

THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP AND PROSPECTS FOR RELATIONS WITH THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

*Victoria GOREAINOV**

*Mircea BRIE***

Abstract. *This paper is an in-depth analysis of the role of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership and its influence on relations with the Russian Federation. The analysis of the role of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership and the prospects for relations with the Russian Federation are necessary, given that the interests of the European Union and Russia intersect in Eastern Europe, and Moldova has been in the past 10 years between East and West. In the situation created Moldova finds itself between two regional powers – the EU and Russia. The European Union, as well as the Russian Federation, are major partners for the Republic of Moldova, and the orientation to the east or west often depends on political desire. The Republic of Moldova is one of the countries in Eastern Europe where Russia, by various methods, tries to maintain its influence, directing all forces against the EU enlargement to the East. In the context of the Republic of Moldova’s rapprochement with the EU, the main geostrategic interest of the Russian Federation is to maintain control over the former Soviet republics. And in order to maintain its status of great power, Russia needs to maintain its influence, including its military presence in Moldova, as a tool for exerting political pressure. However, the current reality, namely that the draft resolution proposed by the Republic of Moldova on “The complete and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military forces on the territory of the Republic of Moldova” was adopted at the UN General Assembly on June 22, 2018, questions the continuation of the presence Russian military in the Transnistrian region.*

Keywords: *Republic of Moldova, Eastern Partnership, Russian Federation, European Union, Europeanization, cooperation, partnership.*

Introduction

This paper aims at analyzing the role of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership and the influence on bilateral relations with the Russian Federation. Today, it is becoming increasingly obvious that Moldova’s proximity to the European Union is not in favour of Russia, which wants to maintain its influence in a state on the border with the EU. The Republic of Moldova for more than 9 years is part of the EU – Eastern Partnership program. During these years there have been many political changes in the country, but Moldova has always been one of the most active participants of the EaP.

* Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, Department for institutional management, Division for Documents Management and Diplomatic State Archive, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova. PhD Student, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, E-mail: victoriagoreainov@gmail.com.

** Profesor PhD, University of Oradea, Romania, E-mail: mirceabrie@gmail.com.

The Eastern Partnership joins 6 post-Soviet countries – the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia, but these countries are currently in different phases of implementing program prerogatives and have different plans for the EU. The evolution of the Republic of Moldova in the EaP has shown that the country's progress in the program depends on the official policy, but also on the influence from the outside. It should be noted that the EaP policies and the active participation of the Republic of Moldova in this program intersect directly the interests of the Russian Federation in this area. Thus, the influence of external factors marks the decisions taken by the governments of the EaP states.

1. Theoretical conceptual framework

In 2003, within the European Union, the Extended Europe concept emerged, when the European Commission, through the Communication “Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours”, proposed the development of a prosperous area, a circle of friends at the EU's external borders.¹ A little later, the European Neighborhood Policy Concept also appears, when in Brussels, on 12 May 2004, the strategic document “The European Neighborhood Policy” was adopted.² The strategy document has defined the coverage of the European Neighborhood Policy: 12 countries from the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, the Palestinian Authority and such countries like – Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

It is important to note that the Russian Federation refused to maintain and develop its cooperation relations with the European Union under the umbrella of the European Neighbourhood Policy. At the same time, at the continental level, the European Neighbourhood Policy is interdependent on Russia's foreign policy, given its role in solving the frozen conflicts in Moldova and Georgia, and the political influence it exercises for its benefit in the post-Soviet space.

Four years later, the European Council on 19-20 June 2008 reiterated the need to promote the Eastern Dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy and to deepen cooperation between the Eastern neighbours of the EU. Thus, in May 2009, the Eastern Partnership initiative is officially launched.

An important theoretical and conceptual aspect is the concept of Europeanization. The concept of Europeanization is one of the most popular among integration theories, which in its turn has several approaches and definitions. However, in order to carry out an analysis of the EU's neighbourhood policy, we can only mention those referring to the external dimension of this process, namely the institutional changes taking place in the partner countries at the borders of the Union (See more Brie, 2014: 113-130 and Brie, 2017b: 51-78).

One of the first definitions of Europeanization is the definition of the American professor Robert Ladrech. In his paper “Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France”, the researcher believes that Europeanization is a

¹ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A new Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, COM (2003) 104 final, Brussels, 11.03.2003, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf, accessed 01.11.2018

² European Commission, Communication from the Commission, European Neighbourhood Policy – strategy paper, com (2004) 373 final, brussels, 12 may 2004, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2004_communication_from_the_commission_-_european_neighbourhood_policy_-_strategy_paper.pdf, accessed 01.11.2018

complex but rather slow process that leads to the reorientation and modeling of policies in such a way that the political and economic dynamics of the European Community becomes part of the organizational logic of the states' national policies (Ladrech, 1994: 70). The definition of the American scholar is interesting as the organizational model of the European community can influence the organizational logic of the states that are in the European space.

In Heather Grabbe's paper "Europeanization goes East: Power and Uncertainty in EU Accession Process", we see an idea that Europeanization is a process under the aegis of the European Union, which is necessary for states wishing to join the European Union (Grabbe, 2003: 3). The author analyzes the process of Europeanization in the Central and Eastern European countries, which in the future want to become EU members, and points out that in these countries the process of Europeanization is deferred from that which takes place in the countries that are already members of the Union. It should be noted that the researcher also highlights the influence of the European Union on the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, a specific factor of the Europeanization process in this region of Europe is that the Central and Eastern European states are open to this influence of the European Union.

Italian researcher C. Radaelli in his paper "Europeanisation: Solution or Problem?" considers that Europeanization represents concepts that interconnect the internal and external aspects of European integration. This is a process of spreading values and legislative norms within the EU but also in countries that are at the borders of the Union (Radaelli, 2004: 4).

The Norwegian researcher Johan Peder Olsen in "The Many Faces of Europeanization", proposed classifying the concept of Europeanization into five categories:

- Europeanization as act of alteration in the external territorial boundaries;
- Europeanization as a development of governance institutions at the European level;
- Europeanisation as the central penetration of national and sub-national governance systems;
- Europeanization as an export of forms of political organization and governance;
- Europeanisation as a political project for a stronger and unified Europe (Olsen, 2002).

Considering the research topic, the last two categories of author J. P. Olsen are interesting from a scientific point of view. These two categories can be analyzed in the context of research into the European Neighbourhood Policy of the EU and the Eastern Partnership Initiative (Brie, 2017a: 55-71; Brie, 2017c: 123-155).

According to Olsen, Europeanization as an export form of political organization and governance is typical for Europe beyond the European Union territory, which focuses on cooperation with non-European states. It should be noted that the process of Europeanization from this point of view also concerns the Republic of Moldova within the Eastern Partnership. Thus, the European model of democratic governance also influenced the official political governance of the Republic of Moldova. As a confirmation, we can add that the Republic of Moldova's accession to the Eastern Partnership Initiative in 2009 was an important political expression of the pro-European government of Moldova at that time. As a result, after the assumption of the responsibility of the government towards the

pro-European vector, the political desire of the Moldovans changed, which was still oriented towards the EU.

Europeanisation as a political project for a unified Europe also takes place under the influence of governance systems outside the European continent. This theory largely refers to the political project for building a strong political Europe. As a result, it is creating a political space that will include the EU and its neighbours. It is worth mentioning that the EU has tried to create political space through its actions.

Europeanization as a political project is important because it is a meeting point between the intentions of neighbouring states and EU members. This process is an effort of the Union for relations with the region. This marks the beginning of a partnership between the EU and its neighbours and increases the commitment of both the neighbours and the Union.³

The European Neighbourhood Policy is a specific form of institutional transfer that applies to the EU's neighbours.⁴ At the same time, the ENP does not formulate the prospect of EU membership, but it presupposes the creation of a "circle of friends" at its borders, which are offered the opportunity to participate in various community activities.

In the paper "Institutional Convergence of CIS Towards European Benchmarks", the German authors believe that the EU has set its interest in implementing democratic and market institutions in neighbouring countries in order to reduce the institutional deficit in these countries (Schweickert, Melnykovska, Gawrich, Drautzburg, 2008: 16). Thus, the technical and organizational consultancy and expertise provided by the European structures to neighbouring countries to solve concrete macro or microeconomic problems is a form of institutional transfer.

In order to carry out the theoretical analysis of the respective research, the theories of international relations were used, such as transnationalism, critical theory, and functionalist theory.

Advocates of transnationalism believe that international relations have gone beyond the framework of inter-state interactions. In addition to states in international relations, there are also international organizations, individuals, and other non-state actors. Thus, the diversity of participants in international relations has contributed to transforming international communication from international to transnational.⁵ Transnationalism can be used to understand the interaction between two different actors such as the Republic of Moldova and the European Union.

Critical theory is used to interpret statistical data regarding the participation of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership. Thus, we can analyze the indices presented in the "Eastern Partnership Index" reports, which are made every year starting with 2012.

The functionalist theory is based on the establishment of connections that eliminate gaps between states through the formation of specific and functional

³ Ioana Mureșan, Politică Europeană de Vecinătate: nou cadru pentru europenizare?, in Colecția de studii IER, Institutul European din România, nr. 15, București, 2005, p. 31, http://beta.ier.ro/documente/working_papers/wp_15.pdf, accessed 04.11.2018

⁴ Eugenia Feuraș, Cadrul teoretico-conceptual cu referință la rolul instituțiilor în procesul de aderare la UE, în Revista „ECONOMICA”, nr. 3 (97), 2016, p. 100, https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/92_110_Cadrul%20teoretico-conceptual%20cu%20referinta%20la%20rolul%20institutiilor%20in%20procesul%20de%20aderare%20la%20UE.pdf, accessed 05.11.2018

⁵ Павел Цыганков, Политическая социология международных отношений, Москва: «Радикс», 1994, https://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Polit/cugan/01.php, accessed 05.11.2018

organizations. Some aspects of this theory are reflected even in the European Neighbourhood Policy when EU countries, through competent institutions, offer rewards to the neighbouring states, demanding in return the implementation of measures that will lead to the security of the areas adjacent to EU borders (Brie, 2017c: 123-155).

