



EUROPEAN UNION BORDER  
ASSISTANCE MISSION TO  
MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE



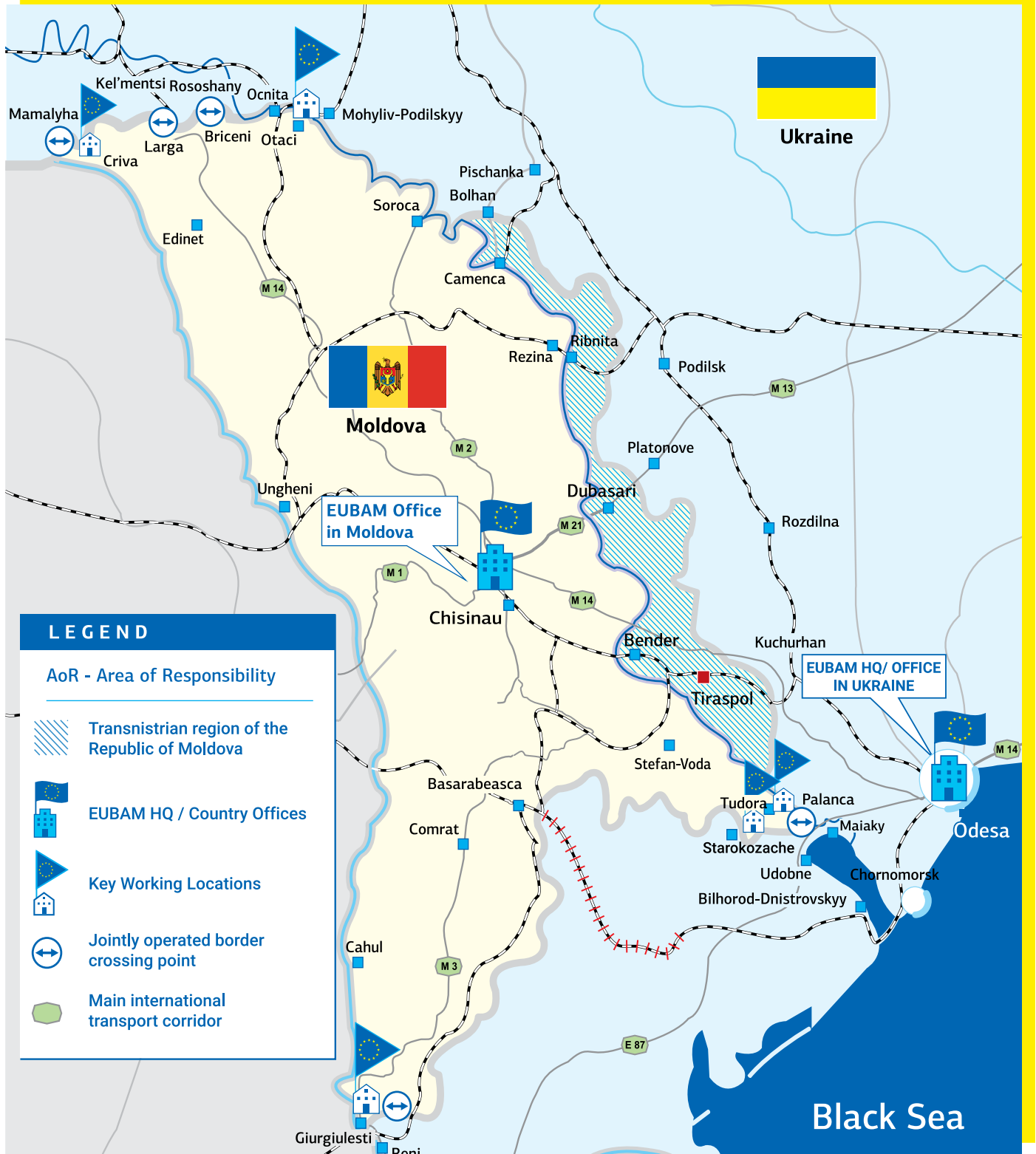
Funded by  
the European Union

# ANNUAL REPORT

1 DECEMBER 2022 - 30 NOVEMBER 2023



# EUBAM AREA OF OPERATION



## Table of Contents

4	FOREWORD FROM THE HEAD OF MISSION
6	THE YEAR IN ACHIEVEMENTS
8	FOREWORDS FROM PARTNER SERVICES
12	SUPPORTING TRANSNISTRIAN REGION-RELATED CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES
18	IMPLEMENTING THE INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT CONCEPT
22	FIGHTING CROSS-BORDER CRIME
26	RENEWING EUBAM MANDATE
28	COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS
34	EUBAM TODAY
36	EUBAM 13 ACTION PLAN

ЗВІТ УКРАЇНСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ



RAPORTUL ÎN LIMBA ROMÂNĂ



# FOREWORD FROM THE HEAD OF MISSION



In 2023, the second year of Russia's aggression against Ukraine continued to cast a destructive effect on the country. Russian unprovoked attacks resulted in damage to Ukraine's Black Sea and Danube port infrastructure. The refusal to extend the Black Sea Grain Initiative added strain to the EU-UA Solidarity Lanes initiative, intensifying congestion on transportation routes in the Lower Danube region.

The prevailing situation profoundly affected border management and security, exerting continuous pressure on our partner services in both the Republic of Moldova (referred hereafter as Moldova) and Ukraine. The imperative shifted towards anticipating and effectively countering the challenges posed by the demanding environment. Despite the critical nature of this role, the Ukraine Border Guards, apart from bearing the responsibility of ensuring the execution

of day-to-day operations at the border, were and continue to be stationed on the frontline, tirelessly defending their motherland.

Given that the priorities of our partners had shifted from regular to emergency border management, the Mission aligned its assistance with heightened expectations. Consequently, our focus was on supporting the adjustment of operational processes and infrastructure to alleviate the large strain on border crossing points, including those beyond the EUBAM mandate's geographical coverage.

In our endeavour to foster collaboration in border management among the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine, our strategic focus remained on facilitating Ukrainian trade. To alleviate the pressure on transport corridors, our primary objective, together

with our partners, was to fine-tune the regulatory and border control procedures. Concurrently, the Mission actively supported the European Commission services, contributing to the shaping of strategic investments aimed at fortifying border infrastructure along the EU-UA Solidarity Lanes.

Regarding cross-border crime, operational support initiatives, suspended earlier due to the war, were resumed. The relaunch of collaborative efforts included joint risk and threat assessments, first through resuming the work of the Inter-agency Regional Analytical Group (IRAG) for the threat assessments in the Odesa region, and secondly, between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine with the common border security assessments. In line with this commitment is also our technical assistance component for the Moldovan and Ukrainian border and customs services with a budget of 1 million euros.

In the same vein, in our resolute commitment to address security challenges stemming from the war and bolster the resilience of our partners, the Mission executed a training program for over 400 Moldovan and Ukrainian border and customs officers.

In the Transnistrian region, numerous activities remained suspended due to the prevailing security situation. Over the year, the Mission persisted in its efforts towards confidence-building measures. EUBAM reported on implementing the EU-Moldova Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade area, actively monitoring the region's regular developments pertinent to foreign trade.

Moreover, EUBAM intensified its efforts to enhance movement compliance across the Administrative Line, involving visits to Internal Customs Control Posts, and made valuable suggestions. Additionally, the Mission facilitated the signing and implementing a Cooperation Action Plan between the Moldovan Customs State Inspectorate for the Surveillance of Non-Food Products and Consumer Protection to bolster Moldovan consumer safety.

A historical moment arrived first with the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine receiving the EU candidate status and, later, with the EU leaders' decision to initiate accession talks with Moldova and Ukraine. It underscores the need for comprehensive reforms in the realm of customs and border management as well. In alignment with its mandate, the Mission remains steadfast in providing its support.

Our unwavering commitment is to support you as much as we can, fostering stability, security and progress in the region that meets the demands of the present and builds a foundation for its future.

In November 2023, the Mission's mandate was extended for an additional two years, and it brings with it a renewed sense of purpose. Moving forward, these recent developments and the changed security landscape necessitate a thoughtful adjustment. The Mission is poised to adapt and evolve, ensuring that our partners receive tailored assistance as they navigate many challenges on their journey towards European Union integration.



**SLAWOMIR PICHOR**

*Head of Mission*

# THE YEAR IN ACHIEVEMENTS

DECEMBER 2022- NOVEMBER 2023

## CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES

### Customs and trade requirements on both banks of the Nistru river further approximated

EUBAM conscientiously monitored, assessed, and reported on implementing the EU-Moldova Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area in the Transnistrian region and its commitment to align with the EU agreement. In 2023, the Transnistrian region's exports to the EU accounted for 69%, while its imports from the EU were 55%. It makes the European Union the region's primary trade partner.

### Health and safety of Moldovan consumers enhanced

EUBAM facilitated the signing of the Cooperation Action Plan between Moldovan customs and consumer protection authorities in January, aiming to adopt top-tier European practices to safeguard the Moldovan people. Initially scheduled for six months, the project proved successful and garnered an extension in October, encompassing goods imported into the Transnistrian region. This initiative marks a significant stride for the Republic of Moldova towards harmonisation with the rigorous health and safety standards upheld by the European Union.

### Movement compliance of people and goods across the Administrative Line reinforced

The Mission intensified efforts to improve movement compliance across the Administrative Line by visiting the Internal Customs Control Posts (ICCPs) and vigilant monitoring. These endeavours included formulating valuable suggestions to optimise the overall operational effectiveness of controls of people and goods.

*\*Source: Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova*

## INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT

### Cooperation on border management to facilitate legitimate trade enhanced

EUBAM's initiatives, such as the quarterly Regional Customs Coordination Group involving the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania, and the 2nd International Trade Facilitation Forum in Chisinau, contributed to enhancing transport corridors' capacity through strategic planning and collaboration.



## CROSS-BORDER CRIME

### Joint risk and threat assessments resumed

To support its Partners against challenges posed by the demanding security environment, the Mission restarted the activities of the Inter-agency Regional Analytical Group (IRAG) for threat assessments in the Odesa region and the development of shared border security assessments between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine along their common border (CBSAR).

