

On military depots in Europe and Moldova

As Greens, we are strong supporters of peace and non-violence both to nature and people. In 2016, we are marking the 25th anniversary of the peaceful dismantling of the Warsaw Pact and the peaceful end of the possibility of a large scale and full military conflict in Europe.

The European continent in the past has been a hotbed of wars and destruction spanning from East to West.

Facing an extended period of peace and prosperity, working together to solve our common and shared problems and issues, we are, nevertheless, dealing with our gruesome past – piles of military hardware, tons of chemical weapons and mountains of old and unused ammunition.

Often stored in inappropriate conditions, with an insufficient level of security, many times on open fields, open to elements of the nature, this deadly hardware is a permanent threat to both the environment and people, sometimes with some fatal consequences.

Unused military ammunition is often more dangerous due to the expiry of its validity time, with high chances that it might explode or infiltrate water and soil, thus affecting the surrounding areas and, at a larger scale, other parts of Europe.

The military depot in Colbasna, Moldova, is one example of such a Cold War legacy. Located in the unrecognised territory of Transnistria, outside the effective control of the public authorities of Moldova, it hosts around 22,000 tons of unused or old military ammunition, both conventional and chemical. One of the largest of its kind, it is part of the Russian military presence in Moldova. Russia committed itself to the withdrawal of the military by 2002 from the territory of Republic of Moldova during OSCE meeting in Istanbul in 1999. However, it suspended ratification of the Istanbul declaration in 2007 and failed to achieve agreed targets.

A legacy of the military presence of the Soviet Army in Central and Eastern Europe, the site is outside of the control of the international organizations, such as OSCE, for example. It represents a potential danger to the densely populated surrounding areas and, due to its proximity to the Nistru river, to a larger area that includes the Black sea. The river is, sometimes, the only a source of drinking water for the majority of the cities and villages located downstream. This makes it a time bomb, ready to detonate at any second of any day. Colbasna military depot is a regional danger.

We, the European Green Party, are envisioning Europe without scars of previous wars. We reinforce the importance of a pan-European peace space and are committing ourselves to a safe and peaceful Europe. In that Europe, there is no place for ammunition depots left unsecured, in inappropriate storage conditions, contaminating water and soil and being a high security risk for the population in the wider surrounding region.

We urge the government of Russian federation to take immediate action for the withdrawal of ammunition from the military depot in Colbasna, Moldova, bringing it to an effective end. Further more, the presence of international organizations such as OSCE must be permitted.

We request from the Moldovan government, with the help of international community, to take necessary actions to identify all endangered areas and to undertake the research necessary for a better understanding of the consequences for nature and people. We require that necessary and appropriate actions towards the decontamination and quality restoration of the soil and water of the areas used as

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military depots and places in its proximity to be undertaken immediately. We call upon the Moldovan government to undertake a proactive campaign in detecting and seizing missing ammunition and arms.

We rely on the OSCE process and military trainings for dismantling, safe storage and handling of ammunition and small guns with relevant institutions in the region and we urge OSCE to continue program after its expiration in November 2016 or until depots are disarmed.