Referring to the Republic of Moldova, which is part of the eastern neighbourhood of the European Union, we find the Soviet legacy of an energy dependence on Russia, and an energy sector characterized by numerous political interferences. The interdependence of the political factor with the economic and social one is a feature of reality in the eastern neighbourhood of the European Union. It is therefore becoming increasingly clear that the Eastern Partnership countries, including the Republic of Moldova, are specific to the interdependence these countries have with Russia (Brie, 2017a: 55-71).

2. Methodological framework and research historiography

The methodological framework used is more analytical in nature, based on the decisions made at the beginning of the EaP to date, according to normative acts published by the EU, or the regulations approved by the Moldovan government that deal with the relationship of this state with the European Union. The examination of the progress reports issued by the European Commission, the Parliament or the Council is very important because they are objective indicators of the progress made by the Republic of Moldova in the EaP.

Various research methods have been used in the paper, such as:

- Discourse analysis – analysis of the speeches of the political leaders of the Republic of Moldova, the EU and the Russian Federation, revealing the general directions of the interests of each of these actors.

- Documentary analysis – study of official documents of the EU and the Republic of Moldova, relevant to the chosen theme: reports, accounts, treaties, agreements, regulations, directives, decisions, communications, action plans.

- Behavioural method – highlighting the specifics of the Russian Federation's interests in Eastern Europe, including the Republic of Moldova.

- Historical method – the possibility of complementing the research of phenomena and specific processes not only in their spatial development, but also in time. Registration of the occurrence, the stages of the evolution and the current progress of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership and the impact on relations with Russia.

- Comparative method – comparative analysis of the progress of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership.

- Statistical analysis – interpretation of public surveys on the impact of European integration and the civic perception of this process in Moldova.

- Critical analysis of documentation sources – critical analysis of sources such as studies, official publications, journals, books, reports on the topic of research.

Given the topicality of the research, the statements of the officials representing the actors involved, especially those of the European Union, of the Russian Federation, as well as those of the Republic of Moldova: the prime minister, the foreign minister, the deputy ministers – persons responsible for the implementation of this area, are used in the paper, considering the value of the argument, their statements representing the official position of the Republic of Moldova.

In the Republic of Moldova, the scientific preoccupation with the European integration, including the activity of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership, is manifested through a multidimensional research, which is in continuous development. Thus, if the participation of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership is widely

approached by Moldovan specialists, then the impact of this cooperation on bilateral relations with the Russian Federation is not sufficiently researched. It should be noted that in Moldova there are several researches that are dedicated to the European integration of the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership and the Moldovan-Russian relations in different contexts.

3. Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership: after 10 years of participation

For over 10 years, the Republic of Moldova has been part of the Eastern Partnership launched by the European Union in 2009. During these years, Moldova has gone through several stages in its evolution in the Eastern Partnership. In order to carry out a complex analysis of the role of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership, it is worth mentioning the main progress and results achieved by Moldova in 10 years within this initiative.

Officially launched on May 7, 2009, the Eastern Partnership aims to further strengthen the relations between the EU and its eastern neighbours. The overall objectives of the Eastern Partnership are political association and economic integration between the European Union and Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus by establishing new bilateral commitments and a new institutionalized framework for multilateral cooperation on four thematic platforms: governance and stability, economic integration and convergence with EU policies, energy security and people-to-people contacts.⁶

The Eastern Partnership is an EU political instrument that structures cooperation with the six partner countries on two dimensions – bilateral and multilateral. The bilateral dimension consists of signing and implementing association agreements, the creation of a deep and comprehensive free trade area, the liberalization of the visa regime, and the multilateral dimension through thematic platforms and flagship initiatives.⁷

Thus, the bilateral dimension for Moldova means the implementation of the Association Agreement and the liberalization of the visa regime. The Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union was signed on 27 June 2014 in Brussels. The agreement was ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on 2 July 2014 and by the European Parliament on 13 November 2014. The Association Agreement (AA) also includes the creation of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area - DCFTA.⁸ As of 28 April 2014, the visa regime for Moldovan citizens was liberalized by amending the EU Regulation no. 539/2001 on abolishing the visa requirement for short-term trips for Moldovan citizens holding a biometric passport in the Schengen area.⁹

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Eastern Partnership, Brussels, 3.12.2008, COM(2008) 823 final, 30 p., [http://www.epgencms.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/upload/668e28f3-9e29-4a41-b376-43acaef76ec/EaP_COM\(2008\)823.pdf](http://www.epgencms.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/upload/668e28f3-9e29-4a41-b376-43acaef76ec/EaP_COM(2008)823.pdf), accessed 15.11.2018

⁷ Ce este Parteneriatul Estic? Ministerul Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene al Republicii Moldova, site-ul oficial, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/totul-despre-pae/>, accessed 15.11.2018

⁸ Acordul de Asociere RM-UE, Ministerul Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene al Republicii Moldova, site-ul oficial, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/totul-despre-aa/>, accessed 15.11.2018

⁹ Dialogul RM-UE privind liberalizarea regimului de vize, Ministerul Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene al Republicii Moldova, site-ul oficial, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/liberalizarea-regimului-vize/>, accessed 15.11.2018

Therefore, as of April 28, 2014, citizens of the Republic of Moldova can travel visa-free, with only a biometric passport, in 26 Schengen states. The results obtained mean that Moldova on the bilateral dimension reached the three major objectives set in 2009 in Prague: political association, economic integration and liberalization of the visa regime. In this respect, it should be noted that Moldova has overcome the rest of the EaP countries. The multilateral dimension of the EaP for Moldova means participation in the discussions in the Ministerial meetings of the Eastern Partnership.

It is obvious that the Republic of Moldova is an active participant in the EaP. Moldova has achieved remarkable successes in the EaP, especially during the year 2014, succeeding in signing and ratifying an Association Agreement with the EU and obtaining the liberalized visa regime. An important success is the creation of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the EU. But we can not fail to mention that these successes, and firstly the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU, led also to the application by Russia of economic sanctions directed against Moldovan agri-food exports, such as the exclusion of 19 categories of products from the free trade regime with Russia by canceling the “zero tax”.

Thus, the Russian executive has adopted the decision by which Russia has the right to apply customs duties to 19 Moldovan product categories despite the fact that there is a free trade area within the CIS. After a series of non-tariff actions restricting imports of wines, canned food, fruits, Russia for the first time applied prohibitive tariffs in trade relations with Moldova. At the same time, non-tariff measures related to the quality and safety of products, frequently initiated, especially after the initialling of the Association Agreement with the EU, derive from momentary decisions and may be temporary. There is something else in the case of the cancellation of the “zero rates”, which is related to the budgetary process, i.e. the revenues that form the state budget, including the collection of import duties.¹⁰

Several analysts, experts and researchers have have addressed the issue of the success, importance but also the inefficiency of the Eastern Partnership, but of an important value in this case is the publication “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries” and “Eastern Partnership Index”, which represent a comprehensive analysis of the progress made by each state in the process of implementing the reforms and adjusting the internal situation to the requirements of the European Union.

In order to understand the evolution of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership, we will analyze the publication “European Integration Index 2012, 2013, 2014 for Eastern Partnership Countries” and the latest “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016”. The study “European Integration Index 2012 for Eastern Partnership Countries”¹¹ has been developed by experts from several countries such as Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, and reflects the progress of the European integration process of the EaP countries, analyzing sectors such as democracy implementation, electoral system, human rights, judicial independence, combating corruption, decision-making transparency, market economy and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, political dialogue, civil society participation. In

¹⁰ Denis Cenușă, Anularea „taxelor zero” pentru produsele moldovenești: Are dreptate Rusia sau nu? Centrul Analitic Independent EXPERT-GRUP, <https://expert-grup.org/ro/comentarii/item/1000-taxe-zero-rusia>, accessed 15.11.2018

¹¹ European Integration Index 2012 for Eastern Partnership Countries, May 2012, <http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP%20Index%20%202012.pdf>, accessed 15.11.2018

the top of the six EaP countries compared in the study, Moldova holds the first place as in 2011. For this reason, Moldova is called “the most willing reformer” among the six states.

According to the study, Moldova has accumulated more points than other countries in the area of democracy: electoral process (0.88 points), fighting corruption (0.75 points), public administration quality (0.79), press freedom (0.71), human rights (0.68) judicial independence (0.66).¹²For the time being, Moldova, along with Georgia, has implemented the most levers to ensure an independent judiciary, but it states that political interference in justice persists. The index is based on a questionnaire with 695 questions, covering the areas of European integration.

According to the “European Integration Index 2013 for Eastern Partnership Countries”, Moldova remains the top reformer in the region and is closest to meeting EU standards. Although its correlation score remains almost the same as in 2012, the country has made progress in Harmonization and Process Management (0.59).¹³The Republic of Moldova continues to occupy its leadership position in all three dimensions and holds the highest mark for profound and sustainable democracy.

Measuring the annual path of the EaP countries on European integration, the edition “European Integration Index 2014 for Eastern Partnership Countries”,¹⁴ is a mixed set of results for the six Eastern partner countries. Moldova continues to be the avant-garde reformer in the region. Its score being the highest, however, remains the same as in 2013. At the same time, Moldova has a rather low score in services, the area in which it was overtaken by all EaP countries except Armenia. But during the analyzed period (January 2013 - June 2014), Moldova had the most developed interpersonal links with the EU, and in 2014 it became the first country in the EU that secured visa-free travel to the EU. Moldova has improved its index of harmonization, deep democracy, education policies, culture, youth and the information society.¹⁵

The progress made by Moldova in the EaP in the period of 2015-2016 was sufficient for Moldova to remain in the lead. Under the “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016”, the equivalence of legislation and the links between the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU are assessed. By measuring the approximation it can be deduced how much the six countries are approaching the European legislation. In terms of link assessment, the emphasis is on the intensity of connections in both the economic, social and inter-human spheres. Today, the Eastern Partnership Index is almost the only instrument to measure objectively the results of EaP countries.