### International Cross Border Crime investigations facilitated

The Mission supported seamless collaboration between EU law enforcement agencies and national Partners in international investigations related to cigarette smuggling, drugs, and human trafficking. The most notable success was the investigation into illicit cigarette manufacturing, which resulted in the seizure of 17.7 million pieces of illegal cigarettes, 11.2 tons of tobacco, as well as clandestine cigarette production lines. Another achievement was breaking up a transnational criminal group involved in the organization of illegal border crossings by Ukrainian citizens.

### Pressure on the transport corridors in the Lower Danube region mitigated

To alleviate border crossing points congestion, the Mission worked with its Partners and DG MOVE on optimizing control procedures. It enhanced the operability of alternative routes for Ukraine's agricultural exports through river and seaports in the lower Danube region under the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes. Tangible outcomes included opening a new railway corridor between Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, improved coordination, and distribution of cargo traffic among border crossing points, and some simplification of SPS control procedures on agricultural goods from Ukraine.

### Investment needs in border infrastructure along the EU-UA Solidarity Lanes supported

EUBAM supported EU Commission services in assessing border crossing points to identify investment needs in border infrastructure and ensure smooth cross-border trade. The investments are aimed at strengthening vital transport connections between Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Romania along the EU-UA Solidarity Lanes – the routes used since Russia's blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports to transport Ukraine's and Moldova's exports and imports.

### Resilience to border security threats further enhanced

In the orchestration of EUBAM, over 400 officers underwent specialized training on risk analysis, threat assessment, vehicle inspection, and document verification. The initiative strengthened our Partners' capacity to combat diverse illegal activities, ultimately bolstering border security.

# FOREWORDS FROM PARTNER SERVICES

GENERAL BORDER POLICE  
INSPECTORATE OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Ruslan Gălușca**

Head of the General Border Police  
Inspectorate of the Republic of  
Moldova



Dear colleagues,

The political, economic and security environment on the European continent has changed drastically as a consequence of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Since the war started, Moldovan and Ukrainian border agencies worked together to tackle multiple crisis rolling one after another.

Together we have managed to ensure the safe crossing of our common border for hundreds of thousands of refugees that were seeking shelter from the war and to quickly adapt and find solution in implementing the solidarity lanes necessary in the context of facilitating the export of Ukrainian goods to EU via land corridors.

In managing this crisis we have leveraged the principles and instruments of IBM, the foundation of which was laid with a considerable contribution of EUBAM.

One of the most efficient tools in our inventory was proved to be joint controls. Not only this instrument allowed us to help tens of thousands of refugees to daily cross into Moldova through BCP Palanca-Maiaki-Udobnoe, using an infrastructure that was not meant for such a flow of people and vehicles, but also to open new avenues for Ukrainian exports through Basarabeasca-Serpneve-1 and Kuchurhan Novosavitske railway BCPs.

We have to note, that the war has changed drastically the security dynamics at our border.

As other wars have showed time after time again, phenomena such as illegal migration, trafficking in human beings, smuggling of goods, drugs, weapons and munitions are going to shape the operational realities on the ground for the foreseeable future.

These risks to border security are exacerbated by the presence of a segment of state border that is not controlled by constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova.

We already can see the difference in proliferation of illegal activity on the border were both Moldovan and

Ukrainian authorities are working together and on the segment were the Ukrainian authorities have to bear this task alone.

Although the challenges have multiplied we are still limited in the resources available to us in tackling these challenges, especially when we refer to the most valuable one – the human resource.

In this context, we have to efficiently leverage the resources we have available at our common border, including through the use of the tools provided by joint control and joint patrols, exchange of information in real time. In the same time we have to think out of the box, beyond the traditional dogma of organizing the security of the state border.

We have to find approaches, digitalize processes and implement technical solutions that will serve as force multipliers, allowing us to receive more with the resources that are available.

Dear colleagues, both Moldova and Ukraine, are now firmly stepping forward towards EU membership, this means an even greater challenge and responsibility in safeguarding the European values and principles, and ensure that the best practices and highest standards are implemented at our borders.

Yet, we must never forget that the future of the European dream is today safeguarded by the Ukrainian warriors fighting off the Russian aggression on the frontlines.

**This aggression has a direct and immediate consequences for the regional security as well as consequences that are going to manifest themselves in the long term.**

## STATE BORDER GUARD SERVICE OF UKRAINE

# Serhii Deineko

Head of the State Border Guard  
Service of Ukraine



For Ukraine, which has been resisting the full-scale armed invasion of the Russian Federation for two years, the issue of territorial integrity and border security remains the top priority.

The Border Guard Agency of Ukraine as part of the sector of the Armed Forces of Ukraine continues defending the motherland from the Russian aggression in all the frontline areas and ensures the border security, where the situation remains equally tense.

Targeting a complex landscape of cross-border challenges, we remain committed to our common goals of ensuring regional security, protecting our communities and developing the Integrated Border Management system.

At the same time, dynamic development of cooperation with the international partners is an important aspect of this activity. In 2023, as part of partnership with EUBAM maintained since 2005, the personnel of the Border Guard Service of Ukraine took an active role in training events on document verification and vehicle inspection at border crossing points along the state border, as well as in exercises on combatting trafficking and illegal production of tobacco products.

Given the intensified collaboration with the Mission under the Mandate extended for 2023-2024, we expect further enhancement of efficient bilateral cooperation in implementation of priority tasks envisaged by the joint Memorandum of Understanding, namely:

- 1) completion of the Ukraine-Moldova state border demarcation;
- 2) ensuring the appropriate level of border security of the transit section of Odesa-Reni Road near Palanka village (the Republic of Moldova);
- 3) enhancement of joint control at international joint border crossing points at the Ukraine-Moldova state border;
- 4) resuming activity of the five-party Working Group on development of the Joint Common Border Security Assessment Report at the Ukraine-Moldova state border;

5) ensuring activity of the Inter-Agency Regional Analytical Group on Risks and Threats Assessment;

6) organisation and delivery of training events on criminal and risks analysis.

I can assure you that Ukraine remains a reliable security outpost at the border with Europe.

We share the principles of collective security and its main features - mutual trust, respect and constructive cooperation.

Your support is extremely crucial for us, which every day brings us closer to the victory over the aggressor!

Navigating through the complex landscape of cross-border challenges, we stay committed to our common goals — ensuring regional security and protection of our communities as well as building a system of Integrated Border Management.

## CUSTOMS SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Igor  
Talmazan**

**Director of the Customs Service  
of the Republic of Moldova**

Cross-border cooperation in 2023 continued in the extremely difficult realities of the war in Ukraine.

The streamlining of cross-border traffic and ensuring border security remained the strategic priorities of the Moldovan Customs Service in the context of the increased cross-border flow of goods and means of transport, the implementation of various operational mechanisms to mitigate the pressure at the borders being continued.

Under the aegis of EUBAM, was established the MD-RO-UA Regional Customs Coordination Group on streamlining cargo traffic flow and EU-UA Solidarity Lanes, within which the representatives of customs authorities in a trilateral format analyzed various aspects of the operational situation at border checkpoints in order to identify optimal solutions to prevent blockages and optimize the flow of goods.

Traffic decongestion measures continued to be discussed at the 2nd International Trade Facilitation Forum – Supporting Ukrainian Exports Through Solidarity Lanes, organized by EUBAM and Moldovan Customs on 12 October 2023 in Chisinau, as well as at the different bilateral and trilateral meetings of customs authorities of the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Romania, including with the participation of other competent national authorities and EU partners.

Last year, according to the commitments of the European integration of the Republic of Moldova, the Moldovan Customs Service with the EU support successfully completed the extensive activities related to the entry into force, starting from 1 January 2024, of the New Customs Code, harmonized with the EU customs legislation. At the same time, with the financial support of the EU, a new Assistance Project was started regarding the development and implementation of the National Transit System of the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova, compatible with Phase 5 of the New Computerized Transit System (NCTS).

**With the support of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova and EUBAM, the interoperability mechanism was established between the Moldovan Customs Service and the State Inspectorate for the Supervision of Non-Food Products and Consumer Protection for the**



**supervision and protection of the Republic of Moldova market and the final consumer from non-compliant and dangerous products.**

Taking into consideration the priority of developing joint control to streamline cross-border traffic and secure the border, the customs and border authorities of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine signed in 2023, based on the Intergovernmental Agreement of 06.10.2017, nine protocols on the organization of joint control, namely three for the new border crossing points Basarabeasca-Serpniovo-1 (railway), Novosavitcaia-Kuciurgan (railway) and Goianul Nou-Platonove (road), the other six being signed for the road border crossing points with previously functioning joint control Criva-Mamalîga, Larga-Kelmenti, Briceni-Rosoşanî, Pervomaisc-Kuciurgan, Palanca-Maiaki-Udobne and Giurgiuleşti-Reni.

In the future, we are going to complete activities regarding the implementation of full-fledged joint control at Pervomaisc-Kuchurhan BCP on the territory of Ukraine, redeployment of Moldovan control services to the territory of Ukraine at Giurgiulesti-Reni BCP, as well as the implementation of joint control at Goianul Nou-Platonove BCP on the territory of Ukraine.

Thematic meetings and capacity building events continued to be organized with the EUBAM assistance in order to strengthen the capabilities of Moldovan Customs Service to respond quickly to threats and challenges at the borders and in the region.

We would like to express our appreciation to all European, Ukrainian and Moldovan partners for close cooperation and confirm our commitment to continue to take joint coordinated measures for effective border management during this challenging period of the war in Ukraine.

## STATE CUSTOMS SERVICE OF UKRAINE

# Serhii Zviahintsev

### Acting Head of the State Customs Service of Ukraine

The State Customs Service of Ukraine, as one of the partner services of EUBAM, shares the European values, responsibly fulfils its international commitments, and remains open to a constructive dialogue with domestic and international community.

The armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine unfolding with involvement of the Republic of Belarus has led to substantial changes in operation of border crossing points (BCPs) at the Ukrainian state border.

At a time when the energy and transport infrastructure of Ukraine is being destroyed by Russian missile attacks and shelling, when Ukraine's BCPs with friendly countries are functioning at their maximum capacity, we are making every effort to find new solutions to streamline operation.

