

Dr Mihaela Daciana Natea, Dr Simion Costea (coordinators)

# The EU Foreign Policy and Security Dilemmas in a Challenging World

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II. Costea, Simion (coord.)

# EU Foreign and Security Policy

# How Can the Future of the Middle East Affect European Security?

**DR. LEILA NICOLAS**

*PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AT THE LEBANESE UNIVERSITY*

**Abstract:** *The Ukraine war has prompted European security interests to emerge in the Middle East, raising two narratives, or “strategic perspectives,”: a realist vision of great power politics and an idealist lens of democracy versus despotism. The situation in Ukraine has strengthened these lenses and affected how Europe views the Middle East. As the Middle East is entering a new phase of global power competition, two main hypotheses for its future are emerging: a chaos scenario, where great power politics and competition lead to chaos and negatively affect European security, and a stability scenario, where powerful regional states prefer diplomacy and conflict resolution means, allowing Europe to prioritize security concerns in Eastern European region. The paper discusses EU paradoxes in the Middle East, challenges, and prospects, and analyses each hypothesis and its consequences.*

**Key words** *European Union, Middle East, Ukraine war, security, peace.*

## INTRODUCTION

**A**fter the Ukraine war, new European security interests emerged in response to the loss of Russia as a source of energy and the threat to their national security. These interests will have a significant impact on the geopolitical environment throughout the world in the ensuing decades. Josep Borrell, the minister for foreign affairs of the EU, said that Europe “must learn to speak the language of force.”

Two narratives, or “strategic perspectives,” are beginning to incorporate this new European “language of power”: a realist vision of great power politics and an idealist lens of democracy versus despotism. While the situation in Ukraine has strengthened these lenses, which were fashioned mainly by earlier conflicts with Russia, they will also affect how Europe views the Middle East.

The Ukraine war, the worst military conflict to hit the European continent since World War II, has forced Europe to devote most of its military, economic, and political resources to face its consequences. Nevertheless, the Middle East remains a priority.

As the Middle East is entering a new phase of global-power competition, this paper will test two main hypotheses for the future of the region and their impact on the security of the EU:

### 1- Chaos scenario:

The Great power politics and competition will lead to a new cycle of chaos in the southern European neighbourhood (the Middle East), thus negatively affecting European security (re-rise of terrorist non-state actors, a new influx of refugees ...)

### 2- Stability scenario:

Powerful Regional states in the Middle East hedging their bets and using their oil reserves as a powerful negotiating tool to maintain their strategic priorities will prefer diplomacy and conflict resolution tools. This will lead to decades of stability in the Middle East, thus giving Europe a chance to prioritise security concerns in the East.

The first part of this paper shall discuss the EU prolonged paradoxes in the Middle East, challenges, and prospects. The second part shall analyse each hypothesis and its consequences. We end up with a conclusion and some recommendations for better EU engagement in the region.

## PART ONE: EU PROLONGED PARADOXES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

EU–Middle East relations are multifaceted, varied, and complex, shaped by historical, political, economic, migratory, social, and cultural dynamics (Dimitris Bouris, 2022). The European Union continues to have a fundamental interest in the Middle East. After the Ukraine war, Europeans cannot turn a blind eye because how they handle their relationships with their larger neighbourhood, notably their southern neighbours in the Middle East, will significantly impact their future wealth, stability, and security.

In recent years, the European Union unveiled new agendas for the Mediterranean and the Gulf. However, there is not a “one size fits all” solution. The size of the region reflects the diversity of the states there, some of which have been embroiled in war for decades, while others are stable and have strong economies.

In their Middle Eastern experience, two apparent paradoxes defined the European Union's Middle East policy:

- First, The EU cannot shape the Middle Eastern developments despite being the second-biggest assistance donor to the region (after the United States) and the major economic partner.

The EU does not exert any pressure on the Arab regimes or Israel. They limit themselves to statements of condemnation or calls for more respect for human rights. Thus, the European voice is rarely heard regarding important Middle Eastern issues.

As the EU does not have the capabilities to shape the developments, they have to cooperate with the existing Arab regimes. According to many in the West, Arab autocrats are one possible cause of the current bloodshed, insurgency, and turbulence. Therefore, cooperation between the EU and the MENA region is sometimes seen by activists as damaging rather than beneficial because it helps maintain regime stability in the region (Hyde-Price, 2006).

- Second, the EU has applied two contradicting policies: promoting liberal values vs. preserving security.

The European Union has used the expansion of its liberal ideas as a primary foreign policy tool since the 1990s, especially in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In the last decades, the EU consistently promoted good governance, democracy, and human rights as tools for combating terrorism and averting violent extremism (Skare, 22).

MENA governments have been co-opted into managing border and migration control, where they operate as Europe's gatekeepers, inside a system of structurally unbalanced economic connections from which Europe and MENA elites benefit the most (Del Sarto, 2021).

The Rise of terrorism led the EU to shift toward a “security first” focus in the region. This came after a gradual shift toward a more “realist-oriented” worldview, which undercuts other EU concerns and speeds up the EU's demise as a normative authority. In other words, the Union had been progressively adopting a security policy paradigm less affected by liberal ambitions. It is grounded in “bounded” logical evaluation of the costs and advantages of different courses of action, or “realpolitik.” (Skare, 22, p. 223)

Since the Iraq war, the Middle East has been in continuous upheaval, resulting in the displacement of millions of people fleeing from Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, and Syria (Volk, 2022). This led to the “securitization” of aid and democratisation projects. EU projects in the MENA were mainly directed toward communities that are presented as a threat to European security. The EU focused on some groups because they are exceptionally vulnerable to terrorism and religious extremism. This securitization was applied because groups such as Al Qaeda- ISIS were far from defeated. The same is true for other jihadi organisations.

Specific nationalities and religious groups, mainly Syrian refugees, had been transformed from political and humanitarian subjects to security targets, thus getting disproportionate aid and care. This has increased tensions between them and the host communities, especially in Lebanon, where the Lebanese accuse the EU and human rights agencies of discrimination, i.e., giving all the resources and aid to Syrian nationalities and blocking benefits from the Lebanese.

Europe's selective expansion of its laws, customs, and dispersed borders, combined with the specific policy decisions of MENA governments, have actually exacerbated socio-economic inequality, and strengthened authoritarian rule in the “southern neighborhood” (Del Sarto, 2021).

In addition to the abovementioned complexities, the US retrenchment is forcing other challenges to EU strategy in the Middle East.

**US retrenchment: adding more challenges to the EU.**

In recent decades, Europe's influence in the Middle East was secure in the shadow of the United States that dominated the region. After the end of the cold war and the liberation of Kuwait, the US expanded its military presence, which solidified its dominance in the region. The flow of oil, containment of Iran, and security guarantees to principal allies like Israel and Gulf monarchies were at the heart of the American regional order.

This US-led Middle East required little of Europe because the US handled most of the challenging political and security tasks. However, in response to the Arab revolutions in 2011, Europe prioritised keeping migrants away from its borders and fending terrorist threats. France and the UK mainly conducted these missions due to their military presence across the region. However, Europeans had always practised coordinated policies with Washington and never acted independently.

When Donald Trump was elected, the previous cooperation between the US and Europe in the Middle East came under pressure.

A notable division occurred between Europe and the US when Trump granted his unconditional support for Israel's annexation of Palestinian territory, recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and dismissed the two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, replacing it with the “deal of the century.” (Dohainstitute, 2020)

In 2017, after US President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, the European Union expressed grave concern, warning that this could impact future peace efforts (Reuters, 2017). The Israeli-Arab conflict was always more important to the EU than any other conflict in the region, which have been the key to shaping EU's foreign policy overall (Persson, 2020).

In 2018, Trump expressed his intent to withdraw from the Middle East, retracted unilaterally from JCPOA, and reimposed sanctions on Iran. Soon after Trump's announcement, the leaders of the UK, France, and Germany—all signatories to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) released a statement expressing their “regret and worry” and reiterating their “continuing commitment” to the accord (Martin Banks, 2018).

Trump's executive order threatened to reinstate sanctions against any foreign business conducting transactions with Iran. The European companies had to leave the Iranian market as Trump gave them an ultimatum of a 90-day or 180-day grace period to end their existing business relationships with Iran, after which they would be subject to US sanctions (TheGuardian, 2018).

European states' inability to keep their commitments to JCPOA was seen as a manifestation of their weakness. Iran accused the European states that they had succumbed to “high school bully” Donald Trump (Hafezi, 2020).

Today, after two decades of sustained military engagement in the Middle East, the US is re-adjusting. This is influenced by shifting strategic considerations, domestic tiredness, and the desire to end “forever wars.”

For the first time since 1952, the US no longer relies on Middle Eastern energy imports and is becoming a net energy exporter. In addition, the US has its strategic sights set on China and intends to shift its political attention, military, and financial resources from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific region.



## PART 2- EU IN A MULTIPOLAR MIDDLE EAST

A new multipolar regional order is emerging due to the United States' desire to “rightsize” its military and diplomatic stances in the region. This led to a rise in regional assertiveness and increased Russian and Chinese involvement in the Middle East.

US retrenchment will pressure the EU to try to fill the power vacuum and find a way to play a role in the region. However, Europe will be fighting with more forceful and geopolitically savvy states already attempting to push Europeans aside in MENA's more complex and multipolar regional system.

Europe has to deal with China and Russia's growing political, economic, and military influence in the Middle East. After its military intervention, Russia's relations with Turkey, Gulf monarchies, and Iran increased.

China's regional influence is being constructed on an economic rather than a security basis, with the Road and Belt Initiative serving as the main vehicle for China's economic objectives. China's readiness to forgo Western-style prerequisites like support for human rights and democracy and its policy of non-interference are key components of its appeal in the region.

China is now pushing for Saudi oil sales to be priced in national currencies rather than dollars to challenge US financial supremacy in the oil industry and de-dollarize the global economy. Also, China is increasingly attempting to use its economic clout to exert political influence. Mediating a reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran is one example.

The Ukraine conflict has highlighted the Middle East's expanding significance as an energy supplier, as European nations struggle to lessen their reliance on Russian oil and gas. Europe's vulnerabilities will increase due to its closer relations with the Middle East. States in the Middle East and North Africa are in a good position, with new means of exerting pressure on the capitals of Europe.

Due to its urgent need for oil flow, Europe concentrated on transactional negotiations that served its immediate energy and immigration needs. However, the geopolitical environment in the MENA was significantly impacted by the conflict in Ukraine, particularly in the markets for food and energy. The war added more pressure on states that do not produce oil in the region, like Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Libya, and Egypt, which face serious threats to their food security. This demonstrates how the fundamental socio-economic causes of the Arab Spring have not been adequately addressed. Taking these risks into consideration, Europeans need to re-evaluate their regional priorities.

In addition to oil supplies, Europe must deal with many security issues facing the region, such as the impending economic crises and inflation hitting many states. The regional effects of a world order increasingly characterised by multipolarity, and great-power rivalry may lead to either chaos or decades of stability in the Middle East.

### *A- Chaos Scenario*

When the Arab Spring revolutions began to spread over the Middle East and North Africa, Europeans envisioned themselves as the ideal partners for democratic and economic transitions that would pave the way for long-term stability. The West thought the revolutions would lead to a moderate version of Islam that engages Democracy and Islamism. However, conflict and instability engulfed the region bringing hordes of refugees to Europe and deadly terrorism.

Today, MENA is at another possible turning point. Following years of unsettling, zero-sum conflict, the region observes a tentative shift toward dialogue and good relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Europeans welcomed the de-escalation because it may provide a way out of the instability and proxy wars across the region. However, the Saudi- Iranian reconciliation may not bring about the stability and prosperity many hoped for in the region.

The current calm has the risk of merely being a brief respite before destabilising forces are reactivated, especially if Iranian nuclear negotiations fail. The new road of diplomacy also covers up deep structural vulnerabilities and unresolved socio-economic problems.

In this scenario, while many in Europe would like to focus on the Russian danger in the East, they are unlikely to have the luxury of ignoring their southern neighbours. The bloc must consider expanding its role in the Middle East to help cement positive openings and avert new risks in a more competitive and multipolar regional order. In this scenario, long-standing European reliance on the United States in the MENA is no longer necessary, and they should do the heavy lifting by themselves.

### ***B- Stability Scenario***

The region has suffered a series of horrific conflicts over the previous decades, but on the positive side, the actors have worn out. The main regional actors are suddenly conversing instead of fighting. The perception of US disengagement in the region as Washington “rightsizes” its position following two decades of overstretch is a significant motivator for Saudi Arabia to reach settlements there. Trump's maximum pressure strategy that continued with the Biden administration has severely damaged Iran's economy.

States throughout the Middle East have engaged in an unprecedented pattern of reconciliation to safeguard their interests amid shifts in the global order, driven by a combination of conflict fatigue, COVID-19, a focus on economic security, the continued concern over declining US engagement, and increased geopolitical competition.

In response to Iranian-linked attacks on Saudi oil infrastructure in September 2019, a growing sense of insecurity in the Arab Gulf was exacerbated by former US President Donald J. Trump's refusal to support his campaign of maximum economic pressure against Iran with military action.

The subsequent willingness of US President Joseph Biden to reenter negotiations to revive the Iranian nuclear deal strengthened the perception that the West was prepared to work with Tehran—and that the region needed to do the same to protect its security.

The new bilateral diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia have been the region's most significant indicator of this transition to diplomacy.

Iran, Bahrain, and Kuwait started a new phase of good relations with Iran. Saudi Arabia and other Arab states restored their relations with Syrian President Bashar Al Asad. A Yemeni deal to end the war is on the way. Also, to indicate a broader shift, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are mending their relations with Turkey, bridging a gap that has been just as problematic. Despite its infancy, this diplomacy offers a route toward the urgently required de-escalation of regional tensions.

The benefits of US regional withdrawal are disputed by many. However, they are increasingly pushing players toward discussing their security issues through diplomacy, a trend that Europeans should support because it will be the best-case scenario for European security.

## **CONCLUSION**

Geopolitical tensions, Arab revolutions, and socio-economic crises in the Middle East granted Europe enormous problems. However, multipolarity and new paths of diplomacy in the region may make it possible to advance European interests more successfully.

The rapprochement between Arab Gulf states and Iran, and other regional reconciliation efforts shed light on a significant region-wide trend of de-escalation. It also signals a change toward direct Middle East regional conflict management. Should it continue, it will be a turning point in the region after decades of geopolitical tensions and division.

These changes cannot remove the tensions that have grown over the decades of regional competition or dispel ingrained mistrust. Instead, they should be viewed as planned adjustments to minimise conflict and lessen economic vulnerability.

Permanent peace can be a result of significant change, a genuine regional reset over time, and sustained political investment. Nevertheless, these new ties could easily break down without deliberate international support, especially EU support. The EU has to invest politically, financially, and socially in peace and stability in the Middle East.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Stability and prosperity in the Middle East are beneficial for European security; however, because the EU lacks the power or leverage to exert pressure on MENA countries, realistic approaches and pragmatism should serve as the basis for a compelling European future strategy:

- The EU should accept “the region as it is” rather than imposing its vision and will. The EU can contribute to stability through programs to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation.
- The EU should participate in the war-torn states' rebuilding processes while focusing on the ideals required to ensure longer-term stability.
- Despite competing for influence with Russia and China, Europeans should keep room for coordination with both states in the region.
- Europeans should support the return to JCPOA and expand diplomacy with Iran.
- Europeans should exert more pressure on Israel to abandon the expansion of illegal settlements in the Palestinian territories. The Europeans should take a clear and firm stance toward the Right – wing Israeli government aggression on Palestinians.
- Arab and Turkish normalisation with the Syrian government may open a window for returning Syrian refugees from Europe and Syria's neighbouring states (Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey). Europeans should take a realistic-neutral position rather than an opposing one.

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# Understanding Bangladesh-EU Relations: From Aid Dependence to Economic Partnership

DR. SHARIFUL ISLAM

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,  
UNIVERSITY OF RAJSHAHI, BANGLADESH

**Abstract:** European Union (EU) remains one of the key priorities of Bangladesh foreign policy under Sheikh Hasina regime (2009-present). Notably, 58 per cent of Bangladesh's total exports go to the EU while the EU is the destination of 64 per cent of Bangladesh's total apparel exports worth US\$ 34 billion. Bangladesh enjoys zero-duty benefit to the EU market under the scheme of 'Everything but Arms' framework. Bangladesh has been enjoying this benefit since 1973. Bangladesh will formally leave LDC group in 2026. The EU is expected to extend the preferential market access benefit for Bangladesh for three more years till 2029. This will impact Bangladesh's future exports to the EU market. Thus, continuing EBA benefit in a new format or GSP plus facility, or zero-tariff benefit under the Free Trade Agreement would be the new area of focus of Bangladesh foreign policy under Sheikh Hasina regime. In fact, trade with the EU has transformed the lives of millions of people in Bangladesh. As a sign of friendship, the EU has allocated € 334 million (equivalent to US\$ 389.31 million) for Bangladesh to mitigate the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 global pandemic. In addition, EU has also announced € 90 million (equivalent to US\$ 104.91 million) for the garment workers in Bangladesh who lost the job due to the pandemic which demonstrates the importance that EU attaches to Bangladesh. More than 1000 garment factories in Bangladesh faced order cancellations worth US\$ 2.97 billion during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, more than one million garment workers faced losing their jobs. Against the above backdrop, the article investigates: How can one understand the growing Bangladesh-EU ties from aid dependence to an economic partnership under Sheikh Hasina regime? And why does EU matter to Bangladesh vis-à-vis Bangladesh to EU? This paper contends that promoting EU-Bangladesh relations is of the interests of both the parties. Although Bangladesh-EU relations are important from a ranging of issues, i.e. economic, security, political and other issues, except for some newspaper short pieces, no study is found on this issue, and this is where the rationale of this study lies. The study explores a number of possible areas where both the parties can engage further and foster their relations for the greater interests of the people of Bangladesh and EU.

**Keywords:** Bangladesh-EU, EU Aid in Bangladesh, Economic Partnership, Bangladeshi RMG in the EU market.

## INTRODUCTION

The article investigates: How can one understand the growing Bangladesh-EU ties from aid dependence to an economic partnership under Sheikh Hasina regime? And why does EU matter to Bangladesh vis-à-vis Bangladesh to EU? It contends that promoting EU-Bangladesh relations is of the interests of both parties. Although Bangladesh-EU relations are important from a ranging of issues, i.e., economic, security, political and other issues, except for some newspaper short pieces, no study is found on this issue; which is also the rationale of this study. The study explores a number of possible areas where both parties can engage further and foster their relations for the greater interests of the people of Bangladesh and EU. And there is no alternative but to promote EU-Bangladesh relations.

Bangladesh-EU relations date back to 1973. In fact, EC food aid was the predominant feature in the beginning state of their relations, since post-war Bangladesh was facing a famine like situation. After Egypt, Bangladesh was the second largest food aid recipient in the world from 1975 to 1992.<sup>1</sup> And during the period between 1989 and 1994, Bangladesh became one of the top four recipients of

<sup>1</sup> Nita Pillai, *Food Aid for Development? A Review of the Evidence*. Edited by Edward Clay, Olav Schram Stokke, Ilford, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd 2000, pp. 196-220.

EU food aid.<sup>2</sup> So, it is clear that just after the independence, in the growing phase of Bangladesh, EU saw Bangladesh as a priority in terms of endorsing food aid. It is noted that EC formal assistance to Bangladesh started from 1976.<sup>3</sup>

From food aid, EU has been a major development partner of Bangladesh, particularly to achieve food security, women's empowerment, good governance, and to improve the conditions of education, health and so on for the last several decades. EU is one of the major institutions that helps Bangladesh in accommodating the enormously large number of Rohingya refugees. EU had disbursed €46.8 million for humanitarian needs and disaster preparedness, while in 2023, till writing this article, the amount of endorsement in the same sector is €23.2 million<sup>4</sup>, thus, relieving Bangladesh from taking all the responsibilities of feeding and maintaining the Rohingya refugees. It would be quite difficult for Bangladesh to harbor the oppressed Rohingya minorities without having aid from foreign institutions, particularly EU. Therefore, EU is not only helping in the food sector but also in the disaster management and refugee crisis sector of Bangladesh. In fact, EU supports Bangladesh in a wider array of issues and events.

Both Bangladesh and the European Union share similar values, i.e. democracy, rules-based global order, multi-cultural and multi-polar world based on global peace and cooperation. The father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman formed Bangladesh's foreign policy in such a way that it promotes peace, cooperation and global security. In fact, Bangabandhu believed in cooperation rather than conflict, as reflected in his foreign policy dictum "Friendship to all, malice to none". Though more than 50 years have passed since the independence of Bangladesh, it has been following the foreign policy formulated by Bangabandhu due to its relevance to the present world political context. It should be noted that the core values of EU as mentioned above are almost identical to those of Bangladesh's. Thus, a long term cooperation between EU and Bangladesh can be prognosticated. While two entities share same values and believe in identical world views, there remains no barrier in terms of cooperation. In addition, recently, Bangladesh and the EU agreed to further deepen their bilateral relationship, and the dialogue took place on the eve of EU-Bangladesh relation's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>5</sup> This implies the parties' interest in developing further cooperation.

The study is significant for a number of reasons and has theoretical and policy implications. First, a sound, sustained EU-Bangladesh relationship serves the interests of both the parties particularly for Bangladesh. Second, although the study is so crucial for Bangladesh since EU is one of the prime development partners of Bangladesh, very few studies have been conducted. So, the study fills the gap. Finally, the findings of the study might guide the policy makers of EU and Bangladesh to promote the bilateral relations.

This article is divided into four sections including introduction and conclusion. The first section briefly introduces the issue and aim of this paper. The second section discusses the aid dependency of Bangladesh, economic partnership between EU and BD, and the geo-strategic and socio-cultural interest of EU, while the third section examines the way forward for the further development of the EU and Bangladesh relationship. Finally, the fourth section concludes the paper with mentioning the major arguments.

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<sup>2</sup> Edward J Clay, Sanjay Dhiri, and Charlotte Benson. *Joint evaluation of European Union programme food aid*. Overseas Development Institute, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Zamir. "Bangladesh and the EU: Moving forward together". *The Financial Express*, March 4, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> See [https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/asia-and-pacific/bangladesh\\_en#how-are-we-helping](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/asia-and-pacific/bangladesh_en#how-are-we-helping) Accessed: 16.06.2023

<sup>5</sup> BSS, Dhaka. 2023. "Bangladesh, EU Agree to Further Deepen Bilateral Partnership." *The Daily Star*. May 3, 2023. <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/diplomacy/news/bangladesh-eu-agree-further-deepen-bilateral-partnership-3310311>.

## AID DEPENDENCE

Since the beginning of Bangladesh-EU ties, EU aid has been the defining feature to rebuild the war-torn Bangladesh. According to data aggregated by the Bangladesh Ministry of Finance, as of 2010, the total volume of EU foreign aid to Bangladesh since 1971 was amounted to US\$52.6 billion. In the first decade of the independence of Bangladesh, EU foreign aid was amounted to US\$ 6.6 billion which was more than doubled in the second decade (1980-1990). In the third decade (1990-2000), EU foreign aid increased by 10 per cent to US\$ 15.6 billion while in the fourth decade (2000-2010), the volume increased to 16.2 billion.<sup>6</sup> Table 1 demonstrates ODA disbursement of EU institutions to Bangladesh between 2009 and 2018. Most of the EU foreign aid comes to Bangladesh primarily in three forms: food aid, commodity aid, and project aid. In Bangladesh, EU mostly focuses on broadly three areas, e.g. human capital development; food security, nutrition, and sustainable development; and democratic governance. In 2001, Bangladesh and EU signed cooperation agreements covering trade, economic and development cooperation, human rights, good governance and the environment. Between 2014 and 2020, EU development aid to Bangladesh was amounted to € 655,000,000.<sup>7</sup>

According to the European Delegation to Bangladesh, since 1976, EU has been playing a crucial role in achieving food security in Bangladesh. The European Commission has a wide array of food security programmes in Bangladesh directly benefiting approximately 300,000 households (representing 1.5 million beneficiaries).<sup>8</sup> The focus is on eradicating malnutrition by targeting the ultra-poor.

**Table 1:** ODA disbursement of EU Institutions to Bangladesh (US\$ million)

| Year  | Total Net |
|---|-----------|
| 2009  | 122,98    |
| 2010  | 183,77    |
| 2011  | 146,1     |
| 2012  | 125,75    |
| 2013  | 112,53    |
| 2014  | 91,33     |
| 2015  | 87,19     |
| 2016  | 125,64    |
| 2017  | 149,99    |
| 2018  | 168,62    |
| <i>Source:</i> OECD.Stat (2020).<br><a href="https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=Table2A">https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=Table2A</a> |           |

<sup>6</sup> Delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh (2012). Bangladesh and Europe 2012. Dhaka: Delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh, p.27

<sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/where-we-work/bangladesh\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/where-we-work/bangladesh_en)

<sup>8</sup> Delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh, 2012, p.40-41

## ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

*Trade*

The EU collaborates closely with Bangladesh within the context of the EU-Bangladesh Cooperation Agreement, which was signed in 2001. This agreement opens up a wide range of potential areas for cooperation, including trade, economic growth, human rights, good governance, and the environment.<sup>9</sup> About 58 per cent of Bangladesh's exports go to the EU market. More than 90 per cent of them is ready-made garments. In 2020, 19.5 per cent of total exports of Bangladesh went to the EU, making it the major trading partner of Bangladesh, while Bangladesh became the 34<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner of the EU in that year.<sup>10</sup> Even in the first two months of the year 2023, according to EUROSTAT Bangladesh maintained the second place in terms of apparel shipment to the EU, which accounted for the 22.75 per cent of the overall apparel imports by the trading bloc.<sup>11</sup> It is also noteworthy to mention that the amount of clothing imported into the European Union (EU) from Bangladesh increased by 35.69% in 2022 compared to 2021.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 2:** Bangladesh's Trade with EU, 2007-2019 (€m)

| Years | Exports to EU (€m) | Imports from EU (€m) | Balances (€m) | Total Trade Values (€m) |
|-------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 2007  | 5125               | 1022                 | 4103          | 6147                    |
| 2008  | 5464               | 1066                 | 4398          | 6530                    |
| 2009  | 5849               | 1006                 | 4843          | 6855                    |
| 2010  | 6690               | 1619                 | 5071          | 8309                    |
| 2011  | 8585               | 1702                 | 6883          | 10.287                  |
| 2012  | 8191               | 1414                 | 6777          | 9605                    |
| 2013  | 9116               | 1501                 | 7615          | 10.617                  |
| 2014  | 10421              | 1835                 | 8586          | 12.256                  |
| 2015  | 12716              | 2272                 | 10444         | 14.988                  |
| 2016  | 13780              | 2364                 | 11416         | 16.143                  |
| 2017  | 14251              | 2914                 | 11338         | 17.165                  |
| 2018  | 15201              | 3223                 | 11977         | 18.424                  |
| 2019  | 16292              | 2964                 | 13329         | 19256                   |

*Source:* 2007-2011 is taken from European Delegation to Bangladesh (2012:23), data of 2012-2019 is taken from Directorate-General for Trade, EC (n.d.). 2012-2019 trade includes total goods.

