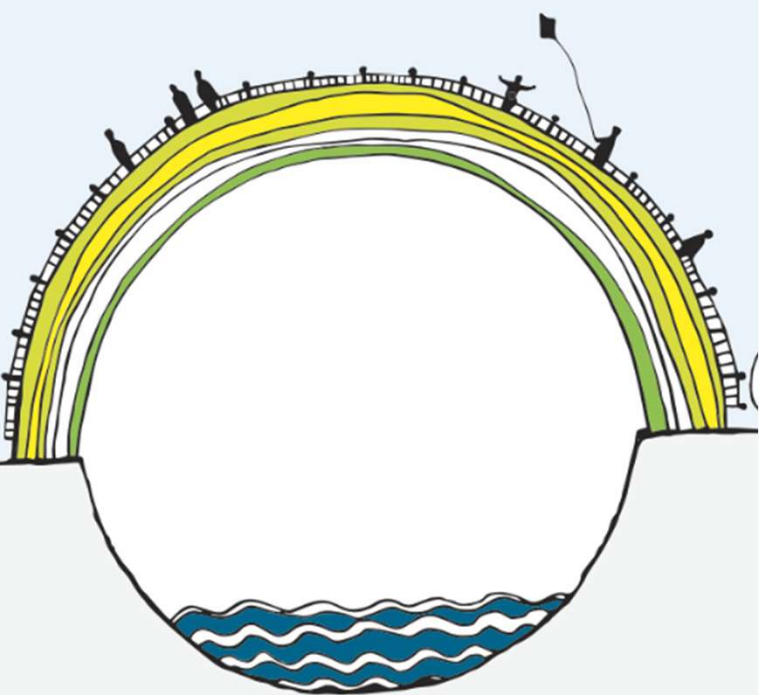


Thematic multi-intervention evaluation of EU support to confidence-building measures in the Republic of Moldova

EU support to Confidence Building Measures – phase IV and phase V (2013 – 2023)



The EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova has been supporting bottom-up approaches to improve people-to-people relations, promote local development and enhance cooperation between the communities from both banks of the Nistru river, with six consecutive iterations of Confidence Building Measures (CBM) since 2009. In this sensitive environment, the EU CBM provides with non-political support to grassroots development, synergic with (although separated from) the political-diplomatic action for the settlement process of the unresolved Transnistrian conflict.

Key components of the EU support to Confidence Building, for a total value of approx. 35 million euro in 10 years:

- Economic development and decent job creation,
- Enhanced cross-river civil society cooperation,
- Community Development and small-scale social infrastructure support,
- Promotion of cultural heritage,
- Rapprochement in health and social care sectors

The objective of the EU CBM is to contribute to the facilitation of the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict by fostering trust between communities on both banks of the Nistru River through joint initiatives with local authorities, CSOs, and stakeholders. Over 10 years, the programme employed diverse tools, from grants for CSOs and local authorities to large-scale projects managed via partners like UNDP and EU member state agencies.

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Main findings

- Unless substantial changes in the relations between Chisinau and Tiraspol, it is difficult to foresee an end to EU support to Confidence-Building Measures without potentially disruptive consequences in people-to-people and inter-community relations
- The CBM strategy in place, based on **mutually beneficial results** for both banks has proven effective and conducive to gradual “rapprochement”: the CBM interventions contribute to strengthening confidence between the communities on both banks via joint or mirrored activities
- **Demand for CBMs and follow-up actions remains high in Moldova**, not only in the Transnistrian region and the security zone but also in the ATU Gagauzia

Lessons learnt

- The assistance should be demand-driven, building on **shared needs and priorities for both sides**
- **Avoid top-down approaches and ensure involvement of stakeholders** from both banks on both banks in the design and implementation of the assistance
- **In-depth knowledge and understanding** of the operating environment is essential
- Invest in **capacity development** of organisations from both sides for joint project work
- Keep a **clear line of separation** between development cooperation initiatives and political processes related to the official negotiations for the conflict settlement

Recommendations

- **Continue and expand** the CBM programmes to more sectors and actors
- **Diversify** the implementation modality and the implementing partners via new players
- Strengthen project implementation **conditionalities**
- Maintain a general principle of **mutually beneficial results** for both riverbanks
- Improve **coordination and alignment** between the CBM interventions and other relevant projects with the Government of Moldova’s priorities in the field of reintegration policies