Since 24 February 2022, BCPs on the segment of the Ukraine-Moldova border and other friendly neighbouring countries have become the main transport arteries connecting Ukraine with EU and the world.

The military aggression against Ukraine has resulted in a prolonged blockade of ports, through which significant volumes of import and export operations were carried out.

Therefore, the matter of streamlining the operation of BCPs amidst increased passenger and cargo traffic through BCPs on the segment of the Ukraine-Moldova border is currently crucial.

The meeting of the co-chairs of the Intergovernmental Ukraine-Moldova Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation convened on 29 September 2023 in Odesa has become an important step in bilateral relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

As a result of the agreements reached by the Commission's co-chairs, the customs and border guard agencies signed Protocols between the Administration of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, the State Customs Service of Ukraine and the General Border Police Inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, as well as the Customs Service under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Moldova on organisation of joint control at Mamalyha-Criva, Kelmentsi-Larga, Rossoshany-Briceni, Reni-Giurgiulesti, Kuchurhan-Pervomaisc, Maiaky-Udobne-Palanca, Platonove-Goianul Nou international BCPs.

Signing the Protocols on organization of joint control bears evidence of consistent actions of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova on streamlining the operation of BCPs along the common border and fulfilment of bilateral commitments.

Ukrainian and Moldovan customs and border guard



agencies undertake other measures aimed at establishing comfortable conditions for crossing the Ukraine-Moldova border, augmenting commodity, and cargo flows, including humanitarian aid to Ukraine and export of Ukrainian-made goods to other countries across the world.

It also concerns export of Ukraine's grain and other agricultural products to foreign markets and averting the global food crisis.

Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova contribute to elaboration of EU Green Corridor Initiative designed to put in place conditions conducive to development of transport corridors for agricultural products.

Customs services of Ukraine and Moldova exchange preliminary data about goods and vehicles moved across the Ukraine-Moldova border; in this regard, a pilot project on pre-arrival information exchange on empty vehicles using SEED+ software solution involving the customs administrations of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Romania, as well EU4Digital program is scheduled for implementation by August 2024.

Customs agencies are currently finalizing preparations for signing the updated version of the Early Emergency Warning System at BCPs along the Ukraine-Moldova border which stipulates an optimal number of vehicles moving across the BCPs and a system of cooperation at all levels of customs authorities to prevent border congestions.

Current challenges and international initiatives on development of cross-border commodity and cargo traffic require tapping into all available reserves as well as seeking and adopting new solutions. The Ukrainian society needs humanitarian support of foreign partners due to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. Business has high hopes for establishment of favourable conditions for export of Ukrainian agricultural goods, metal products, etc., and counts on speed, quality, and attractiveness of logistical services.

Thus, we remain hopeful that EUBAM activities in 2024 will be geared towards engaging international donors for provision of technical assistance and IBM implementation at the Ukraine-Moldova border.

# SUPPORTING TRANSNISTRIAN REGION-RELATED CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES



In 2023, the suspension of cross-border movement along the central segment of the Moldova-Ukraine border paired with the limited operability of Ukrainian sea ports, caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, continued to impact the Transnistrian region's trade. Meanwhile, Chisinau stepped up efforts to address disparities in foreign trade carried by economic operators from both banks of the Nistru River. However, these actions strained relations with Tiraspol and hindered joint confidence-building activities, including those supported by EUBAM.

Despite these challenges, the Mission adapted by shifting to monitoring of Transnistrian developments and supporting Expert (Working) Groups by analysing regulatory changes, and those concerning the EU-Moldova trade area. As for the latter, EUBAM facilitated the signing of a Cooperation Action Plan between Moldovan customs and consumer protection authorities, extending its reach to safeguard all Moldovan consumers from both banks of the Nistru River. Furthermore, the Mission intensified efforts to reinforce movement compliance across the Administrative Line.

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO EXPERT (WORKING) GROUPS

Against the backdrop of a fragile situation in the geopolitical region, the pace of activity within Expert (Working) Groups (WG) slowed. EUBAM, as part of the EU Delegation to Moldova team, participated in three WG meetings: twice in the WG on Road Transport and Infrastructure and once in the WG on Economy. The Economy WG discussed topics such as veterinary, quarantine, and plant protection, trade barriers, environmental fees for Transnistrian businesses, and customs procedures fees. Tiraspol voiced concerns about these fees, while Chisinau aimed to standardize rules for all economic operators on both banks of the Nistru River. Meanwhile, the WG on Road Transport and Infrastructure addressed challenges faced by drivers with Moldovan license plates in the Transnistrian region, the requirement of Transnistrian car insurance for MD drivers, and additional payments for trucks over 18 tons from January 2024. The reopening of Vehicle Registration Offices (VROs) was

also tackled, with particular focus on challenges related to car importation into the Transnistrian region. To this end, EUBAM provided on-the-job mentoring sessions and shared with MDCS guidelines for vehicle import from Germany.

## TRACKING REGULATORY SHIFTS RELATED TO TRANSNISTRIAN REGION FOREIGN TRADE

Throughout the year, EUBAM monitored Moldova's endeavors to address disparities in foreign trade conducted by economic operators from both banks of the Nistru River. This included initiatives concerning customs procedure fee payment, licensing requirements, and environmental fee waivers, with the goal of aligning Transnistrian economic operators with Moldovan requirements. Simultaneously, EUBAM closely tracked regulatory developments in the Transnistrian region to assess progress towards compliance with the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). This involved analyzing amendments to Transnistrian customs regulations regarding temporary importation

procedures and customs tariffs and their compliance with EU and Moldovan Customs Codes. EUBAM also scrutinized Transnistrian amendments related to e-declarations and proofs of origin, promoting paperless administration and reducing bureaucracy in accordance with EU best practices.

## REINFORCING PRODUCT SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE

In 2023, EUBAM expanded its initiative aimed at fostering collaboration between Moldovan customs and market surveillance authorities. Thus, in January 2023, a Cooperation Action Plan between the Moldovan Customs Service (MDCS) and the State Inspectorate for the Surveillance of Non-Food Products and Consumer Protection (MDSISNPCP) was signed. This plan aimed to strengthen partnerships and ensure the safety of products entering the Republic of Moldova's market. Concurrently, the MDCS and MDSISNPCP signed an Order outlining the cooperation procedure. In October 2023, this Order was extended for an additional six months and encompassed more Internal Customs Posts (ICPs), with plans to broaden its scope further in the future. Throughout the year, several simulation exercises were conducted at ICPs to pilot the practical implementation of this Order.

Additionally, in July 2023, EUBAM organized a study visit for seven representatives from both agencies to Germany, providing an opportunity to observe cooperation

between customs and market surveillance authorities in Germany and share experiences in this field with Moldovan counterparts. Consequently, the Mission presented proposals to Moldovan authorities to enhance existing control mechanisms based on German practices.

## ENHANCING COMPLIANCE AT ADMINISTRATIVE LINE

During regular visits to the Administrative Line, EUBAM provided invaluable support to the Moldovan authorities, addressing crucial issues in customs, police, and migration domains. Through on-the-job mentoring sessions, practical insights on EU best practices and guidelines related to risk analysis and combating customs fraud were imparted, significantly enhancing operational capabilities among the partners.

Furthermore, Mission's experts shared their expertise in crafting comprehensive risk assessments for the Administrative Line, enabling partners to efficiently focus their enforcement efforts. This strategic approach aims at optimizing resource allocation, maximizing positive enforcement outcomes such as seizures and VAT collection, while also facilitating legitimate trade.

Additionally, EUBAM identified crucial equipment needs for Internal Customs Control Posts along the Administrative Line, ensuring operational effectiveness and compliance.