Looking at the results of the six countries, we can point out that Moldova is ranked first in only one of the 6 sub-sectors – citizens in Europe, and in another – democracy and human rights, it shares the first place with Georgia. In other cases, Moldova ranks second or third, being advanced by Ukraine and even by Armenia.

Chart 1. Sector rankings of the Eastern Partnership countries 2015-2016.

| Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016 | Republic of Moldova | Georgia | Ukraine | Armenia | Azerbaijan | Belarus |
|--|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
|--|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|

¹² Ibidem, p. 50.

¹³ European Integration Index 2013 for Eastern Partnership Countries, p. 18., http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP_Index_2013.pdf, accessed 15.11.2018

¹⁴ European Integration Index 2014 for Eastern Partnership Countries, February 2015, 112 p., <http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP%20Index%202014.pdf>, accessed 15.11.2018

¹⁵ Indicele Integrării Europene pentru țările Parteneriatului Estic 2014, <http://infoeuropa.md/parteneriat-estic/indicele-integrarii-europene-pentru-tarile-parteneriatului-estic-2014>, accessed 15.11.2018

| Overall ranking (place number) | I | II | III | IV | V | VI |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Democracy and human rights | (0.71) | (0.71) | (0.70) | (0.68) | (0.56) | (0.45) |
| European integration and convergence | (0.69) | (0.66) | (0.70) | (0.66) | (0.57) | (0.42) |
| Sustainable development | (0.78) | (0.64) | (0.77) | (0.81) | (0.78) | (0.64) |
| International security, political dialogue and cooperation | (0.71) | (0.76) | (0.78) | (0.45) | (0.31) | (0.48) |
| Sectoral cooperation and trade flows | (0.61) | (0.56) | (0.64) | (0.39) | (0.50) | (0.35) |
| Citizens in Europe | (0.72) | (0.66) | (0.46) | (0.57) | (0.46) | (0.54) |

Source: Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016. Charting Progress in European Integration, Democratic Reforms, and Sustainable Development.¹⁶

At regional level, the Eastern Partnership can be divided into 3 groups of countries. The first group – Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, which are in close relations with the EU due to the conclusion of the Association Agreements. The second group – Armenia, which tries to combine membership of the Eurasian Union with the renewal of relations with the EU. The degree of rapprochement with the EU though, is always partial, in the equivalence to the European legislation, not preferred by the Russian Federation in its geopolitical influence zone. The last group – Azerbaijan and Belarus, which are governed by the most authoritative regimes in the EaP countries. These countries have no other purpose than to access the EU's market and investment. Both countries view the European model as a threat to the sustainability of their undemocratic regimes.¹⁷

Thus, Moldova can only be compared with countries in the first group – Ukraine and Georgia. After these two countries have obtained the visa-free regime with the EU, during the year 2017, it is assumed that the competition with Moldova will also increase for the preference in the general ranking.

Analyzing the evolution of the Republic of Moldova in the past years within EaP, it should be noted that even if Moldova is in the first place in the last years, in the general ranking, it is advanced by Ukraine and Armenia in several fields. So, in reality, bringing eastern European countries closer to the EU is a complicated and long-lasting process that must necessarily involve the creation of living standards comparable to those of Europe.

4. Evolution of Moldova-Russia relations in the context of the Eastern Partnership

Initially, the launch of the Eastern Partnership was not welcomed by the Russian Federation. This was clear, even before the official launch of the EaP. On March 21, 2009,

¹⁶ Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016. Charting Progress in European Integration, Democratic Reforms, and Sustainable Development, December 2017, p. 26-29, http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP_Index_2015-16_0.pdf, accessed 15.11.2018

¹⁷ Denis Cenuşa, Moldova, pe poziția de frunță al Parteneriatului Estic, 2018, <http://www.contributors.ro/global-europa/moldova-pe-poziti%C8%9Bia-de-frun%C8%99a-al-parteneriatului-estic/>, accessed 15.11.2018

the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated: We are accused of having spheres of influence. But what is the Eastern Partnership, if not an attempt to extend the EU's sphere of influence, including to Belarus...Is this promoting democracy or is it blackmail?¹⁸This is one of Russia's first official reactions.

From the official briefing of the Russian Foreign Ministry's representative, A.A. Nesterenco on March 26, 2009, it appears that in Russia the Eastern Partnership was criticized and not understood as the EU wanted, on the grounds that it created new dividing lines in Europe, and the former Soviet states targeted by the program will have to choose between Moscow and Brussels.¹⁹

Immediately after a week since the official launch of the EaP, Vladimir Chizhov, the permanent representative of the Russian Federation to the EU, doing an interview for the *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* magazine on a question about EaP, said "it is important that the Eastern Partnership is not directed against Russia's interests and does not artificially remove these six states from co-operation with Moscow, adding that Russia does not want CIS countries to face a dilemma – either ahead in the bright future with the EU or behind with the Russian Federation".²⁰

With the return of Vladimir Putin to the Presidency, the Russian Federation has also hurried the process of integration into the CIS through the achievement of the Single Economic Space in 2012 and the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015.²¹The Republic of Moldova, which is part of the CIS, is influenced by the Russian Federation through several instruments such as access to the Russian market, the labour market, energy dependence, settlement of the Transnistrian conflict (Nantoi, Platon, Gerasymchuk, Matiychyk, 2013: 14). Meanwhile, Russia's soft-power policy in the region and Moldova hinders the EU's rapprochement and contributes to the compromise of the European agenda.

The activity of the Republic of Moldova in the EaP has helped to cool diplomatic relations with the Russian Federation. Sudden cooling of Moldova-Russia relations took place with the signing of the Association Agreements with the European Union. Even before signing the Association Agreement, Deputy Foreign Minister Grigori Karasin said that the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union will negatively affect the Moldova-Russia relations, especially the commercial and economic relations, as Russia will have to change the rules and export practice from Moldova to the Russian Federation. The official added that "the consequences of the agreement signed by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova will undoubtedly be serious. We will do everything we can to protect our economy. It is important for the signatories of the document to understand

¹⁸ EU expanding its 'sphere of influence,' Russia says, 21. MARCH 2009, [HTTPS://EUOBSERVER.COM/FOREIGN/27827](https://euobserver.com/foreign/27827), accessed 20.11.2018

¹⁹ О российском отношении к программе «Восточное партнерство». Из брифинга официального представителя МИД России А. А. Нестеренко. 26 марта 2009 г., site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al Federației Ruse, http://www.mid.ru/brifingi/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQUMdqBY/content/id/798212, accessed 20.11.2018

²⁰ Владимир Чижов: "Южный поток" надо сделать приоритетным проектом ЕС", – Считаете ли вы, что запущенное Евросоюзом «Восточное партнерство» направлено на выстраивание Брюсселем сферы влияния на постсоветском пространстве?, 18.05.2009, http://www.ng.ru/courier/2009-05-18/9_chizhov.html, accessed 20.11.2018

²¹ Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov Interview to Interfax News Agency, official site Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union, <https://russiaeu.ru/en/news/russian-foreign-minister-sergey-lavrov-interview-interfax-news-agency>, accessed 20.11.2018

that it has consequences not only on relations with the EU but also with other partner states, including Russia, as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova have concluded Free Trade Agreements within the CIS”.²²

An interesting fact is that on the day of signing the Association Agreement between Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and the EU, the Russian Federation without explanations, announcements canceled two air flights from and to Chisinau. Thus, according to Air Moldova’s press release, aviation authorities in Russia have announced that they do not allow the flight to operate a few hours before the take-off of the aircraft scheduled for 07.00, 27 June 2014.²³ Coincidence or not, but this happened on the day of signing the Association Agreements with the EU.

Russian President’s spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, stated that the conclusion of the Association Agreements with the EU is the sovereign right of each state, but said Moscow would take protective measures if the implementation of these agreements would have a negative impact on Russia’s market and economy.²⁴

But these examples were only the verbal reaction of Russian officials to the signing of the EU Agreements. Bilateral relations have really got worse when Russia has gone from talk to action. As Moldova approached the signing of the Association Agreement, Russia introduced gradual sanctions.

In September 2013, Rospotrebnadzor, the specialized consumer protection agency in the Russian Federation, announced the suspension of import of Moldovan wines. According to Rospotrebnadzor’s press release of September 11, 2013, the reason for the introduction of the embargo on wine was linked to claims for the quality of alcoholic beverages. Russian officials said restrictions on beverages would remain in force until Moldova removed the detected violations.²⁵ At that time Moldova exported 28% of the wines and 22% of the spirits to the Russian Federation, totaling 60 million dollars, about 3% of the total volume of exports.²⁶

Following the Russian embargo of September 10, 2013, the European Commission proposed to fully open the European Union market for Moldovan wine imports before the entry into force of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement and the Free Trade Area Agreement.

