

How the Republic of Moldova Is Perceived from the Left Bank of the Dniester River.

**Observations based on monitoring media sources
from the Transnistrian region.**

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Analysis conducted by Dr. Tatiana Cojocari within the project “Fostering regional social cohesion: understanding public perceptions in the transnistrian region on the 2025 parliamentary elections, geopolitical dynamics, and reintegration” implemented by the Zona de Securitate platform and the WatchDog.MD Community with financial support from Norway. The content of this material is the sole responsibility of Zona de Securitate and WatchDog.MD and can in no way be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Government of Norway.

Chisinau is inferior to Tiraspol;

Moldovans are socially degraded;

„Transnistria” is not and has never been part of the territory of the Republic of Moldova,

are just a few of the ideas that bombard weekly the information space on the left bank of the Dniester.

We wanted to understand the opinion of Moldovans who live in the territory that is not controlled by the Chisinau authorities about the Republic of Moldova, therefore we have monitored during a three-month period eight mass-media sources that target the residents on the left bank of the Dniester. Details about the sources and the monitoring methodology are available at the end of the analysis.

Context

From Chisinau’s perspective, the population on the left bank of the Dniester is seen as mostly having strongly favourable opinions of the Russian Federation and equally strong anti-Western sentiments.

It is no longer news that the limited access of residents on the left bank to ethical and verified information as well as the intense consumption of information from Russian mass-media sources, makes them more prone to disinformation campaigns from the Russian Federation, limiting their access to opinions from different sources.

However, if the opinion of residents on the left bank of the Dniester is known, we cannot declare the same thing about their attitude towards the mother country from which they chose to separate in 1992 - the Republic of Moldova.

In the context in which Chisinau has invited Tiraspol multiple times to walk together on the European integration path, as a unitary and indivisible state, and on September 28, 2025, elections will take place, that will consolidate or, on the contrary, will halt the Republic of Moldova European path, now more than ever it is necessary to understand the opinion of Moldovan residents on the left bank of the Dniester river about the Republic of Moldova and the political processes in Chisinau.

*This analysis provides arguments that demonstrate that residents on the left bank of the Dniester are being exposed every week to messages and news **aimed at denigrating the image of the Republic of Moldova.***

One of the main conclusions is that not only the sources originating from the Russian Federation aim to distort the socio-political reality on the right bank, but as well as the local sources controlled by the Sheriff holding or the so-called special services from the Transnistrian region, lead by the political leaders from the left bank of the Dniester.

Although the majority of toxic messages targeting the population on the left bank of the Dniester are of foreign origin (Russian Federation), the local sources are also massively sharing and quoting Russian politicians in order to show on the one hand, that the economic and political situation in Transnistria is much better than on the right bank. On the other hand, to reiterate that, Chisinau is the number one enemy of the residents on the left bank of the Dniester.

In such a context, any support or initiative from Chisinau to respond to the needs of the population on the left bank is perceived hostilely. And any national or international attempt to increase trust between the two banks and reconcile the population regarding the war from 1992 is hitting an informational wall that is too little penetrated by positive things happening on the right bank, and too often painted with negative and manipulative news that continue to portray the Republic of Moldova as “the great evil” for the residents of the left bank.

What do media sources from the left bank of the Dniester say about the Republic of Moldova?

During the period of June-August 2025, when the mass media sources that target the population on the left bank of the Dniester were analyzed, **three main topics were identified that shape the image of the Republic of Moldova.**

*The first topic generally refers to the **economic, social and political situation on the right bank.***

*The second theme concerns the **context of the parliamentary elections on September 28, 2025.***

*The third topic is **dedicated to cultural and civilizational aspects**, including the identity and linguistic issues of the two banks, rights and freedoms.*

How is the economic situation on the right bank presented to residents on the left bank of the Dniester?

Economically speaking, the Republic of Moldova is frequently depicted as a “corrupt and failed state, which has no future on its own, and which has become impoverished without Russia”. In June, the [MYASORUBKA NEWS](#) channel distributed several news emphasizing how poor the people of the Republic of Moldova are and how Moldova’s economy is almost collapsing. In July the focus was already on demographic issues in Moldova. As in August, quoting a survey data, there were presented news in which the citizens of the right bank themselves said that poverty and corruption are the main problems in the country.

The fact that the Republic of Moldova benefits from financial support from the European Union is presented as a fact that “harms Moldova’s future”, because it would be indebted to “foreigners” for several generations in a row. Therefore, according to the sources from the left bank of the Dniester, “Moldova is one step away from disappearing from the world map.”