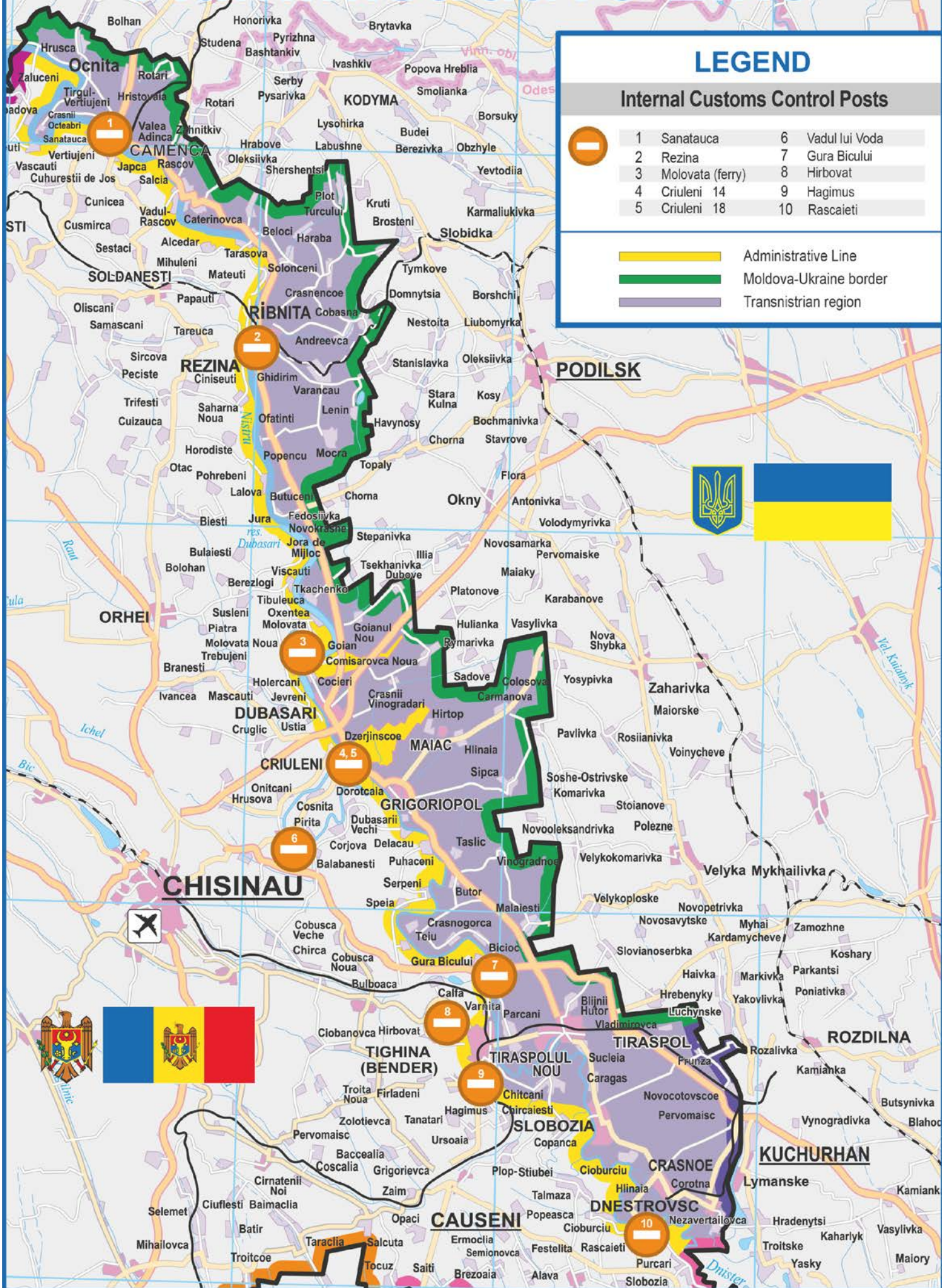


*Sergiu Daranuta, Head of the State Inspectorate for the Surveillance of Non-Food Products and Consumer Protection and Nicolae Vutkariov, the Acting Head of the Moldovan Customs Service signing the Action Plan.*

**At the Administrative Line there are 10 Internal Customs Posts, where officers of the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova work together with the Ministry of Internal Affairs representatives.**



# Administrative Line



## LEGEND

### Internal Customs Control Posts



1	Sanatauca	6	Vadul lui Voda
2	Rezina	7	Gura Bicului
3	Molovata (ferry)	8	Hirbovat
4	Criuleni 14	9	Hagimus
5	Criuleni 18	10	Rascaieti

- Administrative Line
- Moldova-Ukraine border
- Transnistrian region



## EXTERNAL TRADE OF TRANSNISTRIAN REGION

In 2023, foreign trade of the Transnistrian region remained impacted by Russia's unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. Thus, Transnistrian region's foreign trade (goods turnover) dropped by 7% in USD monetary value compared to 2022.

Transnistrian region's economic operators slightly grew by \$17mln or 2% year-on-year to \$744mln (fig.3). In the midst of lowered annual exports and slightly raised imports, the trade deficit in Transnistrian region's foreign trade in goods grew by 64% year-on-year, having reached \$329mln. Major trade deficits were recorded with the European Union (\$125mln) and Ukraine (\$118mln).

### EXPORT

Mainly, metal products (40%), agricultural and food products (25%), textiles and clothes (15%), footwear (7%), equipment and instruments (6%), and other commodities (7%) built up the pattern of Transnistrian merchandise exports in 2023 (fig. 2). The EU (69%), Russia (13%), Indonesia (3%), Ukraine (2%) ranked second, third and fourth, accordingly, while Malaysia (2%) rounded out the top five key markets for the Transnistrian region's exports. Those top five markets claimed around 93% of overall Transnistrian region's exports in USD value in 2023. However, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has brought a new negative dimension having decreased the exports from the Transnistrian region to Ukraine by another 47% year-on-year in USD value.

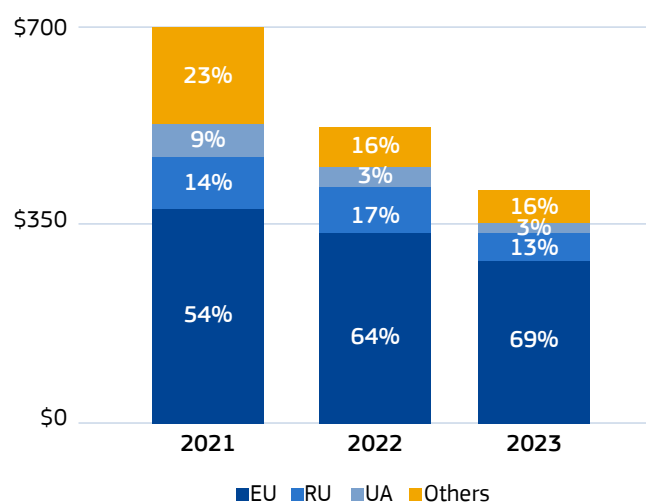
Regardless of its 15%-decrease year-on-year in USD value, exports to the EU made almost two thirds of overall Transnistrian region's export, accounting for \$286mln. Thus, the Transnistrian region's external trade continued to demonstrate solid reliance on the EU consumer and supplier markets. The EU was the first biggest consumer of footwear, agricultural, textile, and metal products from the Transnistrian region. Despite the shockwaves, the Transnistrian region's industries experienced, exports of metal products built 40% of the Transnistrian region's export structure, yet, having decreased by 20% year-on-year in USD value. Steel products made up around 92% of all Transnistrian region's metal products exports with the EU being pivotal as the consumer of such metal products. Additionally, the Transnistrian region largely traded metal products to Serbia, and Ukraine, as well as copper foil and electric motors and generators to Russia. The Transnistrian region's exports of agricultural and food products - the second largest export category (25%) - showed a 23%-decrease in 2023. Wheat, sunflower seeds, rapeseeds, barley and maize, vegetables, and fruit collectively reached 87% of the Transnistrian region's exports of agricultural products. Turkey and the EU were the principal destinations for the Transnistrian region's sunflower seeds, Indonesia, and Malaysia - for wheat, while the EU, Turkey, Nepal and Bangladesh were vastly importing rapeseeds. Additionally, the EU, Russian Federation, and Kazakhstan were the top consumers of Transnistrian region's vegetables and fruits. The Transnistrian region's export to Russia dropped by a significant 39%. Following the EU, Russia continued as the second biggest consumer of Transnistrian region's textile exports. Russia claimed around 31% of Transnistrian

region's exports of equipment and instruments, being mainly electric motors and generators. Exports of plastic film from the Transnistrian region made 19% of the overall Transnistrian region's export to Russia in USD value.

### IMPORT

The main imports were agricultural and food products, machinery, and appliances (fig.4). In 2023, the EU was the only supplier of ferrous scrap to the Transnistrian region, while Ukraine was the first to supply metal articles to the region. The EU continued as a leading supplier of petroleum fuels, copper wire, leather, various equipment, and machinery, thus claiming 55% of overall Transnistrian region's imports (fig.3).

FIG. 1 MARKETS FOR TRANSNISTRIAN REGION'S EXPORTS, IN % OF EXPORT VALUE (USD MLN)



Source: Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova

FIG. 2 CATEGORIES OF TRANSNISTRIAN REGION'S GOODS EXPORTED IN 2023 AND THEIR SHARES BY VALUE (USD MLN)

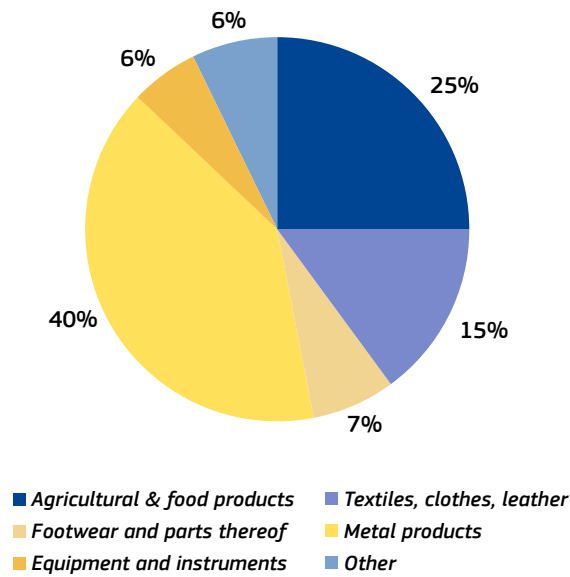
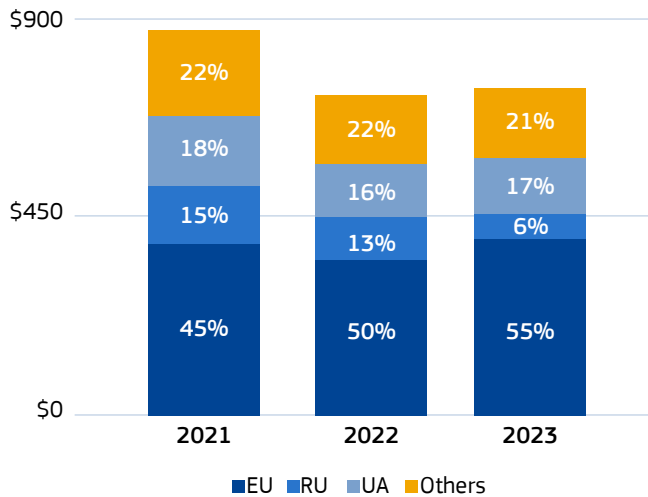
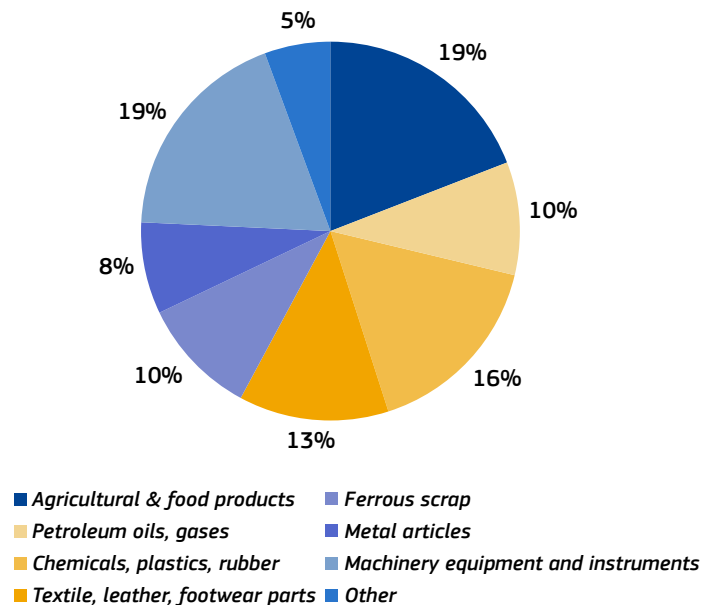


FIG. 3 MARKETS FOR TRANSNISTRIAN REGION'S IMPORTS, IN % OF EXPORT VALUE (USD MLN)



Source: Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova

FIG. 4 CATEGORIES OF TRANSNISTRIAN REGION'S GOODS IMPORTED IN 2023 AND THEIR SHARES BY VALUE (USD MLN)



Explanatory note: the figures are provided by Moldovan Customs Service and do not include internal trade operations between the two banks of the Nistru River. All conversions into USD currency are calculated based on the average monthly exchange rate of the National Bank of the Republic of Moldova. All computations are based exclusively on the USD value of exports and imports.