<sup>9</sup> See [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/bangladesh\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/bangladesh_en)

<sup>10</sup> See [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/bangladesh\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/bangladesh_en)

<sup>11</sup> Refayet Ullah Mirdha (2023, May 4). "Bangladesh retains second position in RMG export to EU". *The Daily Star*, May 4, 2023. <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/bangladesh-retains-second-position-rmg-export-eu-3310546>

<sup>12</sup> The Business Standard. (2023, March 30). "Bangladesh apparel exports to EU grew by 35.69% in 2022". *The Business Standard*, March 30, 2023. <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/rmg/bangladesh-apparel-exports-eu-grew-3569-2022-608102>

Table 2 demonstrates that Bangladesh enjoys huge trade surplus with EU. The trade volume is also on increasing trend. Thus, EU matters for Bangladesh which remains the single largest export destination for Bangladesh over decades. Bangladesh mainly exports manufacture products to the EU market which is worth at €m 13500 in 2016, €m 13,906 in 2017, €m 14, 917 in 2018, and €m16011 in 2019 respectively. Among manufacture products, ready-made garments account for the major products for Bangladesh. Agricultural products including fish, food, and other live animals account for the second position in terms of Bangladesh's export volume to EU market. Bangladesh mainly imports manufactured products from EU, which account for the first position and machinery and transport equipment remain the second position in terms of total import value.

On the other hand, table 3 compares the deficit and surplus in terms of export and import among the major trading partners of Bangladesh during the fiscal year 2021-2022. The deficit of trade was enormously high with China and India, amounting to \$bn -23.09 and \$bn -12.38 respectively, while there was a handful amount of surplus with the USA. However, the difference is notable with the EU as the surplus was a soaring \$bn +21.33 in the same time period, which almost closer to the deficit with China. Thus it is needless to say that EU remains one of the significant trading partner for Bangladesh, and from 2007 to 2022 Bangladesh enjoyed surplus in trade with the EU. While the relation between EU and Bangladesh started with disbursing food aid in the year 1973, now the two actors has become trading partner.

**Table 3:** Bangladesh Export-Import Data (2021-2022) MNI

| Country  | Export (\$bn) | Import (\$bn) | Balance (\$bn) |
|--|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| EU   | 25.13\$       | 3.80\$        | +21.33\$       |
| USA  | 8.72\$        | 2.30\$        | +6.42\$        |
| India  | 1.72\$        | 14.10\$       | -12.38\$       |
| China  | 1.01\$        | 24.10\$       | -23.09\$       |
| <i>Source:</i> Bangladesh Export-Import Data (2021-2022) MNI |               |               |                |

Officially Bangladesh will become a developing country in 2026 which will affect Bangladesh's trade benefits with the EU as a LDC country. EU has extended three more years as a grace period for preparation which normally EU does not allow after a country's graduation. Notably, Bangladesh was enjoying the EBA benefits since 1973 as a LDC country which contributed to the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. In fact, EBA trade benefits becomes important for Bangladesh for a number of reasons. First, having more than 170 million people in 1, 47, 50 km, area with limited resources, it becomes important for Bangladesh to sustain the current growth level. In this context, sustaining the trade volume with the EU is essential. Second, 58 per cent of Bangladesh's total exports goes to the EU market. Bangladesh is the second largest ready-made garments producer in the world. Of total apparel exports, 64 per cent (worth US\$ 34 billion) goes to the EU market. Thus, if zero-tariff benefits are removed, Bangladesh's exports might face 8.7 per cent of duty impose.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, Bangladesh's export volume will decline by 5.7 per cent annually if the EBA is not extended. It is worthy to

<sup>13</sup> Refayet Ullah Mirdha, (2020, June 29). "Bangladesh seeks extension of EU trade benefits even after LDC graduation". *The Daily Star*, June 29, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bangladesh-seeks-extension-eu-trade-benefits-even-after-ldc-graduation-1922029>



mention that more than four million workers are directly employed in the garment sector in Bangladesh. As a result, tens of thousands of garment workers, especially women will be affected economically and socially. Third, the sheer competitor of Bangladesh garment industry is Vietnam, which has already signed a free trade agreement with the EU. As a result, Bangladesh apparels market in EU will be severely affected. Finally, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and impacts of the Russian-Ukraine war, Bangladesh economy is severely affected. In fact, the continuation of EBA benefits becomes important for Bangladesh economy. Therefore, Bangladesh has sent a request letter for the extension of trade benefits. Bangladesh Commerce Secretary, Md Jafar Uddin points out that 'In the letter we did not mention any particular period or any particular scheme. We sought the continuation of the current EBA as we have been facing crisis in different ways due to the coronavirus pandemic'.<sup>14</sup> Zero-tariff benefits to EU market will be continued till 2027 while Bangladeshi exporters demand the benefits for at least 10 years. Thus, continuing the trade benefits in other forms or free trade agreement with EU will be new area of focus of Bangladesh foreign policy formulations and executions.

### *Investment*

The EU-Bangladesh Business Climate Dialogue was initiated in May 2016 at government level to jointly remove the barriers that obstruct EU trade and investment in Bangladesh.<sup>15</sup> During the launching ceremony, EU Ambassador to Bangladesh, Pierre Mayaudon notes that political uncertainty, 'growing militancy' work as major challenge regarding EU investments in Bangladesh.<sup>16</sup> However, it is expected that the formation of EU-Bangladesh Business Climate Dialogue would work to improve the trade and investment environment in Bangladesh. The sixth plenary of the Dialogue was held in Dhaka in December 2019, where all 8 EU Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Dhaka - Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, representatives from EU private sector participated. The EU delegation points out that various tariffs and para-tariff barriers impede European exports to Bangladesh, which needs to be addressed. From Bangladesh side, representatives from Commerce Ministry, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, National Board of Revenue, and Bangladesh Bank participated in the dialogue.<sup>17</sup>

Regarding the increasing interest of European investors in Bangladesh, in an interview with the Daily Star, Nuria Lopez, managing director of Zalo Knitting and Arrow Sports Wear contends that 'It is because of a sizeable ready-to-work labour force of the country and its fast growing economy'.<sup>18</sup> This point is significant enough to understand the necessity of Bangladesh for the EU. Bangladesh has a large number of population and they are ready to provide their labour in areas such as RMG, construction, power and so on. Therefore, investing on such sectors will benefit both EU countries and Bangladesh. It is no doubt that EU investment will create substantial employments in a number of sectors in Bangladesh. At the same time EU will also be benefited due to this ready-to-work labour force.

On the other hand, the nature of EU and Bangladesh relationship is changing. Traditionally, EU investment was centered on the development of education, health, food security and

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> bdnews24.com (2016, May 12). "EU-Bangladesh Business Climate Dialogue launched in Dhaka". Retrieved from <https://bdnews24.com/business/2016/05/12/eu-bangladesh-business-climate-dialogue-launched-in-dhaka>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Press and information team of the Delegation to Bangladesh (2019, December 8). Press Release: 6th plenary of EU-Bangladesh Business Climate Dialogue. Retrieved from [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/chile/71650/6th-plenary-eu-bangladesh-business-climate-dialogue\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/chile/71650/6th-plenary-eu-bangladesh-business-climate-dialogue_en)

<sup>18</sup> Refayet Ullah Mirdha, (2017, November 7). "European investors keen on Bangladesh". *The Daily Star*, November 7, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/european-investors-keen-bangladesh-1485082>

governance. However, recently EU plans to invest in the green technology and infrastructure development of Bangladesh so that Bangladesh can have a smooth transition from its LDC status. In the words of EU Ambassador Charles Whiteley- “We are becoming a lot more focused on political issues, regional issues, and issues of mutual interests. We are also deepening cooperation in practical terms on the issues like ocean governance, climate change and renewable energy”.<sup>19</sup> The Ambassador also expressed that EU is expected to grant 400 million euro to support wind and solar energy development in Bangladesh. This would also help Bangladesh achieve its target of 40 per cent renewable energy by 2041, up from the current 6 per cent.<sup>20</sup> The EU Delegation has already handed over a roadmap on the investment in the energy sector to the government of Bangladesh on June, 2023.<sup>21</sup> Thus it is evident from the above discussion that EU is keen to invest in Bangladesh and help Bangladesh to change its LDC status by supporting infrastructure and renewable energy development. It also shows how significant the EU is to Bangladesh as well as how much priority the EU is giving to Bangladesh.

### GEO-STRATEGIC INTERESTS OF EU IN BANGLADESH

Globally, the European Union is gaining its reputation as an economic bloc, but factors such as geopolitics and the conditions of economy force the EU to widen its political leadership. The development of Russian military ambitions in international politics, the emergence of China as a global power, and the dynamic Middle Eastern landscape are some of the forces that are pushing the EU to expand its political horizons.<sup>22</sup> At present, EU has become a world leader and one of the major actors in world politics. So, the presence and influence of EU in the major parts of the world including Bangladesh is in the greater interests of it. In fact, the geo-strategic importance of Bangladesh is clearly evident. As a result of these political contexts, the geographical position of Bangladesh is highly significant to the EU.

The location of Bangladesh makes it a strategically crucial actor in the arena of geopolitics. The country is surrounded by India from three sides and it shares land border with Myanmar. Towards the Bay of Bengal, out of 12 sea ports, Bangladesh has three sea ports; Chattogram, Payra and Mongla. In addition, due to its geography, Bangladesh is a natural gateway between South-East Asia and South-Asia. Thus any coordination between SAARC and ASEAN requires to include Bangladesh.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, Bangladesh's position is significant for two reasons; Asian Highway and Transit Way.<sup>24</sup> First, Bangladesh has a vital role in the completion of the Asian highway since it provides a more convenient and affordable route connecting India with countries in the south. Though the country has not yet joined the Asian Highway, its significance cannot be ignored. Second, Bangladesh is essential for India to transport goods and freights to its northern parts at a lower cost, and to connect with Nepal and Bhutan via the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh is

<sup>19</sup> Porimol Palma. (2023, May 8). “50 years of Bangladesh-EU ties: EU plans to invest big in Bangladesh”. *The Daily Star*, May 8, 2023. <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/diplomacy/news/50-years-bangladesh-eu-ties-eu-plans-invest-big-bangladesh-3314626>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> The Business Standard. (2023, June 1). “Investing in energy storage in Bangladesh: EU hands over a roadmap to government”. *The Business Standard*. <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/energy/investing-energy-storage-bangladesh-eu-hands-over-roadmap-government-642366>

<sup>22</sup> Munir Hussain. *The European Union: On the verge of global political leadership*, Singapore, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Zillur Rahman. 2021. “Bangladesh's Geopolitical Position Provides for Unique Opportunities.” *The Daily Star*, November 4, 2021. <https://www.thedailystar.net/views/opinion/news/bangladeshs-geopolitical-position-provides-unique-opportunities-2221461>.

<sup>24</sup> Md. Rezwanul Kabir, S.M. Rabiul Islam, Md. Milon Molla and Shoara Akter, “Geological Importance of Bangladesh in Geopolitics”, in *Donnish Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 3(1), 2018, pp. 001-005.

the shortest route. Furthermore, Bangladesh is an influential member of BIMSTEC, and it is one of the key concerns of the EU to spread cooperation and connectivity in this area.<sup>25</sup> Thus to spread EU's influence in this area, Bangladesh remains a crucial factor. If it wants to sustain its global leadership position in the subcontinent as well as in South-East Asian countries, EU cannot ignore Bangladesh.

Furthermore, Bangladesh and the EU agreed to develop cooperation in the strategic areas.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, European Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis depicted the relationship between Bangladesh and the EU as multidimensional and strategic.<sup>27</sup> It was evident that these two parties would cooperate in strategic areas when they published their Indo-Pacific Strategy. By introducing its Indo-Pacific Outlook, Bangladesh has once again highlighted its non-aligned and balanced stance in the world, where the stability and prosperity of the region are crucial, with the aim of promoting peace. Bangladesh aims to engage all stakeholders in achieving this objective. The Outlook is based on four guiding principles-

a. "Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's foreign policy dictum 'Friendship towards all, malice toward none.'"

b. "Constitutional mandate on the conduct of international relations based on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful settlement of international disputes, as well as respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter; and striving for renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament."

c. "Adherence to the relevant UN treaties and international conventions, as applicable, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)."

d. "Constructive regional and international cooperation for sustainable development, international peace and security, humanitarian action, and fundamental rights and freedoms." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh).<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, the Indo-Pacific strategy of the EU resonates the same norms and principles. The EU aims to promote the values of democracy, rule of law, human rights, and international law while promoting peace, security, prosperity, and sustainable development in the Indo-Pacific region,<sup>29</sup> which are in line with the Indo-Pacific Outlook of Bangladesh. Thus to achieve EU's goal in the Indo-Pacific region, enhancing strategic cooperation with Bangladesh is a necessity.

On the other hand, the EU is now a leader in the world of ecology. Global environmental policy decisions now depend on what occurs in the EU, whether they relate to climate change, biodiversity, or chemical control.<sup>30</sup> So, the global decisions regarding environmental issues are largely relied in the perception of the EU. To sustain its leadership position in the global environmental policy decision, the EU needs to extend cooperation with Bangladesh. It is widely recognized that Bangladesh is a climate resilient country. Due to its location, the country is exposed to natural calamities. The people and the government of Bangladesh know how to fight

<sup>25</sup> Christian Wagner, and Siddharth Tripathi. "New connectivity in the Bay of Bengal." *SWP Comment* 53 (2018).

<sup>26</sup> "Bangladesh, EU to Ink Partnership Deal." *The Daily Star*, May 11, 2023. <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/diplomacy/news/bangladesh-eu-ink-partnership-deal-3316736>.

<sup>27</sup> "It's Strategic and Multi-Dimensional." *The Daily Star*, May 7, 2023. <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/its-strategic-and-multi-dimensional-3313011>.

<sup>28</sup> See [https://mofa.gov.bd/site/press\\_release/d8d7189a-7695-4ff5-9e2b-903fe0070ec9](https://mofa.gov.bd/site/press_release/d8d7189a-7695-4ff5-9e2b-903fe0070ec9)

<sup>29</sup> étrangères, Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires. n.d. "The European Union in the Indo-Pacific." France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. Accessed June 19, 2023. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/regional-strategies/indo-pacific/the-european-union-in-the-indo-pacific/#:~:text=With%20this%20new%20strategy%20and>.

<sup>30</sup> Jacques Le Cacheux and, Eloi Laurent. "The EU as a global ecological leader." in *Report on the State of the European Union: Is Europe Sustainable?* London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 125-138.

with the environmental disaster. Therefore, it is essential for any climate related organizations to collaborate with Bangladesh for getting practical knowledge on managing climate change related catastrophes. The EU can grasp the opportunity of enhancing its practical knowledge of disaster management from Bangladesh. In a similar way, Bangladesh can be benefited from EU decisions that would reduce environmental pollution.

In addition, Bangladesh is one of the largest moderate Muslim countries in the world. Even with this large population, Bangladesh remains a non-communal country. Here, people of different religions live with harmony, which respects the norms of the EU. Moreover, Bangladesh is the major troops contributing country of peacekeeping missions of UN. Bangladesh Army has attained a good reputation in maintaining world peace by providing peace keepers to the UN. Thus Bangladesh is a crucial factor for harboring global peace. Similarly, the EU is also a promoter of peace, democracy and human rights. In 2012, it was awarded with the Noble Peace Prize. The EU was awarded due to its contribution to the peace, human rights, democracy and conciliation in Europe for six decades.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, it is evident that the norms of the EU and Bangladesh is identical. Thus to sustain EU's leadership, strategic cooperation with Bangladesh is necessary.

### SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERESTS

Socio-cultural interests of the EU in Bangladesh constitutes a number of issues ranging from human rights to the preservation of historical sites. For instance, recently EU took part in funding a fascinating project called "Hidden Heritage", which includes an ancient infrastructure of Old Dhaka.<sup>32</sup> The name of the building is "Haturia House" and it is also locally known as "Tiger House".

EU also believe in partnering with the civil society organization (CSO) of Bangladesh. On May 2022, EU and Bangladesh held the Join Commission meeting in Brussels, where the organization put emphasize on the need for vibrant CSOs in Bangladesh.<sup>33</sup> Engaging with CSOs foster sustainable development and an effective democratic system since CSOs represents pluralism. The EU has published a roadmap for collaborating with the CSOs in Bangladesh. In the roadmap EU maintains while it is true that States are primarily responsible for development and democratic governance, CSOs and States can work together to address issues like poverty, growing disparities, social exclusion, and unsustainable development.<sup>34</sup> In that road map four priority areas were set for Bangladesh; Enabling Environment, Civil Society as Development Actor in Its Own Right, Capacity Enhancement and Accountability, and Uphold Human Rights.

Gender equality and women empowerment is one of the major interests of European Union in Bangladesh. The EU has been working in this sector in many countries, thereby helping millions of discriminated girls and women. It is notable to mention that EU has taken a project called "Our lives, our health, our futures: empowering adolescent girls and young women in Chittagong Hill Tracts to live with dignity and without violence" in Bangladesh. The goal of this project is to achieve gender equality by addressing questions of bodily and sexual autonomy at a pivotal stage in the lives of adolescent girls and young women. It focuses on disadvantaged

<sup>31</sup> See <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2012/summary/>

<sup>32</sup> Towheed Feroze (2022, September 18). "EU-Funded Hidden Heritage Cherishes History, Celebrates Old Dhaka!" *Prothomalo*, September 18, 2022. <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/1iigljb0yb>.

<sup>33</sup> *The Daily Star*. 2022. "EU Stresses Need of Vibrant Civil Society, Raises Rights Concerns in Bangladesh", May 21, 2022. <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/diplomacy/news/committed-guarantee-rights-all-bangladesh-tells-eu-joint-commission-meeting-3028076>.

<sup>34</sup> "EU COUNTRY ROADMAP for ENGAGEMENT with CIVIL SOCIETY." n.d. Accessed June 16, 2023. [https://www.ecas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu\\_roadmap\\_for\\_engagment\\_with\\_cs\\_en.pdf](https://www.ecas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_roadmap_for_engagment_with_cs_en.pdf).

indigenous people in a rural area that has experienced a protracted crisis. The 60 months (From 1/1/2019 to 31/12/2023) long project costs EUR 5,560,000, while the EU contributed EUR 5,000,000.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the contribution of the EU in the area of women empowerment and gender equality, which is also the target of the government of Bangladesh, is commendable.

## WAY FORWARD

Since the independence of Bangladesh, the remains one of the major aid provider and development partners of Bangladesh. The relationship between Bangladesh and the EU has changed over time. Previously, the engagement was defined by aid and support whereas now it becomes an economic partnership. In addition, Bangladesh is about to upgrade its status from LDC. Therefore, there is a need for further development and assuming the relationship from different perspectives. The following could be the possible areas for enhancing the relationship between these two actors.

## ACCELERATING ECONOMIC RELATIONS

The EU delegates in May 2014 expressed keen interest in investing in Bangladesh and asked for the removal of institutional impediments to investment, i.e. power, infrastructure and services sectors. But between 2014 and 2023, Bangladesh has progressed a lot in terms of infrastructural development including in the power sector. So, EU investment needs to be accelerated since Bangladesh has become an investment bonanza. Even in 2023, the EU handed over a roadmap containing the framework for investing in the energy sector of Bangladesh. The institution is expected to spend 400 million in the solar and wind sector. This is great news for Bangladesh as it is opting for clean and renewable energy.

In addition, the EU can invest in the Exclusive Economic Zones of Bangladesh, which were specially created for foreign investment. The EU should grasp this opportunity. It is worthy to mention that EU is the largest apparel exporting destination of Bangladesh, thus EU investment in this sector can be beneficial for both parties. Beyond this, the EU has the option to invest in the maritime economy sector of Bangladesh, which is largely unexplored. At the same time, the government of Bangladesh should make such policies so that the impediments to investment could be circumvented. Otherwise, attracting foreign investors will be difficult for Bangladesh in the long run.

## EXTENDING GSP AND COMPREHENSIVE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Bangladesh's economic growth is significantly dependent on the export to the EU. 90 per cent of all apparel shipments of Bangladesh goes to the EU. In the table 3 it is showed that Bangladesh enjoys a substantial surplus in trade balance with the EU. The table also depicted the importance of EU import from Bangladesh. Even the EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley also mentioned the significance of the EU and the EBA framework for Bangladesh. In his words- "EBA played a crucial role for Bangladesh in becoming the European Union's largest trading partner - today, more than half of Bangladesh's exports go to the EU, and the country

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<sup>35</sup> "Our Lives, Our Health, Our Futures: Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Chittagong Hill Tracts to Live with Dignity and without Violence. | EEAS." n.d. [Www.eeas.europa.eu](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/bangladesh/our-lives-our-health-our-futures-empowering-adolescent-girls-and-young-women_en). Accessed June 15, 2023. [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/bangladesh/our-lives-our-health-our-futures-empowering-adolescent-girls-and-young-women\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/bangladesh/our-lives-our-health-our-futures-empowering-adolescent-girls-and-young-women_en).

recently even overtook China as the biggest exporter of garments into Europe.”<sup>36</sup> Thus any kind of disruption in this export-import process will drastically affect the RMG sector and the whole economy of Bangladesh.

In recent time, Bangladesh has developed so much that it will be upgraded from its LDC status. As a result, the EU may suspend the GSP facility for Bangladesh, though it has already extended to the year 2029. Faruque Hassan, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), has urged the European Union to increase the GSP transition time from the existing three years to six years. According to him, the extension will enable Bangladesh to get ready for a smooth transition out of the LDC category and maintain its growth momentum.<sup>37</sup> However, the suspension of GSP facility for Bangladesh will have a drastic impact. EU GSP facilities have a significant impact on Bangladesh’s RMG industries, which will impact economic growth because of their impact on the country’s export growth.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand the proportion of women in the workforce of RMG sector is 85 per cent. Out of 4 million garments worker 3.2 million are women and deprived and poverty stricken. Their participation in this cash generating industry improved their quality of life and social standing. The RMG sector offers women workers more chances of social and economic advancement.<sup>39</sup> Thus to safeguard the 4 million working people of the RMG sector, the EU must extend the GSP arrangement for Bangladesh.

Supporting the RMG sector of Bangladesh by providing GSP facility will signify the role of EU as an ecological and environmental leader. Recently, Bangladesh has made a revolution in building Green Factories. It is notable to mention that nine out of ten world’s top green factories are in Bangladesh. Even Bangladesh is the ground of 171 LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified Green Garment Factories. In addition, 550 more factories are in the queue of getting LEED certification. Another amazing fact is that Bangladesh is running 42 out of 100 world largest green industrial projects.<sup>40</sup> It should be highlighted that the boom in green factory revolution is one of the major outcomes of the boom in RMG sector, which is basically the result of GSP facility. Therefore, it is like a chain reaction. If the RMG sector started to sink due to the suspension of GSP, it will trigger the termination of Green Factory revolution, which is a direct contradiction to the aims and goals of EU as an environmental leader. Thus, the EU need to extend the GSP facility to ameliorate its status as a global environmental leader.

EBA needs to be extended for Bangladesh for more years since millions of women are involved in the RMG sector in Bangladesh. So, the preferential access to market is also linked to the fates of those women and the status of their empowerment. As mentioned earlier, 85 per cent of garment workforce is women, which consists of 3.2 million. It is proven that, working in RMG helps to improve overall socio-economic conditions of women and women empowerment. As it is one of the major norms of the EU to eradicate gender discrimination and enhance women

<sup>36</sup> Charles Whitely. “A Thriving Partnership throughout the Decades”. *The Financial Express*, February 26, 2023. <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/views/a-thriving-partnership-throughout-the-decades-1677344565>.

<sup>37</sup> “BGMEA Chief Requests EU for Extended Transition Period.” *The Financial Express*, May 13, 2023. <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade/bgmea-chief-requests-eu-for-extended-transition-period>.

<sup>38</sup> Md Rashedul Islam, and Kamruddin Nur Maruf, “Impact of EU GSP Facilities on Export Growth of Bangladesh: Especially on Readymade Garments Industry”, in *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, volume 3, issue 9, September, 2014. Accessed June 18, 2023. <https://www.ijstr.org/final-print/sep2014/Impact-Of-Eu-Gsp-Facilities-On-Export-Growth-Of-Bangladesh-Especially-On-Readymade-Garments-Industry.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Afsana Mustafa, M. Serajul Islam, Saiful Islam, and Mahfuja Khatun, “Impact of RMG sector on livelihood change of women employees of Bangladesh”, in *Social and Economic Geography*, volume 2, no.1, 2016, pp. 1-10.

<sup>40</sup> Md Saiful Islam, “Bangladesh’s Success in Building Green Factories: A Silent Revolution in RMG Industry”, *The KRF Center for Bangladesh and Global Affairs (CBGA)*, September, 2022. <https://www.cbgbad.org/2022/09/19/bangladesh-success-in-building-green-factories-a-silent-revolution-in-rmg-industry/amp/>.

empowerment, the EU should not do such thing that impede these developments. So, this article suggests that EU needs to reconsider their EBA policy towards Bangladesh considering the overall socio-economic scenario of the country.

In absence of the GSP facility under the EBA arrangement, FTA (Free Trade Agreement) between the EU and Bangladesh could be a possible alternative. With all the tariffs and tax implemented, Bangladeshi product will lose competitiveness in the EU market. As a result, the amount of export will reduce in the future. In addition, without GSP, the price of Bangladeshi high quality apparel will rise. For this reason, the European market will lack the opportunity to buy high quality goods at a cheaper price. However, the European Delegation to Bangladesh provides no good news in this regard. The EU Ambassador Charles Whitely said that he saw no chance of FTA between Bangladesh and the EU in the near future due to immense complexity and lack of interest in the bloc.<sup>41</sup> The article suggests that the EU authority and the Bangladesh government should engage in dialogue to overcome the complexities of making a free trade Agreement.

### **BROADENING COOPERATION ON TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY ISSUES**

On 2021, Bangladesh and the EU held fourth Diplomatic Consultation. The consultations took place in a productive and friendly atmosphere against the backdrop of the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence and the 100th birthday of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In the meeting, Bangladesh and the EU agreed to set up cooperation in the arena of climate change, connectivity and security as par with the EU Indo-Pacific strategy. Both parties also agreed to attend in regular political dialogues for providing strategic guidance on foreign and security policy cooperation. Bangladesh appreciated the EU support in times of COVID-19 crisis, as the institution provided €334 million for COVID-19 response and recovery.<sup>42</sup> The EU also appreciated the leadership of Bangladesh in the CVF (Climate Vulnerable Forum) and invited Bangladesh to join in Green Partnership with the EU.<sup>43</sup> Bangladesh should think about the invitation of the EU for broadening its partnership.

The first Political Dialogue between Bangladesh and the EU took place in 2022. In the dialogue, the two sides discussed curbing violent extremism and combating terrorism. The government of Bangladesh reiterated its “zero tolerance” policy toward all manifestations and forms of terrorism. Both sides reaffirmed their shared stance on the importance of upholding pertinent human rights and humanitarian values in counterterrorism initiatives. The necessity for greater cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crimes, such as migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and money laundering, was also highlighted by the two parties.<sup>44</sup> However, there were still no concrete actions taken by these two actors cooperatively in these areas. Thus the article suggests the actor should increase their cooperation in these regards.

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<sup>41</sup> “No EU-Bangladesh FTA in Foreseeable Future”. *The Daily Star*, October 28, 2022. <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/no-cu-bangladesh-fta-foreseeable-future-3154221>.

<sup>42</sup> “EU and Bangladesh Hold Fourth Diplomatic Consultations | EEAS Website.” n.d. [Www.eeas.europa.eu. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-and-bangladesh-hold-fourth-diplomatic-consultations\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-and-bangladesh-hold-fourth-diplomatic-consultations_en).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>44</sup> “Bangladesh: First Political Dialogue with EU Takes Place | EEAS.” n.d. [Www.eeas.europa.eu. Accessed June 18, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/bangladesh-first-political-dialogue-eu-takes-place\\_en?s=164](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/bangladesh-first-political-dialogue-eu-takes-place_en?s=164).

## FOOD SECURITY

In terms of food security, EU is one of the major partners of Bangladesh since its birth in 1971. Even the relationship between Bangladesh and the EU initially commenced with disbursing food aid to Bangladesh in 1973, when a famine like situation was created in the country. Bangladesh ranked among the top four countries to receive food aid from the EU between 1989 and 1994.<sup>45</sup> From endorsing aid, EU contributed to the food security of Bangladesh.