The year 2014 was marked by a wide range of economic sanctions from the Russian side against Moldova. Thus, at the beginning of 2014, the Russian Federation threatened to adopt more measures to protect the Russian economy in case of signing the Association Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova. In April 2014, the Russian Federation introduced an embargo on finished pork products from the Republic of Moldova. The embargo was introduced because the Federal Service for

²² Карасин: ассоциация Молдавии с ЕС изменит правила торговли с Россией, 10.06.2014, <https://ria.ru/world/20140610/1011549227.html>, accessed 20.11.2018

²³ Air Moldova anunță despre anularea a două curse, 27 iunie 2014, <http://ipn.md/ro/societate/62808>, accessed 20.11.2018

²⁴ Cum a reacționat Rusia la semnarea acordurilor de Asociere cu UE de către Moldova, Ucraina și Georgia, 27 Iunie 2014, https://www.publika.md/cum-a-reactionat-rusia-la-semnarea-acordurilor-de-asociere-cu-ue-de-catre-moldova-ucraina-si-georgia_1987841.html, accessed 20.11.2018

²⁵ О поставках продукции из Республики Молдова, 11.09.2013, http://rospotrebnadzor.ru/deyatelnost/sanitary-supervision/?ELEMENT_ID=600&sphrase_id=1527610, accessed 20.11.2018

²⁶ Guvernul R. Moldova regretă embargoul asupra vinurilor moldovenești, 11 septembrie 2013, https://noi.md/news_id/27741, accessed 20.11.2018

Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance in Russia – Rosselkhoznadzor has repeatedly detected cases of re-export of European products at the border.²⁷

After the Moldovan Parliament ratified the Association Agreement with the EU, Russia said it would take protective measures in this case and on 18 July 2014 Rospotrebnadzor banned imports of canned vegetables and fruit from Moldova. According to the official position, the ban was imposed on infringements of consumer protection law.²⁸ After a few days, on 21 July 2014, Rosselkhoznadzor announced that it bans the import of apples, pears, quinces, apricots, cherries, peaches, nectarines and plums from the Republic of Moldova.²⁹ At the same time, the Moldovan National Food Safety Agency disagreed with the ban, arguing the insufficiency of the reasons and evidence invoked by the Russian side.

On 1 September 2014, the Russian Government's decision on the application of customs duties on imports of 19 categories of goods from Moldova, from wine, fruit and vegetables to furniture, entered into force.³⁰ For these categories of goods, the same customs regime applies as for countries such as Romania, Poland, China, Germany, Estonia, and France. Moldovan Prime Minister Iurie Leanca said that Russia would have no reason to unilaterally impose taxes on Moldovan products. "There is no legal or commercial reason for the Russian Federation to revise the relationship with the Republic of Moldova in such a cardinal manner from the point of view of commercial arrangements," the Head of the Executive stated.³¹

From October 27, 2014, Russia bans the import of meat from the Republic of Moldova. Thus, the head of the Rosselkhoznadzor, Sergei Dankvert, mentioned that the Moldovan meat processing enterprises do not meet the sanitary-veterinary requirements of the "customs union".³²

All these sanctions were a kind of response by the Russian Federation to the signing of the Association Agreement and Free Trade Agreement with the European Union to protect the Russian market from European products that could reach Moldova, being explained by alleged violations of the quality of local products signaled by "Rospotrebnadzor".

Since 2015 there have been several cases when Russian soldiers have been detained on the Chisinau International Airport and sent back to Moscow. On 22 May 2015, a Russian citizen was banned from entering the territory of the Republic of Moldova after customs officers from the Chisinau International Airport found that he was an officer in the Russian Ministry of Defense and intended to travel to Transnistria without having notified Moldovan authorities in advance. On May 14, 2015, two other Russian soldiers

²⁷ Россия ввела запрет на поставки готовой свиной продукции из Молдавии, 08.04.2014, <https://ria.ru/economy/20140408/1002979248.html>, accessed 20.11.2018

²⁸ Роспотребнадзор запретил поставки молдавских плодоовощных консервов, 19.07.2014, <https://www.interfax.ru/world/386663>, accessed 20.11.2018

²⁹ РОССИЯ ОПАСАЕТСЯ РЕЭКСПОРТА УКРАИНОЙ МОЛДАВСКИХ ФРУКТОВ И ОВОЩЕЙ, 29 07 2014, <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=13412>, accessed 20.11.2018

³⁰ Rusia a introdus taxe vamale la importul a 19 de categorii de mărfuri din Moldova, 30 august 2014, https://adevarul.ro/moldova/economie/rusia-introdus-taxe-vamale-importul-19-categorii-marfuri-moldova-1_540196ec0d133766a8b54eca/index.html, accessed 20.11.2018

³¹ Iurie Leancă: Rusia nu are motive să impună unilateral taxe pentru produsele din Moldova, <http://agora.md/stiri/2451/iurie-leanca-rusia-nu-are-motive-sa-impuna-unilateral-taxe-pentru-produsele-din-moldova>, accessed 20.11.2018

³² Россельхознадзор приостанавливает поставки мяса из Молдавии в Россию с 27 октября 2014, <http://www.fsvps.ru/fsvps/press/112633.html>, accessed 20.11.2018

who wanted to reach Transnistria were detained at the Chisinau airport.³³ Also, during this period, several Russian journalists, including Russian film-making teams, were stopped at the Chisinau International Airport.

Another interesting case occurred in September 2015 when the Russian military attaché at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Chisinau participated in the military parade on 2 September 2015 in Tiraspol. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration sent a verbal note to all embassies accredited in Moldova on August 14, 2015 requesting them not to participate in the actions on the left bank of the Nistru river, dedicated to the establishment of the so-called Transnistrian Moldovan republic. However, the Russian Federation ignored the request and sent a military attaché to the military parade organized on this occasion. On September 3, 2015, representatives of the Russian Embassy were summoned to the Foreign Ministry to provide explanations regarding the participation of the Russian military attaché at the Tiraspol military parade. Chisinau's Foreign Minister, Natalia Gherman, then said that such actions affect Moldova-Russia relations and do not fit into the relationship foundation between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation and primarily within the relations declared by the Russian Federation towards the Republic of Moldova.³⁴

In 2016 the official Moldova-Russia dialogue returns to normality. The year 2016 was abundant in important political events and official working visits in terms of Moldova-Russia bilateral relations. In March 2016, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Grigorii Karasin, was on a working visit to the Republic of Moldova for a new round of inter-ministerial Moldova-Russia consultations at the level of deputy ministers. During a meeting with the Moldovan Foreign Minister Andrei Galbur, the interlocutors pleaded for intensifying the political dialogue, invoking the resumption of inter-ministerial consultations at the level of deputy foreign affairs ministers. They agreed to continue the dialogue at the level of the co-chairs of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation and to strengthen cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian field.³⁵

After some time, on 4 April 2016, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, Andrei Galbur paid a working visit to the Russian Federation. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his counterpart in Moldova, Andrei Galbur, mentioned they were dissatisfied with bilateral relations and have pleaded for the situation to be remedied. It should be noted that the volume of trade in 2015 decreased, almost with a one-third.

Sergei Lavrov mentioned the following: “We have a common view that the relations between Moldova and Russia are not satisfactory. I heard today our partners who stressed that the Chisinau Government is interested in the development of cooperation between Moldova and Russia”.

³³ Încă un militar rus, reținut pe aeroportul din Chișinău, 2015-05-26, <https://www.agerpres.ro/externe/2015/05/26/inca-un-militar-rus-retinut-pe-aeroportul-din-chisinau-09-21-27>, accessed 20.11.2018

³⁴ Diplomația rusă, chemată să dea explicații ministerului de Externe. Declarația Nataliei Gherman, 4 Septembrie 2015, https://www.publika.md/diplomatia-rusa-chemata-sa-dea-explicatii-ministerului-de-externe-declaratia-nataliei-gherman_2392511.html, accessed 20.11.2018

³⁵ Ministrul de externe Andrei Galbur l-a primit pe viceministrul afacerilor externe al Federației Ruse Grigorii Karasin, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, Comunicate de presă, 29.03.2016, [HTTP://WWW.MFA.GOV.MD/COMUNICATE-PRESA-MD/503518/](http://WWW.MFA.GOV.MD/COMUNICATE-PRESA-MD/503518/), accessed 20.11.2018

At the same time, Andrei Galbur stated: “We are interested in the full resumption of Moldova’s agricultural production export to the Russian market. In connection with this, we reached an accord to organize a meeting in May 2016 between the co-chairs of the intergovernmental commission for Moldova-Russia economic cooperation”.³⁶

In July 2016, the meeting of the co-chairs of the Moldova-Russia intergovernmental commission for economic cooperation, Octavian Calmic and Dmitri Rogozin, took place in Chisinau in an extended format. After that, expert consultations on the draft roadmap for restoring and intensifying the trade relations between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation for the years 2016 - 2017 were held in Moscow for three weeks.³⁷

Also in 2016, Moldova-Russia relations were discussed by the Moldovan Prime Minister Pavel Filip and the Russian President Vladimir Putin at the CSI heads of state meeting (16-17 September 2016). Thus, Prime Minister Pavel Filip stated that “the discussion was constructive, based on issues of mutual interest”.³⁸

At the end of November 2016 in Moscow, the Deputy Prime Ministers of the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation, Octavian Calmac and Dmitri Rogozin, signed the Protocol of the meeting of the Moldova-Russia Economic Cooperation Commission, which is part of the Action Plan for the development of trade for the years 2016-2017. The documents include priority actions of bilateral cooperation in trade, business, energy, transport, agriculture, industry, migration and humanitarian spheres as well as regional cooperation.

During the talks, the transport problem was overcome, with the Russian side committing to grant 75,000 permits to Moldovan carriers in the Russian Federation and 750 permits to transit Russia’s territory to third countries, which will greatly facilitate trade between both states, but also Moldovan exports to countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan. At the meeting of the Moldova-Russia Economic Cooperation Commission, Dmitry Rogozin said that “today’s meeting has demonstrated that we can reach a consensus when it comes to solving the problems that arise in different areas, based on our national interests”.³⁹

Moldovan Prime Minister Pavel Filip, while offering an interview, pointed out that “in 2016 the Moldova-Russia relations have witnessed a positive evolution, proven by the high-level meetings that we have had – I have seen both the President of Russia, and with the Head the Russian Government. These relationships continue to be good, and the dialogue continues to make the necessary adjustments. The Republic of Moldova has

³⁶ Declarația de presă a viceprim-ministrului, ministrului afacerilor externe și integrării Europene al Republicii Moldova Andrei Galbur după încheierea întâlnirii cu ministrul afacerilor externe al Federației Ruse Serghei Lavrov, Comunicate de presă, 04.04.2016, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/503568/> accessed 20.11.2018

³⁷ Discuții importante la Moscova privind relațiile comercial-economice dintre Moldova și Rusia, 28 Iulie 2016, https://www.publika.md/discutii-importante-la-moscova-privind-relatiile-comercial-economice-dintre-moldova-si-rusia_2699491.html, accessed 20.11.2018

³⁸ Premierul Pavel Filip a discutat cu Președintele Federației Ruse, Vladimir Putin, privind relațiile dintre cele două state, site-ul oficial al Guvernului Republicii Moldova, Comunicate de presă, 2016-09-18, <https://gov.md/ro/content/premierul-pavel-filip-discutat-cu-presedintele-federatiei-ruse-vladimir-putin-privind>, accessed 20.11.2018

³⁹ La Moscova a avut loc ședința Comisiei moldo-ruse de cooperare economică, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Economiei și Infrastructurii al Republicii Moldova, Comunicate de presă, 11/29/2016, <https://mei.gov.md/ro/content/la-moscova-avut-loc-sedinta-comisiei-moldo-ruse-de-cooperare-economica>, accessed 20.11.2018

always offered and will offer friendship to other countries – and especially to the countries with which we have old and varied relations, such as Russia. This is something that a part of our population wants”⁴⁰.