# IMPLEMENTING THE INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT CONCEPT



In 2023, Russia strategically weaponized global food security to exert additional pressure on Ukraine and its allies. In a significant move, Russia withdrew from the Black Sea Grain Initiative in July, an agreement that had previously guaranteed the safe transit of ships transporting grain from Ukrainian ports. After the dissolution of this accord, Russia escalated its military assaults on Ukraine's export infrastructure at both the Odesa seaports and Danube River ports. Land roads became essential transportation corridors for Ukraine, leading to increased reliance on truck transportation across borders. However, this heightened activity also resulted in prolonged queues at checkpoints, necessitating action to alleviate traffic congestion. In that context, EUBAM played a role in promoting connectivity and facilitating legitimate trade and made significant strides in addressing regional cooperation to mitigate those challenges.

## FURTHERING THE FUNCTIONING OF EU-UKRAINE SOLIDARITY LANES

In advancing the goals and objectives of the Solidarity Lanes Initiative, EUBAM has collaborated with partner agencies, implementing various measures. A significant milestone was achieved in December 2022, as the EUBAM-led RO-MD-UA Regional Customs Coordination Group convened for the first time. This group has since assumed a pivotal role in optimizing cargo traffic within the lower Danube region. Meeting on a quarterly basis in the field in different border crossing points, its efforts focus on mitigating traffic congestions along transportation routes.

In complement to the existing three-country coordination mechanism, the Mission orchestrated the 2nd International Trade Facilitation Forum. This forum served as a platform for high-level speakers from the European Commission, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine to engage in crucial discussions. The focal points of these discussions included the optimization of logistics potential,

the improvement of infrastructure and equipment, and the exploration of additional transport routes to broaden the spectrum of available options. The forum, by fostering collaboration and shared insights, aimed to advance trade facilitation efforts and enhance overall regional connectivity.

## ADVOCATING FOR JOINT CONTROL AT THE BASARABEASCA-SERPNEVE 1 RAIL BCP

In March, Moldova and Ukraine signed a protocol on the organization of joint control at the Basarabeasca-Serpneve 1 BCP in territory of the Republic of Moldova and the new railway section from Ukraine started to operate. That was the first rail BCP at the Moldova-Ukraine border, where joint control was performed by the neighbouring countries' border and customs agencies at a single point in one country. The new jointly operated BCP contributes to diversifying the modes of Ukrainian goods transportation and mitigating congestions at road BCPs as well as strengthening cooperation between the two countries.



MD-RO-UA trilateral meeting in Giurgiulesti in December 2022 was aiming to improve cargo flow in Reni-Giurgiulesti-Galati area.

Equally important is that the Jointly Operated BCP enables transportation of goods to ports of Reni (UA), Giurgiulesti (MD) and Galati (RO) by a much shorter route, and reduction of the cargo transportation costs. EUBAM supported the establishment of joint control and its subsequent replication alongside the entire Moldova-Ukraine border due to the benefits it offers to travellers, traders, and border security.

### ADVANCING IBM EFFORTS

EUBAM continued its active support for the IBM agenda for both the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. In March 2023, in collaboration with Latvian and Romanian border services, EUBAM engaged in consultations with the Moldovan authorities on the Law on the State Border to support its alignment with the EU border related requirements.

EUBAM presented amendments to the implementing provisions of the Moldovan Law on the State Border towards their further harmonization with the Schengen Borders Code. In May, the Head of the General Border Police Inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova and the Head of the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova signed a joint order introducing standard technological norms for control at road border crossing points (BCPs) and real-time data exchange.

This fully reflects EUBAM earlier recommendations towards One-Stop-Shop (OSS) border control and reinforces procedures for the implementation of the OSS concept and travellers' data exchange between border and customs authorities. Once implemented, should lead to a reduction of border crossing time and streamlining the border traffic flow.



The central focus of the Forum was to explore innovative solutions and create alternative routes for exporting agricultural products and essential goods to support Ukraine through EU-UA Solidarity Lanes.

## CONTRIBUTING TO SHAPING INVESTMENT IN BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE

In a concerted effort to modernize and enhance border infrastructure, EUBAM embarked on a series of initiatives aimed at identifying and addressing critical infrastructure needs at key BCPs. To this end, in early February 2023, EUBAM engaged, in collaboration with the DG MOVE, and attended an assessment visit to Reni-Giurgiulesti-Galati area.

The assessment focused on the identification of needs for border infrastructure and inspection equipment for funding under the Connecting Europe Facility for Transport mechanism to improve transport connections between Moldova and Romania along the trans-European transport network (TEN-T). In March, EUBAM took part in fact

finding visits to six BCPs, located on the Ukraine-Romania, Romania-Moldova and Moldova-Ukraine borders. The visits were carried out within the EU funded project on EU for Solidarity Lanes and IBM, aimed to map the infrastructural needs of the various BCPs to enhance smooth border crossings of people and goods, improve security and raise processing capacities.

Furthermore, as part of a broader effort to improve connectivity and facilitate more efficient cross-border trade, a needs assessment of 16 selected BCPs at the Moldova-Ukraine and Moldova-Romania borders was conducted in June within the framework of the Global Gateway Support Mechanism (GGSM). The assessment led to the formulation of a set of recommendations designed to enhance cargo flow and overall connectivity.

*EUBAM participated in a fact-finding visit led by the EU Delegation in Ukraine in Tudora BCP in March 2023.*





**EUBAM advocates for European Union border management standards and procedures, aiming to facilitate faster crossings for both people and goods.**

# FIGHTING CROSS-BORDER CRIME



Russia's full-scale of aggression against Ukraine increased risks of transnational organized crime. Though the situation at border crossing points has remained relatively calm, an increase in incidents involving the use of forged documents was observed. Also, a trend of illegal border crossings through the green border continued. There was a sharp increase in trafficking of dangerous synthetic, psychotropic substances in passenger vehicles and postal shipments by natural persons. Furthermore, due to ongoing hostilities, weapon trafficking is still considered as a risk. To assist border and customs authorities in both countries in addressing the border security implications and enhancing their resilience, EUBAM has intensified its operational assistance and capacity building support.

## JOINING FORCES AGAINST CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

Together with the EU, Moldovan and Ukrainian law enforcement agencies, EUBAM contributed to enhancing collaboration in the fight against cross-border crime through leading well-established platforms. The Mission's flagship task force, the Arms Working Group, convened in April to update situational picture and coordinate preventive measures against firearms trafficking at border crossing points (BCPs), in the border area and inland.

Recognizing the evolving dynamics and challenges in the current regional landscape, in October 2023, EUBAM jointly with its Partners resumed the Interagency Regional Analytical Group (IRAG) to facilitate regular risks and threats' assessments in the Odesa region. In the same vein, in Autumn, the Mission revived its efforts with shared border security assessments between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine along their common border (CBSAR), releasing its regular report in December 2023, after a two-year hiatus.

## SYMPOSIUM ON COMBATING ILLICIT CIGARETTE MANUFACTURING

In September, EUBAM organized a high-level international Symposium on Combatting Illicit Cigarette Manufacturing with the participation of representatives from the Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova, the Economic Security Bureau of Ukraine, and Customs and Border Authorities from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. EU high-level advisers, the National Revenue Administration of the Republic of Poland, and representatives from the tobacco manufacturing industry and academia also attended the event. The participants mapped the pressing problem of illegal cigarette manufacturing and discussed strategies on how to effectively combat the phenomenon. The demand for illicit cigarettes has increased considerably after Russia's unjustified war of aggression on Ukraine, and as regular supply chains ceased to exist, many clandestine factories were opened in Europe to produce illegal cigarettes on the spot.



*The Symposium on Combating Illicit Cigarette Manufacturing discussed the strategies for effectively fighting the phenomenon, considering its distressing impact on societies.*

### ASSISTING CROSS-BORDER INVESTIGATIONS TO TACKLE CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

EUBAM facilitated the cross-border cooperation and largely supported several successful investigations. The most notable outcome was the dismantling of an internationally organized criminal group involved in the clandestine production of cigarettes in the Czech Republic and their subsequent distribution on the black market across several EU countries. The total estimated damage to tax revenue stands at EUR 5 million, with over 17 million illegal cigarettes seized and 22 individuals, mostly Moldovan and Ukrainian nationals, detained. In another case, the Mission supported efforts that led to the breaking up of a transnational criminal group engaged in organizing illegal border crossings by Ukrainian citizens from Ukraine through Moldova to EU member states. This initiative resulted in the disruption of the modus operandi, the arrest of two key members of the criminal group, and the acquisition of valuable information, leading to new investigations to combat this type of crime.

### BUILDING CAPACITY AND ENHANCING TECHNIQUES IN FIGHTING CROSS-BORDER CRIME

The war in Ukraine reshaped the security landscape and triggered new challenges, and consequently reinforced the EU support through existing and new instruments, including technical assistance.