For instance, the EU took a three years' project for the development of ultra-poor people who were suffering from malnutrition due to excessive food price. The project area comprises of four districts; Rangpur, Kurigram, Mymensingh and Netrokona. The EU contributed €2 million and 7200 households, 23,225 people, were the beneficiaries of the project.<sup>46</sup> A similar project was partially funded by the EU in 2006. This time it was on shrimp production and the EU sponsored the 66 per cent of total budget. The four years long project was aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of Bangladeshi Shrimp sector.<sup>47</sup> Due to this project, 0.19 million Bangladeshi shrimp farmers along with 3000 depot workers and 300 female workers was benefited.

There are also examples of collaborative actions of EU with other organization to enhance food security in Bangladesh. After the rampage of disastrous SIDR and AILA, the EU and FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) had jointly taken FAO-EU Food Facility project. The aim of the project was to improve food security and support the lives and livelihoods of the marginalized farmers in the impoverished coastal area by helping the landless, marginal, and small farmers in the severely SIDR and AILA impacted 12 districts of South Western sections of the country.<sup>48</sup>

In the first political dialogue with the EU in 2022, the Bangladeshi side reiterated its interest in expanding cooperation in food production, storage, and processing with the respective EU member states.<sup>49</sup> It is clear that Bangladesh wants to broaden its relationship with the EU in the food security sector.

## STRENGTHENING BLUE ECONOMY COOPERATION

Bangladesh collaborated with the European Union in a technical project titled EU-BGD Joint Collaboration on Blue Economy (BE). The project was for two years between August 2016 and July 2018. Maritime Affairs Unit under the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry coordinated the project. The aim of the project was to formulate a national vision for Blue Economy projects in Bangladesh. On 30 June 2018, the Maritime Affairs Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Union Delegation in Bangladesh jointly organized the first Blue Economy National Coordination Workshop under the EU-BGD Joint Collaboration on Blue Economy.<sup>50</sup> Under the project, Bangladesh has identified key Blue Economy sectors which need to be explored and harnessed.

Notably, Kenya is implementing a landmark project for advancing blue economy agenda with EU partnership. The project consists of three main components: Go Blue Growth, Go Blue Environment and Spatial Planning and Go Blue Security. The timeline of the project is January 2021-

<sup>45</sup> Edward J Clay, Sanjay Dhiri, and Charlotte Benson. *Joint evaluation of European Union programme food aid*. Overseas Development Institute, 1996.

<sup>46</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/food-security-strengthening-agricultural-capacities-ultra-poor-bangladesh>

<sup>47</sup> "Support to Boost the Quality of Shrimp Production in Bangladesh for the EU Market". n.d. European Commission.

<sup>48</sup> "FAO-EU Food Facility – SDA Bangladesh." n.d. Accessed June 18, 2023. <https://www.sdabangladesh.org/fao-eu-food-facility/>.

<sup>49</sup> "Ministry of Foreign Affairs." n.d. [www.mofa.gov.bd](http://www.mofa.gov.bd). Accessed June 18, 2023. <http://www.mofa.gov.bd/site/page/7f568636-3f71-4668-80bc-104a69a32c90>.

<sup>50</sup> Pierre Failler, M. G. Hussain, Ahmed Al Karim, and Md Ashraf Alam, "Blue Economy National Coordination Workshop, jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh and the European Union Delegation in Bangladesh", September, 2018, 36 p.



2024, with an estimated budget EUR 24 750 000 million.<sup>51</sup> The specific objectives of the project are blue economy development with a focus on employment opportunities, ensuring healthy ocean through proper management and empowering the local communities through strengthening their capacity and ensuring maritime security through enhancing maritime governance and strengthening maritime law enforcement agencies. According to the UNEP website, the project aims ‘to foster a “sustainable blue economy” in six coastal counties and generate more than 3,000 jobs for youth and women alone’.<sup>52</sup> Bangladesh’s Blue Economy projects also require such massive funding from the EU.

### PROMOTING PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONNECTIONS

The world has now become a global village. It is not surprising to see a Bangladeshi people anywhere in the world. It is well-known that globalization enhanced migration. Nowadays, a lot of Bangladeshi people live in European countries. According to the 2020 International Migrant Stock compiled by UNDESA, a total of 456,516 citizens of Bangladesh lived in Europe in 2020. Males made up 60 per cent of the total migrants, while females made up 40 per cent.<sup>53</sup> Table 4.1 to 4.4 depicted the overall number of Bangladeshi migrants in the European countries in 2020.

**Table: 4.1<sup>54</sup>**

| Region          | Country        | Total   | Male    | Female  |
|-----------------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Northern Europe | United Kingdom | 241.799 | 123.787 | 118.012 |
|                 | Sweden         | 10.263  | 5.989   | 4.274   |
|                 | Ireland        | 3.706   | 2.618   | 1.088   |
|                 | Finland        | 2.983   | 1.956   | 1.027   |
|                 | Norway         | 1.331   | 715     | 616     |
|                 | Denmark        | 1.919   | 1.074   | 845     |
|                 | Estonia        | 263     | 212     | 51      |
|                 | Lithuania      | 44      | 41      | 3       |
|                 | Latvia         | 15      | 11      | 4       |
|                 | Iceland        | 12      | 7       | 5       |

**Table: 4.2<sup>55</sup>**

| Region          | Country  | Total   | Male    | Female |
|-----------------|----------|---------|---------|--------|
| Southern Europe | Italy    | 135.468 | 102.065 | 33.403 |
|                 | Spain    | 14.594  | 10.144  | 4.450  |
|                 | Greece   | 2.851   | 1.441   | 1.410  |
|                 | Portugal | 1.684   | 1.244   | 440    |
|                 | Malta    | 22      | 13      | 9      |
|                 | Slovenia | 20      | 19      | 1      |

<sup>51</sup> See <http://www.goblue.co.ke/>

<sup>52</sup> UNEP, “New programme to support Kenya’s coast and blue economy”, March 30, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/new-programme-support-kenyas-coast-and-blue-economy>

<sup>53</sup> See <https://bangladesh.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11006/files/documents/bangladeshi-migrants-in-europe-2021.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Sources of Table 4.1 to 4.4: <https://bangladesh.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11006/files/documents/bangladeshi-migrants-in-europe-2021.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> Sources of Table 4.1 to 4.4: <https://bangladesh.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11006/files/documents/bangladeshi-migrants-in-europe-2021.pdf>

**Table: 4.3<sup>56</sup>**

| Region         | Country            | Total | Male | Female |
|----------------|--------------------|-------|------|--------|
| Eastern Europe | The Czech Republic | 718   | 666  | 52     |
|                | Bulgaria           | 539   | 288  | 251    |
|                | Russia             | 469   | 407  | 62     |
|                | Hungary            | 244   | 196  | 48     |
|                | Romania            | 161   | 153  | 8      |
|                | Poland             | 128   | 112  | 16     |
|                | Slovakia           | 21    | 18   | 3      |

**Table: 4.4<sup>57</sup>**

| Region         | Country         | Total  | Male  | Female |
|----------------|-----------------|--------|-------|--------|
| Western Europe | Germany         | 13.612 | 9.723 | 3.889  |
|                | France          | 12.878 | 6.296 | 6.582  |
|                | Austria         | 3.326  | 2.158 | 1.168  |
|                | Switzerland     | 2.761  | 1.682 | 1.079  |
|                | Belgium         | 2.694  | 1.597 | 1.097  |
|                | The Netherlands | 1.843  | 860   | 983    |
|                | Luxembourg      | 142    | 92    | 50     |
|                | Liechtenstein   | 6      | 4     | 2      |

It is evident from the tables that a significant number of Bangladeshi people migrated to Sweden, Germany, France, Italy and Spain. The highest number of people migrated to Italy in 2020, which amounted to 135,468, whereas, the other countries harbored a low number of migrants. However, people to people cooperation is needed to enhance human security and development. Sometimes people are discouraged to migrate in such places where people to people cooperation is too low, or there is a negative sentiment about the migrants. It is a well-known fact that migrants and diasporas play a crucial role in the advancement of the host country and emigrating country as well.

Therefore, this article suggests that the EU and the government should focus in this area. They need to find out if there is a lack of people to people cooperation in other countries. To reap out the benefit of migrants' economy Bangladesh needs to emphasize on sending skilled labor to the EU countries.

<sup>56</sup> Sources of Table 4.1 to 4.4: <https://bangladesh.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11006/files/documents/bangladeshi-migrants-in-europe-2021.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Sources of Table 4.1 to 4.4: <https://bangladesh.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11006/files/documents/bangladeshi-migrants-in-europe-2021.pdf>

## TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

At present, Bangladesh is no longer a poor country. In fact, Bangladesh is going through a transition phase to change its status from LDC. Therefore, it is one of the prime needs of Bangladesh to achieve self-dependency. To attain self-dependency in the domain of technology and knowledge is not a matter of days, and it takes a rather long time. Therefore, Bangladesh needs help from its partner countries and institutions. Currently, one of the prime focus of Bangladesh government is the renewable energy sector. The government of Bangladesh seeks technology transfer through EU collaboration.<sup>58</sup> The EU is also eager to invest in the wind and solar energy sector. As a result of this collaboration, Bangladesh will garner sufficient experience and knowledge in this sector.

In addition, Bangladesh is doing a great job in producing generic medicine. This could be another area of cooperation with the EU in terms of knowledge sharing and technology transfer. It is noteworthy to mention that Bangladesh is the inventor of the oral saline, which is saving millions of lives. Therefore, a substantial investment and sharing of technology in this sector can enhance the capability and capacity of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh also lacks the capacity to make apparel machineries as well as agricultural machineries, though these two sectors are crucial for the overall economy of Bangladesh. As a development partner of Bangladesh, the EU should support Bangladesh to attain its self-dependency in these sectors.

## COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL

The EU and Bangladesh cooperate in higher education level through the Erasmus Mundus Scholarship programme. Under this programme any student, teacher, researcher, or job holder with sufficient academic background can pursue higher study in the European Union countries. The amazing fact is that a person is entitled to complete his or her study from three different EU countries. Therefore, applicants get the rare opportunity of learning from a wide range of professors and different environments. They get to know different cultures and norms as well. The scholarship offers 193 different programmes from different fields, ranging from Engineering and pure Sciences to Arts and Social Sciences.<sup>59</sup>

For the year 2022-23, 151 Bangladeshi students are awarded the prestigious Erasmus+ Scholarship, and Bangladesh ranked third in terms of the number of scholarship awarded worldwide.<sup>60</sup> These scholars will enhance Bangladesh and the EU countries academically and by providing their learned skills in the job sectors. Thus they will contribute to the economy of Bangladesh and the world as well. The article suggests that the government of Bangladesh pursue the EU to increase the number of scholarships awarded for Bangladesh.

In addition, scholarly engagement can also be possible between Bangladesh and EU countries. By exchanging teachers and researchers both parties can be benefitted. Bangladesh needs knowledge on technology whereas, as a climate resilient nation, Bangladesh can provide sufficient knowledge and lessons on how to fight natural calamities.

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<sup>58</sup> “Bangladesh Seeks Technology Transfer, Investment through European Collaboration”. *The Financial Express*, October 18, 2021. Accessed June 18, 2023. <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/bangladesh-seeks-technology-transfer-investment-through-european-collaboration-1634475410>.

<sup>59</sup> See [https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/scholarships/erasmus-mundus-catalogue\\_en](https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/scholarships/erasmus-mundus-catalogue_en)

<sup>60</sup> “151 Bangladeshi Students Get Erasmus+ Scholarships for 2022-23.” *Prothomalo*, August 11, 2022. <https://en.prothomalo.com/youth/education/g3iosbujct#:~:text=151%20Bangladeshi%20students%20get%20Erasmus%2B%20scholarships%20for%202022%2D23>.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

There is no doubt that the EU has gained a leadership position in the global environmental protection. Decisions on global environment depends on what happens in the EU, whether it be the biodiversity, chemical or climate change.<sup>61</sup> Thus the EU holds a greater responsibility in maintaining the environment to sustain its leadership position in this area of climate change.

The EU has been supporting Bangladesh to mitigate climate change impacts. In 2017, the EU granted 8 million Euro to support sustainable environment in Bangladesh. The name of the project was Local Government Initiative on the Climate Change (LoGIC), which aimed at helping local governments to enhance adaptation mechanism, and making communities more resilient to the climate change impacts.<sup>62</sup> In addition, on February 2022, the EU declared to grant Euro 18 million to invest in climate-smart infrastructures in Bangladesh along with five other South-Asian countries. Then name of the five years long project is “Accelerating Climate-Smart and Inclusive Infrastructure in South Asia (ACSIIS)” and the project would be implemented by IFC, a global development institution.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the EU allocated €600,000 to mitigate climate change in Bangladesh at the end of 2022.<sup>64</sup> The project is expected to develop knowledge and access to adequate finance to address the climate change impacts. Two NGOs (Non-Governmental Organization) Uttaran, and Education and Development Foundation (Educo) were to implement the project.

Recently, in the first political dialogue between the EU and Bangladesh, both parties agreed to initiate EU-Bangladesh climate dialogue as soon as possible. In addition, both actors underscored the importance of achieving the commitment of COP27 by putting special attention to climate change adaptation and mitigation. In that meeting, Bangladesh appreciated the EU’s commitment towards environmental issues, while the EU welcomed the Bangladesh’s decision to join Global Methane Pledge.<sup>65</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The relationship between the EU and Bangladesh has completed its 50 years in 2023. During this long tenure, EU remains one of the major aid and development partner of Bangladesh. When the EU first disbursed food aid to Bangladesh, it was a newly born country with thousands of problem areas ranging from food to infrastructure and health to human security. The EU has seen the development process of Bangladesh throughout the years and cooperated in the process. However, Bangladesh has changed itself and started to upgrade itself from a LDC. Therefore, this article seeks to understand the relationship between Bangladesh and the EU, and the further areas of cooperation in the future given the dynamic condition of Bangladesh. In addition, the article argues that the relationship between the two actors has changed from “Aid Dependency” to economic partnership.

First, Bangladesh was a major aid receiver of the EU. The aid receiving journey from the EU initiated in 1973, while the formal relation between the two commenced in 1976. In the period 1989 to 1994, Bangladesh ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among the top aid receivers of the EU. Thus the relationship is defined by aid dependency.

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<sup>61</sup> Jacques Le Cacheux and, Eloi Laurent. “The EU as a global ecological leader.” in *Report on the State of the European Union: Is Europe Sustainable?* London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 125-138.

<sup>62</sup> See [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/19969\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/19969_en)

<sup>63</sup> “EU to Make \$21m Climate-Smart Investment in Bangladesh, South Asia.” *The Daily Star*, February 10, 2022. <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/industries/investments/news/eu-make-21m-climate-smart-investment-bangladesh-south-asia-2958816>.

<sup>64</sup> “EU Grants Bangladesh €600,000 to Mitigate Climate Change”. *Bdnews24*, October 26, 2022. <https://bdnews24.com/environment/7ay4u2p2i>

<sup>65</sup> See [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/bangladesh-first-political-dialogue-eu-takes-place\\_en?s=164](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/bangladesh-first-political-dialogue-eu-takes-place_en?s=164)

Second, the boom in the RMG sector of Bangladesh brought a major change in the dimension of EU-Bangladesh relationship. Due to the GSP facility under the EBA arrangement, Bangladeshi RMG products got an advantage in the European markets. Notably, 58 per cent of all exports of Bangladesh goes to the EU market and 64 per cent of RMG also follow suit. In addition, millions of women work in the RMG sectors of Bangladesh and researches have proven that the RMG sector has a positive impact on the socio-economic development and women empowerment of the Bangladeshi women. However, as Bangladesh is on the verge of graduation from the LDC, the EU wants to suspend the GSP facility. Experts believe that it will have a negative impact on the women. Thus, the article suggests EU should reconsider its decision about the GSP facility.

Third, the EU has an immense geo-strategic and socio-cultural interest in Bangladesh. Bangladesh and the EU both share common Indo-Pacific view based on all inclusive cooperation and peace. Therefore, it is argued in the article that EU should enhance cooperation with Bangladesh to attain its aims in the Indo-Pacific region. On the other hand, EU has become an ecological leader and Bangladesh is a climate vulnerable country. Thus helping Bangladesh in climate adaptation and mitigation will help to sustain EU's global leadership role.

Fourth, as argued in the article that the relationship between the EU and Bangladesh has changed to economic partnership, there is a need for furthering cooperation in several areas. The article suggests the EU to enhance economic cooperation with Bangladesh by extending GSP facility or creating a free trade agreement. Though the EU delegates do not see any chance of creating a FTA with Bangladesh due to complexity and lack of interest in the bloc, the article suggests the government of Bangladesh to negotiate in this regard.

Fifth, the article focuses on food security cooperation. It is seen that the EU remains a major partner in developing food security in Bangladesh. The article argues that more cooperation is needed in the processing and storing sector.

Sixth, the study discusses possible cooperation in the technology and knowledge sharing sector. The EU is already eager to invest in the renewable energy sector in Bangladesh. Its main focuses are wind and solar energy. However, the article argues that cooperation is also needed in the area of medicine production and agricultural machineries sector. The article also suggests to enhance the number of Erasmus Mundus Scholarships and increase the teacher and student exchange programmes between the EU countries and Bangladesh.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Md. Shariful Islam, PhD is an Associate Professor in International Relations at the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. Islam is also an adjunct Research Fellow at the KRF Center for Bangladesh and Global Affairs, Dhaka. Some of his latest publications include, *Blue Economy Diplomacy for Bangladesh: Contexts, Challenges and Opportunities* (2023, AHDPH and CBGA, Dhaka), *Fifty Years of Bangladesh-India Relations: Issues, Challenges and Possibilities* (2021, Pentagon Press, New Delhi); *COVID-19 Global Pandemic and Aspects of Human Security in South Asia: Implications and Way Forward* (2020, Pentagon Press, New Delhi, co-authored with Delwar Hossain); 'Understanding Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: Principles, Priorities and Diplomatic Strategies', BISS Papers, No. 30, November, 2021. Islam pursued Honours and Masters Degree in International Relations at the University of Dhaka. Mr. Islam also holds a Masters and a Doctoral Degree in International Relations from South Asian University, New Delhi. His research interests include Foreign Policy of Bangladesh, Maritime Affairs, Blue Economy Diplomacy and Economic Diplomacy. E-mail: shariful\_ruir@ru.ac.bd



## EU'S Role in its Eastern Neighborhood Transformation

DR. CRISTINA MORARI<sup>1</sup>

FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES,  
MOLDOVA STATE UNIVERSITY, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Abstract:** Eastern neighborhood of EU presents a significant interest for research due to geopolitical, political, economic, and social implications. Since 2009 Eastern Partnership program has been the framework that regulated the EU policies towards the states of this region. Nowadays, in the context of current evolutions, security issues and EU membership prospect for Ukraine and Moldova, it is necessary to analyze the EU role in the region.

**Key words:** EU Eastern neighborhood, Eastern Partnership, EU Eastern neighborhood transformation, EU priorities.

The European Union is a multi-level actor whose role in international relations system is not contested. Its actorness is defined by its uniqueness, individuality, and independence. It has important categories of resources, tools, and structural possibilities to act on global arena, to use the network of diplomatic missions, as well as the right to conduct negotiations and conclude agreements. The European Union can produce an impact on other countries through its position on certain issues, development programs, bilateral agreements etc. Thus, the European Union expands its influence beyond its frontiers, in order to ensure the stability, prosperity, democratic transformation and development of the neighboring countries.

According to the European Neighborhood Policy that was launched in 2004, the EU neighboring countries include several categories of states: Southern Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Autonomy, Syria, Tunisia), Western Newly Independent States (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus) and South Caucasus states (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan), that initially were left out of European Neighborhood Policy considering their geographical location<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the European Union has defined its 'ring of friends' with whom it develops close cooperation in order to ensure a prosperous and friendly neighborhood.<sup>3</sup> The European Neighborhood Policy does not imply the prospect of EU membership. Instead, it proposes a privileged relationship to the neighbors by sustaining economic integration, providing programs of political and economic reforms and promoting administrative reform and institution-building, interregional dialogue and investment through the Neighborhood Investment Platform<sup>4</sup> for diverse sectors such as transport, energy, infrastructure, social development etc. However, analyzing the advantages this policy offers, it can be noticed that many are designed mostly in accordance with eastern neighbors' necessities. Indeed, for the Southern Mediterranean states, the implementation of some parts of the EU norms and standards, in order to get access to the European single market, are more difficult. On the other hand, the Eastern neighboring countries are European democratic states that are focused on a closer relationship with the European Union and are more likely to adapt to European requirements. Moreover, for some Eastern neighboring countries the unavailability of the

<sup>1</sup> **Cristina MORARI**, PhD in Political Sciences, lecturer at the International Relations Department, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of International Relations, Political and Administrative Sciences, Moldova State University. *Research interests include:* European Studies, EU- Moldova cooperation, International Relations. Over 30 articles in journals, proceedings of international conferences or collective volumes. E-mail: cristina.morari@usm.md

<sup>2</sup> European Neighborhood Policy Strategy Paper, Accessed on 20.04.2023 [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-01/2004\\_communication\\_from\\_the\\_commission\\_-\\_european\\_neighbourhood\\_policy\\_-\\_strategy\\_paper.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-01/2004_communication_from_the_commission_-_european_neighbourhood_policy_-_strategy_paper.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Wider Europe — Neighborhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbors, Accessed on 20.04.2023 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52003DC0104>

<sup>4</sup> Neighborhood-wide Cooperation, Accessed on 20.04.2023 [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/neighbourhood-wide-cooperation\\_ro](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/neighbourhood-wide-cooperation_ro)

EU membership prospect was not absolute and a long term perspective in this respect has been admitted.

Therefore, the European Union develops its relations with neighbors on two main directions: the Southern neighborhood region and the Eastern neighborhood region. For the Eastern neighborhood region (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan), in 2009, the Eastern Partnership program was launched, with a strong political call for reforms, dialogue and promotion of democratic principles, in order to foster political association and a deeper economic integration with the European Union. It introduced a new type of Association Agreements with a focus on the establishment of deep and comprehensive free trade areas and admitted as objectives: the development of administrative capacity and legislation approximation for partner states; conclusion of mobility and security pacts in the interest of facilitating mobility of citizens of partner states through visa liberalization and fight against corruption, organized crime and illegal migration; enhancement of energy security and assurance of convergence towards EU policies.<sup>5</sup> This initiative underlines a different EU approach towards the Eastern neighboring countries, as the relationship with these states can be deepened within the neighborhood policy; there can be traced the further directions of cooperation ahead and common future perspectives can be developed, especially by recognizing the European identity of the states.

Within the following key documents of the Eastern Partnership, the high importance of the Eastern Partnership is reconfirmed as a specific dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy and the necessity to promote further cooperation at all levels is highlighted and, in particular, in the fields of strengthening institutions and good governance, economic development and market opportunities, energy security, sustainability and competitiveness, mobility and people to people contacts, identifying, thus, 20 key areas for tangible results for 2020.<sup>6</sup> Beyond 2020, Eastern Partnership objectives were traced according to the *Joint Communication: Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all*<sup>7</sup>, as follows: a) to achieve resilient, sustainable and integrated economies (by developing trade and economic integration, investment and accession to finance, improving interconnectivity in transport and energy sectors, investing in people, research and innovation); b) to build accountable institutions, the rule of law and security (by judicial reforms, fighting against corruption and organized crime, strengthening security and developing cyber resilience); c) to assure environmental and climate resilience (by diversifying renewable energy resources, transition to circular economy, sustainable solutions for environment challenges); d) to promote resilient digital transformation (by developing digital infrastructure and consolidating the eGovernance in the partner states etc.); e) to develop resilient, fair and inclusive societies (by reforming public administration, increasing the involvement and role of civic society and youth, ensuring access to fact based information and fostering contacts through mobility partnerships)<sup>8</sup>. The new agenda for Eastern Partnership, which presents main actions that would be undertaken in order to efficiently implement the previously highlighted objectives, was

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<sup>5</sup> Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague, 7 May 2009, Accessed on 21.04.2023 [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit (Riga, 21-22 May 2015), Accessed on 21.04.2023 [https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/eastern/docs/riga-declaration-220515-final\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/eastern/docs/riga-declaration-220515-final_en.pdf); Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit (Brussels, 24 November 2017), Accessed on 20.04.2023 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31758/final-statement-st14821en17.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all, Brussels, 18.3.2020, Accessed on 22.04.2023 [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/1\\_en\\_act\\_part1\\_v6.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/1_en_act_part1_v6.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all, Brussels, 18.3.2020, Accessed on 22.04.2023 [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/1\\_en\\_act\\_part1\\_v6.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/1_en_act_part1_v6.pdf), Mihaela Daciana Natea, Mihai Daniel Aniței, Reshaping European and national security in a post COVID – 19 context, Acta Marisiensis, Seria Oeconomica 2019, vol II ,pp. 49-64

announced by Joint Staff Working Document adopted in 2021 at Brussels and is based on two pillars: investment and governance.<sup>9</sup> As priorities for 2025, important investments are underlined in ten priority directions as support for 500000 small and medium enterprises; construction or modernization of 3000km of priority roads and railways in accord with EU standards; elimination of hybrid and cyber-related threats; reduction of energy consumption by at least 20% in 250,000 households; improved access to safe water services; development of rule of law; support for civil society and independent media; mobility opportunities for 70,000 students, researchers and workers, sustainable actions for post Covid social and economic recovery etc.<sup>10</sup>

Hence, the implementation of all Eastern Partnership initiatives for over fourteen years, reflects the readiness of the European Union to support the states from its Eastern neighborhood to develop closer cooperation with it. As Mihaela Natea notes, each of the Eastern Partnership countries had their own evolution,<sup>11</sup> however the European Union has an impact on every state. Undeniably, the cooperation within neighborhood policy has brought some impressive results. As Sergiu Buscaneanu states in his work, reflecting on the socialization dimension of neighborhood policy: "...in the Eastern neighborhood, only Moldova and Ukraine managed to associate themselves to the Horizon 2020 (former FP7) research program in 2012 and 2015; Moldova became part to COSME in 2014; and Georgia and Moldova received associated status to Creative Europe in 2015. In addition to these, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan were invited to take part in the Mobility Partnership initiative.... Moldova and Ukraine also became members of the Energy Community in 2010 and 2011."<sup>12</sup> Also, the trade between the European Union and its Eastern partners has doubled. The EU has become the largest or main trading partner and the biggest export market for partner states, thus contributing to their better integration into the global trade chains, as well as for their gradual integration into the EU' internal market. Also, the EaP countries have benefited from EU funds. As it is presented in the *Joint Communication of EU on Eastern Partnership deliverables in 2020*, a number of 125,000 small and medium enterprises directly benefited from EU funding that permitted either to create or sustain more than 250,000 jobs.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, EU support is offered with certain expectations, that these states will assume and realize their commitments in their turn. In this context, a very good statement is made by Gabriela Carmen Pascariu and Gilles Rouet, who consider that the European Union approach to Eastern neighboring countries is based on assumption that these states will adopt the European model of development without hesitation. In this case, the European Union can spread its norms, rules and values, realizing its role of the transformative power in the region<sup>14</sup>. Indeed, besides the economic dimension, the EU policy towards its Eastern neighborhood implies important reforms at domestic level. The past decade has clearly shown that if in the economic domain all the countries are interested, due to the received financial benefits, in the case of the processes of democratization and

<sup>9</sup> Joint Staff Working Document: Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 Eastern Partnership priorities, Brussels, 2.7.2021, Accessed on 22.04.2023 [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/swd\\_2021\\_186\\_f1\\_joint\\_staff\\_working\\_paper\\_en\\_v2\\_p1\\_1356457\\_0.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/swd_2021_186_f1_joint_staff_working_paper_en_v2_p1_1356457_0.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem

<sup>11</sup> Mihaela Daciana Natea, Proiecte politice ale UE in Estul Europei. Impactul asupra proprietății intelectuale. In: Studia Universitatis Petru Maior. Series Oeconomica, 2018, p. 42, Natea Mihaela Daciana, Disinformation crossing borders. The Multilayered Disinformation Concerning the War in Ukraine, L'Harmattan, Paris France, 2022

<sup>12</sup> Sergiu Buscaneanu, Regime Dynamics in EU's Eastern Neighborhood EU Democracy Promotion, International Influences, and Domestic Contexts, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p102

<sup>13</sup> Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all, Brussels, 18.3.2020, Accessed on 22.04.2023 [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/1\\_en\\_act\\_part1\\_v6.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/1_en_act_part1_v6.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Gabriela Carmen Pascariu, Gilles Rouet, Introduction: Resilience and the Eastern Partnership—

What Relevance for Policies? In: Resilience and the EU's Eastern Neighborhood Countries. From Theoretical concepts to a Normative Agenda. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, p.6

Europeanization of the states – the best guarantor is the real perspective of the EU membership. The European Union has many ways to influence and shape policies and institutions specifically created in candidate and potential candidate states. In this respect, the conditionality is one of the main mechanisms. Being a broad concept, in the specialty literature, conditionality is usually defined as: “a set of rules or norms of conduct to be adopted by a state seeking EU membership (the institutionalist approach) or as a set of material incentives that serves to adjust the cost-benefit calculations of states in the bargaining and negotiation process that precedes accession, thereby inducing the adoption of EU rules and standards (the rationalist approach)”<sup>15</sup>. Conditionality does not imply just the accomplishment of the Copenhagen criteria. It has a dynamic character and can be adjusted to a certain country and certain circumstances. EU conditionality can be identified within the agreements that the Union conclude with its neighbors, where the conditions that should be met are listed (for example observance of human rights, promotion of good governance, of functional democracy and the rule of law) in order to achieve financial assistance for development. The same applies to the Eastern Partnership conditionality. The main rewards within this framework were visa liberalization, Association agreements, and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas for the six member states.