The year 2017 was marked by the activity of the President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon, for the deepening of friendship relations with the Russian Federation. During 2017, the President of the Republic of Moldova made five visits to the Russian Federation:

- 1) 18-19 January 2017 – official visit (the first official visit of the President of the Republic of Moldova to the Russian Federation for the past 9 years). The agenda included a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russian Federation’s Vice-President Dmitry Rogozin, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Russian Federation Council President Valentina Matvienco, the President of the College of the Eurasian Economic Commission – Tigran Sarkisyan, His Holiness, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia - Kiril.⁴¹
- 2) March 16-18, 2017 – working visit to Moscow on the occasion of the Economic Forum. During the visit, Igor Dodon had an official meeting with Vladimir Putin.
- 3) 8-10 May 2017 – working visit to Moscow at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin;
- 4) 1-3 June 2017 – working visit to Sankt-Petersburg on the occasion of the International Economic Forum.⁴²
- 5) 25 December 2017 – working visit to Moscow at the invitation of Vladimir Putin.

On March 1, 2017, Igor Dodon said: “Yesterday, the Russian dignitaries decided to apply a migrant amnesty to Moldovan citizens. More precisely, Moldovans will be lifted the Russian entry bans that have been enforced earlier, including those who have committed administrative misconduct. About 250,000 people who have their residence permit expired but are still on the territory of the Russian Federation can apply to the local section of the Main Migration Department of the MIA (Ministry of Internal Affairs) of Russia to legalize their stay on the territory of the Russian Federation”.⁴³ This was a good result for Moldova achieved by President Igor Dodon for Moldovan citizens.

Analyzing the dynamics of Moldova-Russia relations in 2017, we can mention that the Moldovan President Igor Dodon had 7 meetings with the Russian President Vladimir Putin:

- January 17, Moscow, during the official visit to Russia;
- March 17, Moscow, during a working visit to Russia;

⁴⁰ Pavel Filip: sper mult că drumul rm spre ue va fi deja ireversibil în 2019, <http://tribuna.md/2017/04/13/interviu-pavel-filip-sper-mult-ca-drumul-rm-spre-ue-va-fi-deja-ireversibil-in-2019/>, accessed 20.11.2018

⁴¹ Igor Dodon întreprinde o vizită oficială la Moscova, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, Comunicate de presă, 16.01.2017, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/igor-dodon-intreprinde-o-vizita-oficiala-la-moscova>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁴² Relațiile diplomatice între Republica Moldova și Federația Rusă, Ambasada Republicii Moldova în Federația Rusă, <http://www.rusia.mfa.md/diplomatic-relations-ro/>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁴³ Igor Dodon a anunțat despre aplicarea amnistiei migraționale de către autoritățile Federației Ruse pentru mai multe categorii de migranți moldoveni, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, Comunicate de presă, 01.03.2017, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/igor-dodon-a-anunatat-despre-aplicarea-amnistiei-migrationale-de-catre-autoritatile-federatiei-ruse-pentru-mai-multe-categorii-de-migranti-moldoveni>, accessed 24.11.2018

- April 14, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, at the meeting of the Supreme Council of the Eurasian Economic Union;
 - May 9, Moscow, during the May 9 celebrations;
 - June 2, at the St. Petersburg Economic Forum;
 - October 10, Sochi, during the meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council;
- December 25, Moscow, during a working visit to Russia.⁴⁴

Also, in 2017, Igor Dodon had a meeting with the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev (22 May 2017) and two meetings with Dmitry Rogozin (June 1, August 5, 2017), Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation. Also in 2017, Igor Dodon had 16 meetings with the Russian Ambassador to Chisinau, Farit Muhametşin (9 February, 27 February, 10 March, 12 April, 19 April, 28 April, 19 May, 25 May, 20 June, 19 July, July 28, August 30, September 26, October 17, November 29, December 20).⁴⁵

The President of the Republic of Moldova, in 2017, also had 42 meetings with various Russian officials, including Leonid Kalasnikov, Chairman of the State Duma Committee of the Russian Federation on CIS issues, Grigori Karasin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Kiril – Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, representatives of “Delovaia Rossia” organization, Kazbek Taisaev – member of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Veaceslav Volodin – President of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation), Gheorghii Poltavchenko – governor of St. Petersburg, Igor Ceaika – co-president of “Delovaia Rossia” Association, Valentina Matvienko – President of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.⁴⁶

If we are to analyze the volume of foreign trade of the Republic of Moldova with the Russian Federation, then it should be noted that during 2017 it increased by 7.5% compared to 2016. Regarding the volume of trade recorded, the Russian Federation ranked second among the trading partners of the Republic of Moldova, with a share of 11.4% in the total trade of the country.

The export of goods amounted to USD 254.5 million, increasing by 9.2% or by USD 21.4 million as compared to 2016. The Russian Federation ranked second in the top of the countries where the Republic of Moldova carried out export operations, with a weight of 10.5% in the total export of the Republic of Moldova. Imports of goods made in the Republic of Moldova from the Russian Federation grew by 6.8% compared to 2016.⁴⁷

By analyzing the evolution of Moldova-Russia relations in 2017, we can not fail to mention the case when at the end of May 2017, 5 Russian diplomats from the Russian Embassy in Chisinau were expelled from Moldova. At the same time, Moldovan officials did not provide additional information on the reasons for declaring the five Russian diplomats “personae non gratae” in the Republic of Moldova. On this issue, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigori Karasin pointed out that the decision of the Chisinau authorities is “a serious challenge” and a “blow applied to the forces headed by President

⁴⁴ Site-ul oficial al Preşedinţiei Republicii Moldova, Comunicate de presă 2017, <http://www.presedinte.md/>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁴⁵ Ibidem

⁴⁶ Geografia lui Igor Dodon: Izolaţi lângă Putin, Ziarul de Gardă, 19 octombrie 2017, <https://www.zdg.md/editia-print/politic/geografia-lui-igor-dodon-izolati-langa-putin>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁴⁷ Relaţiile economice bilaterale, Ambasada Republicii Moldova în Federaţia Rusă, <http://www.rusia.mfa.md/economic-relations-ro/>, accessed 24.11.2018

Igor Dodon, who militates for normalizing the relationship with Russia.” He added that “the response will of course be tough enough”.⁴⁸

President Igor Dodon’s reaction to this case was a critical one: "Over the past 25 years of relations between Moldova and Russia, we have not been so close to the gap as we are now. This is the result of the irresponsible decisions of the Moldovan government and the parliamentary majority, taken not in the interests of the citizens, but aligned with the geopolitical interests of the Westerners.” Igor Dodon said that “the government committed a revolting gesture in relation to our strategic partner Russia. (...) I am deeply indignant at this displayed hostility of Moldovan diplomacy and categorically condemn it”.⁴⁹

In response to the expulsion of the five Russian diplomats from the Republic of Moldova on 31 May 2017, five Moldovan diplomats were declared *personae non gratae* in the Russian Federation. Advisor to the Embassy of the Republic of Moldova in the Russian Federation was invited to the Foreign Ministry of Russia, where he was handed a note stating that in response to the expulsion of Russian diplomats, five Moldovan diplomats were declared *personae non gratae*, and in three days they were to leave Russia. At the same time, the Moscow authorities expressed the hope that those in Chisinau will realize the counterproductive and unfriendly actions against the Russian Federation, as well as the destructive character of the steps taken by the Moldovan side, which are contrary to the principles of partnership and trust.⁵⁰

Another unpleasant case in Moldova-Russia bilateral relations occurred in August 2017 when the Government of the Republic of Moldova, at the proposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, adopted a decision by which the Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitri Rogozin was declared “*persona non grata*” on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Foreign Minister Andrei Galbur said that Dmitri Rogozin made a whole series of comments and offensive statements against the Republic of Moldova and its people. In this respect, he referred to an interview for the news channel Russia-24 in which he defamed the Republic of Moldova and its citizens.

It all started when Dmitri Rogozin’s visit to Chisinau and Tiraspol on July 28, 2017 failed and did not occur because the Romanian authorities did not issue an overflight permit. In this respect, the President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Adrian Candu mentioned the following: “The competent authorities of the Republic of Moldova from the beginning informed the authorities of the Russian Federation that the event to be organized in the Transnistrian region is not authorized by the authorities of the Republic of Moldova. We have announced to the Russian authorities that all people going to attend this event will be stopped and returned home, whether they are journalists, artists or dignitaries. We do not have what to celebrate because the country remains torn after that conflict, and that’s why it was incomprehensible to us and to me personally what President Dodon wanted to do there and how he could celebrate that event. Mr. Rogozin knew about the attitude of the authorities of the Republic of Moldova related to this event. His move to Chisinau was nothing more than a challenge because he knew he would not

⁴⁸ Cinci diplomați ruși, declarați *persona NON GRATA* în R.Moldova. Moscova promite „un răspuns dur”, 29 Mai 2017, <https://radiochisinau.md/cinci-diplomati-rusi-declarati-persona-non-grata-in-rmoldova-moscova-promite-un-raspuns-dur---51163.html>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁴⁹ Rusia a decis expulzarea a cinci diplomați moldoveni/ Dodon denunță "iresponsabilitatea" Chișinăului, 31 Mai 2017, <https://www.mediafax.ro/externe/rusia-a-decis-expulzarea-a-cinci-diplomati-moldoveni-dodon-denunta-iresponsabilitatea-chisinaului-16395829>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁵⁰ Moscova reacționează: Cinci diplomați moldoveni expulzați din Rusia, 31.05.2017, <http://trm.md/ro/politic/moscova-reac-ioneaza-cinci-diploma-i-moldoveni-expulza-i-din-rusia/>, accessed 24.11.2018

be allowed the overflight of Romania because he was on the list of sanctions imposed by the European Union. At the same time, he received official information on the diplomatic channels that we are against the event”⁵¹.