Also, in the information space on the left bank, one can be constantly find news that emphasizes the idea that the population of the right bank is inferior to those who live on the left bank. In order to support this idea, several messages constantly emphasize how “Moldovans on the right bank were caught with drugs or

committing different crimes in Tiraspol and Moscow". Through such type of news, the authors of these posts do not hesitate to remind people how "far back Moldova and its citizens are."

By contrast, through news about the achievements athletes from the left bank at various sports and checkers championships, it is suggested that the Transnistrian region is a "more developed 'state'" compared to the right bank.

Although the population of the right bank, in perception of the authors of the news sources, would be "inferior" to the residents of the Transnistrian region, the official sources of the Tiraspol leaders never tire of reminding how "Moldova intentionally impoverishes the Transnistrian region" and "makes fun of (its) citizens from the left bank of the Dniester."

The Myasorubka channel, quoting political leaders from the left bank, states that "due to economic pressure exerted by the Republic of Moldova, the GDP of the Transnistrian region decreased by 5.4% in real terms, according to an announcement by the Tiraspol authorities."

In the same rhetoric, Vitalie Ignatiev, the leader responsible of the foreign policy of the region, states that the experts, journalists, and certain politicians would have a rhetoric of hate towards the residents of the Transnistrian region:

"(...) certain actors from the neighbouring state have not managed to **overcome the nationalist mentality of the 90's and their own complexes and psychological issues**", which, due to particular reasons, are projecting on our country and its own residents. This is a very alarming trend, because with this exact rhetoric has started the Moldo-Transnistrian conflict. (Source: Novosti Pridnestrovia).

Last but not least, Chisinau is to blame for the energy crisis in the region. While Russia has done and is doing everything possible to ensure "stable gas supplies", Moldova is not undertaking the necessary steps, TSV Pridnestrovia tells us quoting Russia's ambassador to Moldova, Oleg Ozerov.

How is political life in Chisinau seen from the left bank?

"Corrupt and controlled by the West" is the answer that broadly summarizes the general idea found in the information space of the Transnistrian region.

For example, Andrei Sofonov suggests in a Facebook [post](#) that "the Republic of Moldova's entry into the European Union would be comparable with a 'third occupation of Moldova by Romania'." Pay attention to the terms - occupation! (source: Andrei Sofonov)

The information space on the left bank, obviously does not lack quotes from statements made by Kremlin officials who relentlessly repeat that "the people of Moldova want to be a sovereign (sovereign of Europe, not of Russia), but the current government would sell the country to foreigners."

Quoting Maria Zakharova, other sources tell us that "Western countries are directly interfering in the electoral process in the Republic of Moldova, exerting pressure on the leadership of the republic." Zakharova emphasized that "it is an attempt to prevent the free choice of lucid people in favor of their own future, the

development of equal and respectful relations with various countries, including Russia.” (Source: Myasorubka News)

Also, any visit of European decision-makers to Chisinau is presented as interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Moldova. Meanwhile, the stationing of the Russian army on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is presented not as interference in internal affairs, but as a necessity to protect “Transnistria from Moldova.”

The media space of the Transnistrian region could not miss news about “how incompetent the government of the Republic of Moldova is”, “how many illegalities it commits” and in general, we are presented with a detailed “plan” about how the “parliamentary elections in September 2025” will be “falsified” by the country’s leadership.

A month before the parliamentary elections, the number of posts with a political and electoral tone increased significantly. For example, in August, 56 messages about elections and right-wing politics were identified compared to only 18 in July.

The intensification of the messages was partially caused by the decision of the authorities to reduce the number of the polling stations in the security zone. We will dedicate a separate report about the impact of this decision.

To summarize, if we were a Moldovan living for example in Bender and we watched the news from the Transnistrian region, it would not be possible to have any trust in the government in Chisinau, and in general, in the public institutions on the right bank, because we would be told on a weekly basis how they “make fun of the people from Moldova”, “lie to people about the possible chance to integrate into Europe only to win a vote”, or how they “chase away Moldovans out of the country” in order to “bring immigrants to work in the service sector.” (Source: TSV Pridnestrovie).

The discourse about the intention to rig the September 2025 elections is cleverly built on any decision by the authorities to limit the number of polling stations in areas where electoral corruption of voters cannot be stopped (such as the uncontrolled territory left of the Dniester, the Russian Federation or Belarus), or not to allow the violation of the law by certain parties that want to buy voters or whose sources of funding are not transparent.

To make the image even more credible, it is suggested that although “government representatives commit crimes, unfortunately they will not be held accountable because they are “protected” by the EU,” the Myasorubka News source tells us, quoting Alexander Corinenco.

Moldovans are „fascists” because they identify as Romanians, and the true history of “Moldovanism” is preserved in Tiraspol.

These would be the main ideas about the identity of the Republic of Moldova’s citizens that are frequently instilled by the information sources from the left bank of the Dniester.

