

**Committee: DISEC 2**

**Topic: The question of Transnistria**

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## Summary

Transnistria is an unrecognized breakaway region in Eastern Europe. The region's origins can be traced to the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which was formed in 1924 within the Ukrainian SSR. During World War II, the Soviet Union took parts of the Moldavian ASSR, which was dissolved, and of the Kingdom of Romania's Bessarabia to form the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1940.

The present history of the region dates to 1990, during the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was established in hopes that it would remain within the Soviet Union should Moldova seek unification with Romania or independence, the latter occurring in August 1991. Shortly afterwards, a military conflict between the two parties started in March 1992 and concluded with a ceasefire in July that year. Although the ceasefire has held, the territory's political status remains unresolved as Transnistria is an unrecognized but de facto independent presidential republic. Transnistria has its own government, parliament, military, police, postal system, currency, and vehicle registration. Its authorities have adopted a constitution, flag, national anthem, and coat of arms.

## Definition of Key Terms

- **Transnistria:** Transnistria is a self-proclaimed, unrecognized state situated in Eastern Europe, lying between the Dniester River and the eastern border of Moldova.
- **The Soviet Union:** The Soviet Union was the world's first Marxist-Communist state and was one of the biggest and most powerful nations in the world.
- **Ceasefire:** A call to terminate armed conflict.
- **Referendum:** A general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision.

- **Confidence-building measures:** Confidence-building measures (CBMs) are broadly defined as measures that address, prevent, or resolve uncertainties among states.
- **The 5+2 format:** The 5+2 format, also known as the 5+2 negotiations is a diplomatic negotiation platform aimed at finding a solution to the Transnistria conflict between Moldova and the unrecognized state of Transnistria

## Background Information

### Political Issues:

Transnistria's political landscape is characterized by its unilateral declaration of independence from Moldova in 1990, which triggered a brief but intense armed conflict. Subsequently, the region has maintained de facto independence but remains unrecognized internationally. Transnistria operates its own government institutions, military forces, and constitution. A primary political challenge in Transnistria is the issue of its sovereignty and the disputed nature of its status. Moldova insists on its territorial integrity, encompassing Transnistria, while the separatist authorities in Transnistria seek full independence. Transnistria faces a unique and complex political situation. Its political landscape is shaped by its disputed status, historical legacies, and external influences.

### Government Structure

Transnistria operates under a de facto government structure, with its own executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The key institutions include:

- **Executive Branch:** The region has a presidential system, with a president serving as the head of state and a prime minister as the head of government. Vadim Krasnoselsky currently holds the office of the president.
- **Legislative Branch:** The Supreme Council (or Parliament) of Transnistria is the legislative body responsible for making laws and policies. It is a unicameral legislature, and its members are elected through a mixed electoral system.
- **Judicial System:** Transnistria has its own judiciary, including a Constitutional Court, which interprets the constitution, and a Supreme Court, which handles criminal and civil cases. However, these institutions operate independently of international legal norms.

### Political Parties

Transnistria's political landscape includes a variety of political parties and movements. Some of the prominent ones include:

- **United Russia Party:** This political party has strong ties to Russia and advocates for closer integration with Moscow.
- **Renewal Party:** Also known as the Obnovlenie Party, it is a major political force in Transnistria and has held the presidency in the past.
- **Opposition Parties:** While opposition parties exist, they often face challenges in gaining significant political influence, given the dominance of pro-Russia parties and the limited political pluralism.

### Russian Influence

Russia plays a significant role in Transnistria's political situation. It has historically supported the region politically, militarily, and economically. The presence of Russian peacekeeping forces in Transnistria adds to Moscow's influence. Transnistria relies on Russia for trade, financial support, and security.

### Elections and International Recognition

Transnistria conducts its own elections, including presidential and parliamentary elections. However, these elections are not internationally recognized, and the legitimacy of the electoral process is a matter of dispute.

International recognition remains a central issue in Transnistria's political situation. While the region seeks recognition as an independent state, Moldova asserts its territorial integrity over Transnistria. The ongoing conflict has hindered a comprehensive resolution to this issue.

### Conflict Resolution Efforts

Various international organizations, including the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), have been involved in diplomatic efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Transnistrian conflict. Negotiations have taken place in the 5+2 format, involving Moldova, Transnistria, Russia, Ukraine, and the OSCE, with the United States and the European Union as observers.