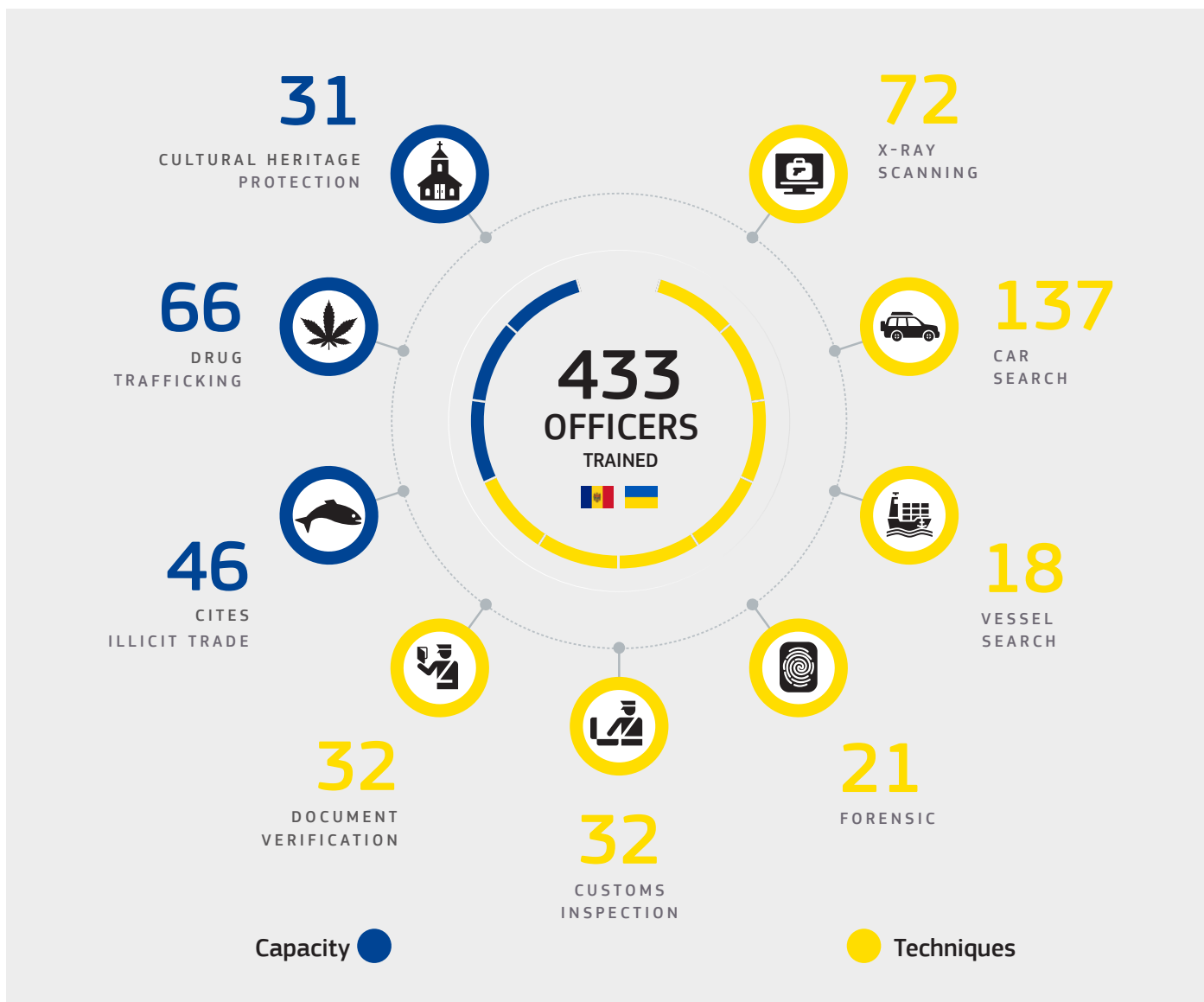
Also, this was an opportune time to equip EUBAM with a technical assistance component integrated directly into its budget. In the EUBAM new budget, the European Commission allocated 1 million Euro for technical assistance, and EUBAM has already initiated equipment procurement.

Moreover, the Mission focused its support for the partner services on capacity-building activities to strengthen prevention and better cope with the changed security situation.



*EUBAM-led Arms Working Group gathers regularly to update situational picture and coordinates preventive measures against firearms trafficking.*

## BUILDING CAPACITY AND ENHANCING TECHNIQUES IN FIGHTING CROSS-BORDER CRIME



EUBAM trained 433 people to enhance the professionalism and capabilities of customs and border officers in the region, improving their ability to combat various illegal activities and maintain border security. The program covered significant border crossing points at the Moldova-Ukraine border and was delivered in collaboration with the EU member states external trainers. Furthermore, the Mission's field teams actively engaged in On-the-Job Mentoring (OJM), and around 600 sessions took place, focusing on critical areas such as border checks, customs clearance, and the latest modus operandi, including counterfeit vehicle registration documents and VIN manipulation and more.

### JOINT ASSISTANCE EXERCISE "PYTHIA II" TO TACKLE THREATS IN INTERNATIONAL POSTAL DELIVERY

In January, EUBAM, jointly with the Moldovan Customs Service, conducted an exercise on customs control of international postal deliveries and express courier parcels. Altogether, 12 field visits to the Internal Customs Post "Posta Moldovei" and express couriers' customs control zones were made to improve the declarations and risk analysis-based customs controls of goods. The joint activity supported Moldovan Customs in identifying potential threats and substantiating the associated risks in international postal deliveries and express parcels, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the customs control.



EUBAM and Moldovan Customs jointly conducted exercise on international postal deliveries and express courier parcels, improving declarations and risk analysis for more effective customs oversight.



**EUBAM provided training to 433 people, aimed at bolstering the professionalism and capabilities of customs and border officers in the region. This initiative enhances their proficiency in combating diverse illegal activities and upholding border security.**

# RENEWING EUBAM MANDATE

In June, the EUBAM Partners' Coordination Meeting convened, bringing together representatives from the Ukrainian and Moldovan Foreign Ministries, as well as Customs and Border Services.

Chaired by Ambassador Jānis Mažeiks, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, the meeting served as a platform to apprise partners of the new EUBAM budget effective from the beginning June, along

with opportunities for capacity-building activities and technical assistance.

This strategic gathering not only boosted the process of extending the EUBAM mandate but also laid the groundwork for shaping the Mission's actions in the forthcoming period.

The Mission's mandate was extended in December 2023 for two additional years.





**The Mission works alongside its Moldovan and Ukrainian partners to enhance the efficiency of cross-border crime combat operations.**

# COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS



Meeting in March with Maja Bakran, Deputy Director General of DG MOVE and Alain Baron, Head of the International Transport Sector.

## COORDINATION WITH VARIOUS EUROPEAN UNION ENTITIES

Throughout the reporting period, EUBAM worked closely, ensuring a tight coordination of activities with the EU Delegations in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine and various EU institutions.

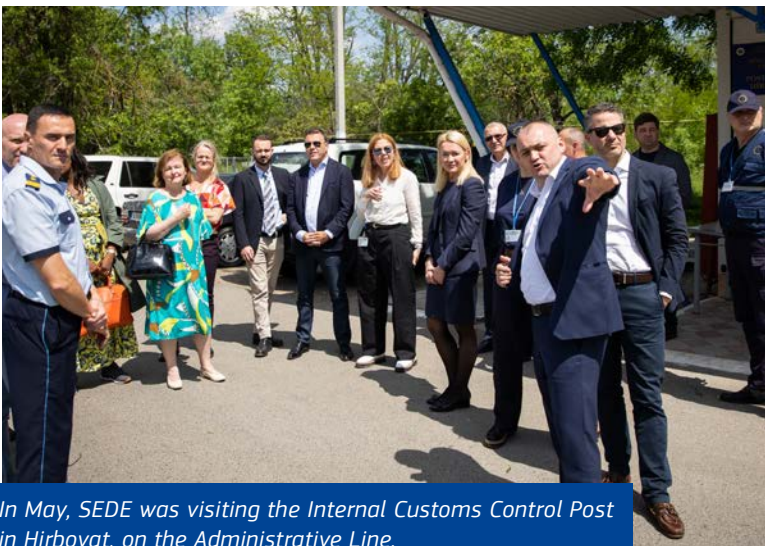
In March, at the EUBAM headquarters in Odesa, Head of Mission Slawomir Pichor met with **Maja Bakran, Deputy Director General of DG MOVE**. Their discussions revolved

around alternative routes for Ukraine's exports through EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes, explicitly focusing on rivers and seaports in the lower Danube region, challenges and needs for managing increased truck traffic carrying Ukraine's agricultural goods through Moldova.

In May, during the **visit of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) to Moldova**, the Head of Mission engaged in discussions that centred on the impact of war on border security and trade, as well as the operability of the EU-UA Solidarity Lanes Initiative. EUBAM also joined the SEDE delegation to visit the Internal Customs Control Post in Hirbovat, located on the Administrative Line between Chisinau and Tiraspol.

In June 2023, the **Head of Mission, conducted a productive working session in Brussels** through a series of meetings with high-level officials from various European Commission services and EU entities, as well as the Heads of Missions of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to the European Union. Those meetings aimed to coordinate EUBAM's activities in the context of the mandate extension, underscoring the Mission's commitment to fostering dialogue and collaboration with its EU partners.

During his diplomatic visit to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in late September, **Josep Borrell, Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative for**



In May, SEDE was visiting the Internal Customs Control Post in Hirbovat, on the Administrative Line.



*In September, European Commission Vice-President and High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell met with EUBAM experts in Palanca-Maiaky-Udobne JBCP.*

**Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, met with EUBAM experts** at the jointly operated border crossing point Palanca-Maiaky-Udobne as he crossed the border en route to Ukraine.

In November, the Head of EUBAM met with the **Council of the European Union Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom)** during their visit to Chişinău. The meeting aimed to familiarize the committee with EU support for enhancing the resilience of the Republic of Moldova.

Furthermore, the Mission cooperated closely with Frontex, Europol, CEPOL, CELBET, and EUAM Ukraine. EUBAM's experts consistently played an active role by sharing their extensive knowledge and contributing significantly to diverse EU projects and events. These included the DG MOVE's Danube Cluster Solidarity Lane, numerous EU Support Hubs for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova, and the TOPCOP project. EUBAM as well participated in the High-Level Regional Customs Antifraud Conference "Cross-Border Crime Risks in an Open Europe - Shared Challenges, Shared Solutions," co-organized by the Moldovan Customs Service (MDCS) and the EU High-Level Advisors' Mission in Moldova.

## INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

EUBAM maintained its proactive involvement in several working groups like Interpol's Millenium Project and Regional Human Trafficking Expert Group or OSCE coordination group on Transnistrian region-related matters,

demonstrating its commitment to addressing pressing issues.

EUBAM also contributed to the OSCE-led Coordination Meeting of International Partners supporting Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Control Efforts in Ukraine, underscoring its dedication to enhancing regional security.

Additionally, EUBAM participated in a UNHCR round table on "Crossing the Ukrainian Border: Challenges and Perspectives," contributing valuable insights to discussions surrounding border management and refugee protection. On top of that, the Mission's involvement extended to multiple Task Force on Trafficking in Persons meetings, orchestrated collaboratively by the Moldovan Government, UNHCR, and IOM.



*In November, CivCom delegates received an overview of EUBAM's role in supporting regional security and economic development and information on its mandate and activities.*

## WORKING TOGETHER WITH NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

EUBAM maintained close and collaborative contact with its partners and stakeholders throughout the reporting period, fostering robust relationships and facilitating cooperation on various projects.

These engagements included regular consultations and joint initiatives with governmental and law enforcement agencies. By actively engaging with its partners, EUBAM was able to address shared challenges and explore opportunities for cooperation in areas such as border security, trade facilitation, and regional stability.

## UKRAINE

The Mission actively fostered consistent communication by regularly meeting key partners at both the central and regional levels. Notably, EUBAM maintained close ties with the leadership of Ukraine's Border and Customs Authorities, and also actively liaised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Economic Security Bureau of Ukraine, the Odesa Regional Military Administration, the Southern Regional Directorate of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, and the Odesa Customs House. These interactions were routine and vital forums for exchanging strategic insights, intelligence, and collaborative planning. EUBAM, mindful of the dynamic challenges posed during this period, worked closely with its Ukrainian counterparts to address emerging issues, strategize effective solutions, and implement coordinated measures to enhance overall security.



*Meeting in December 2022 with the Head of the Odesa Regional Military Administration Maksym Marchenko and representatives of Regional Border Guard and Customs Services' management focused on interruptions on electricity supply in the region and its impact on the operability on the border crossing points.*

*The February meeting with Vadym Melnyk, Director of the Economic Security Bureau of Ukraine, centered on excise tax frauds in the face of the continued war.*





*In June, Paun Rohovei, Ambassador with Special Missions of Ukraine responsible for the Transnistrian file, visited the EUBAM office in Chisinau.*



*In August, EUBAM discussed practical steps to provide support for technical assistance with Vladyslav Suvorov, Deputy Head of the State Customs Service of Ukraine.*



*In August, during a meeting with Andrii Nadzhos, the Acting Director of the Directorate General for the European Union, and NATO in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, both parties discussed EUBAM's achievements to date. They explored opportunities for further engagement in the context of its new mandate.*



*In September, engagements with Serhii Hrynchyshyn, the Acting Head of Odesa Customs House, were predominantly focused on the Mission's upcoming initiatives to aid the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes.*

## THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Numerous meetings were held with key partners from the Moldovan Border Police and the Moldovan Customs Service, with the primary focus being on the collaborative activities conducted with EUBAM. Talks revolved around enhancing security measures at the Moldovan-Ukraine border and identifying areas where institutional capacity development and assistance are required.

Turning its attention to the Transnistrian settlement process, the Mission undertook multiple discussions with Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister for Integration. An essential aspect emphasized in these discussions was the pivotal role played by EUBAM in providing assistance.

In addition to its core objectives, EUBAM remained steadfast in its commitment to bolstering the Republic of Moldova's overall security framework at the governmental level. In September, the Head of EUBAM participated in a high-level working group dedicated to border security for the preparation of the Support Platform for Moldova, organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Furthermore, in October, Slawomir Pichor actively engaged in a consultative meeting aimed at shaping the new National Security Strategy, alongside diplomatic missions, and permanent representations in Moldova. Notably, the event was presided over by the President of the Republic of Moldova, Maia Sandu, adding significant momentum to these efforts.

*In January, the EUBAM team met with Rosian Vasiloii, the Head of Moldovan Border Police, to explore bilateral cooperation and capacity-building efforts.*



*In March, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova Dorin Recean got acquainted with EUBAM work and assistance during his visit to the Criva border crossing point.*



*In March, Oleg Serebrian, Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration underscored Missions contributions, particularly in facilitating the transposition of the European Union's compliance requirements at the national level.*



*In April, conversations with Igor Talmazan, the Head of the Moldovan Customs Service, focused on implementing effective mitigation measures at the border and addressing the necessity for border infrastructure development.*



*In September, EUBAM together with the Ambassadors accredited in Chisinau was actively involved in working group dedicated to border security for the preparation of the Support Platform for Moldova.*

# EUBAM TODAY

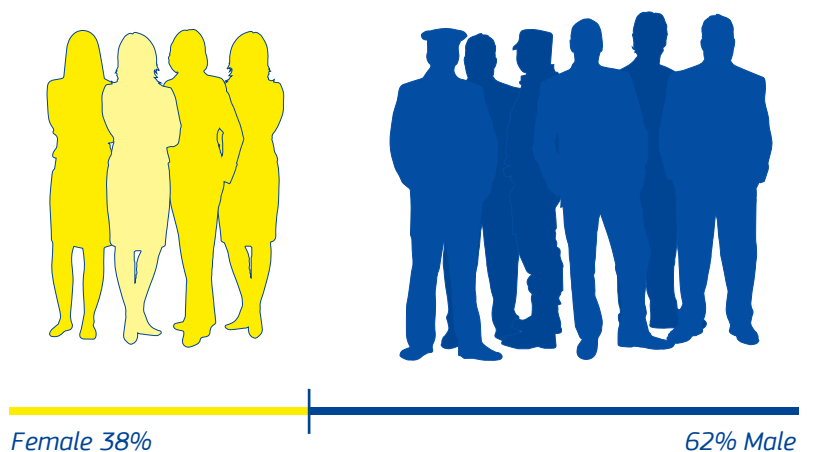
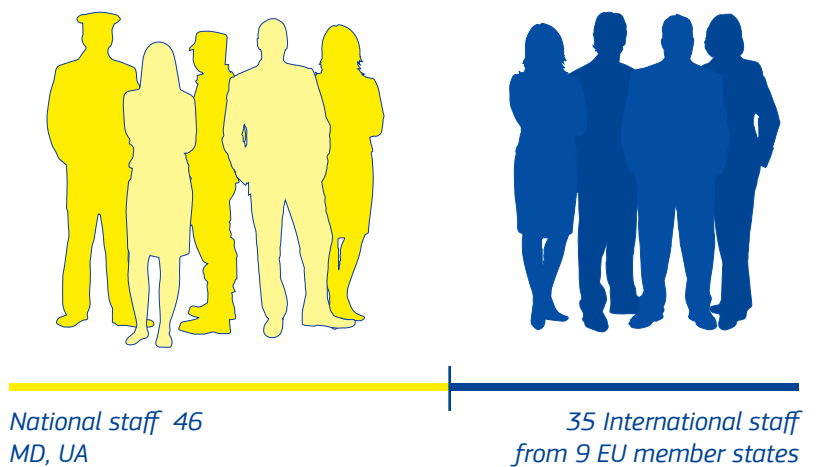
The European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) was launched in November 2005 to promote border control, customs and trade norms and practices that meet European Union standards, and serve the needs of its two partner countries. It is an advisory, technical Mission headquartered in Odesa (Ukraine) with two country offices and field offices in its area of operation. EUBAM activities promote economic development and enhance regional security. The Mission contributes to cross-border co-operation and confidence-building, and helps to improve efficiency, transparency and security along the Moldova-Ukraine border.