At the same time, Prime Minister Pavel Filip mentioned that the Republic of Moldova wants to be treated with respect by all countries. “The manner in which our citizens were treated through these statements is simply unacceptable and I think it is the duty of the authorities, every time, to protect the dignity of our citizens and our country. Relations with any country in the world must be based on mutual respect,” said Pavel Filip.

Thus, the tough reaction of Chisinau comes after Rogozin described as “gypsy-like” the Moldovan-Russian negotiations on the intergovernmental line.

The head of the Moldovan state, Igor Dodon, said that “the governors involved Moldova in an unprecedented diplomatic and geopolitical conflict in the last quarter of a century”.

The Moldovan political analyst Petru Bogatu said: “A signal from Chisinau to Moscow that the period in which Russia treated relations with the Republic of Moldova as relations between a master and a lackey was over. No respected state can accept to be trampled. Russia under the current political regime is unfortunately an unpredictable country and surely we must also expect tough reactions”⁵².

It is clear that this case had a negative influence on Moldova-Russia bilateral relations. At the same time, we can mention that President Igor Dodon was doing everything for Moldova’s rapprochement with Russia.

In 2018 we can mention the following political events that marked the Moldova-Russia bilateral relations:

- February 17, 2018, The meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Tudor Ulianoschi with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov with the occasion of the Munich Security Conference. The two officials stressed the need to improve the political dialogue in order to identify mutually beneficial solutions for the advancement of cooperation in priority areas.⁵³
- 27 March 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration declared three Russian diplomats from the diplomatic mission of the Russian Federation in Chisinau *personae non gratae*. The decision comes as solidarity with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and following the conclusions of the European Council on 23-24 March 2018, which qualifies the Salisbury attack as a threat to collective security and international law.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Comentariul Președintelui Parlamentului Andrian Candu pe marginea acțiunilor întreprinse de guvernare după declarațiile ofensatoare ale oficialului rus Dmitri Rogozin în adresa Republicii Moldova, 02.08.2017, <http://www.parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3294/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁵² Dmitri Rogozin a fost declarat PERSONA NON GRATA pe teritoriul Republicii Moldova, 2 August 2017, https://www.prime.md/ro/dmitri-rogozin-a-fost-declarat-persona-non-grata-pe-teritoriul-republicii-moldova_59234.html, accessed 24.11.2018

⁵³ Ministrul Tudor Ulianoschi a avut o întrevedere cu omologul său rus Serghei Lavrov, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, 17.02.2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/510778/>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁵⁴ Trei diplomați din cadrul Ambasadei Federației Ruse în Republica Moldova au fost declarați *persona non-grata*, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, 27 martie 2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/511547/>, accessed 24.11.2018

- May 14, 2018, the Moldovan President Igor Dodon meets with the Russian President Vladimir Putin after the assembly of the Eurasian Supreme Economic Council.⁵⁵
- June 13, 2018, visit to Moscow of the President of the Republic of Moldova Igor Dodon at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin for the opening of the World Cup 2018.⁵⁶
- July 14, 2018, the meeting of Mr. Igor Dodon with Vladimir Putin.⁵⁷
- August 4, 2018, working visit of President Igor Dodon to Omsk, Russian Federation, at the invitation of the Omsk Governor Aleksandr Burkov.
- 14-16 September 2018, the organization of the World Congress of the Family under the aegis of the President of Moldova, with the participation of the Russian State Duma, the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the civic activists.⁵⁸
- 20-22 September 2018, Chisinau, Moldova-Russia economic forum, with the participation of a large number of businessmen from the Russian Federation. Moldova-Russia Economic Forum is a platform for discussion on the development of trade and economic relations between Moldova and Russia. Starting with 2018, this forum will be held annually and will take place in Chisinau and Moscow. The first event took place in Chisinau, and in 2019 it will be organized in Moscow.
- 28 September 2018, brief working meeting of the President of the Republic of Moldova Igor Dodon and the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin at the CIS Summit in Dushanbe.⁵⁹
- October 31 - November 1, 2018, official visit to the Russian Federation of the President of the Republic of Moldova. During the visit, Igor Dodon met with the Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Kirill, State Duma Speaker Veaceslav Volodin, and other Russian officials.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Președintele Republicii Moldova, Igor Dodon, a avut o întrevedere cu Președintele Federației Ruse, Vladimir Putin, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 14 mai 2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/presedintele-republicii-moldova-igor-dodon-a-avut-o-intrevedere-cu-presedintele-federatiei-ruse-vladimir-putin-11155>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁵⁶ Șeful statului întreprinde o vizită la Moscova, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 13 iuni 2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/seful-statului-intreprinde-o-vizita-la-moscova>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁵⁷ Igor Dodon a avut o întrevedere cu Vladimir Putin, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 14 iulie 2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/igor-dodon-a-avut-o-intrevedere-cu-vladimir-putin>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁵⁸ Igor Dodon a prezidat ședința finală cu privire la desfășurarea Congresului Mondial al Familiei, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 11 sseptembrie 2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/presa/igor-dodon-a-prezidat-sedinta-finala-cu-privire-la-desfasurarea-congresului-mondial-al-familiei>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁵⁹ Președintele Republicii Moldova, Igor Dodon a avut o întrevedere de lucru cu Președintele Federației Ruse, Vladimir Putin, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 28 septembrie 2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/presedintele-republicii-moldova-igor-dodon-a-avut-o-intrevedere-de-lucru-cu-presedintele-federatiei-ruse-vladimir-putin>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁶⁰ Președintele Republicii Moldova efectuează o vizită oficială în Federația Rusă, , site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 30.10.2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/presedintele-republicii-moldova-intreprinde-o-vizita-oficiala-in-federatia-rusa>, accessed 24.11.2018

- November 22, 2018, the meeting of the Moldova-Russia Economic Council in Moscow. The event was chaired by President Igor Dodon, and the Co-President of the Russian Public Association, Delvaia Rosia, Andrei Nazarov. During the meeting, Igor Dodon stressed that as of January 1, 2019, customs duties will be canceled for half a year on five types of goods exported from Moldova to Russia, including winemaking, canning, fruit and vegetables. Thus, the meeting was a continuation of the Moldova-Russia Economic Forum held in Chisinau on September 20-22, 2018. The outcome of the meeting was the elaboration of the roadmap for expanding cooperation and increasing trade between Moldova and Russia.⁶¹
- 20-25 November 2018, working visit of the President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon, to the Russian Federation - Moscow and St. Petersburg.⁶² During the visit, Igor Dodon delivered a speech at the plenary session of the Russian State Duma, being the first President of the Republic of Moldova to address directly to Russian law makers. Also during the visit, the President of Moldova had a working meeting with Dmitri Rogozin.

An important event for the Republic of Moldova took place when, on June 22, 2018, the UN General Assembly voted the draft resolution proposed by the Republic of Moldova on “The complete and unconditional withdrawal of the foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova”. The document submitted was co-authored by Canada, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, the United Kingdom and Ukraine, voted by 64 states, while only 15 states voted against, among which was the Russian Federation.⁶³

Russia’s reaction to this document was a negative one. Thus, according to official information posted on the website of the Russian Foreign Ministry, the adoption of the resolution by the UN member states will complicate the process of settling the Transnistrian conflict. At the same time, it is highlighted that the decision of the Republic of Moldova to submit the document, despite the fact that it was not approved by all the political forces in the state, will worsen Moldova-Russia bilateral relations.⁶⁴

The reaction of the so-called Tiraspol authorities was an interesting one. Therefore, a member of the Transnistrian separatist parliament stated that “Russia should

⁶¹ La Moscova s-au desfășurat consultările interministeriale moldo-ruse, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, 08.11.2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/513863/>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁶² Igor Dodon întreprinde o vizită de lucru în Federația Rusă, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 20.11.2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/igor-dodon-intreprinde-o-vizita-de-lucru-in-federatia-rusa>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁶³ breaking news - Adunarea Generală a ONU a VOTAT proiectul de rezoluție privind retragerea trupelor ruse de pe teritoriul Republicii Moldova, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, 22 iunie 2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/512679/>, accessed 24.11.2018

⁶⁴ Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с голосованием в Генассамблее ООН по представленному Республикой Молдова проекту резолюции, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al Federației Ruse, 23.06.2018, http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/kommentarii_predstavatelya/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQUMdqBY/content/id/3274365, accessed 24.11.2018

increase its troops number in this territory and in no case withdraw them, and the Russian military technology be as new as possible.⁶⁵

Conclusions

Since the creation of the Eastern Partnership ten years have already passed. During these years the Republic of Moldova was quite active, being among the leaders of this initiative. Even if in the last years Moldova has ranked first among the EaP countries, there are sectors where the country has had less success.

At the same time, it is important to note that the activity of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership influences negatively the bilateral relations with the Russian Federation (See more Brie, 2016: 359-381; Brie and Brie, 2008: 95-107). Thus, Moldova's rapprochement with the European Union stirs up Russia's dissatisfaction reactions. Several times, Russia's reaction to Moldova's closeness to the European community can take the form of economic sanctions, embargoes or export bans, as it happened in 2014. In conclusion, it should be noted that 2019 is to be a very important year, because it will be the 10th anniversary of the launch of the Eastern Partnership. In connection with the 2019 anniversary, the Republic of Moldova has backed the organization of a high-level event on this occasion in the spring of 2019.