Without a doubt we can say that the favorite theme of political leaders from Tiraspol is the one that touches the subject of identity and civilizational. The number of posts on this theme in the three months of monitored precedes the other themes identified. After all, it is also understandable when media sources from the region uncontrolled by Chisinau since 1990 trumpet that "the Transnistrian region was forced to secede from Chisinau" because Moldovans wanted to speak Romanian (not a language mangled by the Soviets, half full of Russianisms, written in Cyrillic, called "Moldovan").

In this vein, sources from the left bank of the Dniester never tire of maintaining this myth, suggesting that there is a "Moldovan language" different from the Romanian one, as well as a "separate Moldovan people". This language and this people are obviously found on the left bank of the river.

Meanwhile in the Republic of Moldova, not only is there "nothing Moldovan" left, as the source Myasorubka suggests, referring to Igor Grosu's quote (which mentions that "only a people that preserves its language, history and traditions has a future. We, Moldovans, have what we need — we also have folk songs and folk dances." The author of the post asks: But what else did you leave Moldovan for the Moldovan people? (Source: Myasorubka News), but more than that, in the Republic of Moldova, "historical truth" is being falsified intensely and "Russophobia" is being promoted.

We also know from Kremlin-affiliated sources that the government in Chisinau is "Russophobic". It is just that this message is constantly repeated by sources on the left bank of the Dniester in order to make the residents of the left bank not doubt for a moment the decision to separate from Chisinau. After all, how can they live in a country which, according to media sources on the left bank, does not allow "the Russian language and culture" and "discriminates against Russian speakers".

In unison with this message, during the three months of monitoring, one of the main topics on the public agenda in the Transnistrian region was about "how the authorities in Chisinau falsify history".

This narrative is promoted in a credible manner by constantly quoting opinion leaders with pro-Russian sympathies from Chisinau or even politicians from Russia.

"School history textbooks in the Republic of Moldova cultivate hatred towards Russians and the Soviet past, distorting the events of World War II," this would be the opinion of the scientific director of the Russian Military History Society, Mikhail Myagkov.

The author also tells us that "Romania finances this, the European Union finances this. The main thing is that this is directed against Russia. These textbooks are oriented precisely towards Russophobia, hatred towards Russians" (Source: Myasorubka News).

Thus, while in Chisinau, you wonder what is happening with history textbooks, in Tiraspol the authorities are taking care to perpetuate the idea of a fascist Romania that "invaded the Republic of Moldova" and of a "Soviet Union (or Russia) that saved and continues to save humanity from fascism".

Moreover, "the Russian Military-Historical Society is ready to create a textbook on the **true** history of Moldova, in order to combat the distortion of events and facts", the same source Myasorubka News informs us.

It is not only Romania that is the enemy of the inhabitants of the Transnistrian region (according to media sources on the left bank of the Dniester). People on the left bank are constantly reminded of how “Moldovan (nationalists) persecuted and killed Russian speakers in 1992”.

Thus, the source Pervyi Pridniestrovskii distributes news about how:

“33 years ago in the village of Gisca, five people were shot while defending the border of their native village. The day before, on July 21, the presidents of Russia and Moldova signed the Agreement on the Peaceful Settlement of the Transnistrian Conflict.” According to the news, “a special purpose brigade from Moldova shot these people.” (source: Pervyi Pridniestrovskii).

And on August 1, media sources remind the population on the left bank of the Dniester that it is a day of mourning - “The Day of Commemoration and Sorrow for those who fell during the armed aggression of Moldova against the Transnistrian people. Commemorative events will take place throughout Transnistria.” (Source: Novosti Pridnestrovia).

These messages are joined by voices of so-called history experts, such as Andrei Safonov, who explains how “Transnistria has never been part of the Republic of Moldova” or how the region is entitled to “self-determination and independence.”

Sources controlled by the leaders in Tiraspol also give us history lessons, stating that:

“It is important to note that the Transnistrian statehood arose earlier than the modern Moldovan one (...). Moldovan statehood was revived by the Soviet Union in 1940. At that time, an artificial unification of two different regions took place: Transnistria and part of Bessarabia - into the union republic of the Moldavian SSR. Moreover, Transnistria served as the basis for it, where a republic was created in 1924 - the Moldavian Autonomous SSR (MASS). Thus, after the decision of the Moldovan parliament of June 28, 1990, Transnistria had a legitimate, legally and historically conditioned opportunity to recreate (based on the experience of statehood in 1924–1940) a republic, which was achieved on September 2, 1990.” (source: Novosti Pridnestrovia).