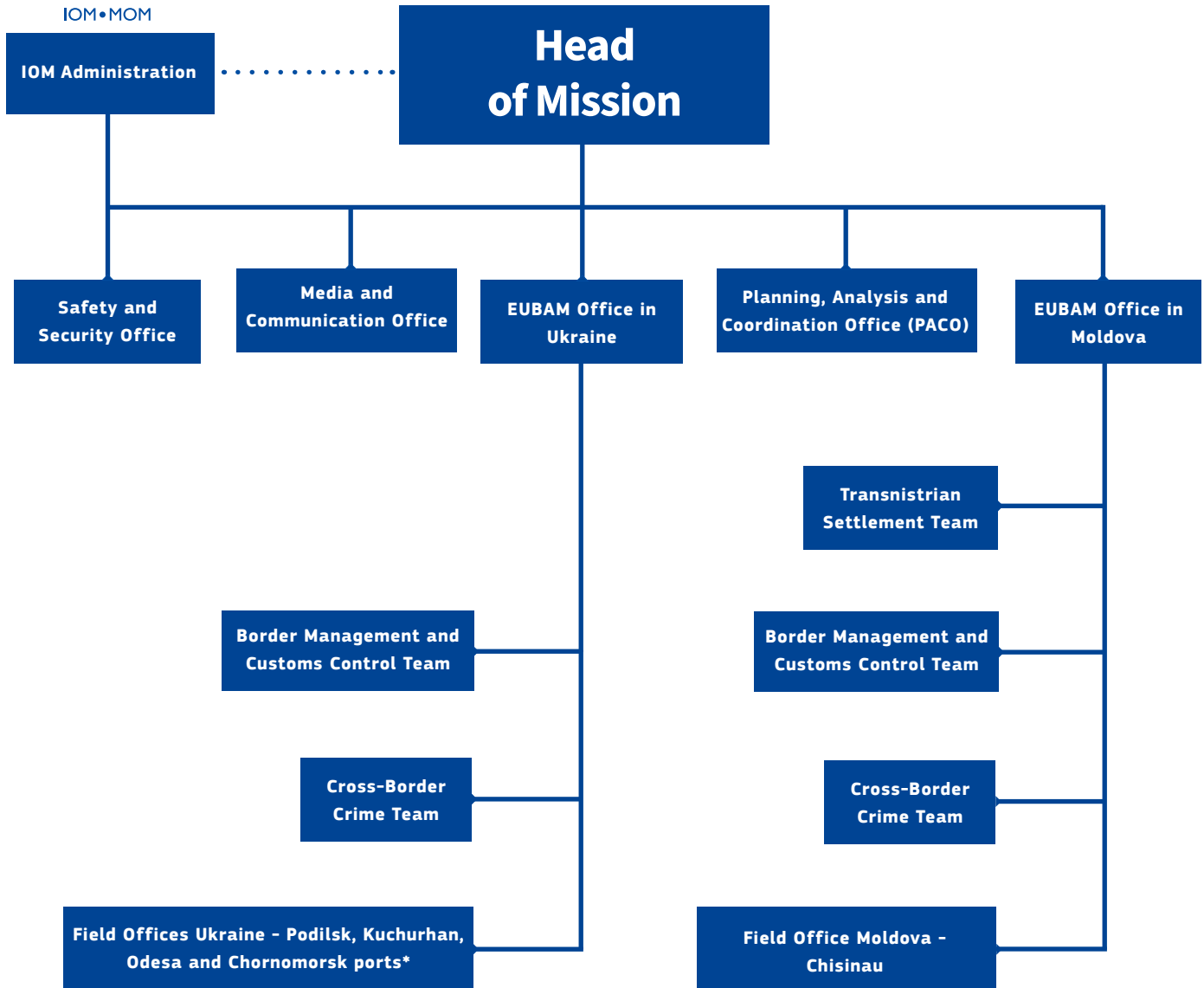
## THE MISSION'S AIMS

- » the development of Transnistria-related confidence-building measures and approximation of legislation and procedures in customs, trade, transport and trans-boundary management;
- » the implementation of the Integrated Border Management at the Moldova-Ukraine border with a special attention to its Transnistrian segment; and
- » the fight against cross-border crime on the Moldova-Ukraine border, especially at the Transnistrian segment.

## EUBAM IN NUMBERS

Total EUBAM staff 81, as for 30 November 2023





THE MISSION'S MANDATE HAS BEEN EXTENDED SEVEN TIMES



\*Since February 24 2022 EUBAM operations in Podilsk and Kuchurhan were temporarily suspended.

# EUBAM 13 ACTION PLAN

01 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2025

<b>Overall objective</b>	<b>To support Moldova's and Ukraine's efforts to effectively manage their common border and actively support concrete measures linked to the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict.</b>	
<b>Specific objective 1</b>	<b>To support the development of Transnistrian region-related confidence-building measures and approximation of Moldovan and EU requirements and procedures in the field of customs, trade, transport and trans-boundary management.</b>	
Outcome 1	Joint Confidence Building Measures (CBM) are closely co-ordinated with Chisinau, have greater range, and impact on increasing trust and security between the sides. Legislation and procedures in the field of customs, trade, and transport are approximated.	
Output 1.1	Customs and trade related requirements and procedures on both sides of the Nistru River approximated.	
Activities	1.1.1	Support the country authorities to monitor the movement of people and goods across the administrative line and customs clearances of goods from/to Transnistrian region at inland posts.
	1.1.2	Advise on the approximation of customs duties, taxes, and fees and charges between Chisinau and Tiraspol.
	1.1.3	Advise Chisinau and Tiraspol on improving the customs framework and further simplification of formalities in trade in goods.
	1.1.4	Assist Chisinau and Tiraspol in the implementation of related trade facilitation arrangements under EU-Moldova AA/DCFTA.
Output 1.2	Increased awareness among international and national stakeholders on Transnistrian region external trade and trans-boundary commerce.	
Activities	1.2.1	Analyse Transnistrian region external trade activity, including on the implementation of the single customs regime (i.e. 2005 Moldova-Ukraine Joint Declaration).
	1.2.2.	Analyse trade in goods between economic operators from both banks of the Nistru River.
	1.2.3.	Contribute to developing an exchange of information between relevant experts from both banks of the Nistru River on the enforcement of customs and trade legislation and procedures in trans-boundary and international trade.
Output 1.3	Strengthened interaction between sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary experts on both sides of the Nistru River contributed to enhanced regional consumer safety.	
Activities	1.3.1	Promote technical interaction between Chisinau and Tiraspol to uphold regional consumer safety.
	1.3.2	Advise on practical and sustainable cooperation mechanisms between sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary experts from both river's banks.
Output 1.4	Sound technical solutions for the fully-fledged resumption of passenger and freight traffic across Transnistrian region found and implemented.	
Activities	1.4.1	Develop and sustain confidence-building measures in the field of road and rail transport.
	1.4.2	Contribute to defusing disruption of passenger and freight services across the administrative line and transit, import and export of cargo overseas by road and rail through Transnistrian region.
Output 1.5	Contribution provided to joint working groups on confidence building measures (CBM) through advice on the free movement of people and goods across Transnistrian region.	
Activities	1.5.1	Develop opinion, proposals or initiatives for joint Chisinau and/or Tiraspol projects in the field of customs, trade and transport, benefitting business and people residing in either bank of the Nistru river.
	1.5.2	Support the activity of political representatives and Expert (Working) Groups in the development and implementation of concrete measures for addressing practical issues related to the free movement of people and goods across Transnistrian region, and to the access of Transnistrian trade to DCFTA and its compliance.
<b>Specific objective 2</b>	<b>To support the implementation of the Integrated Border Management (IBM) concept at the Moldova-Ukraine border with a special attention to its Transnistrian segment.</b>	
Outcome 2	The Integrated Border Management (IBM) concept at the Moldova-Ukraine border, with special attention to its Transnistrian segment, is developed, sustained, and managed by the host countries.	
Output 2.1	Extended joint control at border crossing points.	

Activities	2.1.1	Mobilise partner services for the implementation of action plan on the establishment/replication of jointly operated border crossing points (JOBCEPs) along the entire Moldova-Ukraine border.
	2.1.2	Assist partner services in assessments of needs and minimum requirements for the implementation of JOBCEPs along the Moldova-Ukraine border, in particular at its Transnistrian segment.
Output 2.2	Efficiency of border and customs controls increased as a result of simplified transparent procedures and inter-agency co-operation at the regional and local levels.	
Activities	2.2.1	Monitor and advise on the implementation of risk-based checks, simplified procedures, One-Stop-Shop (OSS) principles and data exchange mechanisms at border crossing points (BCPs) along the Moldova – Ukraine border.
	2.2.2	Assist and advise on the development of inter-agency mobile units based on intelligence-led activities.
	2.2.3	Perform a comprehensive evaluation of customs controls (at inland and border customs posts) with a focus on simplified procedures, risk-based checks, and interagency cooperation at regional/local level.
	2.2.4	Promote development of other IBM tools and good practices at border crossing points.
Output 2.3	Cross-border processes aligned with the Association Agreements, Visa Liberalisation Action Plans (VLAPs) and Integrated Border Management provisions.	
Activities	2.3.1	Assist in the implementation of the EUBAM 12 recommendations resulted from the two verification exercises of border checks and customs control of passenger and cargo traffic.
	2.3.2	Monitor and assess the implementation of the EU Visa Post-Liberalisation Action Plan's benchmarks in both the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the following areas: border management, migration management, combatting cross-border organised crime and freedom of movement of citizens of both countries, upon the request of the EU and/or partner services.
	2.3.3	Monitor and advise on the modernisation process of BCPs along the Moldova-Ukraine border.
	2.3.4	Upon request, support the finalisation of the border demarcation process on the Moldova-Ukraine border.
	2.3.5	Support the harmonisation of border, customs, phyto-sanitary and veterinary procedures between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine at the common border, in line with their AA/DCFTAs commitments with EU.
Outcome 3	Effectiveness of efforts to combat cross-border crime on the Moldova-Ukraine border, especially at the Transnistrian segment, is increased.	
Output 3.1	Increased effectiveness of fighting cross-border crime at Moldova-Ukraine border and adjacent ports of entry.	
Activities	3.1.1	Assist in the prevention, detection, and investigation of cross-border crime.
	3.1.2	Perform an evaluation on institutional and operational capacity of border and customs services in the prevention of and fighting against cross-border and customs crimes such as human trafficking, smuggling of excisable goods, arms, ammunition, explosives, radiological and nuclear materials.
	3.1.3	Develop Special Reports on concrete case studies/analyses of potential crime or risk in the Mission Area of Responsibility (e.g. smuggling, etc.) with a view to facilitate knowledge sharing of trends, identified key challenges and opportunities in both countries.
Output 3.2	Threats to border security jointly assessed by the border services and other law enforcement agencies in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.	
Activities	3.2.1	Develop capacity for risk analysis, intelligence and data-flow management of the partner services and ensure their implementation at the common border.
	3.2.2	Support the development and ensure implementation of the partner services' joint risk and threat assessments on cross-border crime.
	3.2.3	Streamline the prompt information exchange among the inter-agency investigation groups on prevention and combating cross-border crime.
Output 3.3	The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are able to manage effective networks of cooperation between them and with international partners to combat transnational and cross-border crimes.	
Activities	3.3.1	Advise on the improvement of information exchange between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine on preventing and combating human trafficking, smuggling of goods, including tobacco products and trafficking in drugs, arms and ammunition, explosives, radiological and nuclear materials.
	3.3.2	Upon request, review the international agreements/ protocols on law enforcement cooperation between Moldovan and Ukrainian border and customs agencies and other relevant law enforcement agencies.
	3.3.3	Support the planning, conduct and evaluation of joint border control operations by the partner services and in co-operation with relevant EU and international agencies.
Output 3.4	Enhanced inter-agency coordination in the prevention, detection and investigation of cross-border crime.	
Activities	3.4.1	Streamline joint efforts to improve prevention of and fight against cross-border crime.
	3.4.2	Conduct joint exercises with border and customs services for testing law enforcement inter-agency cooperation and identifying gaps in inter-agency agreements/ protocols in law enforcement area.



**EUBAM**



**EUROPEAN UNION BORDER ASSISTANCE  
MISSION TO MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE**





International Organisation for Migration is  
the implementing partner



[www.eubam.org](http://www.eubam.org)  
Zatyshna 13, Odesa, 65012, Ukraine  
[press@eubam.org](mailto:press@eubam.org)

Disclaimer: This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of EUBAM and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

© 2024, IOM. All rights reserved. Licensed to the European Union under conditions.