Analyzing the perspectives of the Moldova-Russia relations in the context of the Eastern Partnership, we can assume that Russia's reaction to the celebration and organization of a high-level event on this occasion will be negative. At the same time, it is obvious that the Moldovan President Igor Dodon will continue to advocate the development and deepening of relations with Russia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acordul de Asociere RM-UE*, Ministerul Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene al Republicii Moldova, site-ul oficial, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/totul-despre-aa/>, accessed 15.11.2018
- Air Moldova anunță despre anularea a două curse*, 27 iunie 2014, <http://ipn.md/ro/societate/62808>, accessed 20.11.2018
- Breaking news - Adunarea Generală a ONU a VOTAT proiectul de rezoluție privind retragerea trupelor ruse de pe teritoriul Republicii Moldova*, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, 22 iunie 2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/512679/>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Brie, Mircea (2014), *European enlargement and new frontiers Central and Eastern Europe*, în *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai, Series Europaea, Cluj-Napoca*, LIX, 1, 2014, p. 113-130.
- Brie, Mircea (2016), *Identity as Frontier in Central and Eastern Europe. The Case of the Republic of Moldova*, în Mircea Brie, Alina Stoica, Florentina Chirodea (coord.), *The European Space Borders and Issues. In Honorem Professor Ioan Horga*, Editura Universității din Oradea/Debrecen University Press, Oradea/Debrecen, 2016, p. 359-381.

⁶⁵ REACȚIA Rusiei la rezoluția adoptată de ONU privind retragerea trupelor ruse din Transnistria, 26 iunie 2018, https://www.publika.md/reactia-rusiei-la-rezolutia-adoptata-de-onu-privind-retragerea-trupelor-ruse-din-transnistria_3010695.html, accessed 24.11.2018

- Brie, Mircea (2017a), Rethinking the European Neighborhood Policy. Eastern Partnership, in *Analele Universității din Oradea, Seria Relații Internaționale și Studii Europene*, 2017, p. 55-71.
- Brie, Mircea (2017b), The Cross-Border Cooperation Between Romania and Ukraine in the Context of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and Association Agreements (AA), in *EUROPOLITY, Continuity and Change in European Governance*, Vol. 11, no. 2, 2017, p. 51-78.
- Brie, Mircea (2017c), *A New European Neighbourhood Policy toward Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova in the Context of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and the Association Agreements (AA)*, in *Studii Europene*, nr. 10, Chisinău, 2017, p. 123-155
- Brie, Ioan and Mircea Brie (2008), *The Interreligious Dialogue in the Context of the New Europe: The European Ecumenical Movement*, în *Religious frontiers of Europe, Eurolimes*, vol. 5, volum editat de Sorin Șipoș, Enrique Banús și Károly Kocsis, Oradea, 2008, p. 95-107.
- Ce este Parteneriatul Estic?* Ministerul Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene al Republicii Moldova, site-ul oficial, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/totul-despre-pae/->, accesat 15.11.2018
- Cebotari, Svetlana, Eremia, Natalia (2015), *Impactul politicii energetice a Federației Ruse asupra securității Republicii Moldova*, în *Studia Universitatis, Revistă Științifică a Universității de Stat din Moldova*, nr.8(88), p. 13-17, https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/03.p.13-17_Impactul%20politicii%20energetice%20a%20%20Federatiei%20Ruse%20asupra%20securitatii%20RM.pdf accessed, accessed 24.11.2018
- Cenușă, Denis, *Anularea „taxelor zero” pentru produsele moldovenești: Are dreptate Rusia sau nu?* Centrul Analitic Independent EXPERT-GRUP, <https://expert-grup.org/ro/comentarii/item/1000-taxe-zero-rusia>, accessed 15.11.2018
- Cenușă, Denis, *Moldova, pe poziția de fruntaș al Parteneriatului Estic*, 2018, <http://www.contributors.ro/global-europa/moldova-pe-poziti%C8%9Bia-de-frunta%C8%99-al-parteneriatului-estic/>, accessed 15.11.2018
- Cinci diplomați ruși, declarați persona NON GRATA în R.Moldova. Moscova promite „un răspuns dur”*, 29 Mai 2017, <https://radiochisinau.md/cinci-diplomati-rusi-declarati-persona-non-grata-in-rmoldova-moscova-promite-un-raspuns-dur---51163.html>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Comentariul Președintelui Parlamentului Andrian Candu pe marginea acțiunilor întreprinse de guvernare după declarațiile ofensatoare ale oficialului rus Dmitri Rogozin în adresa Republicii Moldova*, 02.08.2017, <http://www.parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3294/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council*, Eastern Partnership, Brussels, 3.12.2008, COM(2008) 823 final, 30 p., [http://www.epgencms.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/upload/668e28f3-9e29-4a41-b376-43acaef76ec/EaP_COM\(2008\)823.pdf](http://www.epgencms.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/upload/668e28f3-9e29-4a41-b376-43acaef76ec/EaP_COM(2008)823.pdf), accessed 15.11.2018
- Cum a reacționat Rusia la semnarea acordurilor de Asociere cu UE de către Moldova, Ucraina și Georgia*, 27 Iunie 2014, https://www.publika.md/cum-a-reactionat-rusia-la-semnarea-acordurilor-de-asociere-cu-ue-de-catre-moldova-ucraina-si-georgia_1987841.html, accessed 20.11.2018
- Declarația de presă a viceprim-ministrului, ministrului afacerilor externe și integrării Europene al Republicii Moldova Andrei Galbur după încheierea întâlnirii cu ministrul afacerilor externe al Federației Ruse Serghei Lavrov*, Comunicate de

- presă, 04.04.2016, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/503568/>, accessed 20.11.2018
- Dialogul RM-UE privind liberalizarea regimului de vize*, Ministerul Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene al Republicii Moldova, site-ul oficial, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/liberalizarea-regimului-vize/>, accessed 15.11.2018
- Diplomația rusă, chemată să dea explicații ministrului de Externe*. Declarația Nataliei Gherman, 4 Septembrie 2015, https://www.publika.md/diplomatia-rusa-chemata-sa-dea-explicatii-ministrului-de-externe-declaratia-nataliei-gherman_2392511.html, accessed 20.11.2018
- Discuții importante la Moscova privind relațiile comercial-economice dintre Moldova și Rusia*, 28 Iulie 2016, https://www.publika.md/discutii-importante-la-moscova-privind-relatiile-comercial-economice-dintre-moldova-si-rusia_2699491.html, accessed 20.11.2018
- Dmitri Rogozin a fost declarat PERSONA NON GRATA pe teritoriul Republicii Moldova*, 2 August 2017, https://www.prime.md/ro/dmitri-rogozin-a-fost-declarat-persona-non-grata-pe-teritoriul-republicii-moldova_59234.html, accessed 24.11.2018
- Dragomir, Andreea Nicoleta, *Overview of the Concept of Europeanization, Political Sciences, Sociology, International Relations*, LDMD 2, <http://www.upm.ro/ldmd/LDMD-02/Pol/Pol%2002%2007.pdf>, accessed 15.11.2018
- Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016. Charting Progress in European Integration, Democratic Reforms, and Sustainable Development*, December 2017, 132 p., http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP_Index_2015-16_0.pdf, accessed 15.11.2018
- EU expanding its 'sphere of influence,' Russia says*, 21. MARCH 2009, <HTTPS://EUOBSERVER.COM/FOREIGN/27827>, accessed 20.11.2018
- European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament – Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A new Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, COM (2003) 104 final, Brussels, 11.03.2003, 26 p, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf, accessed 01.11.2018
- European Commission, Communication from the Commission, European Neighbourhood Policy – STRATEGY PAPER*, COM (2004) 373 final, Brussels, 12 May 2004, 35 p, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2004_communication_from_the_commission_-_european_neighbourhood_policy_-_strategy_paper.pdf, accessed 01.11.2018
- European Integration Index 2012 for Eastern Partnership Countries*, May 2012, 72 p., <http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP%20Index%20%202012.pdf>, accessed 15.11.2018
- European Integration Index 2013 for Eastern Partnership Countries*, 55 p., http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP_Index_2013.pdf, accessed 15.11.2018
- European Integration Index 2014 for Eastern Partnership Countries*, February 2015, 112 p., <http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP%20Index%202014.pdf>, accessed 15.11.2018
- Feuraș, Eugenia (2016), *Cadrul teoretico-conceptual cu referință la rolul instituțiilor în procesul de aderare la UE*, în Revista „ECONOMICA”, nr. 3 (97), p. 92-110, https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/92_110_Cadrul%20teoretico-conceptual%20cu%20referinta%20la%20rolul%20institutiilor%20in%20procesul%20de%20aderare%20la%20UE.pdf, accessed 05.11.2018