### **Economy and Financial Situation:**

Economically, Transnistria faces numerous challenges. The region heavily relies on outdated Soviet-era industries. The economy is based on a mix of heavy industry (steel production), electricity production, and manufacturing (textile production), which together account for about 80% of the total industrial output. Transnistria also struggles to compete in modern global markets as its economy is also heavily dependent on Russia for trade and financial support. The lack of international recognition impedes Transnistria's access to foreign investments and economic assistance, making it heavily reliant on Russia's economic support.

### Dependence on Russia

One of the defining features of Transnistria's economy is its heavy dependence on Russia for trade, energy, and financial support. Russia serves as a primary trading partner, providing a crucial market for Transnistrian goods and supplying the region with energy resources, including natural gas. Financially, Transnistria relies on Moscow for budgetary support and assistance in propping up its financial system.

### Lack of International Recognition

The lack of international recognition poses significant economic challenges for Transnistria. It limits access to foreign investments, development aid, and trade agreements with other nations. Transnistrian businesses face hurdles in accessing global markets, hindering economic diversification and growth prospects.

### Trade Restrictions and Border Issues

The region's disputed status and limited recognition contribute to trade restrictions and border issues. Transnistrian goods often encounter difficulties when crossing international borders, including those with Ukraine and Moldova. These trade barriers affect the flow of goods and impact the region's economic stability.

### Fiscal Challenges

Transnistria faces fiscal challenges stemming from its budgetary dependence on Russia. Fluctuations in Russian support can create uncertainty and fiscal vulnerabilities. Moreover, budget transparency and accountability remain areas of concern, and addressing these issues is essential for sustainable economic development.

### Inflation and Currency

Inflation rates in Transnistria have historically been higher than in neighbouring countries. The region uses the Transnistrian Ruble as its currency, but its value is not internationally recognized. This leads to currency stability issues and challenges in conducting foreign trade.

### Limited Foreign Direct Investment

The absence of international recognition and ongoing conflict deter foreign direct investment (FDI) in Transnistria. Investors are hesitant to commit capital to a region with uncertain legal and political status. FDI could play a pivotal role in modernizing industries and fostering economic growth.

### Informal Economy

The informal economy is prevalent in Transnistria, with many businesses operating outside the formal regulatory framework. While this can provide a lifeline for survival, it also leads to challenges related to tax evasion, economic informality, and limited social protections.

### Prospects and Opportunities

Despite the numerous economic challenges, Transnistria possesses certain opportunities for development. These include its agricultural potential, access to the Black Sea, and proximity to larger markets in Moldova and Ukraine. Furthermore, efforts to modernize industries, improve infrastructure, and enhance economic governance could help the region unlock its economic potential.

### **Social Issues and Challenges:**

Socially, the population of Transnistria grapples with a complex identity challenge. While the region has a majority ethnic Russian and Ukrainian population, there is also a significant Moldovan minority. This diversity in ethnic and linguistic backgrounds has contributed to tensions and divisions within the region. The absence of international recognition and economic difficulties have led to emigration, particularly among the younger population. The human rights record of Transnistria has been criticised by several governments and international organisations. The 2007 Freedom in the World report, published by the U.S.-based Freedom House, described Transnistria as a "non-free" territory, having an equally bad situation in political rights and civil liberties. Furthermore, LGBT individuals are subject to governmental and societal discrimination.

### Language and Cultural Divide

Language plays a pivotal role in Transnistria's social dynamics. Russian is the dominant language, used in education, media, and official communication. Ukrainian and Moldovan (Romanian) are also spoken, but they often face challenges, such as limited access to education in these languages. This linguistic divide can reinforce ethnic and cultural barriers, hindering meaningful intercultural exchange.

### Emigration and Brain Drain

The lack of economic opportunities and political uncertainty have driven significant emigration from Transnistria, particularly among the younger population. Many young people seek better prospects abroad, leading to a demographic challenge for the region. The loss of skilled individuals through emigration contributes to a brain drain, limiting local human capital and stifling economic development.

### Isolation and Limited Access to Information

Transnistria's isolation from the international community has led to limited access to global information sources and perspectives. State-controlled media and restricted access to the internet

contribute to a closed information environment. This isolation can inhibit critical thinking, access to diverse viewpoints, and the ability to engage in informed decision-making.

### Education and Healthcare

The education and healthcare systems in Transnistria face significant challenges. The lack of international recognition limits access to foreign educational institutions and resources. Healthcare infrastructure struggles to meet modern standards, and access to quality healthcare services remains a concern. These challenges impact the well-being and future prospects of Transnistria's population.

### Human Rights and Freedom of Expression

Concerns regarding human rights and freedom of expression persist in Transnistria. Reports of restrictions on political dissent and media freedom have raised alarm. Ensuring the protection of fundamental rights is crucial for fostering a healthy civil society and addressing social challenges effectively.

### Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

The Transnistrian conflict and the 1992 war resulted in a significant number of internally displaced persons. While many have returned to their homes, the issue of property rights and reintegration remains complex. The presence of IDPs contributes to social tensions and calls for durable solutions.

### Socioeconomic Disparities

Socioeconomic disparities within Transnistria are evident, with urban areas, such as Tiraspol, experiencing more development compared to rural regions. These disparities can lead to uneven access to basic services, opportunities, and economic benefits, exacerbating social divisions.

### Political Stagnation

Transnistria's unresolved status and political isolation have led to political stagnation, with the same authorities remaining in power for an extended period. This can impede social progress and the development of effective policies to address pressing challenges.

### Confidence and Trust Building

Building trust among Transnistria's various communities and with neighbouring Moldova is essential for addressing social challenges. Confidence-building measures, dialogue, and initiatives aimed at fostering reconciliation can help bridge divides and create a more inclusive and cohesive society.

In conclusion, the social issues and challenges in Transnistria are intertwined with its political and economic realities. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes human rights, education, access to information, and the promotion of inclusive policies. Moreover, a peaceful resolution of the Transnistrian conflict and efforts to integrate the region into the broader international community can provide opportunities for addressing these social issues and fostering stability and prosperity for its population.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

1. **Moldova:** The Republic of Moldova claims Transnistria as an integral part of its territory and seeks a peaceful resolution to the conflict that maintains its territorial integrity. Moldova's position has been consistent in advocating for a reintegration of Transnistria within its borders through diplomatic means.
2. **Russia:** Russia has historically provided political and military support to Transnistria, maintaining a military presence in the region. Its influence in the conflict is substantial, with Moscow advocating for Transnistria's right to self-determination and independence.
3. **Ukraine:** Ukraine as a neighbouring country plays a vital role in regional stability, serving as a transit route for goods and people to and from Transnistria. Ukraine's position on the conflict is closely tied to its broader relations with Russia and Moldova.
4. **European Union (EU):** The EU actively supports Moldova's territorial integrity and is committed to resolving the conflict through diplomatic means. It provides political and financial support to Moldova and has sought to promote dialogue between the conflicting parties.
5. **United Nations (UN):** The UN has been involved in diplomatic efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Transnistrian conflict, with various missions and resolutions aimed at facilitating dialogue and addressing humanitarian issues in the region.
6. **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE):** The OSCE is actively engaged in facilitating negotiations between the conflicting parties and monitoring the situation on the ground. It plays a crucial role in building trust and confidence between the parties involved.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Key Events
1990	Transnistria declares independence from Moldova.
1992	Armed conflict erupts between Moldova and Transnistria.
1992	The ceasefire agreement is signed, ending major hostilities.
2006	A referendum in Transnistria reaffirms independence.
2011	Moldova and Transnistria sign agreements on confidence-building measures.
2018	The EU launches the "EU4Transnistria" program for economic development.
2021	Presidential elections in Transnistria; Vadim Krasnoselsky reelected.
2022	The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe defines the territory as under military occupation by Russia.

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

### United Nations Development Program (2007-2011)

The United Nations Development program, adopted in Moldova in 2007, played a significant role in addressing the issues concerning Transnistria, an unrecognized breakaway region in Eastern Europe. This program aimed to address the ongoing humanitarian issues and promote a peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. Below is a concise summary of the program:

- **Humanitarian Focus:** UNDP highlighted the importance of addressing the humanitarian situation in Transnistria. It called for improvements in living conditions, the protection of human rights, and the promotion of economic and social development in the region.
- **Support for Negotiations:** The resolution expressed support for the ongoing negotiations aimed at finding a comprehensive settlement to the Transnistrian conflict. These negotiations took place in the 5+2 format, involving Moldova, Transnistria, Russia, Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with the United States and the European Union as observers.

### Key Outcomes:

- **Humanitarian Improvements:** The resolution's focus on the humanitarian situation in Transnistria contributed to efforts to address issues such as access to education, healthcare, and better living



conditions for the population. These improvements aimed to alleviate the hardships faced by residents in the conflict-affected region.

- **Diplomatic Momentum:** UNDP provided diplomatic momentum for ongoing negotiations in the 5+2 format. It reiterated the importance of dialogue and confidence-building measures between Moldova and Transnistria, as well as the role of international organizations in supporting the peace process.

In conclusion, The United Nations Development program served as a crucial step in the international community's efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the problems that face the residents of Transnistria.