Also in sources controlled by the Tiraspol regime or their affiliates we find allusions how “weak and helpless” Chisinau was in 1992 when it suffered a defeat at the hands of Tiraspol:

“After the **failure of the pro-Romanian nationalists’ adventure** with the invasion of Bender on June 19, 1992, it became clear that the then regime in Chisinau had suffered a strategic defeat: it could not even occupy the right side of the TMR, let alone capture Tiraspol or Dubasari” (Source: Andrei Safonov).

In conclusion, the analysis of media sources from the left bank of the Dniester indicates how the opinion of the residents of the left bank of the Dniester about the Republic of Moldova is shaped and what ideas are frequently inoculated into the collective mentality of the population from the left bank of the Dniester through media content.

According to the sources from the Transnistrian region, we have a “weak and powerless Chisinau in relation to Tiraspol”. “A country on the edge of the abyss ready of an economic collapse”. “Dirty” politics with “incompetent and corrupt” politicians. “Poor people who are driven out of the country by corrupt politicians”. And a Transnistrian region that has fortified its “statehood” under protectorate of Russia.

Nothing about the fact that Moldovan citizens on the left bank benefit daily from the medical services on the right bank. Nothing about the free education offered to any student who wants to study in Chisinau. Nothing about pensions. Nothing about the fact that many young people from the Transnistrian region have chosen to work specifically in Chisinau or in European states.

Nothing about Romanian (fascist) passports.

Too little about the projects implemented in the region with European money, about the support offered by the EU to get out of the energy crisis.

Besides, we all ask ourselves, reading the media sources from the Transnistrian region, but maybe it is time for us, the people from the right bank, to (re)integrate with the Transnistrian region, if things are so good across the Dniester?

Media monitoring methodology

This material is a summary of the results of the monitoring conducted by the “WatchDog.MD” Community during June-August 2025 period. The monitoring aimed to identify toxic messages targeting the population on the left bank of the Dniester.

15 sources (Telegram channels, Facebook pages, websites) were monitored, including sources from the right bank of the Dniester, from the Transnistrian region, and from Russia. In total, 8 sources were defined as being from the Transnistrian region. The analysis is based only on the content identified in the media sources on the left bank of the Dniester.

The content of each source was analyzed by two media monitoring specialists to identify false and toxic messages targeting the topics developed according to the research purpose. To reduce the subjectivity related to the human factor in the process of identifying and defining a news or post as false or toxic, both a cross-check by the monitoring team members and a random check by the project researcher were undertaken.

Monitored sources:

- [Vitalie Ignatiev/ MID PMR](#) (MID PMR) - the so-called “Minister of Foreign Affairs” of the Transnistrian region. He does not have any public profiles or platforms for sharing posts or videos. He is quoted by TV stations in the separatist region, the Telegram channel of the so-called "Minister of Foreign Affairs" from Tiraspol, and Russian propaganda sources.
- [Vadim Krasnoselski](#) - the so-called “President” of the Transnistrian region, in office since 2016, maintains only one active social media account – Telegram. He posts infrequently, primarily sharing videos from official events. Nevertheless, he is frequently cited by Transnistrian and Russian media outlets.

- [MYASORUBKA NEWS](#) - an anonymous Telegram channel that identifies itself as an “alternative information platform”. On average, it publishes over 20 posts per day. The content primarily focuses on international politics, the Transnistrian region, and the Republic of Moldova. Information is frequently presented in a manipulative manner.
- [TSV Pridnestrovie](#) - a public television outlet based on the left bank of the Dniester. Its Telegram channel predominantly publishes news related to social issues, entertainment, and politics concerning the region. References to the Republic of Moldova are less frequent but tend to be presented in a defamatory manner.
- [Igor Shornicov](#) - a political scientist and director of the Institute for Sociopolitical Research and Regional Development in the Transnistrian region, who publishes materials via the institute’s platform. He selects the topics addressed in conformity with the national political context. The posting frequency is low, averaging 2–3 posts per week.
- [Pervyi Pridniestrovskii](#) - a public television station on the left bank of the Dniester, affiliated with the Tiraspol regime and financed by the regional budget. The outlet maintains active pages on YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, and Facebook. For monitoring purposes, we selected the prime- time news bulletin broadcast at 20:30, also available on YouTube.
- [Novosti Pridnestrovia](#) - a news portal affiliated with the Tiraspol regime. It maintains accounts on YouTube, Facebook, and Telegram, with the latter selected for monitoring purposes.
- [Andrei Safonov](#) - a politician and MP from the left bank of the Dniester, often presents himself as a political analyst. He is one of the active promoters of Russian propaganda in the Transnistrian region, with an emphasis on civilisational and political aspects.

The monitoring database can be made available individually by sending a request to this effect to the email address: contact@watchdog.md