The practice has proven that transformation of the Eastern neighborhood of the European Union under the conditionality and Europeanization mechanisms develops differently, based on the countries' interests in the European integration process. Out of the six state members of the Eastern Partnership, Moldova was the first country in the region to obtain visa liberalization in 2014, followed by Ukraine and Georgia in 2017. Then, Association agreements with European Union were signed by these three countries in 2014. That denotes a direct statement towards the European choice of the states.

The situation of the other three states is different. Armenia and the European Union have a good cooperation, especially after they have signed the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2017, which entered fully into force on 1 March 2021.<sup>16</sup> Visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Armenia entered into force in January 2014<sup>17</sup> and it has to function in order to gain full visa liberalization. In its turn, relationship between the European Union and Azerbaijan are still based on the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that is in force since 1999<sup>18</sup>. Visa facilitation also entered into force in 2014. The discussions launched in 2017, on a new agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan with the aim of broadening the cooperation between the two parties, do not have any finality at the moment. Generally, in the EU relationships with Armenia and Azerbaijan there can be traced some directions of development. A challenge is the growing conflict potential in the region. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has not been resolved yet. The presence of frozen conflicts in the region hinders the development of regional integrationist programs and the socio-economic development of the countries from region. The EU cannot efficiently influence the conflict resolution. However, it can exert influence on the countries through the benefits of the cooperation it proposes and by offering a place within the community of the European states. Through the democratization of neighboring countries, the EU is looking to reduce the conflict potential. In Armenia, who is following the multi-vector principle in its foreign policy and has joined the treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015, the government is oriented

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<sup>15</sup> Joel T. Schelton, *Conditionality and the Ambitions of Governance Social Transformation in Southeastern Europe*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p.2

<sup>16</sup> EU relations with Armenia, Accessed on 25.04.2023 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/armenia/>

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem

<sup>18</sup> EU relations with Azerbaijan, Accessed on 25.04.2023 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/azerbaijan/>

to comply with basic EU requirements, recognizing the importance of cooperation with the EU from a pragmatic point of view, as well as denoting its commitment to European values. Armenia follows the EU political model which implies a broad modernization agenda to ensure transparency of state institutions regulation, independence of justice, stability of the electoral system, and support for small and medium-sized business. The Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement allowed the creation of a civil society platform, consisting of Armenian and European non-governmental organizations. Despite the lack of an agreement on free trade area between Armenia and the EU, in the context of partnership between the parties, favorable conditions for trade activities are created, for both, Armenian and foreign companies. In Azerbaijan, mostly those EU requirements are implemented that better answer to the country's needs and there can be noticed a tendency of criticism towards the EU foreign policy's principles and values. In its turn, the EU often comes with a negative evaluation of reform process and political situation in the country. For example, in 2018 the European Union, in its recommendations on the EU-Azerbaijan partnership priorities, tried again to draw attention on the necessity of Azerbaijan to conduct democratic reforms, to fight against corruption, to develop the dialogue with civil society and specifically indicated the importance of Azerbaijan's entering the World Trade Organization<sup>19</sup>.

In the case of Belarus, it has suspended its participation in the Eastern Partnership in 2021<sup>20</sup>, as a consequence of the EU policy of sanctions in response to the developments in this country. During the cooperation within the Eastern Partnership platform, the European Union was constantly concerned about human rights issues and the state of law in Belarus, but some positive changes were started as, for example, the release of all the remaining political prisoners in 2015, Belarus' growing openness to dialogue and cooperation with the OSCE/ODIHR, initiation of talks regarding the possibility to sign a Mobility Partnership in the field of migration policy with Belarus in 2016, as well as of a visa facilitation agreement<sup>21</sup>. After the Belarusian presidential election in 2020, were declared neither free nor fair by the EU Council and constant human rights violations, EU decided to recalibrate its financial assistance and shift it from central authorities to civil society, imposing since then restrictive measures on Belarus<sup>22</sup>. After the large-scale military invasion of Russia against Ukraine in 2022, against Belarusian authorities, as collaborators, tough sanctions were introduced. Anyway, the European Union does not want Belarus to get isolated, thus, in line with the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020, it focuses on intensifying cooperation with non-state stakeholders, including notably civil society, independent media and youth from Belarus and even initiated a special measure for 2022, the 'EU4Belarus: Supporting societal resilience and human capital development' having as main objective the reinforcement of the resilience and capacity of Belarusian society to achieve democratic changes in Belarus.<sup>23</sup> As result, as shown in the annual survey on

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<sup>19</sup> Recommendation No 1/2018 of the EU-Azerbaijan cooperation Council of 28 September 2018 on the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities [2018/1598], Official Journal of the European Union, 2018, Accessed on 26.04.2023 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2018:265:0018:0022:EN:PDF>

<sup>20</sup> EU relations with Belarus, Accessed on 26.04.2023 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/belarus/>

<sup>21</sup> Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016. Charting Progress in European Integration, Democratic Reforms, and Sustainable Development, Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, 2017, p.11

<sup>22</sup> The European Union and Belarus, Accessed on 26.04.2023 [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/belarus/european-union-and-belarus\\_en?s=218](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/belarus/european-union-and-belarus_en?s=218)

<sup>23</sup> European Commission implementing decision of 5.12.2022 on the financing of the special measure in favour of the people of Belarus for 2022, Brussels, 5.12.2022, Accessed on 26.04.2023 [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/C\\_2022\\_8721\\_1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v2.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/C_2022_8721_1_EN_ACT_part1_v2.pdf)

Belarus perception of the EU, which was conducted in June-July 2022, more Belarusians trust the EU (38%) than not (31%) and an average of 33% of Belarusians have a positive image of the EU<sup>24</sup>.

Meanwhile, a major step was made by Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova by applying for EU membership. Unfortunately, this evolution took place in the conditions of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In other circumstances, probably, it would have taken longer to achieve this objective. However, geopolitical and regional security conditions have facilitated the process. The candidate status was granted to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova on the 23 June 2022. Georgia was granted potential candidate status. The decision on Georgia was based on the worsening, since 2021, of the situation in the field of justice and human rights. EU criticized the appointment for life of Supreme Court judges, the utter imbalance in favor of the ruling party, problems with the electoral process. The European Commission came with a range of priorities, the accomplishment of which will be evaluated in the fall of 2023 and the issue of EU membership will be discussed accordingly. The priorities are mostly general, and it will be difficult for Georgia to implement them and for the European Union to evaluate them. Among these priorities the following are mentioned: to address the issue of political polarization; to guarantee the full functioning of all state institutions and further improve the electoral framework, to address all shortcomings identified by OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe/Venice Commission in these processes; to realize judicial reform; to strengthen the fight against corruption and organized crime; to implement the commitment to de-oligarchisation, to protect human rights of vulnerable groups etc.<sup>25</sup>

The level of implementation of the Association Agreements and the capacity of state institutions to assure the rule of law and democratic principles were evaluated by the European Union as solid in the case of Ukraine and Moldova. Both countries are working on the implementation of the European Commission's recommended steps (nine for the Republic of Moldova and seven for Ukraine) in order to be able to open accession negotiations in the fall of 2023. In many aspects, the recommended steps tend to be similar, some are similar to those identified for Georgia, but in each case the main domains are reflected, in which countries have to improve their progress, taking into consideration the national specifics, circumstances and the capacity of the states to assume and fulfill commitments. So, Ukraine should implement such recommendations as: a new selection procedure for judges of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine; new composition for the High Council of Justice; fight against corruption and effective work of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine; reform of the entire law enforcement sector and implementation of the Anti-Oligarch law, adjustment of media law to EU media directive and finalization of the reform of the legal framework for national minorities<sup>26</sup>. In its turn, Moldova should focus on: completion of the launched comprehensive justice system reform; application of all shortcomings identified by OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe/the Venice Commission; realization of the "de-oligarchisation" process; fight against corruption and organized crime; implementation of public administration reform and the reform of Public Financial Management, the involvement of the civil society in the decision-making process and the promotion of gender equality and fight violence against women<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Annual Survey 2022: Belarus, Accessed on 26.04.2023 <https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/publications/annual-survey-2022-belarus/>

<sup>25</sup> EU Commission Opinion on Georgia's application for membership of the European Union. Brussels, 17.6.2022, Accessed on 26.04.2023 <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/Georgia%20opinion%20and%20Annex.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> EU Commission Opinion on Ukraine's application for membership of the European Union. Brussels, 17.6.2022, Accessed on 27.04.2023 <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/Ukraine%20Opinion%20and%20Annex.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> EU Commission Opinion on the Republic of Moldova's application for membership of the European Union. Brussels, 17.6.2022, Accessed on 27.04.2023 <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/Republic%20of%20Moldova%20Opinion%20and%20Annex.pdf>

Speaking about the progress on the implementation of these steps, Ukraine has adopted the law regarding the selection of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine judges, the comprehensive media law, the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and a new head of the Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office was appointed. Also, a state program "Unity in Diversity" is developed in order to ensure the rights of national minorities and other measures are underway according to the EU requirements, etc.<sup>28</sup>. In the Republic of Moldova, according to the national plan adopted to fulfill the EU's nine requirements, out of 60 actions, 14 actions (23,33%) are fully implemented, 21 actions (35%) are implemented with some reservations, 23 actions (38,33%) were initiated and are in process of implementation and 2 actions (3,33%) were not initiated.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the Law no. 120/2021 for Constitution amendment was adopted in order to improve the provisions for the judicial system; laws for consolidation of the Judicial Inspection activity were adopted; a new Electoral Code was adopted by implementing most of the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations; a new mechanism for criminal prosecution was adopted, trial and sentencing in absentia of persons who evade participation in criminal prosecution; the criminal and procedural legislation was aligned with the provisions of Istanbul and Lanzarote Conventions<sup>30</sup>; necessary laws and mechanisms are underway according to all EU requirements. This way, both countries are focused on the opening of accession negotiations with the European Union and the transformation and Europeanization process in these countries is in full development.

To conclude, the EU's role in its Eastern neighborhood is obvious. Rationalism and pragmatism of EU approaches towards the relationship with eastern neighbors lead to a constructive dialogue with all of them. It can be noticed heterogeneity of national changes within countries in the evolution of their partnership with the European Union under the influence of costs and benefits of the partnership, under the influence of external factors such as the Russian Federation's impact on the region and the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, under the influence of the level of European aspirations of the countries and EU conditionality credibility. However, the EU neighborhood policy in the Eastern region has contributed to the democratization of the partner states as a consequence of implementing its requirements. The significant transformation of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia take place due to the downloading and application of EU norms, values and standards. Nonetheless, it should be highlighted that the transformative role of the European Union in the region is greater when the EU model adopted by the eastern neighbors has no alternative and there is a strong will to deepen relationships and integrate with the European community.

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## The European Model of National Minorities Protection in the Case of Ukraine. Romania as a Kin-State

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DR. RADU CARP<sup>1</sup>

PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

**Abstract:** *The issue of national minorities has been, since 1991, one of the most difficult that Ukraine was confronted with. The difficulty of applying the Minsk agreements shows that the issue of the Russian minority in Ukraine is, right now, without a viable solution. The start of the Russian aggression on 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 is, among others, the result of unsolved identity problems. The Hungarian and the Romanian minorities were long perceived as the Russian minority, having the support of a kin-state, but the war has changed this interpretation, national minorities rallying around Kyiv objectives. The protection of national minorities in Ukraine is regulated by the Constitution, by different laws and Ukraine is part of the Council of Europe instruments in this area. The Venice Commission expressed its opinion on Ukrainian legislation in 2011 and 2017. The CoE Council of Ministers adopted a Resolution in 2020 regarding national minorities in Ukraine. The European Commission refers to this issue in its Opinion on the application of Ukraine to become an EU Member State in June 2022. Because Ukraine wants to start accession negotiations very fast, the Supreme Rada adopted in December 2022 a new law on national minorities. This law is not in line with previous recommendations addressed to Ukraine by the European bodies in this area. Romania criticized this law, having a special status as kin-state, according to the OSCE Bolzano Recommendations. Ukraine needs to adopt the European model on the protection of national minorities, as a proof that is opposing the Russian Federation perspective that neglects all the basic instruments of human rights.*

**Keywords:** EU, education, European model, human rights, kin – state, national minorities

To write about the Romanian minority from Ukraine and the international instruments of national minorities protection is not an easy task, in the context of the war in Ukraine. Ever since Ukraine gained its independence, more than three decades ago, the issue of national minorities has been one of the most difficult issues. There was a need of affirming a national identity, in contrast with the Russian one. Any claim of the Russian minority from Ukraine has been supported by the Russian Federation, in its role of kin-state. The Russian Federation did not play according to the rules that kin-states are applying regarding national minorities in other states, but has used the Russophone people as a tool to neglect the very existence of the Ukrainian state. This exacerbated role, unique in the larger context of kin-states, resulted in the fact that the issue of national minorities from Ukraine has never been discussed, as it is discussed in a state like Romania, for example. No special instruments were created for a special case. Retroactively, one may put the question if in the case of the Russian Federation involvement in Ukraine, with the purpose of protecting a national minority, special instruments would have been imagined. The issue is a little more complicated, because these instruments would have been agreed upon also by Ukraine. The difficulty of applying the Minsk Agreements shows that the issue of the Russian minority in Ukraine is, for the moment, without a viable solution. Even if it was agreed that Ukraine shall give special rights to this minority,

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<sup>1</sup> Radu Carp is Professor, Faculty of Political Science, University of Bucharest. MA in European studies and international relations, Institut Européen des Hautes Etudes Internationales, Nice (1996). SJD, Comparative Constitutional Law, Faculty of Law, Babeş - Bolyai University of Cluj (2002). Representative of the University of Bucharest team part of the European research network *Observatory on Local Autonomy*, coordinated by the *Université de Lille* (2015 -). Member of the Academic Curriculum Group (2017 - 2018; 2021 -); Executive Committee (2015 – 2020; 2022 - 2023) of the E.MA - European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratization of the Global Campus of Human Rights, Venice. Representative of the University of Bucharest in the project CIII-PL-0702-06-1718 - *Ethics and Politics in the European Context*, part of the CEEPUS III network, coordinated by The Catholic University John Paul II of Lublin. Address for correspondence: Faculty of Political Science, str. Spiru Haret 8, Bucharest radu.carp@fspub.unibuc.ro.

especially in Donbas, Ukraine has constantly stated that giving supplementary rights would put into question even the existence of Ukraine as a state.

The start of the war, as a result among others of the unsolved dispute on the Donbas region statute, the independence of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics, followed by fake referenda in order to include these republics into the Russian Federation - all these events being accompanied by fierce fighting for the control of these territories - shows the consequences of the lack of solutions for identity related problems for a long period. The Russian Federation was and still is in a permanent dilemma related to Donbas: while these regions were under Kyiv control, national minorities rights protection instruments could be invoked; while they were proclaimed as being part of the Russian Federation, this argument disappears in a natural way. The Russian Federation did not give an answer to the question that it generated: what the situation is from this perspective, to be a kin-state or a state (but in this case it shall give rights to a new minority, the Ukrainian one).

The Russian Federation's dilemma is equally Ukraine's dilemma but, of course, related to other national minorities. The treatment of the Russian minority - that could be a threat even to the existence of the state itself - may be translated in the relationship with other national minorities and that option would not be necessarily a threat to the statehood. A number of political leaders that were in power in Kyiv seems to give an affirmative answer to this question. Especially the Hungarian and the Romanian Minorities were perceived as the Russian minority, having the support of a kin-state - Hungary, respectively Romania. Constantly, Ukraine was afraid of an alignment of other national minorities with the Russian one. In fact, the national minorities from Ukraine made only point alliances, limited as a purpose and sometimes their perspectives did coincide, even in the absence of formal alliances. The pro-Russian parties were voted in Transcarpathia by other minorities, besides the Russian one, being perceived as a balance to the attempts of „ukrainization” or, more exactly, affirmation attempt of a national identity that was suppressed for a long time and that in 1991 transformed itself from a minority inside USSR into a majority in a new national state, Ukraine.

These conjunctural alliances were and still are politically exploited: the Russian federation exaggerate their existence, kin-states neglected them, Ukraine look suspiciously the discourse of its neighbors, applying the same scheme of interpretation to decrypt the will of the Russian Federation, Hungary and Romania.

The war in Ukraine has changed this pattern of interpretation, in the sense that national minorities rallied to the Kyiv perspective. From outside, this transition has not been observed and, even if observed, its role has been downplayed, because it did not correspond to a narrative of identity political orientations from both countries. Ukraine did not change the way it looks at the issue of national minorities on its territory, still considering that they are influenced more by their kin-states than by Ukraine. The war could be - and there are still chances to play this role very effectively - the item that shall favor the formation of a new civic identity, less based on the affirmation of national identities.

At the declarative level, Ukraine has this purpose for the post-conflict period. The reality contradicts nevertheless this purpose. There is a gap consistently large between the optimistic statements of President Zelensky on the fate of national minorities after the war and the concrete steps in the direction of harmonizing the legislation of Ukraine with the European model on the protection of national minorities. Of course, it is premature to draw conclusions, but the existence of this gap cannot be neglected. The premise that shall underlie any analysis on this matter is the good faith: good faith of Ukraine in its Europeanization efforts, the good faith of national minorities, proved by the solidarity with the Ukrainian majority during the war, the good faith of kin-states like Romania that never stopped the sustained rhythm of help for Ukraine - for refugees and also for the people still living in Ukraine and highly affected by the armed aggression of the Russian Federation.

According to the Ukraine Constitution, “The free development, the use and the protection of the Russian language and other national minorities languages is guaranteed in Ukraine” (Article 10). According to another provision, “citizens that belongs to the national minorities have guaranteed the right to education in their mother tongue, in educational institutions at the local or central level or by national cultural societies” (Article 53, paragraph 5). According to Article 22, paragraph 3, “the content and the purpose of the rights and freedoms cannot be diminished by new laws or by amendments to the laws that are in force”.

Based on this constitutional framework, Ukraine has adopted the Law on national minorities in 1992 and the Law on the principles related to the linguistic state policy in 2012, the latest being repealed in February 2014, after the EuroMaidan revolution, the attack on Crimea by the Russian Federation and the change of power in Kyiv.

Ukraine is part to the Council of Europe instruments related to the protection of national minorities - the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities and the European Charter of regional or minority languages. As a member state to the Framework Convention, Ukraine periodically writes reports on the status of the national minorities’ protection and the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe periodically adopts Resolutions in order to evaluate these reports and draw recommendations - the last resolution of this kind dates back from 2020.

On the occasion of the Charter ratification, Ukraine stated that its provisions refer to the “Belarussian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Greek, Jewish, Tatar, Moldavian, German, Polish, Romanian, Slovak and Hungarian” minorities. To notice that even at the beginning of its relationship with the European institutions in charge with the national minorities’ protection, Hungary affirmed the existence of two separate minorities, Romanian and Moldavian.

The Venice Commission expressed themselves repeatedly on the Ukrainian legislation related to the protection of national minorities. The first time it was in 2011, on what became in the end the 2012 law, mentioned above. Second time in 2017, on the Education law. In its 2011 Opinion, the Venice Commission considered that “the protection of languages is and remain in Ukraine a complex and extremely sensitive issue” and the necessary balance between the use of Russian and Ukrainian languages is “a serious challenge” for the Ukraine authorities<sup>2</sup>.

In 2017, when the second Opinion has been released, in Ukraine there were approximately 400.000 students belonging to national minorities in 735 schools where the language of instruction was different from Ukrainian.

In the 2017 Education Law one may find a provision, Article 7, that was constantly and vigorously challenged by the national minorities from Ukraine and by the kin-states. For this reason, Ukraine reported the situation to the Venice Commission. The analysis made by this body revealed that this provision is not clear. There is a mention about the official language - Ukrainian - about the languages of the national minorities but there are no details. For example, one or more study subjects can be offered in two or more languages: the official language, English, other EU official languages. Who is going to decide in concrete terms? Would students or their parents have a say in this matter? Is there an upper limit to the number of courses in the mother tongue? There is no answer to all these questions.

The Venice Commission conclusion was that “without specifications in the national legislation, the implementation of the Ukraine obligations regarding the use of minority languages in education will be hardly insured”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Venice Commission, *Opinion No. 651/2011 on draft law on principles of the state language policy of Ukraine*, CDL- AD (2011)047.

<sup>3</sup> Venice Commission, *Opinion No. 902/2017 on the provisions of the Law on Education of 5 September 2017 which concern the use of the state language and minority and other languages in education*, CDL-AD (2017) 030.

Ukrainian authorities offered to the Venice Commission statistics showing that 55% of the students enrolled in Romanian schools and 62% students enrolled in Hungarian schools failed the test of Ukrainian language knowledge. The Venice Commission has shown that these statistics cannot be considered, because the methodology that underlies these data is unknown.

In order to offer an assessment related to the core of the issue at stake, the Venice Commission has made a comparison with the opinion it offered in 2010 on the Law on state language from Slovakia (dealing with a similar problem - Slovak language vs. Hungarian language). The Conclusion was that “the measures taken to achieve this legitimate goal (learning Hungarian language) must be coordinated and put in balance with the guarantees and measures for education in the language of national minorities”. Moreover, the Venice Commission expressed “serious doubts that Ukrainian authorities will [...] solve the important problem of the lack of qualified teachers that could teach Ukrainian language”. In other words, to the question if the 2017 Education Law does ensure a balance between promoting the Ukrainian language and the protection of the linguistic rights of the national minorities, in the absence of concrete data, the Venice Commission cannot give an answer. There is no evaluation about teaching the languages of national minorities, but certainly, the teaching of Ukrainian language in the education system cannot be expanded, because of the lack of teachers. No further modifications have occurred from 2017 up to the present time.

The Venice Commission has also analyzed the situation of the schools where mother tongues are used exclusively. The Romanian minority of Ukraine benefit from the existence of such schools. In doing this task, the Venice Commission invoked the ECHR decision in the case *Cyprus v. Turkey*<sup>4</sup> where it was stated that the schools where Greek language is used cannot be closed, because it would affect the very substance of the right to education. Based on this argument, the Venice Commission stated that this kind of schools are part of the “historical heritage of Ukraine” and must work continuously. To notice that the 2017 Education Law does not refer to these schools that would cease to function, as an effect of applying this law.

The Venice Commission formulated many recommendations addressed to Ukraine. Among these: to ensure a “sufficient level of education in the EU official languages”, “to increase the quality of instruction in the state language”, to initiate “a dialogue with the national minorities representatives and with all interested parts”, to “exclude private schools” from the new provisions”, to “ensure that the law application will not endanger the preservation of the cultural heritage of minorities”.

None of these recommendations released by the Venice Commission in 2017 have been put into practice.

All that has been done up to now was to postpone until September 2023 the application of the provisions according to which all the schools from Ukraine where Romanian language is taught will be obliged to study all the study objects in Ukrainian, apart from Romanian language and literature.

One may believe that until the start of the Russian Federation aggression on 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 Ukraine has not been asked to implement the Venice Commission recommendations. This assumption is not true.

Ukraine, as all other States part to Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities, is under the obligation to report periodically the implementation of this instrument. The latest Resolution of the Council of Ministers, ResCMN(2020)13, adopted on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 include many recommendations addressed to Ukraine, among others:

- To ensure the protection of the rights of the people belonging to the national minorities.
- To adopt, as a priority and in close consultation with the interested groups, a legal framework for the protection of national minorities.

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<sup>4</sup> ECHR, Appl. No. 25781/94, *Cyprus v. Turkey*, Judgement of 10 May 2001.

- To develop, in consultation with all relevant groups, a clear and coherent legal framework regarding the use of languages, in order to offer solid legal guarantees for the protection and the use of all minority languages, including the least numerous;
- To implement the recommendations included in the 2017 Opinion of the Venice Commission.
- To facilitate and encourage the use of all minority languages in the relationship with administrative authorities.
- To adopt measures having as purpose the access of minorities to media in their mother tongue.
- To adopt measures for the representation of the minorities to the level of elected bodies, local or central<sup>5</sup>.

In other words, the Council of Europe considered in 2020 that Ukraine does not have a suitable legal framework for the protection of national minorities, does not have a suitable legal framework for learning the languages of these minorities and has not applied the recommendations of the Venice Commission related to the Education Law. Consequently, *in December 2020 Ukraine must start from nothing the building of this normative framework, in accordance with the European model for the national minorities' protection.*

On the date of 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, just 5 days after the start of the unjustified aggression of the Russian Federation, Ukraine submitted the application to become EU Member State. On 7<sup>th</sup> of March the EU Council requested the European Commission for an opinion on this application. This document was delivered on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, and it was called the Opinion of the Commission on the application of Ukraine to become EU Member State, COM (2022) 407 final<sup>6</sup>. In order to start the accession negotiations to the EU, Ukraine must fulfil some requirements. Among them the following:

*“The respect for the rights of persons belonging to the national minorities in the area of education, of language and in the area of their representation in the elected institutions to all the levels of public life must be ensured by the full implementation of the Venice Commission recommendations regarding the Education Law...taking into account the latest monitoring cycle of the Framework Convention...Ukraine made steps for the implementation of the Venice Commission recommendations but need to complete the reform of the normative framework for national minorities and to adopt efficient implementation mechanisms”.*

In other words, the European Commission see the situation of the national minorities from Ukraine in an integrated way, by referencing the evaluations of the Committee of Ministers and of the Venice Commission in this matter. To note that the evaluation of the European Commission does not refer only to the 2017 Venice Commission opinion, but to all the opinions of this body that considered at a certain moment the situation of the national minorities from Ukraine.

Because it wants to start the EU accession negotiations as quick as possible, the Supreme Rada of Ukraine adopted in December 2022 a new law on national minorities. Article 11 of this law states that the education in the language of national minorities is regulated by the 2017 Education Law. A submission of this kind is not enough, as this law shall be modified by considering the content of the 2017 Venice Commission Opinion.

