

Transdnestr Ends Customs Duties With Moldova

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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CHISINAU — Moldova's breakaway Transdnestr region has scrapped a 100 percent customs duty on goods imported from Moldova, in a move aimed at improving ties with the rest of the country.

Tuesday's announcement by new Transdnestr President Yevgeny Shevchuk marked one of his first moves since he won an election last month on a platform of normalizing relations with Moldova.

Transdnestr, a small sliver of land located along Moldova's border with Ukraine mainly populated by Russian speakers, has ruled itself since breaking away from largely Romanian-speaking Moldova in a brief war in 1992.

Its independence has not been recognized internationally.

It introduced the duties on Moldovan goods in 2006, after Moldova said all Transdnestr exports had to be cleared by its customs. At the time, Transdnestr also halted reconciliation talks with Moldova. The talks resumed late last year.

Shevchuk's office said the duties would be scrapped immediately.

Shevchuk, who took over from veteran leader Igor Smirnov, has promised to make it easier for his territory's 500,000 residents to do business, while also defending its independence and seeking its recognition abroad.

Moldova hopes to reintegrate the region, which depends heavily on financial assistance from Russia.

Moscow advocates granting Transdnestr special status as part of Moldova as a possible solution.

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