The road to civilization is paved with tin cans



What can afford more pleasure than a good rest in open air? Summer has brought a lot of nice weather and lush greenness. On days with a scorching sun, city folks seek for the shade and freshness provided by parks. But it's not because they are keen to listen to bird songs while lounging on the soft grass. Grabbing as much food as they can carry, all of it abundantly wrapped in plastic bags, in addition to a pack of soda for the kids and another one of beer for themselves, and of course some liquor "for fun" and dozens of plastic glasses, the picnickers occupy their cozy places in the shade. Before long swirls of smoke start rising above the park: here and there you can hear wood cracking in the fire and sense the scent of barbecue. The children play tag on the grass, making it disappear together with the flowers in it, as the adults throw into the fire everything they can, including the branches of the trees which once gave them the cool shade they so much enjoyed. And all this happens to the earsplitting sounds of what they call music.

*"The voice
of Nature makes
itself heard to those
who walk into it with
an open heart"*

Nicholas Roerich

Here is also a group of youths who decided to visit this recreational area, but not simply to spend their leisure time. As they're gone, a sad picture appears before our eyes: a real unauthorized waste dump; numerous pits in the ground left by campfires, now full of garbage, and you can't take one step without stumbling upon plastic glasses, bottles, tin cans and many other things... I think it's not the case to enumerate all the garbage collected in bags by our volunteers, but let me just say it was a very good idea to wear rubber gloves!

In several hours of hard work involving volunteers of the group "Inima", as part of the event "For a Cleaner Planet", and this little corner of nature is able to breathe freely again. Thanks to our efforts, the garbage scattered around everywhere was collected into bags, which were then disposed of in the nearest bins. The few passers-by who witnessed the event looked with confusion at the young people collecting

the wasted bottles and plastic. And only one woman stopped for a moment to praise the workers for their effort.

Sure, what those young volunteers did there was just a small tribute to Nature, and it's perhaps an insufficient way to solve the numerous existing environmental problems. However, this initiative must come from all of us; at least we should not forget to collect all the waste left after each picnic.

Other solutions could be to reduce production and consumption of plastic packages and dinnerware, arrange special places for picnics and barbecues, and instal bins and containers for



garbage (often one has to carry the garbage for hundreds of meters to the nearest bin). It is very strange that people haven't yet realized that the most important things are the air we breathe, the water we drink and the earth that gives us food, and which mustn't be poisoned with chemical waste. Many aren't even scared by the prospect of our children not having any air to breathe, or of not being able to take a swim in the poisoned waters of rivers and seas. Man considers himself to be the king of nature... then why does he kills his subjects?

This project is implemented by the initiative group "Inima", Bender town, with the support of the "Promo-LEX" Association within the framework of the Small Grants Program for Civil Initiatives in the Transnistrian Region. The Small Grants Project is part of the "Strengthening Civil Society in Moldova's Transnistrian Region" Project, funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kyiv through the Matra/KAP Program.

Respect for Human Rights in Eastern Partnership Countries: Best Practices and Challenges

In early 2010 the idea was born to strengthen civil society efforts at Eastern Partnership level in promoting and defending human rights. The idea was supported by a number of organizations from Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and materialized in the project “Respect for Human Rights in Eastern Partnership Countries: Best Practices and Challenges”. The project was implemented by the Promo-LEX Association (Moldova) in partnership with the Union “Article 42 of the Constitution” (Georgia), the Public Interest Citizen Initiative Union (Azerbaijan) and the Open Society Institute Armenia Foundation.

The project was carried out from May 2010 to June 2011 and included 4 implementation stages during which 4 study visits were made to Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova. The agenda of the study visits focused on the following themes: Strategic litigation - instrument to promote and protect human rights in the countries of the Eastern Partnership, The impact of the European Convention on Human Rights and of other international human rights instruments on laws and legal practices in Eastern Partnership countries, The practice of human rights monitoring in Eastern Partnership Countries and Human Rights Advocacy Initiatives in Eastern Partnership Countries.

The goal of the project was to promote greater respect for, observance and protection of human rights in the countries included into the Eastern Partnership Initiative through an experience exchange and strengthening of the regional cooperation between civil society organizations from Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Promo-LEX launches the Brochure

“Respect for Human Rights in Eastern Partnership Countries: Best Practices and Challenges”.