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<sup>5</sup> Resolution CM/ResCMN(2020)13 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Ukraine. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 8 December 2020 at the 1391st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

<sup>6</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council, *Commission Opinion on Ukraine's application for membership of the European Union*, Brussels, 17.6.2022, COM(2022) 407 final.

The new law on minorities also includes provisions on the right of persons belonging to the national minorities to elect and to be elected, the right to the media in their mother tongue, etc. A close look at the way these provisions are formulated proves that they bring nothing new about the existent normative framework, sometimes constitutional provisions being only resumed as such.

For the Russian minority, the new provisions will enter into force 6 months after the end of the war, but for other minorities exactly when the law enters into force.

Romania reacted at the adoption of this law, reminding Ukraine that it engaged itself to ask the opinion of the Venice Commission before the adoption of the law, but this did not happen. The official position of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was that the new provisions did not bring anything new as compared to the existing normative framework, but Ukraine shall change it in order to fulfil the requirements of the European model on the protection of national minorities.

Indeed, Ukraine did not ask the opinion of the Venice Commission before adopting this new law and Ukrainian authorities did not give any reason for such an omission. Most probably, the Venice Commission would reiterate the 2017 recommendations that were not put into practice.

The minorities law was promulgated by President Zelensky on 30 of December 2022. He had the option to send the law to the Venice Commission before promulgation or to turn it back to the parliament with his remarks, but he decided not to act in any of these ways.

Even if Ukraine did not consider the reaction of Romania or the reaction of the Hungarians living in Transcarpathia, also criticizing this law, the European Commission will examine if Ukraine fulfilled its obligations that were communicated as an answer to its request of accession to the EU. In that moment Ukraine will have to restore not only this law, but all the internal instruments for the protection of national minorities. *The matter of national minorities protection in Ukraine concerns not only the relationship between Ukraine and Romania, as a kin-state, but the relationship of Ukraine with the European Union. Inside the European Union, Romania's perspective, as kin-state for the Romanian minority in Ukraine obviously matters more than the perspective of other EU Member States that do not have this quality.*

In order to better understand why Romania has, in regards with Ukraine, a special status, different from other EU Member States, the content of the Bolzano Recommendations must be reminded. Bolzano Recommendations on national minorities and inter-state relations were adopted under the aegis of OSCE and of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities in June 2008<sup>7</sup>. This document is addressed to all of OSCE Member States, including Romania and Ukraine.

The document starts from the premise that no kin-state could exercise its jurisdiction on the territory of a state where national minorities live, without the consent of that state, because the protection of national minorities is the responsibility of the state where that minority lives. However, OSCE Member States cannot prevent the right of the persons belonging to the national minorities to establish and maintain contacts with persons from other states that has the same ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity or a “common cultural heritage”.

Kin-states may expand certain benefits to the persons from the states where kin minorities live, as in the area of education, work permits, and a preferential visa regime. Kin-states may offer “assistance for the support of education abroad”, could offer help to the non-governmental organizations, cultural or religious, with the consent of the state where these minorities live. Access to media issued by a kin-state cannot be restricted by the state where these minorities live but only in the case of incitement to violence, racism, or discrimination. Kin-states and those where kin minorities live are encouraged to conclude bilateral treaties for the protection of national minorities. Otherwise, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in his official perspective on the Ukrainian

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<sup>7</sup> OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, *The Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations*, 2 October 2008.

Law on minorities evoked this opinion that an agreement has not been reached with the Ukrainian authorities.

As a conclusion, Ukraine's behavior with regard to the protection of national minorities is conditioned by: the Resolutions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, adopted as an effect of Ukraine ratifying of the Framework - Convention for national minorities; Venice Commission Opinions in this matter, especially those from 2011 and 2017; the Opinion of the European Commission on the application of Ukraine to become EU Member State and the relationship of Ukraine with kin-states as Romania shall be in line with the Bolzano Recommendations of the OSCE.

*So far, in the area of national minorities protection Romania acted in the relationship with Ukraine in full respect of the European model that is defined by the Council of Europe and OSCE. The European Union refers to this model in its relationship with Ukraine as well. To criticize the way Romania behaved up to now, means to criticize and to put under the sign of doubt this European model. One of the biggest challenges of Ukraine right now is to find the fairest report to all its citizens, in order to prove that it fulfils the same democratic standards as any EU Member State. Facing the war, the national minorities from Ukraine behaved as the majority - even the Russophone people opposed to the Russian Federation aggression. Right now, Ukraine is facing tough choices: continuing the resistance against an unjust aggression and applying simultaneously the European model in a lot of areas, like the protection of national minorities. These choices are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary. Proving the respect for this European model, Ukraine could prove, based on irrefutable facts, that it is in antithesis with the Russian Federation that neglect it fully, as part of a refusal of a more developed model that refers in general to the respect of human rights.*

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## EU - Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia. Their Power Relations in the Contemporary History

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NATALIA BÎRLĂDEANU

PHD STUDENT, UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE, PHARMACY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, TARGU-MURES,  
ROMANIA, EXPERT, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Abstract:** *The change of the informational paradigm, being the consequence of the effects of the evolution of today's post-modernism, and the appeal of more actors for the hybrid methods of asymmetric struggle, imposes on the nation states to increase the ability to defend the informational, identity and educational space, including the cyber space, to reduce the effects of hybrid warfare<sup>1</sup>.*

**Keywords:** *EU - Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia, cold war, neighbourhood policy, alliance, regional conflicts, separatism.*

**W**ith the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Eastern Communist Bloc dominated by the Soviet Union, the victorious Western organizations, the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union, adapted to consolidate the prosperity and security of their own members, as well as to ensure stability on the scale of the entire European continent and to “fill” the security vacuum produced by the implosion of the Soviet Union and the disappearance of its alliances<sup>2</sup>.

In a globalized world, under the conditions in which the development of the means of communication and transport have experienced an unprecedented development, along with the obvious evolutions in the matter of weapons and military equipment, the proximity factor is present in any type of identifiable threat. We are talking about cyber-attacks, about the energy dependence of the member states of the alliance on other states, about terrorist attacks, about organized crime. The source of all these threats is often far from the borders of the targeted state, but the improvements in the technical field and infrastructures have been favoured by globalization.<sup>3</sup>

The paradigm of the contemporary international security environment over the course of the last decade has transformed in a way that it has imposed more points of view on the future of the international order in debates of the international system of collective security, as well as the modality of ensuring national security by nation states. Regrettably, the strategic vision of the 1990s EU regarding the development and consolidation of a stable international space of international collective security, from Vancouver to Vladivostok could not be implemented. In today's international environment, the multitude of crisis-type events in Syria and the Mediterranean Sea, the annexation of Crimea and the military conflict in eastern Ukraine, with the effects of heightened military tensions in the Black Sea, the recent military conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the launch of new hybrid strategies to destabilize nation-states with an asymmetric method resulting from information technologies, and the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic require national states and international collective security organizations to re-evaluate

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<sup>1</sup> Frunzeti T., Zodian V. (coord.), Lumea 2005. *Enciclopedie politică si militară (studii strategice si de securitate)*. - Bucuresti, Editura Centrului Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Brucan Silviu, *Secolul XX: Viitorul Uniunii Europene. Războaiele în secolul XXI*, Polirom, Iași, 2005, p 89.

<sup>3</sup> Frunzeti T., Zodian V. (coord.). Op.cit

and develop preventive strategies<sup>4</sup> and new countermeasures to respond to the challenges that have arisen. Thus, increasing the resilience<sup>5</sup> and consolidating a national community within the state, based on common values, principles, and identities, as well as amplifying the multilateral factor of international organizations and collective security, based on the principle of community solidarity, become imperative in facing the new challenges<sup>6</sup>. One thing that is obvious in the analysis of multidimensional and multilateral options, in the complexity of the circumstances of the international security environment, which produces the effect on nation states, is the vital point regarding the fortification of the area of national strategic communication capabilities. The change of the informational paradigm, being the consequence of the effects of the evolution of today's post-modernism, and the appeal of more actors for the hybrid methods of asymmetric struggle, imposes on the nation states to increase the ability to defend the informational, identity and educational space, including the cyber space, to reduce the effects of hybrid warfare<sup>7</sup>.

The end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century is characterized, for the most part, by profound transformations of the security environment and by the emergence of new challenges and risks for states and societies. Political instability, regional conflicts, separatism, social unrest, terrorism, cross-border crime, proliferation of conventional and unconventional weapons, the unilateral use of external energy resources, massive migratory movements, natural cataclysms represent contemporary threats to national and international security. I have chosen to take into consideration external security challenges through the prism of the mentioned phenomena as they play an important role in national, regional, and international security<sup>8</sup>.

The large-scale and diverse changes in contemporary history have brought profound changes of a political, diplomatic, social, financial, economic, technical, and technological, religious, informational, legal, ecological, and military nature<sup>9</sup>.

The European Union has a huge responsibility for maintaining global peace and human security. In this work I will try to present how much the EU has progressed to become an actor in conflict management, but also how difficult and contradictory this process continues to be<sup>10</sup>.

The fate of actors in the Eastern EU continues to be marked by the history and consequences of the Cold War. Frozen conflicts are characteristic of the states that, after 1991, broke away from the former USSR, but remained under the strong influence of the Russian Federation. Even now, these states are in search of autonomy, manifesting more or less strongly the tendency to approach and consolidate relations with Western actors, which determines efforts on the part of the Kremlin to keep them in its own sphere of influence<sup>11</sup>. The Black Sea Basin includes four such conflicts that have already been established. On the territory of Georgia, two separatist republics - Abkhazia and South Ossetia - are the subject of similar conflicts, the Republic of Moldova faces an obvious separatist tendency of Transnistria, while Nagorno Karabakh is still the subject of heated dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The respective separatist entities have not been recognized at the international level as states, but, at present, they are under the control of authorities distinct from

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<sup>4</sup> Mihaela Daciana Natea, Mihai Daniel Aniței, *Reshaping European and national security in a post COVID – 19 context*, *Acta Marisiensis*, Seria Oeconomica, an 2019, vol II, pp. 49-64

<sup>5</sup> Mihaela Daciana Natea, *Reshaping European Security in a Post COVID-19 World*, L'Harmattan, Paris France, 2023

<sup>6</sup> Gh. Ciascai, „Parteneriatul Estic și limitele procesului de „europenizare” a Estului”, *Polis*, Iași, vol. III, No 4 (10) 2015.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> Cristina Bogzeanu, „Crizele politico-militare din Zona Extinsă a Mării Negre: de la cronicizare la acutizare”, în *Impact Strategic*, nr. 4[53]/2014.

<sup>9</sup> *Parteneriatul Estic – între pragmatism și scepticism*, accesat la data de 06.12.2022 la adresa Parteneriatul Estic – între pragmatism și scepticism | Moldova | DW | 26.09.2017

<sup>10</sup> *Strategia europeană de securitate, o Europă sigură într-o lume mai bună*, accesat la data de 26.04.2022 la adresa, untitled (europa.eu).

<sup>11</sup> Mureșan, Mircea, Văduvă, Gheorghe, *Războiul viitorului – viitorul războiului*, București, Editura U.N.Ap., 2004.

those of the states of which they are a part of. Although they have been attributed the character of frozen conflicts, recent history has shown unequivocally that they tend to re-ignite under certain circumstances<sup>12</sup>.

European integration was conceived in the 1950s largely as a conflict resolution exercise. The means of action were of an economic nature, but the declared objective was rather political: the pacification of Europe. With the advancement of integration and the decrease of the potential for conflict in Western Europe, the concern of the European Union towards the conflict has become more and more externalized. From the Balkans to the Middle East and from the South Caucasus to Western Sahara, the European Union is surrounded by conflicts that affect European security. In a difficult environment, the EU has become increasingly active in managing the surrounding conflicts, even if there have been hesitations. The main objective in the neighbourhood is to consolidate a ring of well-governed, prosperous and democratic states<sup>13</sup>.

But the EU cannot do much in its eastern neighbourhood without having a policy towards the secessionist conflicts in Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. It is hard to bet on good governance and functional state institutions when some of the poorest European states invest massively in the military and do not have control over important sections of the border. In this area, smuggling and corruption flourish. This situation has persisted for almost two decades. The August 2008 war in Georgia tragically highlighted a fact contrary to popular opinion: these conflicts are not “frozen”, only their solution. Sometimes they erupt to the surface, leading to new bloodshed, as in Abkhazia in 1998 or South Ossetia in 2008<sup>14</sup>.

These conflict zones may be invisible on the world map, but they are real political phenomena that affect the development of foreign policy and European security, as well as relations within the EU and almost all his partners from extended Europe: Russia, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia. With the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2003, the EU implemented a series of international policy instruments aimed at influencing the resolution of conflicts in this troubled area. Altogether, the EU has carried out several missions, with over 400 people involved, and spent hundreds of millions of euros in conflict management in the post-Soviet space. However, the ever-longer list of EU international political actions is counterbalanced by a parallel list of potential EU actions, which in the end did not materialize. Among them were the Union's failure to send peacekeeping forces to the Republic of Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh and monitors on the Georgian border. In addition, the EU has an added value in the resolution of international conflicts, and this is partly due to its size. A union of half a billion people that managed to maintain a peaceful Europe in the last 60 years<sup>15</sup>.

As the 2004 enlargement of the Union approached, member states feared that instability at the new border would undermine EU security. Under the ENP, the EU has offered its neighbours a strong political partnership, assistance, visa facilities, trade liberalization, inclusion in certain agencies and European programs in exchange for reforms and the gradual implementation of the acquisition. The EU also expressed its interest in contributing to the resolution of conflicts in the neighbourhood<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The grand chessboard. American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, New York, 1998, p.57.

<sup>13</sup> Bidilean Vidu, *Uniunea Europeană. Instituții, Politici, Activități*, Editura Universitară, București, 2011, p 76.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>15</sup> Conflictul din Georgia va determina Moldova sa accepte o solutie ruseasca la conflictul transnistrean | Global | DW | 21.11.2008, accesat la data de 27.04.2022.

<sup>16</sup> *Parteneriatul Estic – între pragmatism și scepticism*, accesat la data de 06.12.2022 la adresa Parteneriatul Estic – între pragmatism și scepticism | Moldova | DW | 26.09.2017.

The conflicts and political division in the Mediterranean area of the last fifty years have seriously slowed down the development of the region<sup>17</sup>. Small unrecognized regions like Transnistria are a magnet for organized crime and can destabilize or block the process of state building, political consolidation, and sustainable development. Despite some declarative promises, in an attempt to help resolve the conflicts in the neighbourhood, the EU has not been sufficiently involved in conflict management until now. The security dimension of the ENP was focused more on conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation, not on the direct involvement of the EU in conflict resolution<sup>18</sup>.

The European Neighbourhood Policy is an instrument of the European Union through which it ensures its security and creates good neighbourly relations with neighbouring states, in fact it pursues the goal of creating a “ring of friends” - an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness. This policy constitutes a framework for consolidating neighbourhood relations and aims at intensifying cooperation with the neighbouring states of the enlarged EU.<sup>19</sup> This policy is based on objectives, goals that guide its consolidation and that are to be implemented by the partner states. The ENP was designed to avoid the appearance of dividing lines between Europe and its neighbours, giving neighbouring states the possibility to participate in EU activities through political and economic collaboration. Thanks to the ENP, the EU governs relations with 16 neighbouring countries to the east and south<sup>20</sup>.

EU-Russia relations have been strained since 2014, due to the following reasons: Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, support for the rebels in eastern Ukraine, neighbourhood politics, sedition campaigns formation and negative internal developments. Tensions were also accentuated after Russia's intervention in Syria, Libya, and sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2014, the EU has periodically renewed the sanctions against Russia. With all this, the EU and Russia remain closely interdependent, and the EU practices “selective collaboration”.<sup>21</sup> Another source of tension are disinformation campaigns and cyber-attacks, as well as attempts to interfere in democratic processes in the states west of Russia. Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, EU economic sanctions against Russia target the financial, defence and energy sectors. Russia responded with sanctions, banning almost half of the agri-food imports from the EU bloc. Before Christmas 2020, EU leaders unanimously decided to extend the sanctions until 31 July 2021. The measures, which are renewed twice a year, hit Russia hard: it is assumed that by the end of 2018 its economy was reduced by 6%

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<sup>17</sup> Costea, Simion, (et Michel Labori) *Le Management des Politiques de l'Union Européenne/ The Management of EU Policies*, Paris, Prodifmultimedia, 2011, p. 39.

<sup>18</sup> Politica Europeană de Vecinătate | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (mae.ro) , accesat la data de 28.04.2022.

<sup>19</sup> Costea, Maria, Costea, Simion (2015, ISI Journal article) “Ukraine between EU and Eurasian Regional Project in 2013”, p.113-131, in *Transylvanian Review* (Center for Transylvanian Studies and the Romanian Academy), Vol. XXIV, Supplement No. 1, 2015. Costea, Maria, Costea Simion (2011, ISI journal article), „The Management of the EU’s Eastern Partnership Project: A New Stage in the European Neighbourhood Policy”, p.409-433, in *Transylvanian Review* (Center for Transylvanian Studies and the Romanian Academy), Vol. XX, Supplement No. 4, 2011. Costea, Maria, Costea, Simion, (2015, ISI proceedings article), „Challenges of the EU in the migrant/Refugee Crisis in 2015”, p.166-175, in vol. *Discourse as a form of multiculturalism in literature and communication. History ad cultural mentalities Tîrgu-Mureş, Arhipelag XXI Press*, 2015. Costea, Simion (2014, ISI Proceedings article), „The Culture of the European Accession Negotiations”, p.50-56, in vol. *Globalization and intercultural dialogue: multidisciplinary perspectives Tîrgu-Mureş, Arhipelag XXI*, 2014. Costea, Simion (2011, SCOPUS article), “EU-Ukraine Relations and the Eastern Partnership: Challenges, Progress and Potential”, p.259-276, in *European Foreign Affairs Review* (College of Europe BRUGGE and University of Montreal), volume 16, issue 2, 2011. Costea, Simion (2012), “The European Union’s Eastern Partnership: the objective of regional cooperation”, p.51-60, in vol. *The Eastern Partnership and the Europe 2020 Strategy: Visions of leading policy-makers and academics*, LUXEMBOURG, Publications Office of the European Union, 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Politica Europeană de Vecinătate | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (mae.ro) , accesat la data de 28.04.2022..

<sup>21</sup> Relațiile UE-Rusia: Comisia și Înalțul Reprezentant propun calea de urmat, accesat la data de 23.06.2022, la adresa Relațiile UE-Rusia: Comisia și Înalțul Reprezentant propun calea de urmat — Cotidianul,

following EU and US sanctions. EU restrictive measures have different forms. The diplomatic measures consisted in the exclusion of Russia from the G8, the suspension of Russia's accession process to the OECD and the International Energy Agency, and the interruption of regular EU-Russian bilateral summits<sup>22</sup>.

The world we live in is transforming and re-dimensioning. Confrontation strategies are combined with political-economic partnership strategies and international crisis and conflict management actions. In this context, the complexity of the political, economic, social, military, and cultural aspects of the current security environment tend to transform any attempt to understand them into an analytical approach that requires, above all, a clear dissociation between real and hypothetical facts<sup>23</sup>.

## CONCLUSIONS

After the end of the cold war, the world witnessed a series of significant changes, the disappearance of bipolarity, the collapse of the socialist system, the collapse of the USSR, the abolition of the Warsaw Treaty, which led to changes in the structure, organization, and nature of the missions of the armed forces. Thus, almost all the armed forces have experienced great processes and phenomena that accompanied their transformation, both as organizations and as state institutions.

At the same time, after the end of the cold war, there have been an increase in the number of interstate conflicts, which, in turn, increased the need for protection and guarding of people and their goods both in the area of conflict, as well as in its immediate vicinity. At the same time, we can observe the manifestation of the state's tendency to narrow its area of responsibility regarding human security, especially by reducing its intervention in the provision of public services such as education such as health, public transport, energy, water, etc<sup>24</sup>.

At the same time with the aforementioned changes, the concern of the international community regarding human security has increased. As the danger of an armed conflict between the two military blocs, imminent during the Cold War, seemed to have disappeared, the democratic states of the world have turned their attention to the promotion, guarantee and defence of the human security at the individual, group, local and national community level, as well as at the global level<sup>25</sup>.

The paradigm of the contemporary international security environment, over the course of the last decade, has become transformed in such a way that it has imposed more points of view on the future of the international order in debates of the international system of collective security, as well as the modality of ensuring national security by nation states.

Thus, increasing the resilience and consolidating a national community within the state, based on common values, principles, and identities, as well as amplifying the multilateral factor of international organizations and collective security, based on the principle of community solidarity, become imperative when facing new challenges.

The successive Enlargements of the European Union, starting with those of the 70s and up to those of the 2000s, all had a geographical and geopolitical logic. Moscow perceived the EU's Enlargement plan as an open threat, because it was losing the former Soviet republics under its influence. Therefore, any initiative of the EU was heavily attacked by Kremlin. One of the most punished countries for its European aspirations is Ukraine. In the context of internal political conflicts, Ukrainians came out on the Maidan, trying to turn the course towards European integration.

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<sup>22</sup> Extinderea parteneriatului UE-Rusia, accesat la data de 25.06.2022, la adresa , BBC Romanian.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>24</sup> Rebegea, L., *Terorism și contra-terorism în UE: lecții din trecut*, Ed. Mica Valahie, București, 2017, p 109.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem.

This led to the change of power in the state, but also to the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of a bloody conflict in eastern Ukraine, which continues today. With all this, Kyiv managed to sign the Association Agreement with the EU and obtain a liberalized visa regime for its citizens.

The conflict in Ukraine called into question the basis on which the Eastern policy of the EU has been built until now. The Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine led to the collapse of the international and regional security system, as well as the system of international law, in 2014. Practically all international guarantees regarding the security of Ukraine can be considered unreal, in the conditions in which the main aggressor is pronounced as the main guarantor - the Russian Federation. Starting with 2014, we are in a new stage of "hybrid war". The character of the new hybrid war can be observed in the process of annexation of Crimea in the spring of 2014 by the Russian Federation, and later also in the support of the separatist elements in the east of Ukraine. Hybrid war is not a new war, but an actual one, in which one of the warring parties carries out, in the name of another force the activity of special formations and information techniques for the purpose of disinformation on the enemy territory, actively using propaganda<sup>26</sup>.

Human security represents an important objective of the international community. As the risks, dangers, and threats to human security at the local, national, regional, and global level grow, security has become an increasingly relevant issue.

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# The Cold Security World War: A New Approach to the Conflict in Ukraine and the Implications for the Security of the European Union

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DR. NICOLAE PLOEȘTEANU<sup>1</sup>, DR. RAUL MIRON<sup>2</sup>

GEORGE EMIL PALADE UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE, PHARMACY,  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF TARGU MURES, ROMANIA

**Abstract:** *The study proposes that the current war in Ukraine represents a “Global Cold Security War”, which goes beyond the conceptual and geographical boundaries of the conflict itself. The security of the European Union is directly influenced by this conflict, as the EU relies on regional stability and security to maintain its own security. The concept of a “Global War on Cold Security” is an attempt to recognise the complexity of the current conflict in Ukraine and the interdependence of international actors. This concept suggests that the problem is not limited to Ukraine, but also involves other states and international organisations such as the UN and the EU. This concept can help understand the global dimensions of the conflict and identify more comprehensive solutions to address international security challenges.*

**Key Words:** *EU, Cold Security World War; Ukraine; European security; public international law.*

**I. The concept of “cold security”** refers to a strategy of maintaining peace and stability in a region or between states through the use of tactics and approaches that do not directly involve military confrontations or violence. Rather than relying on brute force, cold security focuses on diplomacy, economic sanctions, cultural influence, and international cooperation to achieve security goals. In this context, we can analyze the war in Ukraine and the meaning of the concept of cold security.

Prior to the 1990s and the breakup of the former USSR, the concept that defined power relations was that of the Cold War. The typology of that period, according to many authors, had as its objective a security problem<sup>3</sup>. Presently, the same idea was clearly affirmed and embraced by the main protagonist of the war, namely the Russian Federation, but also evoked in public speeches of other international actors<sup>4</sup>. Meanwhile, for several decades a controversial concept has been circulated, like all security concepts in international relations, namely the concept of collective security<sup>5</sup> other than that based on various alliances between states, but which would presuppose a remodeling of the United Nations Organization, in order to ensure peace and stability in the world

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Nicolae Ploeșteanu is a tenure professor at the George Emil Palade University of Targu Mures specialized in international public law and data protection, having both an academic foundation and relevant professional experience. The present research is published with the support of the European Union and represents a outcome within the EU project Jean Monnet Center of Excellence in European Security and Disinformation in Multicultural Societies – no. 101047907 – ESDMS. The sole responsibility of this publication lies with the author. The European Union is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Raul Miron is a tenure lecturer at the George Emil Palade University of Targu Mures and a practicing lawyer, with relevant experience in international law, constitutional law, and human rights.

<sup>3</sup> Jervis, Robert. “Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2001, pp. 36–60. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26925099>. Accessed 6 May 2023.

<sup>4</sup> In an interview given by one of the close associates of President Vladimir Putin, it is clearly shown that the war in Ukraine is a war between Russia and NATO, especially America, which wants to remove Russia from the political map of the world - [https:// www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-ally-patrushev-says-russia-is-now-fighting-nato-ukraine-2023-01-10/](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-ally-patrushev-says-russia-is-now-fighting-nato-ukraine-2023-01-10/), accessed on 6.05.2023 (“The Westerners’ plans are to continue to pull Russia apart, and eventually just erase it from the political map of the world,” Patrushev said.)

<sup>5</sup> Collective Security beyond the Cold War, George W. Downs, University of Michigan, 1994.

more effectively. The war in Ukraine turned this idea of reshaping and collective security into a chimera.

The conflict in Ukraine acquired the valences of a war both formal and factual, independent of the different formulas used by the protagonists to justify the typology of the war: special military operation, war of aggression, war of self-defense or liberation<sup>6</sup>. From the point of view of respect and concern for the human rights, this war/conflict is not much different from others that are going on now and that have been going on in the past decades: people are killed, maimed, families are torn apart, many leave their homes, propaganda and hatred settle like a necessary “sauce” to a “good steak”.

The international community refuses, at this time, to understand the need for a radical reform of the current world security system. All official international declarations constantly insist on the need to respect international law, human rights, and democracy as arguments for the justification of different opinions and positions towards the war in Ukraine. However, irrespective of this controversy, we consider that we can identify the following fact: the conflict is ongoing and the belligerents and the groups around them do not show that they would be willing to give in to their own ideologies. This generalized attitude highlights a reality: the current war in Ukraine is no longer just a fight for independence and territorial integrity for one side, or an armed approach necessary to preserve neighborhood influence for the other side, but it goes far beyond conceptual and geographical limitations. It is a World War of Cold Security, as it was defined so well at the end of World War II. The link between this concept and the current international legal order is defying: all the factual elements justify a possible intervention of the UN Security Council, because the current reference situation represents the most serious threat to international peace and security; however, the Security Council is unable to deal dissuasively and promptly with this situation, even though it is the hard core of the world legal order. *In conclusion, the persistence of the current de facto war situation amounts to a Cold Security war.*

**II. A characteristic of cold security is that it can be interpreted**, with particular reference to the situation in Ukraine, as a form of indirect involvement of the international community in the management of both the crisis until the start of the war, as well as in the management of the war. Obviously, any direct military involvement on the part of the Western states, especially the United States and the member countries of the European Union, would have led to the escalation of the conflict, creating the conditions for a third world war. This is indeed a threshold, which all interested parties have in mind, and which we believe none of them wants to cross. On the other hand, this highly visible threshold allows Ukraine's allies to directly engage in supporting the war effort by providing intelligence, logistics, weaponry, and many other facilities. Previously and currently, the European states have opted for the application of economic sanctions against Russia in order to try to influence its behavior. Efforts were made in order to ensure the effectiveness of the sanctions, especially by means of comparing the sanctions imposed on Russia to those imposed on other countries, making thus the Russian Federation a *radioactive country*<sup>7</sup>.