- Geografia lui Igor Dodon: Izolați lângă Putin*, Ziarul de Gardă, 19 octombrie 2017, <https://www.zdg.md/editia-print/politic/geografia-lui-igor-dodon-izolati-langa-putin>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Grabbe, Heather (2003), *Europeanization goes East: Power and Uncertainty in the EU Accession Process*, In K. Featherstone, C. Radaelli, *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 3, https://www.ceses.cuni.cz/CESES-141-version1-3_1_Grabbe_2002_Europeanisation_goes_east.pdf, accessed 05.11.2018
- Guvernul R. Moldova regretă embargoul asupra vinurilor moldovenești*, 11 septembrie 2013, https://noi.md/news_id/27741, accessed 20.11.2018
- Igor Dodon a anunțat despre aplicarea amnistiei migraționale de către autoritățile Federației Ruse pentru mai multe categorii de migranți moldoveni*, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, Comunicate de presă, 01.03.2017, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/igor-dodon-a-anuntat-despre-aplicarea-amnistiei-migrationale-de-catre-autoritatile-federatiei-ruse-pentru-mai-multe-categorii-de-migranti-moldoveni>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Igor Dodon a avut o întrevedere cu Vladimir Putin*, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 14 iulie 2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/igor-dodon-a-avut-o-intrevedere-cu-vladimir-putin>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Igor Dodon a prezidat ședința finală cu privire la desfășurarea Congresului Mondial al Familiei*, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 11 septembrie 2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/presa/igor-dodon-a-prezidat-sedinta-finala-cu-privire-la-desfasurarea-congresului-mondial-al-familiei>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Igor Dodon întreprinde o vizită de lucru în Federația Rusă*, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 20.11.2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/igor-dodon-intreprinde-o-vizita-de-lucru-in-federatia-rusa>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Igor Dodon întreprinde o vizită oficială la Moscova*, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, Comunicate de presă, 16.01.2017, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/igor-dodon-intreprinde-o-vizita-oficiala-la-moscova>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Încă un militar rus, reținut pe aeroportul din Chișinău*, 2015-05-26, <https://www.agerpres.ro/externe/2015/05/26/inca-un-militar-rus-retinut-pe-aeroportul-din-chisinau-09-21-27>, accessed 20.11.2018
- Indicele Integrării Europene pentru țările Parteneriatului Estic 2014*, <http://infoeuropa.md/parteneriat-estic/indicele-integrarii-europene-pentru-tarile-parteneriatului-estic-2014>, accessed 15.11.2018
- Iurie Leancă: Rusia nu are motive să impună unilateral taxe pentru produsele din Moldova*, <http://agora.md/stiri/2451/iurie-leanca-rusia-nu-are-motive-sa-impuna-unilateral-taxe-pentru-produsele-din-moldova>, accessed 20.11.2018
- La Moscova a avut loc ședința Comisiei moldo-ruse de cooperare economică*, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Economiei și Infrastructurii al Republicii Moldova, Comunicate de presă, 11/29/2016, <https://mei.gov.md/ro/content/la-moscova-avut-loc-sedinta-comisiei-moldo-ruse-de-cooperare-economica>, accessed 20.11.2018
- La Moscova s-au desfășurat consultările interministeriale moldo-ruse*, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, 08.11.2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/513863/>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Ladrech, Robert (1994), *Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The case of France*, in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, nr.32 (1), <https://econpapers.repec.org/article/blajcmkts/default21.htm>, accessed 05.11.2018

- Ministrul de externe Andrei Galbur l-a primit pe viceministrul afacerilor externe al Federației Ruse Grigorii Karasin*, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, Comunicate de presă, 29.03.2016, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/503518/>, accessed 20.11.2018
- Ministrul Tudor Ulianoschi a avut o întrevedere cu omologul său rus Serghei Lavrov*, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, 17.02.2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/510778/>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Moscova reacționează: Cinci diplomați moldoveni expulzați din Rusia*, 31.05.2017, <http://trm.md/ro/politic/moscova-reac-ioneaza-cinci-diploma-i-moldoveni-expulza-i-din-rusia/>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Mureșan, Ioana (2005), *Politică Europeană de Vecinătate: nou cadru pentru europenizare?* în Colecția de studii IER, Institutul European din România, nr. 15, București, 52 p., http://beta.ier.ro/documente/working_papers/wp_15.pdf, accessed 04.11.2018
- Olsen, Johan Peder (2002), *The Many Faces of Europeanization*, In Journal of Common Market Studies, Vol. 40, nr. 5, p. 921-952, <http://eu-wb.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/olsen-2002.pdf>, accessed 15.11.2018
- Pavel Filip: sper mult că drumul rm spre ue va fi deja ireversibil în 2019*, <http://tribuna.md/2017/04/13/interviu-pavel-filip-sper-mult-ca-drumul-rm-spre-ue-va-fi-deja-ireversibil-in-2019/>, accessed 20.11.2018
- Premierul Pavel Filip a discutat cu Președintele Federației Ruse, Vladimir Putin, privind relațiile dintre cele două state*, site-ul oficial al Guvernului Republicii Moldova, Comunicate de presă, 2016-09-18, <https://gov.md/ro/content/premierul-pavel-filip-discutat-cu-presedintele-federatiei-ruse-vladimir-putin-privind>, accessed 20.11.2018
- Președintele Republicii Moldova efectuează o vizită oficială în Federația Rusă*, , site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 30.10.2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/presedintele-republicii-moldova-intreprinde-o-vizita-oficiala-in-federatia-rusa>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Președintele Republicii Moldova, Igor Dodon a avut o întrevedere de lucru cu Președintele Federației Ruse, Vladimir Putin*, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 28 septembrie 2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/presedintele-republicii-moldova-igor-dodon-a-avut-o-intrevedere-de-lucru-cu-presedintele-federatiei-ruse-vladimir-putin>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Președintele Republicii Moldova, Igor Dodon, a avut o întrevedere cu Președintele Federației Ruse, Vladimir Putin*, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 14 mai 2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/presedintele-republicii-moldova-igor-dodon-a-avut-o-intrevedere-cu-presedintele-federatiei-ruse-vladimir-putin-11155>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Radaelli, Claudio M. (2004), *Europeanisation: Solution or Problem?* In European Integration online Papers (EIoP), Vol. 8, nr. 16, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/pdf/2004-016.pdf>, accessed 15.11.2018
- REAȚIA Rusiei la rezoluția adoptată de ONU privind retragerea trupelor ruse din Transnistria*, 26 iunie 2018, https://www.publika.md/reactia-rusiei-la-rezolutia-adoptata-de-onu-privind-retragerea-trupelor-ruse-din-transnistria_3010695.html, accessed 24.11.2018

- Relațiile diplomatice între Republica Moldova și Federația Rusă*, Ambasada Republicii Moldova în Federația Rusă, <http://www.rusia.mfa.md/diplomatic-relations-ro/>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Relațiile economice bilaterale*, Ambasada Republicii Moldova în Federația Rusă, <http://www.rusia.mfa.md/economic-relations-ro/>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Rusia a decis expulzarea a cinci diplomați moldoveni/ Dodon denunță "iresponsabilitatea" Chișinăului*, 31 Mai 2017, <https://www.mediafax.ro/externe/rusia-a-decis-expulzarea-a-cinci-diplomati-moldoveni-dodon-denunta-iresponsabilitatea-chisinaului-16395829>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Rusia a introdus taxe vamale la importul a 19 de categorii de mărfuri din Moldova*, 30 august 2014, https://adevarul.ro/moldova/economie/rusia-introdus-taxe-vamale-importul-19-categorii-marfuri-moldova-1_540196ec0d133766a8b54eca/index.html, accessed 20.11.2018
- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov Interview to Interfax News Agency*, official site Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union, <https://russiaeu.ru/en/news/russian-foreign-minister-sergey-lavrov-interview-interfax-news-agency>, accessed 20.11.2018
- Schweickert, Rainer, Melnykovska, Inna, Gawrich, Andrea, Drautzburg, Thorsten (2008), *Institutional Convergence of CIS Towards European Benchmarks*, CASE Network Reports No. 82, Warsaw, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/93792/22459063_rc82.pdf, accessed 24.11.2018
- Site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova*, Comunicate de presă 2017, <http://www.presedinte.md/>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Șeful statului întreprinde o vizită la Moscova*, site-ul oficial al Președinției Republicii Moldova, 13 iuni 2018, <http://www.presedinte.md/rom/comunicate-de-presa/seful-statului-intreprinde-o-vizita-la-moscova>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Trei diplomați din cadrul Ambasadei Federației Ruse în Republica Moldova au fost declarați persona non-grata*, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și Integrării Europene, 27 martie 2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/comunicate-presa-md/511547/>, accessed 24.11.2018
- Карасин: ассоциация Молдавии с ЕС изменит правила торговли с Россией*, 10.06.2014, <https://ria.ru/world/20140610/1011549227.html>, accessed 20.11.2018
- Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с голосованием в Генассамблее ООН по представленному Республикой Молдова проекту резолюции*, site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al Federației Ruse, 23.06.2018, http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/kommentarii_predstavatelya/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQUMdqBY/content/id/3274365, accessed 24.11.2018
- О поставках продукции из Республики Молдова*, 11.09.2013, http://rospotrebnadzor.ru/deyatelnost/sanitary-supervision/?ELEMENT_ID=600&spphrase_id=1527610, accessed 20.11.2018
- О российском отношении к программе «Восточное партнерство»*. Из брифинга официального представителя МИД России А. А. Нестеренко. 26 марта 2009 г., site-ul oficial al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al Federației Ruse, http://www.mid.ru/brifingi/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQUMdqBY/content/id/798212, accessed 20.11.2018
- Роспотребнадзор запретил поставки молдавских плодоовощных консервов*, 19.07.2014, <https://www.interfax.ru/world/386663>, accessed 20.11.2018

- Россельхознадзор приостанавливает поставки мяса из Молдавии в Россию с 27 октября 2014*, <http://www.fsvps.ru/fsvps/press/112633.html>, accessed 20.11.2018
- Россия ввела запрет на поставки готовой свиной продукции из Молдавии*, 08.04.2014, <https://ria.ru/economy/20140408/1002979248.html>, accessed 20.11.2018
- РОССИЯ ОПАСАЕТСЯ РЕЭКСПОРТА УКРАИНОЙ МОЛДАВСКИХ ФРУКТОВ И ОВОЩЕЙ*, 29 07 2014, <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=13412>, accessed 20.11.2018
- Цыганков, Павел (1994), *Политическая социология международных отношений*, Москва: «Радикс», https://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Polit/cugan/01.php, accessed 05.11.2018
- Чижов, Владимир: *"Южный поток" надо сделать приоритетным проектом ЕС*, – Считаете ли вы, что запущенное Евросоюзом «Восточное партнерство» направлено на выстраивание Брюсселем сферы влияния на постсоветском пространстве?, 18.05.2009, http://www.ng.ru/courier/2009-05-18/9_chizhov.html, accessed 20.11.2018