This publication includes a brief description of the context, goals and activities of the project, as well as a general overview of the human rights situation in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova. This Brochure also includes a perspective on the practices of strategic litigation and human rights monitoring, a perspective on human rights advocacy campaigns and an analysis of the impact of the European Convention on Human Rights and of other international human rights instruments on the legislation and legal practices in Moldova. In addition, the Brochure contains the main conclusions and recommendations formulated by the project participants on how to promote and defend human rights in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova.

The project was implemented with the support of the East East: Partnership Beyond Borders Program (EE:PBPP) of the Soros Foundation-Moldova, the Open Society Georgia Foundation, the Open Society Armenia Foundation, and the Open Society Azerbaijan Foundation.

The Brochure is available in English, Romanian and Russian languages on www.promolex.md, Publications section.

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“Strengthening democracy and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms have become priority areas for non-governmental organizations in countries of Eastern Partnership”



ECHR will examine in a priority basis a case versus Moldova and Russia



On 23 August 2011, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) decided to apply the urgency procedure to the case of **Eriomenco v. Moldova and the Russian Federation**, application no.42224/11 lodged with the Court on 1 July 2011 by lawyers of the human rights organization Promo-LEX.

Vitalie Eriomenco is a businessman from the town of Slobodzia in the Transnistrian region, who was arrested on 29 March 2011 by a law enforcement agency of the unrecognized republic. During his detention, the victim has been subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment in private detention facilities in the Transnistrian region. He has been kept for several months in a humid cell, without ventilation, adequate sunlight or access to sanitation, without drinking water, and infested with lice, bedbugs and cockroaches. Detention in such conditions has led to the worsening of his chronic illnesses, including high blood pressure, heart block and respiratory distress. Also, because of the poor conditions of detention, his prostatitis and duodenal ulcer has

worsened so much that they give him unbearable pains. In three months, Mr. Eriomenco's health has declined badly. He lost 5 kg in just 18 days, because the food there is unpalatable. He is also denied medical assistance. For his release, investigators requested \$1 million from his family to serve as a compensation for damages allegedly caused to a person. Further, Vitalie Eriomenco was fraudulently dispossessed of shares in the companies he administrated. Moreover, the home he owned was seized and his family evicted.

The applicant complained to the ECtHR that the defendant States violated Arts. 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 17, 34 and Art.1 of Protocol 1 to the European Convention.

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InfoPost – Newsletter for NGOs



Social-information center "Apriori" within the "InfoPost" bring to your attention the electronic version of the Newsletter designed to reflect important moments in the NGO sector activity and social events in Transnistria.

The first number may be found by following the link - <http://suslikov.net/blog/civic/70.html>

Also, if you want to share some thoughts, experiences or information about planned activities or past ones, or if you have any questions about finan-

cial management and legal aspects related to operation of an organization - please send an e-mail at: sic.apriori@gmail.com.

We welcome the comments, suggestions, recommendations and hope for fruitful cooperation!

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Be Different – Build a One Europe



Chisinau, **September 20-27, 2011**

Type of activity: Experience exchange between youths, Cooperation between European Union Action neighboring countries

Duration:
September 20-27, 2011

Location:
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Participating countries: Italy, Russia, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova

Participants:

- young people aged between 18 and 30 years,
- 4 representatives from each country, together with a team leader,
- communication language: English,
- should display interest in informal education, international relations, and be open to making new friends, meeting new people; no specific knowledge or skills are required,
- should prepare a presentation of their country with a focus on cultural aspects.

Objectives:

- promote understanding of the intercultural education concept,
- encourage participants to accumulate knowledge, skills and good practices on

informal education and apply such techniques in everyday activity,
 - engage less experienced young people in youth interventions and informal education activities, and facilitate their transformation into active citizens,
 - raise public awareness of and change perceptions on people with disabilities in the context of an open labor market,
 - share visions and methods on social inclusion of the youth,
 - establish new partnerships and improve international cooperation among the youth,
 - broaden knowledge on the Youth in Action Program.

Conditions: The project is implemented by the Youth in Action Program. The accommodation and meal costs will be covered by the organization, transport costs will be 70% covered.