NATO is the most important vehicle in supporting the interests of Western states, because it is by far their “shield and sword”, and the new strategic concept adopted at the NATO summit in Madrid on June 29, 2022, reflects extremely clearly the concept of cold security, even if its expression and intentions are specifically formulated. The indirect way of intervention results from the content of the strategy document because it insists on the element of deterrence: “*Our new*

<sup>6</sup> All these nuances can be identified in the speeches of the representatives of the states within the Security Council at the meeting no. 8974 of February 23, 2022 (night)/SC/14803 - <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14803.doc.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Jeff Stein & Jeanne Whalen; Biden Aides Explore Rarely Used Sanctions Weapon Against Russia, WASH. POST (Mar. 24, 2022), at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2022/03/24/russia-economy-sanctions>.

*Strategic Concept reaffirms that the essential purpose of NATO is to ensure our collective security, based on a 360-degree approach. It defines the Alliance's three core tasks: deterrence and defense; crisis prevention and management; and security through cooperation. We emphasize the need to significantly strengthen our deterrence and defense as the primary foundation of our mutual defense commitment under Article 5.*" The heads of state and government of the NATO Allies declared that they have a<sup>8</sup> "clear vision of the world we want: we want to live in a world where sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights and international law are respected and where every country can choose its own path, free from aggression, coercion or subversion. We work with everyone who shares these goals"<sup>9</sup>

Diplomacy has also been used to facilitate dialogue between the parties involved and to seek political solutions to the Ukrainian crisis. This was manifested in the Minsk negotiations and subsequent efforts to implement ceasefire agreements and troop withdrawals<sup>10</sup>. In this regard, cold security played an important role in preventing the escalation of violence and limiting the impact of the conflict on the civilian population. It is very true that in the end, war could not be avoided.

The main ideology cold security is based on consists in the respect and strengthening of human rights. The phenomenon of human rights is extremely intensely ideologized and seen as a tornado above any peace negotiations, aimed at finding solutions to satisfy the interests of the parties through compromise. It must be said that cold security is currently characterized by carrying the banner of the defense of human rights on all possible fronts. The international assumption of this ideology of human rights, allowing a competition between the prioritization of values, respect for human rights vs international peace and security, is currently manifested through an unprecedented mobilization of international institutions with the aim of putting pressure on Russia<sup>11</sup>. In this category, the effort to investigate, analyze and sanction in any form serious violations of human rights is more significant; such examples are: the measures to cease all hostilities and to refrain all entities from supporting Russia's military operations, ordered by the International Court of Justice in its judgment of 16 March 2022 in the case Charges of Genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of genocide<sup>12</sup>; the Court's decision of the European Court of Human Rights, delivered on 1 March 2022<sup>13</sup>, in the case of Provisional measures on Russia's military operations in Ukraine, obliging Russia to refrain from military attacks against civilians and civilian objects, including homes, residential premises, emergency vehicles and other specially protected civilian structures, such as schools and hospitals, and immediately ensure the safety of medical facilities, personnel and emergency vehicles in the territory attacked or besieged by Russian troops; the decision of the European Court of April 1, 2022<sup>14</sup>, regarding the extension of provisional measures, in the sense that Russia must ensure evacuation routes that allow civilians to take refuge to safer

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<sup>8</sup> Romania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs official website, The NATO Strategic Concept, article visible on the following link <https://www.mae.ro/node/59117>, accessed on the 8th of May 2023.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> Negotiations between Ukraine and the pro-Russian separatists in the eastern regions were signed on two separate occasions, in September 2014 and February 2015, in the presence of representatives of the OSCE, Russia and some Western countries. Monitoring compliance with the agreements was the responsibility of the OSCE, but unfortunately they were violated very soon after their conclusion.

<sup>11</sup> International Institutions Mobilize to Impose Accountability on Russia and Individual Perpetrators of War Crimes and Other Abuses doi:10.1017/ajil.2022.29

<sup>12</sup> Allegations of Genocide Under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, (Ukr. v. Russ.), Provisional Measures, para. 30 (Int'l Ct. Just. Mar. 16, 2022)

<sup>13</sup> Eur. Ct. Hum. Rts. Press Release, The European Court Grants Urgent Interim Measures in Application Concerning Russian Military Operations on Ukrainian Territory, ECHR 068 (Mar. 1, 2022)

<sup>14</sup> Eur. Ct. Hum. Rts. Press Release, Expansion of Interim Measures in Relation to Russian Military Action in Ukraine, ECHR 116 (Apr. 1, 2022)

regions of Ukraine; the decision of the prosecutor<sup>15</sup> of the International Criminal Court to start investigations; the decision of 17 March 2023 of the Second Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court to order the arrest of Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, finding that there are reasonable grounds to believe that each suspect bears responsibility for the crime of war of illegal population deportation and for the illegal transfer of population from the occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, to the detriment of Ukrainian children. Certainly, this level of pressure on Russia to respect human rights is a first in international relations and in the general international protection of human rights. Unique, because never before, in the recent history of public international law, has an arrest warrant been issued for the head of one of the victorious states in World War II. Unique also, because it is issued during an international armed conflict, without waiting for its end.

**III. The reasons that were put forward by the Russian side at the outbreak of the war** are dressed in the same clothes of the fight for the observance of international commitments and under the banner of the defense of human rights. The Russian ambassador to Romania declared in April 2022 that Russia's special military operation aims to end the genocide committed by Ukraine in the last 8 years, calculated since the conclusion of the Minsk agreements, committed against the population of the autonomous republics of Donbas and Lugansk. Very concretely, on February 23, 2022, Vassily Nebenzia, representative of Russia in the Security Council, *“expressed his regret that the calls to stop the provocations against the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics were not heeded. Ukraine, actively armed by a number of states, still harbors the illusion that it can achieve a military solution in Donbas with the help of Western sponsors. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the significant intensification of bombings and acts of diversion on the territory of the two republics. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission recorded nearly 2,000 ceasefire violations, including nearly 1,500 explosions. Residents of Donetsk and Luhansk continue to shelter in basements, and refugees continue to make their way to the Russian Federation. The nature of the challenges from the Ukrainian armed forces has not changed. Western colleagues repeat “a Ukrainian fairy tale” according to which the people of Donbas bomb themselves. In today's debate in the General Assembly, Western colleagues found not a single word of compassion or condolence for the suffering of the people of Donbas, as if these 4 million people simply do not exist.”*<sup>16</sup>

The precedent of Kosovo expresses a certain line of secessionist practice of the states<sup>17</sup>. After the events in Kosovo in 1999, under the conditions of NATO's special military intervention, this province broke away from Serbia and declared its independence in 2008. A few months later, Russia invaded Georgia and recognized the independence of the province of South Ossetia. In the context generated by Kosovo's declaration of independence, the International Court of Justice judged that this declaration does not violate international law. In 2014, the province of Crimea unilaterally declared its independence, and in its declaration, it invokes, inter alia, the precedent of Kosovo. Later this region will be incorporated following a referendum into the Russian Federation. Next, on April 7, 2014, the “People's Republic” of Donetsk was proclaimed, followed, on April 24, 2014, by that of Luhansk. On the eve of the outbreak of war, on February 21, Putin signed decrees recognizing the

<sup>15</sup> The Declaration issued by the General Prosecutor of the ICC, Karim A.A. Khan QC, regarding the situation in Ukraine (Feb. 28, 2022), at <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name/420220228-prosecutor-statement-ukraine>

<sup>16</sup> UN – Security Council, Press Release, 8974TH MEETING (NIGHT), SC/14803, 23 FEBRUARY 2022 Russian Federation Announces ‘Special Military Operation’ in Ukraine as Security Council Meets in Eleventh-Hour Effort to Avoid Full-Scale Conflict (press release available on <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14803.doc.htm>)

<sup>17</sup> See Judge Dean B. Pineles' analytical opinion on this topic <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/03/09/how-the-kosovo-precedent-shaped-putins-plan-to-invade-ukraine/>

independence of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, two rebel territories in Donbas, using the precedent of Kosovo, as he did in Georgia and Crimea.

#### **IV. Some conclusions regarding the features and expressions of cold security policy**

Cold security is a form of expression of current world politics, using, in particular, the discourse of respect for human rights and special military interventions to stop serious violations and ensure peoples' right to self-determination.

Cold security always involves the engagement of international institutions and organizations to put pressure on states responsible for serious violations of the norms of general international law.

In the conditions of an armed war, cold security involves the use of tactics that do not involve direct violence, such as diplomacy and economic sanctions, judicial proceedings, the intervention of international organizations within the limits of their competences and the support of the war effort of the state in self-defense. In this way, in the long-term, cold security will primarily contribute to the strengthening of human security.

However, within this cold security, a competition emerged marked by conflicting security interests. The escalation of this competition is currently marked by a war, to which we have referred to in this paper as cold security war. The expression "cold security world war" can be interpreted as an analogy or an extension of the concept of cold security on a global level. In this context, the term suggests an ongoing struggle between states and international actors in which direct military confrontations are not resorted to, but non-violent tactics and strategies are used to advance their interests and influence international politics. This cold security war is characterized by geopolitical competition (for influence and control in various regions of the world), by economic sanctions and financial pressures (the application of economic sanctions, asset freezes and other financial pressure measures to punish and influence the behavior of competing states - for example, in the case of Western sanctions against Russia or in the trade war between the United States and China), information warfare and propaganda (the struggle to control information and influence public perceptions in the sense of supporting one's own interests and undermining opponents); espionage and covert operations (government agencies use espionage, sabotage, hacking and other clandestine activities to obtain information, influence events and weaken adversaries), international cooperation and alliance building (states try to strengthen alliances and promote international cooperation to- and strengthen the position on the global stage and counter the influence of adversaries – for example, Finland's accession to NATO on April 4, 2023 and Sweden's future accession to this organization<sup>18</sup>, while on March 21, 2023 Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to cooperate extensively in a number of economic and business fields.<sup>19</sup>

The above indicators, often in a mirror-like manner, glimpse at a certain hypothesis despite the idea that Russia's action in Ukraine is certainly a violation of the general international law, being clear that it is an invasion, just as it was clear that even at the beginning of the Second World War the occupation of the Baltic republics and Northern Bucovina represented an aggression, accepted even by the winning powers. Cold security is based on the promotion of human rights and the strengthening of democratic institutions, on the one hand, but also on the right to self-determination. The precedent of Kosovo, although disputed, changed the essence of the principle of nationalities, giving new values to the right to self-determination. In this cold security war, nowadays a harsh reality is foreshadowing: an amputated but strong Ukraine alongside its new allies with an ideology

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<sup>18</sup> NATO Press Release, Enlargement and Article 10, full press release available on [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_49212.htm?](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49212.htm?)

<sup>19</sup> CHINA ECONOMY, China and Russia affirm economic cooperation for the next several years, PUBLISHED WED, MAR 22 2023:19 AM EDT, Evelyn Cheng, @CHENGEVELYN online article available on <https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/22/china-and-russia-affirm-multi-year-economic-cooperation.html>

of respect for human rights, on the one hand, and a more geopolitically influential western alliance towards Russia, on the other hand, and a more extensive Russia with more concrete influence over regions such as Luhansk and Donetsk. This is as such, as long as the security competition does not cross the nuclear threshold.

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## Voices at War. Can Cultural Diplomacy Bridge Back Communication?

DR. VERONICA ZAHARAGIU<sup>1</sup>  
UMFST G.E.PALADE TG. MURES, ROMANIA

**Abstract:** *Culture has always played a key role in politics, at the forefront of diplomacy. It has shaped nations, helping them define themselves, representing them on the international arena and was a core element in the formation of the nation-state. What has been, however, the role that culture played in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, between different political systems and what happens to it as states begin to talk different languages in terms of their approach towards their foreign policy and state interests? Can culture alleviate basic differences and help build a communication bridge or does it separate and divide?*

**Keywords:** *EU, propaganda, ideology, cultural diplomacy, identity, mediation.*

### CONTEXT: A THEORETICAL 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

**F**oreign policy has long been dominated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by realism, moving from normative traditionalism to descriptive and explanatory positivism, and then by neorealism. Between the anarchic structure of the international system and institutions, learning and other means leading to cooperation, the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw neorealism and neoliberalism competing for the center theoretical stage. Critical theorists explicitly bring into the forefront the question of identities shaped by historical processes (the same that also create interests). Countries interacted with each other based on the “hard” tools of treaties, laws, political negotiations, internationally recognized organizations, military capability.

At the end of the century, critical theory, postmodernism and feminism all challenged the notion of state sovereignty and argued for new political communities more inclusive with the marginal and disenfranchised groups. Outsiders are of equal importance with a country’s citizens, challenging the nation-state. The massive migration flows of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have largely changed this concept. Postmodernism supports cultural diversity and stresses the importance of minorities, whereas feminism argues against the realist theory’s masculine bias, and for the inclusion of woman and alternative values into public life. The post-positivists have thus made their entrance into the game, changing and challenging the realist status quo. Channeling the classical view of the human being as an individual that is basically social and rational, capable of cooperating and learning from past experiences, the non-positivists theorists of the English school emphasize that states, like individuals, have legitimate interests that others can recognize and respect, and that they can recognize the general advantages of observing a principle of reciprocity in their mutual relations<sup>2</sup>. Shared values, shared interests and a dynamic international system are core values of the liberal theory, advocating international cooperation and change resulting from interdependence. This has eventually led to globalization and to the globalist system.

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<sup>2</sup> Jackson, Robert and Georg Sørensen. *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 167.

New trends in the 21st century have seen a revival of classical realism, especially of Morgenthau's work. Scholars (Hartmut Behr, Muriel Cozette, Amelia Heath, Sean Molloy) have reinterpreted his works, pointing to the flexibility of his classical realism and revealing his normative assumptions based on the promotion of universal moral values. For Morgenthau, states are power-oriented actors, and this is a critical stance in security studies. At the same time, he acknowledges that international politics would be more pernicious than it actually is were it not for moral restraints and the work of international law<sup>3</sup>. "The protection of human life and freedom are given central importance by Morgenthau, and constitute a 'transcendent standard of ethics' which should always animate scientific enquiries."<sup>4</sup>

Thus, recent years, with the constant, growing aggressions of Russia against Ukraine, first in the invasion and annexing of the Crimean Peninsula, leading to full-on war of aggression against Ukraine that began on 24 February 2022, are also marked, up to a certain point, by conflicting theoretical views: Russia's realist take on international relations, its emphasis on power, state security, self-interest vs a large (if not the larger) part of the neoliberal, post-positivist Western world, constantly advocating for progressivism, moralism, legalism, and which had lost touch with the reality of self-interest and power, as the global order was stable and aggression-free. The overoptimistic liberal belief was further challenged during the Covid-19 pandemic, which acutely showed what unbalanced (mainly economic, but not only) dependence can do to state security. Armed conflicts (more frequent in the Middle East, in Africa) had become less frequent or, at least, more geographically isolated. In the case of Europe, the following need to be mentioned: the break-up of Yugoslavia (leading to the Yugoslav Wars, spread over almost 10 years), Georgia (with a Russo-Ossetian alliance emerging as Russian explicit expanding presence), Abkhazia, Kosovo (leading to the North Kosovo crisis), Ukraine (with the Pro-Russian unrest, the annexation of Crimea, the Russo-Ukrainian War and the Russian invasion of Ukraine).

## REALISM. NEOREALISM. THE COLD WAR

Culture plays a double role in the context of international relations: it creates or expresses identity, and it then promotes it in the international arena (see, for the latter, the similar if not synonym concepts of cultural relations, cultural exchange, cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is thus part of public diplomacy and closely related to the concept of soft power.

Realism saw the rise and development of cultural diplomacy in its institutional form: Alliance Française first opened in France in 1883, with its first foreign branch or comite local, opened a year later in Barcelona, Spain. At the time, the Alliance was an NGO and not a diplomatic body of the state (though it received funds and was often coordinated by the French Foreign Ministry<sup>5</sup>). It was France again that created the function of cultural attachés, sent in diplomatic missions during the First World War. Cultural diplomacy was further bureaucratized by having a dedicated department within the French Foreign Ministry, the Directorate General for Cultural Affairs. E. Pajtinka then details further examples, having a more specialized and concrete goal: the British Council, founded in UK in 1934, was meant to counteract German propaganda, particularly in the states of Latin America and the Middle East, whereas the Division of Cultural Relations, within the U.S.

<sup>3</sup> Behr, Hartmut and Amelia Heath. "Misreading in IR Theory and Ideology Critique: Morgenthau, Waltz, and Neo-Realism," *Review of International Studies*, 35(2):2009, pp. 327–349.

<sup>4</sup> Cozette, Muriel, "Reclaiming the Critical Dimension of Realism: Hans J. Morgenthau and the Ethics of Scholarship," *Review of International Studies*, 34(1): 2008, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> For a brief history of public diplomacy, see also Pajtinka, E. 2014. "Cultural Diplomacy in the Theory and Practice of Contemporary International Relations". In *Politické vedy/ Political Sciences*. Roč. 17, č. 4, 2014. ISSN 1335 – 2741, s. 95-108, [http://www.politickevedy.fpv.mv.umb.sk/userfiles/file/4\\_2014/PAJTINKA2.pdf](http://www.politickevedy.fpv.mv.umb.sk/userfiles/file/4_2014/PAJTINKA2.pdf), accessed 28.04.2023, 08:00 a.m.



Department of State, was to fulfil a similar mission: foster cultural relations with Latin American countries to fight back the growing influence of fascist ideology in South America. It was created in 1938. In 1940, the Office of Inter-American Affairs, led by N. Rockefeller, was created in order to promote American culture in Latin America.

The Cold War brought a new dimension to cultural diplomacy, as it was an active tool, with, again, very concrete missions, in the tensed ideological struggle between the U.S. and the USSR. For the U.S., the take was the promotion of the values of democracy and freedom, as elements of American cultural identity. In the 50s, the United States Information Agency (USIA) coordinated activities related to cultural diplomacy. Created in 1953, the USIA later joined forces with government-supported groups such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) and private organizations such as the Ford Foundation; other elite cultural institutions, museums, universities, and foundations joined in, heavily sponsored by the private sector, a business world that not only understood to support the art world for itself, for economic gain, but also for political purposes. This kaleidoscope, then, shifted in the 1960s due to larger changes in American politics, culture, economics, and demographics.

The revisionist thesis—developed by Max Kozloff<sup>6</sup>, Eva Cockroft<sup>7</sup>, and David and Cecile Shapiro<sup>8</sup>, made famous by Serge Guilbaut<sup>9</sup>, and further elaborated by Frances Stonor Saunders<sup>10</sup>—then makes an argument for a more direct instrumental role that abstract expressionism played in the cultural Cold War: presumably apolitical and internationally prestigious, abstract expressionism would be a weapon of the Cold War for the United States.

On their turn, the USSR saw arts as playing a crucial role both within the Soviet Union and in foreign policy: through repeated exposure to the ideologically correct message it carried (deeply political, and less so aesthetic), art could help shape the new Soviet man, a selfless person, totally dedicated to the cause, a spark in the Communist Revolution, and a brick in the new Communist society. The Communist Revolution could be ignited through arts, so cultural diplomacy and cultural exchanges played a crucial part in Soviet foreign policy. Art could educate and be the correct representation of the only ideological correct world, the Communist one.

Stalin's death marked the beginning of what has been called the thaw, an era of lessened restrictions, and, in terms of foreign policy doctrine, of peaceful coexistence. Paradoxically, the famous thawing seems to have found its spring in the writings of the father of the October Revolution, Lenin. Since the revolution was to ignite the capitalist world, the Bolsheviks understood peaceful coexistence as a transitory state. Soviet writer Ilya Ehrenburg first used the term thaw as the title of his novella published in May 1954, which dealt with previously unmentionable topics, such as mass arrests, and questioned whether individuals could achieve real happiness through devoting themselves to building socialism.<sup>11</sup> As Stephen Bittner explains, Ehrenburg did not want his readers to equate the idea of a thaw with spring because “slight frosts” would still occur. Instead, the idea of a thaw is best understood as a lengthy process with periods of reoccurring frosts, which would evoke a feeling of uncertainty.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Max Kozloff, “American Painting During the Cold War,” *Artforum*, May 1973: 44

<sup>7</sup> Eva Cockroft, “Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War,” *Artforum*, June 1974: 39

<sup>8</sup> David Shapiro and Cecile Shapiro, “Abstract Expressionism: The Politics of Apolitical Painting,” *Prospects* 3 (1977): 210.

<sup>9</sup> Serge Guilbaut. 1983. *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 2, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Frances Stonor Saunders, “Modern Art Was CIA ‘Weapon,’” *Independent*, October 22, 1995, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/modern-art-was-cia-weapon-1578808.html>. Saunders develops this argument fully in *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 2000)

<sup>11</sup> Stephen V. Bittner. *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat*, Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2008, pp. 2–3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 2–3.

Geoffrey Roberts explains, as successive Soviet leaders focused on developing Communism within the Soviet Union and the worldwide Communist Revolution did not occur, peaceful coexistence became a constant notion.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, Soviet officials understood peaceful coexistence as permitting non-violent competition between the Communist and capitalist states, which offered the Soviets an opportunity to showcase the superiority of their system and emerge victorious. Robert C. Grogin argues, in, *Natural Enemies: The United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War, 1917–1991*, that all three leaders, Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev, strove to spread Communism, using different means. Lenin sought a quick worldwide revolution; Stalin supported a more gradual Communist victory via military conquest; and Khrushchev desired to encompass the West by supporting national liberation movements within the developing world. Clearly, writes Grogin<sup>14</sup>, all three leaders remained dedicated to defeating the West and spreading Communism.<sup>15</sup>

Soviet cultural diplomacy and then Soviet-American cultural relations entered a new era starting with 1957, when Khrushchev rose to undisputed power in the Soviet Union. As Cadra<sup>16</sup> writes, just as Americans planned to capitalize on these changes within the Soviet Union, Khrushchev actively sought a cultural exchange program designed to erode anti-Communist sentiment. The Soviet leader understood the vast potential of nonmilitary weapons. Even before he defeated his political opponents, Khrushchev had promoted American-Soviet cultural exchange. On June 2, 1957, during an interview with the American network CBS, Khrushchev argued that increased cultural relations would improve relations between the United States and Soviet Union and admonished U.S. leaders to stop halting cultural exchange efforts. Four days later, Soviet officials set forth a large proposal for exchanges in the scientific, industrial, technical, and artistic spheres<sup>17</sup>. As with the previous attempts to persuade the United States to sign a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, Khrushchev's CBS interview aimed to cast the United States as a hostile and uncompromising foe. Though Ideological Goodwill outwardly seeking better relations, Khrushchev sought to compete with the West, and his belief in the doctrine of peaceful coexistence provided the philosophical basis for cultural exchange. However, as Cadra summarizes, "scholars either argue that Khrushchev truly desired improved relations with the United States, or contend that the Soviet leader harboured animosity toward the United States, or maintain that Khrushchev's policies vacillated between a hard line Communist stance and more moderate Communist policies"<sup>18</sup>.

Another characteristic in the Soviets' approach towards culture, and one immediately after the success of the October Revolution, was their acceptance of past. Indeed, it would be the carefully selected past, but, as Sheila Fitzpatrick<sup>19</sup> shows, in the 1920s there were bourgeois artists invited by the state to continue their work. More complicated was the case of the Imperial theatres, the Bolshoi in Moscow, the Marynisky in Petrograd (which later became Leningrad), which, all throughout the

<sup>13</sup> Geoffrey Roberts. *The Soviet Union in World Politics: Coexistence, Revolution, and Cold War, 1945–1991. The Making of the Contemporary World*, eds. Eric Evans and Ruth Henig, London: Routledge, 1999, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Robert C. Grogin. *Natural Enemies: The United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War, 1917–1991*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Costea, Simion (2012), „Over the Iron Curtain: the Romanian-Belgian Diplomatic Relations in 1948”, (p.11-215) in vol. Carmen Andras, Cornel Sigmirean, (coordinators), *Itineraries beyond Borders of Cultures, Identities and Disciplines*, Sibiu, „ASTRA Museum”, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Cadra McDaniel., *American-Soviet Cultural Diplomacy: The Bolshoi Ballet's American Premiere*, Lexington Books, London, 2014, p. 16

<sup>17</sup> Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali. *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary*, W. W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 147–148

<sup>18</sup> Cadra McDaniel., *American-Soviet Cultural Diplomacy: The Bolshoi Ballet's American Premiere*, Lexington Books, London, 2014, p. 28

<sup>19</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick. *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia*, Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992, pp. 91–92.

decade, fought for survival. Ballet, a form of art for the previous nobility, managed to stay alive, accepting innovative techniques (some aesthetically valid, some other just experiments) which ensured its survival. “The ballet’s modernization symbolized the new society’s reconstruction of Russian culture, including the most sacred traditions of the prerevolutionary era. Soviet cultural identity consisted of prerevolutionary formats and techniques overlaid with revolutionary themes”, as Cadra McDaniel Peterson<sup>20</sup> wrote. It then became one of the most praised cultural weapons in the Cold War, with the Bolshoi ballet formally touring the US<sup>21</sup>.

“‘cultural Cold War’, the struggle for cultural prestige and influence between the Communist Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc satellites on one side and the United States and the nations of western Europe on the other. The battles of the cultural Cold War ranged from heated exchanges at international conferences to duelling theatrical productions to competing literary and cultural journals.”<sup>22</sup>

In the end, the bilateral exchanges led the way to Gorbachev's glasnost, perestroika, and the end of the Cold War. Yale Richmond<sup>23</sup> gives a compelling account of this cultural journey in his book *Cultural Exchange and The Cold war: Raising the Iron Curtain*.

## THE END OF THE COLD WAR. NEOLIBERALISM. GLOBALIZATION. MULTICULTURALISM

Since the end of the Cold War, culture and identity rather than ideology have been increasingly recognized as key forces shaping global order<sup>24</sup>. The rise of identity politics and religious revivalism have been feeding debates on the “clash of civilizations” and Islam’s challenges to the West, as the Western and the Arab worlds were brought closer together by globalization, open markets, migration.

The current intellectual and cultural commerce between the United States and other nations has produced radical changes in international relations. Movies, the mass media of communication, tourism, publicity, and advertising have altered the character of national cultures and of international discourse. The activities of universities, foundations, religious groups, fraternal orders, professional societies, and labour unions have contributed to the same end.<sup>25</sup>

In parallel, debates have been focusing on globalization, broadly defined as an “empirical process of increasing worldwide economic, political, technological, and cultural interconnectedness. Globalization’s impact on culture has been viewed as both a blessing and a curse: on the one hand offering unprecedented opportunities for interactive and enriching cultural exchanges and therefore increasing cultural diversity, and on the other leading to uniformity or tensions between cultures.”<sup>26</sup> In many parts of the world, globalization is perceived as a threat to national cultures and traditional

<sup>20</sup> Cadra McDaniel. *American-Soviet Cultural Diplomacy: The Bolshoi Ballet’s American Premiere*, Lexington Books, 2014p. 36, Natea Mihaela Daciana, „Do we like the bad guy? Branding trough negative image”, în *Elite politice și securitatea națională a României*, Natea Mihaela Daciana, et all (coord.) Ed ProUniversitaria, 2018, pp. 112-117

<sup>21</sup> See, for this, compelling accounts given by Prevots, Naima, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War Studies in Dance History*, Wesleyan University Press, 1998, and Cadra Peterson, 2014, *American-Soviet Cultural Diplomacy: The Bolshoi Ballet’s American Premiere*, Lexington Books,

<sup>22</sup> Greg C. Barnhisel. *Cold War Modernists. Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy*, Columbia University Press, 2015, p. 20

<sup>23</sup> Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and The Cold war: Raising the Iron Curtain*, Penn State University Press, University Park, 2003

<sup>24</sup> Irena Kozymka, *The Diplomacy of Culture*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p.9

<sup>25</sup> González Chiaramonte Claudio, “The Evolution of U. S. Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War. México y la Cuenca del Pacífico” [en línea]. 2007, 10(28), 19-42[read on 29 de Abril de 2023]. ISSN: 1665-0174. Available at: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=433747604003>

<sup>26</sup> Irena Kozymka, *The Diplomacy of Culture*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p.9

forms of identity.<sup>27</sup> As a result and contrary to earlier predictions of “the end of history,” the forces of globalization appear to be more nurturing than destructive of the reaffirmation of sovereignties and, in reaction, in Irena Kozymka’s words, of the demands for recognition of regional and local differences.