### **5+2 Talks:**

The 5+2 talks for Transnistria represent a diplomatic effort aimed at resolving the long-standing conflict in the breakaway region of Transnistria, located in Eastern Europe. These talks involve key stakeholders, including Moldova, Transnistria, Russia, Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with the United States and the European Union participating as observers. The primary objective is to find a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Transnistrian conflict.

The format includes five primary parties:

1. **Moldova:** As the internationally recognized state, Moldova asserts its territorial integrity over Transnistria and seeks a peaceful resolution to the conflict that respects its sovereignty.
2. **Transnistria:** The self-proclaimed breakaway region of Transnistria insists on its right to self-determination and independence, although its sovereignty is unrecognized by the international community.
3. **Russia:** Russia has played a significant role in the conflict, providing political, military, and economic support to Transnistria. It has an active presence in the talks and advocates for Transnistria's interests.
4. **Ukraine:** As a neighbouring country, Ukraine is involved in the negotiations due to its proximity to Transnistria and its role as a transit route for goods and people.
5. **OSCE:** The OSCE serves as a mediator in the talks, facilitating negotiations, monitoring the situation on the ground, and promoting confidence-building measures.

In addition to the five primary parties, the United States and the European Union participate as observers, offering political support and contributing to the negotiation process.

The 5+2 talks for Transnistria have yielded several key outcomes:

- **Dialogue and Confidence-Building:** The talks provide a platform for sustained dialogue between Moldova and Transnistria, promoting mutual understanding and trust-building.

- **Humanitarian and Economic Measures:** The negotiations have led to various humanitarian and economic measures aimed at improving living conditions in Transnistria, addressing humanitarian issues, and fostering economic development.
- **Security and Stability:** The talks contribute to the maintenance of stability in the region by addressing security concerns and preventing the escalation of the conflict.
- **International Engagement:** The involvement of international organizations, such as the OSCE, the United States, and the European Union, underscores the commitment of the international community to finding a peaceful solution to the Transnistrian conflict.

In conclusion, the 5+2 talks represent a diplomatic mechanism for addressing the complexities of the Transnistrian conflict. While a comprehensive resolution has remained elusive, these talks have played a crucial role in promoting dialogue, confidence-building, and stability in the region, offering hope for a peaceful future.

### Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Efforts to resolve the Transnistrian conflict have included diplomatic negotiations, confidence-building measures, and international mediation. Some notable initiatives include:

1. **1992 Ceasefire Agreement:** This agreement ended the armed conflict but did not resolve the core issues of sovereignty and recognition. It laid the foundation for peacekeeping efforts in the region.
2. **1997 “Moscow Memorandum”:** Signed by Russia and Ukraine, this document outlined principles for conflict resolution but did not lead to a final settlement. It emphasized the need for a special status for Transnistria within Moldova.
3. **2005 “Kozak Memorandum”:** Proposed by Russia, this plan suggested a federalization of Moldova, granting Transnistria significant autonomy. It was rejected by Moldova, citing concerns about its sovereignty.
4. **2016–2017 Negotiations:** These talks aimed at a comprehensive settlement but faced challenges related to the withdrawal of Russian troops, constitutional reforms in Moldova, and differing visions for the region's future.

### Possible Solutions

Finding a lasting solution to the Transnistrian conflict remains a complex task. Potential solutions include:

1. **Diplomatic Negotiations:** Continuing diplomatic efforts, including the 5+2 talks, to find a mutually acceptable resolution that addresses political, economic, and social concerns, while respecting Moldova's territorial integrity. These negotiations should involve all relevant stakeholders and prioritize conflict de-escalation.
2. **Autonomy within Moldova:** Granting Transnistria a high degree of autonomy within Moldova, similar to the "Kozak Memorandum" proposal, while preserving Moldova's territorial integrity. This solution would require comprehensive guarantees for the rights and security of Transnistrian residents.
3. **International Mediation:** Involving international mediators and organizations to facilitate dialogue and confidence-building, addressing the concerns of all parties involved, and ensuring a sustainable peace process. Mediation efforts should focus on trust-building measures and long-term reconciliation.
4. **Normalization of Relations:** Encouraging economic and social integration between Transnistria and Moldova to promote reconciliation and sustainable development. This approach should prioritize people-to-people contacts, cross-border cooperation, and the removal of trade barriers.
5. **Status Quo with Improvements:** Maintaining the current situation while pursuing confidence-building measures and gradual reconciliation, with an emphasis on addressing humanitarian issues and building trust. This includes improving living conditions, enhancing access to education, and fostering cultural exchanges between communities.

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