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Strengthening Civil Society through Arts and Culture

The Open Society Foundations' Arts & Culture Program (ACP) is announcing a call for proposals.

The ACP works at the nexus of arts, culture, human rights, and social advocacy. Through its grant program, the ACP strives to encourage broad-based critical reflection and catalyze social action in parts of the world where open societies are absent or weak, and where the cultural rights of minority

groups are endangered. The aim of this call for proposals is to strengthen alternative and autonomous cultural infrastructures and innovative arts initiatives, to raise professional standards in the art world in the Arts and Culture Program's regions of activity, and to promote reform in the arena of cultural policy.

Eligible projects

Projects that aim to draw on the power of culture to help build open societies in



Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), the Caucasus, Afghanistan, Moldova, Mongolia, and Turkey, and that involve one of the following activities:

1. Cultural production
2. Creating or strengthening cultural platforms
3. Professional development and capacity-building

What the Program provides

Project grants that typically range between \$1,000 and \$30,000.

Deadline

Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis through **December 31, 2012**. Application forms may be completed in either Russian or English.

Additional information

For detailed information about the eligible

countries and activities, please view the *Application Guidelines* available at: <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/arts/focus/civil-society/grants>

How to apply

Before applying, please send a Letter of Inquiry. ACP will typically respond to your Letter of Inquiry within two weeks of receipt. If eligible, you will be invited to complete the Application Form. The Application Form, the e-mail address to which the application should be made, as well as other details on how to apply are available at: <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/arts/focus/civil-society/grants>

For further information, please contact **Daniela Bolganschi**,
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Apply to State-Building School

Building on the experience accumulated during five editions of the project “OGILINDA Commission – Training on Parliamentary Norms and Practices”, the Institute for Regional Development and Sustainable Administration (IDRAD) is launching **the State-Building School**, dedicated to undergraduate and master's degree students, which will run **from September 2011 through May 2012**.

Two decades into independence, the Republic of Moldova hasn't yet finalized the process of building state institutions and of consolidating mechanisms of regulating relations between them. Legislative deficiencies often produce systemic crises for which political solutions are applied depending on conjuncture.

In this context, the **State-Building School** seeks to present to the participants an integrated vision on state-building, on strategic development principles, and on how state institutions and local public authorities function.

The School's program is divided into three major compartments that will include:

- Weekly meetings with various relevant experts;
- Practical activities;

- Analysis of legislative proposals and formulation of amendments;
- Formulation of development strategies in legal, economic and other areas.

Applicants shall present:

- A Curriculum Vitae (European model)
- An essay on the topic “Development Prospects for Moldova in the Next 30 Years”.

Applications shall be sent to the email address idad_institut@yahoo.com until 20 September 2011.

Selected persons will be contacted for additional details.

INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL BE REJECTED!

** Persons who participated previously in OGLINDA Commission projects are eligible for the State-Building School, but priority will be given to new applicants. Thus, previous participants will be earmarked over 30% of the available places. Those selected will be required to attend all meetings.*

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The **Promo-LEX Association** is a Non-Governmental Organisation focused on promoting democratic values and on implementing internationally recognised standards in the Republic of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region.

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Mission – To advance democracy in the Republic of Moldova through promoting and defending Human Rights and strengthening Civil Society.

RESOURCE AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE FOR TRANSNISTRIA

Resource and Development Center for Transnistria (RDCT), whose purpose is to contribute to the development and strengthening of the nongovernmental sector in the Transnistrian region of Moldova, **supports NGOs and Initiative Groups by providing following services:**

- *Training for NGOs* on diverse topics: Organizational Development, Strategic Planning, NGO Management, Project Management, Financial Management for NGOs, Writing project proposals, Fundraising, Advocacy and Lobbying, other;
- *Individualized assistance* to NGOs and initiative groups;
- *Financial support* within Small Grants program for Transnistrian region NGOs and initiative groups;
- *Advertising information* about activity of the third sector within electronic newsletter.

Promo-LEX continues to offer free legal advice on issues related to military service for youth from the Transnistrian region. For any questions or complaints regarding the violation of recruits rights contact: tel: 373 (22) 45-00-24, email: tiras.army@gmail.com

The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily express the views of the National Endowment for Democracy.