Neo-liberalism, constructivism, postmodernism thus see culture as not an external tool in their public diplomacy, as outside representation, but as an intrinsic part, creating, shaping an evolving identity. Cultural diversity has become a hot topic, centred on multiculturalism – the cultural diversity within countries, on the issue of cultural globalization (seen as a peril in terms of cultural heritage and marketisation, driven by the capitalist drive for profit continuously opening and exploring new territories, i.e. markets). Multiculturalism thus stands against formal liberal universalism: there is no universal human nature, but countless cultural differences.

Regarding the complex relation between the multicultural and the global, “the first referring to the past and tradition, the second wholly centred on the present; the first consisting of differences, the second tending towards homogeneity,”<sup>28</sup> the two phenomena nevertheless refer back to and support each other. “The current globalization is a “new” historical fact owing to its eminently technical origin (information technology, military technology, economic and financial market, etc.), with a practical and operational basis which in itself does not lead to an effective universal culture. Hence it cannot rise up to the role of cultural universality or constitute a principle for the unification of a whole life form. Indeed, **a totally technological culture** is only possible as a technocratic ideology, that is, as the universalization (unfounded and therefore violent) of technological power<sup>29</sup>. Botturi continues by warning that “The modern paradigm of the human and political relationship as a conflict, in line with the *homo oeconomicus* model of mercantile competition and with the model of the centralizing state clashes with the new world configuration of globalization in which technological power and the universal interrelation make **conflict an increasingly catastrophic reality**.”<sup>30</sup> In this context the digital component must be considered in all form and shapes as it has a deeply transforming nature in matters of cultural dialog and diplomacy<sup>31</sup>.

Conflicts have not been far from the EU, but the annexation of Crimea and then the invasion of Ukraine have come to prove that while there many states were concerned with the global/multicultural paradigm. Others, like Russia, never lost contact with Realism, continuing to act according to their reality of self-interest and power.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Andrew Heywood, *Global Politics*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 136–156.

<sup>28</sup> Elena Pariotti, “Multiculturalismo, globalizzazione e universalità dei diritti umani,” *Ragion pratica*, no. 16 (2001), p. 63, accessed April 29, 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Francesco Botturi, “The Conditions for Multicultural Cohabitation”, Oasis [online], published on 27th March 2019, URL: <https://www.oasiscenter.eu/en/conditions-for-multicultural-cohabitation>, accessed April 29, 2023.

<sup>30</sup> Francesco Botturi, “The Conditions for Multicultural Cohabitation”, Oasis [online], published on 27th March 2019, URL: <https://www.oasiscenter.eu/en/conditions-for-multicultural-cohabitation>, accessed April 29, 2023.

<sup>31</sup> Natea Mihaela Daciana, *Communication through Digital Diplomacy and the Impact over National Security*, Luminița Chirean, Cristian Lako, Cristina Nicolae (coord.), Humanities in the Spotlight, Lambert Publishing, ISBN: 978-620-0-48128-3, pp. 188-194, Natea Mihaela Daciana, „Politica de diplomație publică între comunicare și manipulare”, în *Elite politice și securitatea națională a României*, Natea Mihaela Daciana, Lucian Săcălean, Roxana Mihaly (coord.) Ed ProUniversitaria, 2018

<sup>32</sup> Maria Costea, Costea, Simion (2015, ISI Journal article) “Ukraine between EU and Eurasian Regional Project in 2013”, p.113-131, in *Transylvanian Review* (Center for Transylvanian Studies and the Romanian Academy), Vol. XXIV, Supplement No. 1, 2015. Costea, Maria, Costea Simion (2011, ISI journal article), „The Management of the EU’s Eastern Partnership Project: A New Stage in the European Neighbourhood Policy”, p.409-433, in *Transylvanian Review* (Center for Transylvanian Studies and the Romanian Academy), Vol. XX, Supplement No. 4, 2011. Costea, Maria, Costea, Simion, (2015, ISI proceedings article), „Challenges of the EU in the migrant/Refugee Crisis in 2015”, p.166-175, in vol. *Discourse as a form of multiculturalism in literature and communication. History ad cultural mentalities* Tîrgu-Mureș, Arhipelag XXI Press, 2015.

The political voices on the international relations scene are all loud, seeking to be heard, understood, respected, even obeyed. The pandemic, with its health (natural, universal) crisis, its (global) economic crisis, its social (culturally different) crisis, and now the war in Ukraine have shown, ever more acutely, the lack of a common communication language, i.e. a shared recognitional relationship.

## CONCLUSIONS

After the annexation of Crimea, it has become evident that Russia and the Western states speak two different languages: Russia has never steered too far away from its Realist state interests, and has used the argument of a shared culture (the Russian minorities in Crimea and regions of Ukraine) to bring them back behind its borders. The Western states, adhering more, rather than less to the Westphalian principles, are also battling the challenges brought by globalization, with the changes in the global market and a steady rise of nationalist movements. At EU level “every crisis generated pressure on the EU. Every crisis generated the need for a common political action and solidarity. Finally, every crisis generated some degree of political division within the EU. The political division social manifestation and discontent which were in some cases by the information which reached the population”<sup>33</sup>. Although Lucian Sacalean was referring to EU cultural minorities, his warning regarding “the guaranteeing of a set of rights that encompass education, mother tongue usage, political representation both local and national, and actual cultural preservation is not only welcome but urgent and necessary to apply”<sup>34</sup> remains valid today. We believe that culture can bridge back communication between these such different political views, and that the role of cultural diplomacy needs to be strengthened if states are to speak the negotiation and even peace language again.

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<sup>33</sup> Mihaela Daciana Natea, “Is the EU Strategic Communication Good Enough? Why Does the War in Ukraine Prove the Need for a More Complex Approach Towards Disinformation?” in Mihaela Daciana Natea (ed.). *Disinformation Crossing Borders. The Multilayered Disinformation Concerning the War in Ukraine*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 2022, p. 13

<sup>34</sup> Lucian Sacalean, “Minorities vs. Majorities – An Evolutive Debate Towards An European Legislation?”, in Mihaela Daciana Natea et Lucian Sacalean, *Security and Reconstruction in Europe*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 2020, p. 192

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# Information Security in the Republic of Moldova in the Context of Hybrid Threats

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ALEXANDRU DOROSEVICI-DUKA<sup>1</sup>

STATE UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Abstract:** *Russia's war against Ukraine has revealed numerous weaknesses and gaps in the Republic of Moldova's ability to show resilience in front of hybrid threats. A weak civil society, as well as the fears of the post-Soviet society in transition. Russian propaganda rovokes significant social processes in the Republic of Moldova.*

**Keywords:** *EU, Moldova, Security, Vulnerability, Risks, Hybrid war.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Russia's war against Ukraine has revealed numerous weaknesses and gaps in the Republic of Moldova's resilience against hybrid threats. With a weak civil society and the fears of a post-Soviet society in transition, Russian propaganda, using all these to its advantage, brings about important social processes in the Republic of Moldova. This article aims to analyse the beginning, evolution, and current situation, as well as the prospects for the development of the Republic of Moldova in one of the longest hybrid wars in modern times, which Russia has unleashed against Moldova, emphasizing the political, ethical, and public mental health perspectives.

The history of the informational war on the territory of the modern Republic of Moldova began long before the start of the hot phase of the war on the Dniester in 1992. Studying historical data, one can see that the growth of the territory of the Russian Empire towards the Danube in the direction of Constantinople has been interrupted by the geographical position of the Romanian people, dividing the Russian Empire and the Slavs of the Balkan Peninsula, whose liberation was an essential argument for Russia's expansion. Initially, the authorities of the Empire did not question the common identity of the Romanians, but only recruited individuals and the nobility into the imperial administration. Soon, giving a separate national identity for Moldovans, especially after the Unification of the Danube Principalities, this question became imperative for the Russian authorities. Years later, the USSR, not agreeing with the unification of Bessarabia with the Romanian Kingdom, created the Autonomous Moldavian Soviet Republic on the territory of Soviet Ukraine, which would be a mirror version of "bourgeois" Romania.

The Romanian population of this new country was subjected to a massive ideological re-education, first of all, in the creation of a separate national identity based entirely on Romanophobia. After this, the reform of 1933 was intended for the convergence of the literary norms of the newly minted Moldavian language and standard Romanian, when the Soviet authorities saw an opportunity to spread the communist revolution to the neighbouring Kingdom of Romania. But soon, the organizers of this rapprochement were shot, the language norms were again artificially distant from each other, and Romania was portrayed exclusively in a negative light [4].

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<sup>1</sup> Dorosevici-Duka Alexandru adorosevici@gmail.com MD psychiatrist, Community Mental Health Center Călărași, Republic of Moldova. PhD. student, Department of Philosophy and Bioethics of "Nicolae Testemițanu" State University of Medicine and Pharmacy of the Republic of Moldova. Master's student, Center for European Studies, Faculty of Law. "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași.



Succeeding the conquest of Bessarabia by Soviet troops, this policy was extended to the newly annexed territories. The children who attended the schools of the Soviet era received an education that denigrated the national identity, the Romanian history, while at the same time, the Russian culture was shown to be superior. As a result, these children were very separated ideologically from their parents, who were graduates of a Romanian school.. Public opinion figures such as teachers and religious figures were shot or expelled, and their place was taken by teachers and political educators from other regions of the USSR. [6]

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the independent Republic of Moldova became the first target of the Russian Federation hybrid war, striking at once in several key areas. Russia broke the resistance of Moldova for many years, energetically, economically, politically, informational, and ideologically; religion and nostalgia for the good old days also became a help in an unconventional war, which also had a hot phase with the direct participation of the troops of the Russian 14th Army, as well as Russian citizens who signed up for the front in Moldova voluntarily, the so-called Cossacks, internationalists, and militias, only a small part of which consisted of properly local residents of the eastern regions of Moldova. Before, during, and after the hot phase of the war, the Republic of Moldova was attacked by information weapons from internally controlled sources and from outside sources such as Russian TV channels still broadcasting throughout the territory of the former USSR, as well, by Media owned by regional pro-Russian media of Transnistria and Gagauzia. [5,10]

## **2. WHY IS INFORMATION WARFARE SO IMPORTANT ETHICALLY?**

Despite the fact that information wars are most often not directly associated with human casualties, they can also indirectly cause victims: for example via interpersonal or intergroup conflicts, mental trauma, damage to the image and reputation. Furthermore, during a hybrid war, the moral framework and benchmarks can change or shift, involving a large mass population, thus having a collective character [7.] Information wars in Moldova divide generations and families into opposite sides, interpersonal conflicts on a political, and geopolitical basis, become commonplace in many families. Thus, the Moldovan society turned out to be particularly vulnerable in front of the Russian information war.

## **3. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVE.**

From a psychological point of view, the main goal of a hybrid war is to divide society into two parts and clash them. Propaganda also blurs the boundaries between civilians and military, each of them can take on a different role at any time. Likewise, during a hybrid war, the moral framework and benchmarks can change or shift, which happens rarely during a period of welfare, but in the case of disinformation, it can have a multiple, collective character. [8.]. Another goal of Russian propaganda that should be mentioned is to discredit Ukrainian refugees, unleash conflicts, and simulate bad attitudes or humiliation of the local population by Ukrainian refugees, for example, by painting memorable places in the colours of the Ukrainian flag in the early days of a Russian invasion.

The war in neighbouring Ukraine caught the medical public system of the Republic of Moldova unprepared; mass anxiety and the flow of refugees raised the necessity of food and clean water supplies, adequate shelter, and safe transportation and the lack of medical staff become a challenge for the local healthcare system and multiplied the load [9.] The number of appeals to the public mental health system has significantly increased against the background of military anxiety, with exacerbated chronic mental illnesses, in particular, the anxiety-depressive spectrum, as well as signs of Post-Traumatic Disorder among refugees. However, coordinated work and international

assistance have significantly improved the situation and helped provide the necessary assistance on the spot or redirect the flow of refugees to the next destination. Despite this, there was an urgent need for highly specialized specialists working with psycho-traumas, conducting rehabilitation of people, as well as for psychoeducation.

#### **4. VULNERABLE AND DISARMED**

The phenomenon of hybrid war in the Republic of Moldova is a continuation of Kremlin's policy of disinformation of the local population, aiming to cause confrontation with the Moldovan authorities, and is a component of a hybrid war along with economic, political, social, environmental, and military warfare [2.] . A large percentage of politically controlled media, due to the lack of transparency and low profitability of the media market, allow the media to be easily controlled by oligarchs and their political protégés; moreover the weak separation of the branches of power and their political dependence on the same oligarchs turned Moldova into a captured state [2,5] Media literacy in Moldova also needs to be given attention, in order to familiarize viewers with such concepts as fact-checking or explaining complex issues. Another issue is the language of the presentation. For a long time, the Moldovan state gave pan-national frequencies to large Russian media, and many are informed from Russian-speaking or Russian media, as the locals do not have enough money to improve coverage and quality broadcasts.[2,5] Also, for many years, the pro-Russian authorities in Moldova limited Western investments, or did not make the market attractive, while Russian businessmen bought up enterprises of strategic importance, which, for example, include wine factories in Moldova. Also, an important factor was to constantly reinforce the dependence of the Moldovan economy on Russia, even when cooperation with the EU in exports and imports has long replaced the importance of Russia, in significant proportions. In the political arena, control was exercised through overtly pro-Russian parties that targeted nostalgic people and national minorities, as well as the so-called pro-European parties that most often became entangled in corruption scandals, causing frustration and criticism.

#### **5. A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE FACE OF MULTIPLE VULNERABILITIES. MODIFICATION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK.**

Over time, with the gradual changes in the political field and the arrival of new players, a possible increase in the resilience of the Republic of Moldova to hybrid threats began to appear and be discussed. The Information Security Strategy details the efforts of the Republic of Moldova to counter propaganda and false information (2019-2024). The strategy was approved by the Parliament in 2018 in accordance with the objectives set out in the Information Security Concept of the Republic of Moldova (2017). The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova (2011) states that disinformation and propaganda campaigns in the media must be stopped in order to protect the information security of the state. The Security and Intelligence Service submitted two reports to the Parliament (SIS) on the implementation of the Information Security Strategy in 2019 and 2020.

The latest report has been submitted to the Parliament, but has not yet been made public. In 2018, the National Media Development Concept was adopted. The main problems are identified, as well as policy priorities aimed at improving the regulatory framework for the media. Targets have also been set to reduce the harmful effects of propaganda and disinformation on the media environment. In addition, work is underway on a new program document called "The National Program for the Development of the Media of the Republic of Moldova". Over time, the progress and interest of both the political class and civil society in the issues of resilience to hybrid threats became noticeable.[1.]

## 6. THE CURRENT SITUATION

The Republic of Moldova ranked the lowest among the 14 countries surveyed in the Disinformation Resilience Index (six Eastern Partner countries and eight EEC member states). Due to the fact that, in the Republic of Moldova, the media are often the target of both internal and external disinformation campaigns, exacerbated by the precarious economic situation, the lack of critical thinking of the population, the growing dependence of the media on the government, ethnic divisions, as well as the ideological fracture of the geopolitical landscape countries, the Republic of Moldova is currently extremely susceptible to propaganda and false information.[1.]

The most vulnerable groups of the population of the Republic of Moldova, according to the same research, are people who use Russian TV channels for information, which are very popular among the broad sections of Moldovan society, and completely are prevalent in Transnistria, Gagauzia, and for other minor ethnic groups.

The high level of public trust in the Moldovan Orthodox Church, a division of the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate, plays a significant role. Religious figures often use an anti-Western narrative to reaffirm their conservative, anti-scientific view, while not forgetting to mention Russia as a defender of traditional values.

Despite the fact that, in the Republic of Moldova, there are a number of institutions responsible for information security and media regulation, their activities are not coordinated, are weak and sometimes openly disinterested. Moreover, the lack of a legal definition of the term “disinformation” is currently not part of the national regulatory framework.

The Information Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova for 2021-2024 was developed by the government, the Security Service, and the Intelligence Service in 2018 and approved by the Parliament after a heated public debate on information security issues and the government’s ability to address threats. The strategy includes a detailed action plan to be implemented by all relevant authorities to ensure information and cyber security.[1.]

## 7. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE

Among the possible solutions, the following can be considered - increase the transparency of media channel funding and liberalise advertising revenues, organise media literacy and critical thinking courses for the population, develop public organisations that contribute to the fight against propaganda, strengthen legislation and involve parliamentarians, delineate the duties of regulatory bodies and define the exact fields of action, legislatively define the concepts of disinformation and propaganda, solve the problem of church influence.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

Russia's war against Ukraine has revealed numerous weaknesses and gaps in the Republic of Moldova's ability to counter hybrid threats. The weak civil society, as well as the fears of the transitional post-Soviet society, are used by Russian propaganda to their advantage, provoking significant social processes in the Republic of Moldova. Hybrid threats from Russia, however, do not subside in their intensity, and Russia is increasingly making direct threats and interfering in internal affairs. Information warfare as part of hybrid warfare has shown its destructive impact on society, revealing an increase in the burden on the public mental health system with a colossal ethical impact. Thus, the Republic of Moldova simply has no other choice but to increase its capacity for resilience, reduce the split inside its society and develop plans and strategies for further actions.

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## From Education for Democratic Culture to Education for Resilience. Are they Different in Building Competences to Combat Disinformation?

DR. MIHAELA DACIANA NATEA<sup>1</sup>,

UNIVERSITATEA DE MEDICINĂ, FARMACIE, ȘTIINȚE ȘI TEHNOLOGIE,  
GEORGE EMIL PALADE DIN TÂRGU MUREȘ

**Abstract:** Building resilience is a complex process, starting from the definition that we may attribute to the concept. From one country to another, from one organization to another, the concept shifts its meaning from essential to minor aspects. From a particular security policy to an overarching policy, one may identify all range of approaches towards resilience. What is clear is that resilience should help communities to better respond to threats and to better recover in the aftermath of an event. Also, we know that education should set the scene for this process. In which way, it is not clear yet. This could be a consequence of the problems in definition and taxonomy, or a result of the constantly changing threats.

The article looks back to the way the concepts of education for peace, education for democratic citizenship and culture have evolved, trying to identify common grounds, if any, to a possible concept of education for resilience. The emphasis is put on the efforts to combat disinformation as it is a stringent need of the current security context.

**Key words:** EU, Security, resilience, disinformation, education, education for resilience

### FROM EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE TO RESILIENCE

In the midst of the political changes that took place in 1990, the concept of education for peace took momentum within the international organization. Elaborated and developed at UNESCO level, the Education for peace concept was meant to foster mutual understanding and human rights in a post conflict world. The new education should be based on knowledge about conflict and peace and should also develop the skills for a non-violent culture<sup>2</sup>.

Five years later, through the Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy<sup>3</sup>, UNESCO established the link between education for peace and education for democracy in an international political context in which the world was reuniting, ideologically speaking, and the former communist states were set on the road towards democracy and reform. In the focus was the historical approach regarding the evolution of humankind, thus, in the new international context, history as a discipline should be revised to include the new evolutions and to serve as a peace building discipline.

Education for democratic citizenship is another concept developed in the '90s this time within the education framework of the Council of Europe. As landmarking initiatives are:

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<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, UNESCO'S Work on Education for Peace and Non-Violence, Building Peace Through Education, 2008, p.3, ED-2008/WS/38, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000160787>

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO, Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, 1995, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/resources/educators/human-rights-education-training/12-integrated-framework-action-education-peace-human-rights-and-democracy-1995>

⇒ the “European Educational Cooperation for Peace, Stability and Democracy”<sup>4</sup> (1996) – a programme of cooperation with the new independent states that are transitioning towards democracy<sup>5</sup>.

⇒ the Enhanced Graz Process and Stability Pact (1998). Both documents focused on reforming the history curriculum, which previously focused on “forging a public sense of national identity and loyalty by selective use of the past, with a focus on conflict with others, conveying fear, distrust and hatred of all ‘outsiders’”<sup>6</sup>. History as a catalyst of peace was a concept already used but the reconceptualization of the way history is taught in the Central and Eastern European area had the potential to dismantle old rhetoric and ideologies that were well embedded in the collective mentalities and others that could be resuscitated and create risks for insecurities. Thus, history could teach about common values, regional identities, evolutions in the international relations system, and the European construct.

In the 2000s, the concept of education for democratic citizenship started to emerge and was developed in several documents:

⇒ Cracow Resolution (2000) adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and the Recommendations issued two years later by the Committee of Ministers to member states on education for democratic citizenship<sup>7</sup>, building on the previous concepts of education for democratic citizenship.

⇒ Declaration of the third Summit of Heads of States and Government (2005) – building on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, the declaration stresses the importance to promote these values and an active involvement of citizens and the society in general<sup>8</sup>. Education for Democratic Citizenship is considered to be at the center of democratic societies<sup>9</sup>, preventing conflict, promoting stability and facilitating economic and social progress<sup>10</sup>.

⇒ Action Plan<sup>11</sup> of the Declaration makes reference to the need to build a culture of democracy. The stress is on values and cultures as catalysts for democratic practices which will lead to fighting terrorism, corruption and organized crime, combating trafficking in human beings, combating violence against women including domestic violence, combating cybercrime and strengthening human rights in the information society, ensuring social cohesion, building a Europe for children<sup>12</sup>.

⇒ “Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture” meant at “preventing violent extremism and radicalization” and at establishing “common goals in citizenship education”<sup>13</sup> (2018). The framework is a recommendation and represents a support material for the states or institutions which want to develop or implement an education for democratic culture. The Guidelines

<sup>4</sup> Council of Europe, Stability pact, DG IV/EDU/HIST (2003)10, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680651409>

<sup>5</sup> Council of Europe, "New initiative of the Secretary General", <https://www.coe.int/en/web/history-teaching/new-initiative-of-the-secretary-general>

<sup>6</sup> Council of Europe, Stability pact, DG IV/EDU/HIST (2003)10, p.3 <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680651409>

<sup>7</sup> Birzea, Cezar, Cecchini, Michela, Harrison, Cameron, Krek, Janez, Spajic-Vrkas, Vedrana, Tool for quality assurance of education for democratic citizenship in schools, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000140827>

<sup>8</sup> Art 1 and 2, Warsaw Declaration, 2005, Warsaw Political Declaration, Council of Europe Summit, 2005, [https://www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517\\_decl\\_varsovie\\_en.asp](https://www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517_decl_varsovie_en.asp)

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> Council of Europe, Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, Council of Europe Publishing, April 2018, p5

<sup>11</sup> Action Plan, CM(2005)80 final 17 May 2005, [https://www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517\\_plan\\_action\\_en.asp](https://www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517_plan_action_en.asp)

<sup>12</sup> *Idem*

<sup>13</sup> Council of Europe, Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, Council of Europe Publishing, April 2018, p5, <https://rm.coe.int/prems-008318-gbr-2508-reference-framework-of-competences-vol-1-8573-co/16807bc66c>

come after 10 years from the Summit and in a moment when disinformation was already showing its effects over Europe. Moreover, in 2018 the frameworks on combating disinformation are developed as we will show in the following chapter, but the three-volume document has no emphasize on democratic culture for combating disinformation. However, the parts relating to media competences, critical thinking or communication skills represent the basis for strategies in education for combating disinformation<sup>14</sup>.

⇒ Porto Santo Charter (2021)<sup>15</sup> on education for a culture of democracy brings, among other the ideas, that cultural institutions, education institutions or NGOs should be involved in shaping a culture of democracy.

**Education for resilience** as a basic definition aims at developing the necessary skills so that the individual can better cope with the faced challenges and can recuperate faster. Even if the idea of educating the individual to be resilient was well established in psychology, little development can be identified in other related fields where resilience becomes a new standard in practice.

Education in the context of resilience can be found in different documents. Even if there is no clear view on how education for resilience should be shaped, it is clear that the two concepts intertwine in security documents:

⇒ Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy<sup>16</sup> – societal resilience is built through education.

⇒ Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action<sup>17</sup> - education in the context of migration.

⇒ Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats – A European Union response<sup>18</sup> - exercises for building resilience.

⇒ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach<sup>19</sup> - resilience, education and media literacy.

⇒ Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council - Increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats<sup>20</sup> - exercises for strengthening resilience in CBRN threats.

All these documents approach the concept of resilience and emphasize the education dimension needed to build resilient societies. Even if there is not a clear path towards how education for resilience should be built and there is a blended approach toward the education system and exercises, there is no clear set of skills that education for building resilience should encompass.

<sup>14</sup> *Idem*, pp. 34-35

<sup>15</sup> Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, 2021, <https://www.2021portugal.eu/en/events/?start-date=2021-01-01&end-date=2021-12-31>

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<sup>17</sup> European Commission, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action {SWD(2017) 226 final} {SWD(2017) 227 final}, p.3, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017JC0021>

<sup>18</sup> European Commission, *Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats – A European Union response* (06 Apr. 2016), JOIN (2016), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016JC0018&from=EN>

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<sup>20</sup> Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, and the Council. Increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats JOIN, 16 final, European Commission, 2018, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018JC0016&from=GA>

## FIGHTING DISINFORMATION AND EDUCATION REFORM – A EUROPEAN APPROACH

The Digital Education Action Plan<sup>21</sup> sets forward measures to be adopted and implemented in the educational reforms at European level in the view of the digital transition. The document is correlated with the DESI index and sets measures and solutions from member states in the reform process. It is important to mention that the EU financing architecture developed sets for considerable funds to finance the digital transition, as the Digital education initiatives part of the Digital Education Action Plan show<sup>22</sup>. The process is ongoing and is supported by the 2021- 2027 financing period.

Acknowledging the dangers of disinformation and the ravaging effects it has online with little regulations, the European Commission adopted the Communication: “*Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach*”. Considering the Eurobarometer on Fake news and disinformation, the Communication sets directions for establishing a base for addressing this hybrid threat in the EU. In the light of the document “disinformation is understood as verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm”<sup>23</sup>. In this vein the document identifies as the causes of disinformation 4 intertwined causes: economic, technological, political, and ideological. The impact of the disinformation phenomenon is differentiated based on the: “education levels, democratic culture, trust in institutions, the inclusiveness of electoral systems, the role of money in political processes, and social and economic inequalities.”<sup>24</sup>

In the process of tackling disinformation on a long term the basis should be put on “collective resilience in support of our democratic bearings and European values”. Thus, the document situates at the core of combating disinformation the democratic values. The concept of resilience and the European values are added to them.

The document builds on the aspects of education set forward in the Digital Education Action Plan and emphasizes the need to implement measures to boost education and legal means to control the use of technology in scope of spreading disinformation.

In order to fight disinformation, an Independent High level Expert Group on fake news and online disinformation was established to identify principles and directions for combating disinformation. In March 2018 the final report was released “*A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation*” which identifies five pillars developed around “interconnected and mutually reinforcing responses”<sup>25</sup>: “enhance transparency of online news; promote media and information literacy to counter disinformation; develop tools for empowering users and journalists to tackle disinformation; safeguard the diversity and sustainability of the European news media ecosystem; and promote continued research on the impact of disinformation in Europe”. Education is in the center of the process as information literacy and media literacy are considered at the center of the process of combating disinformation. The document stressed the importance of media literacy and

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<sup>21</sup> European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Digital Education Action Plan, Brussels, 17.1.2018 COM(2018) 22 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0022&from=EN>

<sup>22</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/about-digital-education>

<sup>23</sup> European Commission, Brussels, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach, 26.4.2018 com(2018) 236 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0236>

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 4

<sup>25</sup> Independent High level Group on fake news and online disinformation, Report A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation, March 2018, pp. 5-6 <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/final-report-high-level-expert-group-fake-news-and-online-disinformation>



information literacy as preventive actions to combat disinformation. The document mentions security literacy as a possible field to expand the means used in order to address disinformation.

The reform of the educational evaluation process across EU to include standards for information and media literacy in PISA evaluation system is a measure that could generate a harmonization in practices across EU with the mention that education policies rest on the member states competences; thus, a curriculum reform could be hard to coordinate.

EU Code of practice on disinformation makes no reference to education, but establishes rules and principles in combating disinformation at European level. The code offers clear conceptual definitions and taxonomies for what disinformation is or it is not, clear lines of measures and affirms the commitment of the of the signatories to implement them.

In table one, all the above-mentioned documents can be found and we tried to identify the difference in approaching education for democracy, for resilience or for combating disinformation.

| No. | Institution       | Document  | Key concepts                                    | Definitions  | Competences  |
|-----|-------------------|---|---|--|--|
| 1.  | UNESCO            | UNESCO, Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, 1995 | Education for peace, Education for Democracy    | ultimate goal of education for peace, human rights and democracy is the development in every individual of a sense of universal values and types of behaviour on which a culture of peace is predicated. | <b>Abilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to define and value human rights,</li> <li>- to accept values which exist in multicultural societies</li> <li>- to strengthen personal identity</li> <li>- ability of non-violent conflict resolution</li> <li>- critical thinking</li> <li>- knowledge about the international dimension</li> <li>- knowledge about historical facts and interpretations and the role of international institutions</li> <li>- learning languages</li> <li>- should link the global interdependence of problems to local action</li> <li>- knowledge, understanding and respect for the culture of others at the national and global level</li> </ul> |
|     | Council of Europe | Stability pact (1996) and Graz process (1998)   | History, democracy, peace, mutual understanding | European Educational Cooperation for   | <b>The Initial and In-Service Training of History Teachers:</b>  |

|    |                   |  |   |  |  |
|----|-------------------|--|---|--|--|
|    |                   |  | and reconciliation  | Peace, Stability and Democracy”.<br><br>“History education and history teaching were quickly identified as potentially an important area within education, in fostering mutual understanding and reconciliation in the area” | - developing teachers’ knowledge of their subject in a post-communist world, with a focus on histories of neighbouring countries, the histories of ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities.<br>- teach comparatively, to introduce multiple perspectives on an event, how to tackle controversial and sensitive issues,<br>- use varied kinds of historical sources in classrooms (critical thinking)<br><b>The Development of Teaching Resources for History Teachers Curriculum Development To support New Programmes in History Teaching in Higher Education</b> <sup>26</sup> |
| 2. | Council of Europe | Summit declaration and Action plan (2005)                                      | Culture of democracy, comprehensive security, and education |  |  |
| 3. | Council of Europe | Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (2018) <sup>27</sup> | Culture of democracy, and education                         | Culture of democracy meaning:<br>⇒ commitment to public deliberation;<br>⇒ willingness to express one’s  | <b>Combating hate speech:</b><br>⇒ knowledge of human rights<br>⇒ linguistic and communicative skills  |

<sup>26</sup> Council of Europe, Stability pact, DG IV/EDU/HIST (2003)10, p.3 <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680651409>

<sup>27</sup> Council of Europe, Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, Council of Europe Publishing, April 2018, <https://rm.coe.int/prems-008318-gbr-2508-reference-framework-of-competences-vol-1-8573-co/16807bc66c>

|    |                     |   |                    |  |  |
|----|---------------------|---|--------------------|--|--|
|    |                     |   |                    | <p>own opinions and to listen to the opinions of others;</p> <p>⇒ conviction that differences of opinion and conflicts must be resolved peacefully;</p> <p>⇒ commitment to decisions being made by majorities;</p> <p>⇒ commitment to the protection of minorities and their rights;</p> <p>⇒ recognition that majority rule cannot abolish minority rights;</p> <p>⇒ commitment to the rule of law.</p> | <p>⇒ knowledge and understanding of digital media</p> <p><b>Political debate</b></p> <p>⇒ understanding of freedom of expression and its limits</p> <p>⇒ understanding of cultural appropriateness</p> <p>⇒ knowledge and critical understanding of politics,</p> <p>⇒ linguistic and communicative skills,</p> <p>⇒ knowledge and understanding of communication,</p> <p>⇒ knowledge and understanding of cultural norms,</p> <p>⇒ analytical and critical thinking skills</p> <p><b>Combating propaganda advocating violent extremism</b></p> <p>⇒ analytical and critical thinking skills</p> <p>⇒ Autonomous learning skills</p> <p>⇒ knowledge and critical understanding of media</p> <p>⇒ values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding</p> |
| 4. | European Commission | Digital education action plan <sup>28</sup> | Digital, education | Making better use of digital technology for  | ⇒ ensuring equity and quality of   |

<sup>28</sup> European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Digital Education Action Plan, Brussels,

|    |                         |  |  |  |  |
|----|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|
|    |                         |  | Digital transition   | teaching and learning<br>Developing relevant digital competences and skills for the digital transformation<br>Improving education through better data analysis and foresight | access and infrastructure.<br>⇒ Connecting educators<br>⇒ Mobility in education<br>⇒ Digital competences: information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content and creation, safety and well-being, problem solving   |
| 5. | European Commission     | “Tackling online disinformation: a European approach <sup>29</sup> ”                             | Disinformation   | collective resilience in support of democratic bearings and European values  | ⇒ life-long development of critical and digital competences;<br>⇒ quality journalism as an essential element of a democratic society<br>⇒ education and media literacy<br>⇒ dissemination of good practices to boost resilience<br>⇒ strategic communication to combat disinformation to fight disinformation about the EU |
| 6  | High Level Expert Group | Final report of the High Level Expert Group on Fake News and Online Disinformation <sup>30</sup> | Fake News<br>Online Disinformation<br>Media Literacy<br>Information Literacy | Media and information literacy- “the capacity to exert critical thinking as to the productions, representations,   | ⇒ media and information literacy<br>⇒ critical thinking skills   |

17.1.2018 COM(2018) 22 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0022&from=EN>

<sup>29</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0236>

<sup>30</sup> Independent High level Group on fake news and online disinformation, Report A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation, March 2018 <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/final-report-high-level-expert-group-fake-news-and-online-disinformation>

|  |  |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|
|  |  |  |  | languages<br>(visuals, texts,<br>sounds),<br>audiences and<br>communities<br>characteristic of<br>mainstream and<br>social media” <sup>31</sup> |  |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

If we look back in history in the 1990s and if we imagine the use of the concept of resilience in that context, building strong democracies and changing collective mentalities must have been at the core of post-Cold War resilience. Even if the terminology used at that time was not resilience, the concept of using education to increase stability and security of the society is certainly envisaged as a pillar for the new world.

Considering this, we must retain two directions: history as a catalyst for peace, education for democratic citizenship – including political education. In the first case, the accent was placed on information, namely which information is useful for building peaceful societies? Not debating the success of the policy, one must retain that no skills can be built in lack of knowledge. The main concern when thinking about education for resilience should be what kind of knowledge is mandatory for further developing skills and competences. In the case of disinformation, the lack of knowledge is an impeding aspect in the line on critical thinking and media literacy. For example, it is debatable what kind of knowledge a high school pupil has about the EU so that the pupil could differentiate between false or true news. In many countries, there is no specific discipline about the EU and how it functions, leaving this information to a few lessons in the history books.

And here step in the aspects regarding education for democratic citizenship. In order to build stronger democracies, disciplines were inserted in the curricula to teach pupils about the democratic political system. This led to an increase in democratic participation and understanding of the democratic system. This should be done in the case of disinformation. While understanding the main directions of disinformation, a curriculum should be build addressing key concepts that are barely debated in other subjects.

One aspect when addressing disinformation is that, apart from media literacy and information literacy, no clear skills, competences or education strategy could be identified. Strategies, communications, codes and other documents must find their way into practice and soon, as the phenomenon will not cease to exist in the near future.

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<sup>31</sup> Divina Frau-Meigs and Berengere Blondeau, YALLA EMI, Un guide d'éducation aux medias et à l'information, IREX et Savoir\*Devenir 2018, apud Independent High level Group on fake news and online disinformation, Report A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation, March 2018 <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/final-report-high-level-expert-group-fake-news-and-online-disinformation>

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# **Xenophobia, Radicalisation and Disinformation Impact over the EU and beyond**

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# Phenomena of Radicalism, Extremism, and Terrorism: Conceptual-Theoretical Landmarks

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DR. CRISTINA EJOVA<sup>1</sup>

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, MOLDOVA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHISINAU, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Abstract:** *At the present stage, the study of the phenomenon of radicalization continues to attract significant interest, which is due to the processes taking place in the modern world, including various conflicts associated with the use of extremism and terrorism.*

*The aim of this work is to analyse the concepts of the triad “radicalism” – “extremism” – “terrorism” through the prism of the use of violence to achieve political goals. The concept of “terrorism” is not identical to the concepts of “radicalism” and “extremism”.*

**Key words:** *EU, radicalism, radicalization, extremism, terrorism*

**T**he phenomenon of terrorism is closely linked to such phenomena as radicalism and extremism. The increase in the activity of modern radicals who resort to extremist and terrorist actions requires a deep terminological analysis of these dangerous phenomena.

The last decade has been marked by a sharp rise in the influence of right-wing and left-wing radical parties on the European continent. However, radicalization actions do not always lead to extremist and terrorist manifestations, but sometimes fall within the framework of legality (by participating in electoral processes) or are expressed through street protests, especially by supporting manifestations of social dissatisfaction.

The tendency towards radical social changes, xenophobia, and aggressive nationalism has become a growing trend in European politics. There is a difference in the path from radicalism to extremism and terrorism depending on religious affiliation: Christian religious radicals tend to remain at the level of extremism, while those of Muslim religion may move on to terrorist actions. Radicalism proves to be an ideological support for extremism and terrorism.

Before considering the relationships between the concepts of “radicalism,” “extremism,” and “terrorism,” it is necessary to examine their definitions.

Radicalism would mean breaking away from an already recognized tradition, specifically through fundamental or radical change. Radical (from lat. radix – root) means supporter of fundamental and decisive actions. The concept of “radicalism” defines the socio-political ideas and actions aimed at key and decisive changes of the existing social and political institutions and norms. In a broader sense, the concept of political radicalism is seen as a special socio-cultural phenomenon, caused by specific historical, social, economic and religious factors in the development of a state, aimed at changing it at a fast pace.

Analysis of the scientific literature focused on the study of radicalism allows us to state the fact that the main part of the literature is centred on the study of the history, causes of emergence, and peculiarities of various radical parties and movements (right-wing, left-wing), religious radicalism, namely Islamic radicalism, rather than the study of the concept of “radicalism” itself and the definition of its main determinants that distinguish it from other ideological, socio-political phenomena.

The term “radicalism” is used in literature as a synonym for the concept of “extremism”. This is not entirely accurate word usage: there is a certain difference between these concepts.

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<sup>1</sup> PhD in Political Sciences, Chisinau, Faculty of International Relations Political and Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations, [cristina.ejova@usm.md](mailto:cristina.ejova@usm.md)

Although radical ideas and actions have existed since ancient times, the concept of radicalism emerged in England in 1832 among opponents of the Bill on electoral reform, as a characteristic of supporters of innovation. Later, the founder of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham, and his followers were called supporters of radicalism. In the 19th century, radicalism began to be interpreted more broadly, as a political, philosophical, religious, cultural, and educational movement. Finally, the characteristics of modern understanding of the term “radicalism” were defined in 1930 by the American scholar Horace Kallen: “Radicalism is a distinct philosophy and idea of social transformation aimed at the systematic destruction of what is hated and its replacement by art, faith, science or society, which is logically regarded as right, good, beautiful, and just.”<sup>2</sup>

In its original meaning, the term only defined the unacceptability of compromises and did not necessarily imply a violent component directed solely at destruction. Many authors viewed radicalism as a catalyst not only for destructive, but also for positive phenomena, accelerating progress.

However, in some works dedicated to the problems of radicalism, there are other approaches to defining and understanding this term. By calling aggressiveness and destructiveness essential elements of radicalism, they believed that it transitions from an idea to radical, often illegal activities<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, throughout history, the meaning of “radicalism” as a concept has significantly changed. In the 19th century, many political parties were reformist rather than revolutionary, called themselves radical, and advocated only for the introduction of democracy, and were mainly non-violent activists. It should be noted that some radical demands of the 19th century have become part of the foundational human and citizen rights today. In other words, the content of the term “radical” has changed quite sharply in just over a century: if in the 19th century the term “radical” referred primarily to liberal, anti-clerical, pro-democratic, and progressive political positions, modern usage tends to encompass more anti-liberal, fundamentalist, anti-democratic, and regressive agendas<sup>4</sup>.

Radicalism is not linked directly with any specific ideology. In the political dimension, it is customary to distinguish between left and right radicalism. Left radicalism includes social democratic, socialist, communist, and anarchistic ideas. Right radicalism can be represented by a wide range of ideas, from fascism, national socialism, racism, and anti-Semitism to various forms of xenophobia. Speaking about other significant forms of radicalism for the current period, it is impossible not to mention religious radicalism. In this case, the use of the term “fundamentalism” is appropriate, which denotes an unconditional imperative to follow the dogmas of religious sacred texts, the domination of religious institutions in society, as well as the impossibility of any innovations in the connotation of canonical documents. One of the common forms of religious radicalism is Islamic radicalism, which is defined as an ideological doctrine and the political practice based on it characterised by the normative and value-based consolidation of ideological, politico-ideological, and armed opposition of the “true Islam” world to the world of “unbelievers” externally and the world of “false faith” inside Islam, and require absolute social control and mobilisation (serving the idea) of their supporters. Some authors suggest using a compromise term, such as the radicalization of the Islamic movement, which refers to the process of the formation and

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<sup>2</sup> Grebenshchikov Ivan, Vliyanie gosudarstva na razvitie diskursa ob ekstremizme. Dissertaciya na soiskanie uchenoj stepeni kandidata sociologicheskikh nauk. Moskva, 2020. p.36.

<sup>3</sup> Ajtzhanova Dinara, Opyt evropejskikh stran v protivodejstvii religioznomu ekstremizmu Dissertaciya na soiskanie uchenoj stepeni kandidata filosofsvchii nauk. Respublika Kazahstan Nur-Sultan, 2021, p.20. <http://repository.apa.kz/xmlui/handle/123456789/571> (accessed 02.02.2023).

<sup>4</sup> Schmid A.P. Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review, ICCT Research Paper, The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2013, 91 p. <http://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCTSchmid-Radicalisation-De-Radicalisation-Counter-Radicalisation-March-2013.pdf> (accessed 10.03. 2023)

consolidation of Islamized political groups using Islamic slogans and elements of doctrine as an ideological platform, which distinguishes them from other public formations in the struggle for power with the goal of changing, on this basis, the existing socio-political order, in one region or another<sup>5</sup>.

The term “extremism” (from the lat. *extremus* - extreme, last) means an attachment, in politics and ideas, to views and actions that belong to extremities. If the phenomenon of “extremism” has been known since ancient times, the term “extremism” does not have a multi-century history. It has been used in the political press in England since the middle of the 20th century. In the U.S. this concept appeared during the Civil War (1861-1865). In France it started to be used during World War I (1914-1918)<sup>6</sup>.

According to the Russian researcher S. Fridinskiy, the term has been actively used to refer to the followers of extreme views since the beginning of the 20th century, and in that period such characteristics was attributed to be the representatives of the left wing of the “Indian National Congress” party, who were consistent supporters of the struggle to achieve complete independence of India<sup>7</sup>.

The American researcher at the University of South Florida Randy Borum, in his article “Radicalization into Violent Extremism: a Review of Social Science Theories” brings the following definition of extremism, taken from Palgrave Macmillan dictionary of political thought: “Extremism can be used to refer to political ideologies that oppose a society’s core values and principles. In the context of liberal democracies this could be applied to any ideology that advocates racial or religious supremacy and/or opposes the core principles of democracy and universal human rights. The term can also be used to describe the methods through which political actors attempt to realize their aims, that is, by using means that show disregard for the life, liberty, and human rights of others”<sup>8</sup>.

Russian professor S. Sergeev conducted an analysis and systematisation of dissertation research in the period of the 1990s and 2000s in the Russian Federation on the problems of extremism and radicalism, and noted the fact that many authors consider the concepts of “radicalism” and “extremism” as one indivisible concept.

In our opinion, unlike extremism, radicalism is primarily oriented towards the substantive side of the ideas being proclaimed, which are not always “extreme” and do not necessarily advocate for terror or violence.

The Russian researcher D. Olshansky justly points out that in contrast to terrorism, radicalism is focused on the content of one or another side of the ideas, but not on the methods of carrying them out. Radicalism can be entirely based “on ideas”, and, unlike extremism, not on actions. Extremism primarily focuses itself on the methods and ways of fighting, pushing the ideas on the second level<sup>9</sup>.

Radicalism is usually referred to in relation to ideologically, politically and socially extreme-oriented organisations, parties or party factions, political movements and groups, individual leaders, etc., assessing the ideological direction and extent of expression of such inclinations. Regarding

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<sup>5</sup> Ahmedova Kulisum, *Religioznyj faktor v politicheskom kontekste protivodejstviya terrorizmu*. Dissertaciya na soiskanie uchenoj stepeni kandidata politicheskikh nauk. Rostov-na-Donu, 2014, p. 39-40. Natea Mihaela Daciana, *Disinformation crossing borders. The Multilayered Disinformation Concerning the War in Ukraine*, L’Harmattan, Paris France, 2022

<sup>6</sup> Kornilov Serghei, *Mezhdunarodnye aspekty protivodejstviya ekstremizmu*. Avtoreferat dis. na soiskanie uchenoj stepeni kandidata yuridicheskikh nauk. Moskva, 2011, p.13.

<sup>7</sup> Fridinskiy Serghei, *Protivodejstvie ekstremistskoj deyatel'nosti v Rossii*. Avtoreferat diss. na soisk. uch. Step. doktora yuridicheskikh nauk. Moskva, 2011. p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> Borum Randy, *Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research*, in: “Journal of Strategic Security”, №. 4, 2011, p. 37-62. <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1140&context=jss> (accessed 02.02.2023).

<sup>9</sup> Olishanskij Dmitrii, *Psihologiya terrorizma*. Sankt-Peterburg, Piter, 2002. p.167.

extremism, it usually assesses the degree of the extreme methods of implementing certain aspirations.

Socio-psychological ground for the growth of radicalism is the overall state of uncertainty and instability. On this ground there is a bloom of ultra-left and ultra-right ideas, followed by concrete actions. It is worth mentioning that radicalism develops into extremism if there is use of violent methods and means in a political fight.

According to the Russian political scientist M.K. Archakov, the concepts of “radicalism” and “extremism” differ not in that one phenomenon covers the sphere of ideas and the other – actions: “... the clear criterion that distinguishes political radicalism and political extremism is the use of illegitimate illegal violence by extremists.”<sup>10</sup>

Manfred Funke, in the article “Terrorism – an Attempt to Investigate the Challenge”, states that “a radical embodies a high degree of intensity of a critical system, but does not resort in his arguments to gunshots, and while he looks at the root of “the evil”, he fetishes it in his theory, however, he does not participate practically in the political struggle. He walks with his friends hand in hand during the demonstrations. His relationship with the people make their way through the book “walls”, and at a direct meeting with the masses he has to take decision on his position: to become a revolutionary leader (Lenin, Trotsky) or to go into the area of political philosophy, where one can verbally open new horizons (Marx, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Marcuse)”<sup>11</sup>.

The Russian expert in the field of left-wing extremism I. Morozov sees radicalism as the intention of actors towards a radical transformation of the existing reality in a particular field of activity. Extremism from his point of view is seen as actions (physical or informational and propagandist), whereas radicalism is seen as ideas, a conglomerate of beliefs and theories, which need, according to their creators and followers, a full realisation. Political radicalism is the founding principle of extremist ideology, according to which the current political system is perceived as absolutely unacceptable, unfair, not capable of effective modernization and evolution, and, thus, should be destroyed in the shortest amount of time or immediately<sup>12</sup>.

German scholar Astrid Bötticher, in her study “Towards Academic Consensus Definitions of Radicalism and Extremism”, separates the phenomena of radicalism and extremism by highlighting 10 distinguishing characteristics. Summarising the author’s conclusions, it is worth noting the most significant distinctive features from our point of view:

1. Radical movements tend to use political violence pragmatically and on a selective basis, while extremist movements consider violence against their enemies as a legitimate form of political action and tend to embrace extreme forms of mass violence as part of their political credo.

2. Both radicalism and extremism contain a narrative reference to what lies beyond the present.

3. Extremism is, by its very nature, anti-democratic; it seeks to abolish constitutional democracy and the rule of law. Radicalism is emancipatory and not per se anti-democratic.

4. Extremists openly confront the notion of universal human rights and those institutions that serve to uphold them for all. Radicalism is not opposed to equal human rights.

5. Radicalism stands in rebellious opposition to the establishment; extremism, on the other hand, is directed not only against the establishment but against all those who do not embrace its dogmatic prescription for a transformation of society.

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<sup>10</sup> Archakov Mihail, *Politicheskij ekstremizm v Rossii: sushchnosti, proyavleniya, mery protivodejstviya* Dissertaciya na soiskanie uchenoj stepeni doctora politicheskikh nauk., Ekaterinburg, 2016. p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> Afanasiev Nicolai, *Ideologiya terrorizma*, in: “Socialino-Gumanitarnye znaniya”, №6, 2001, p. 213.

<sup>12</sup> Morozov Iliya, *Levyj ekstremizm kak politicheskij fenomen vtoroj poloviny XX — nachala XXI vekov: evolyuciya strategii i taktiki*. Avtoreferat dissertacii na soiskanie uchenoj stepeni doktora politicheskikh nauk. Saratov, 2010. p.30.

7. The concept of extremism is closely linked to authoritarian dictatorships and totalitarianism. Historically, radicalism has been more egalitarian and less elitist while extremists are supremacists opposed to the sovereignty of common people.

8. Radicalism draws strongly on the political legacy of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment, with its ideas of human progress and its faith in the power of reason. Extremism, on the other hand, is linked to an irrational, usually religious and fanatical belief system, that claims a monopoly of truth on the basis of which it seeks to transform society according to its retrograde vision.<sup>13</sup>

In essence, radicalism does not yet become an action that goes beyond the legal field, but as a social phenomenon it is characterised by an extreme form of expression of views, ideas, and concepts. Unlike extremism, radicalism does not imply the use of unlawful actions and does not harm public or political institutions. Bearers of radical views cannot be held criminally or administratively responsible for expressing their radical views unless they are capable of causing illegal acts or can have a negative impact on social processes.

Terrorism (from lat. terror - fear, horror) can be defined as systematic, socially or politically motivated, ideologically justified uses of violence or the threat of using violence, by which the intimidation of individuals controls their behaviour in a positive direction for terrorists and contributes to the achievement of the goal pursued by terrorists.

According to the view of Russian philosopher N. Afanasiev, extremism has its own social practices. The difference of terrorism from these practices is in the fact that a terrorist goes till the logical end in the purpose of social destabilisation of society, halfway through which an extremist stops. An extremist throws stones, but a terrorist starts throwing bombs. An extremist blocks street, railway lines, and roads, but a terrorist takes hostages. An extremist threatens with death, but a terrorist causes death. In certain cases, extremists may turn into terrorists, because the terrorists recruit their members from among extremists. For terrorists the armed struggle becomes more important than the process of ideological justification<sup>14</sup>.

From our point of view, terrorism is a continuation and further development of extremism. Usually, terrorism is defined as an extreme form of extremism. The fundamental difference between extremism and terrorism consists in the human life factor. When an extremist switches from threatening to use violence to killing innocent citizens, he becomes a terrorist.

Radicalism (including extremism) usually formulates its goals as some sort of ideal (political, social, economic, religious, ethnic, etc.), while terrorism puts forward intermediate goals<sup>15</sup>.

The term radicalism is associated with the derivative term radicalization. M. Sedgwick, a researcher at the Department of the Study of Religion, Aarhus University, in Denmark, points out that before 2001, the term “radicalization” was rarely mentioned in the press, although it was sometimes used in academic circles. Then, in 2005-2007, particularly after the Madrid bombings in March 2004 and the London bombings in July 2005, there was a sharp increase in the use of the term “radicalization”, which was linked to the phenomenon of “home-grown terrorism” and the need to explain its origins. Starting in 2005, most Western European countries developed “deradicalization” programs, resulting in the actual institutionalisation of the term “radicalization”<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Bötticher Astrid, Towards Academic Consensus Definitions of Radicalism and Extremism, in: “Perspectives on Terrorism” , Published by: Terrorism Research Initiative Stable, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2017, p. 73-77, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26297896> (accessed 02.02.2023).

<sup>14</sup> Afanasiev Nicolai, Ideologiya terrorizma, in: “Socialino-Gumanitarnye znaniya”, №6, 2001, p. 217.

<sup>15</sup> Lopushanskij Igor, Radikalizm: teoriya i praktika: uchebnoe posobie dlya magistratury. Sankt-Peterburg, Sankt-Peterburgskij juridicheskij institut Akademii Generalinoj prokuratury Rossijskoj Federacii, 2016. p.18.

<sup>16</sup> Sedgwick Mark, The Concept of Radicalisation as a Source of Confusion, in: “Terrorism and Political Violence”, Taylor & Francis Group, vol. 22, no. 4, 2010, p. 479-494. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2010.491009> (accessed 02.02.2023).

Radicalization is a set of methods, ways, and means aimed at fundamentally changing the ideological foundations, forming an alternative system of values by breaking with existing tradition, as well as qualitatively transforming the basic social institutions and/or the political system as a whole<sup>17</sup>.

Currently, “radicalization” is understood as either a) the process by which individuals or groups become adherents of certain radical ideas or supporters of fundamental transformations, or b) the process associated with the use of radical methods to achieve one’s goals<sup>18</sup>.

In scientific literature, there is a viewpoint according to which it is possible to conceptualise radicalization and terrorism within the framework of one continuum, where radicalization is a process leading to the final point – terrorism<sup>19</sup>. We fully agree with the Russian researcher Sakayev V., who notes the inadequacy of interpreting the concept of “radicalization” solely as a process of “turning into a terrorist”. Radicalization primarily appears as a process of spreading radical ideas, regardless of their relationship to violence as a means of achieving goals. The researcher also notes that providing a general definition of radicalization is very difficult, as it has significantly changed over the development of this concept. Since the mid-2000s, the theory of radicalization has undergone a serious evolution – from initial, relatively primitive approaches to modern, more multifaceted and less ideologized ones. Initially, radicalization was understood as the process of an individual or group adopting radical ideas, resulting in involvement in violent, terrorist actions<sup>20</sup>.

Let us also consider the viewpoint of American researcher Randy Borum from the University of South Florida, who emphasises that the link between radical beliefs and terrorist activity is not so straightforward: most radicals do not engage in terrorism, and many terrorists have not been “radicalized” in any traditional sense<sup>21</sup>. A similar idea is expressed by C. McCauley in a recent work, stating that 99% of people with radical views will never move towards terrorist activity, and that many have already taken action without having those same radical ideas<sup>22</sup>.

Currently, in Western literature, several main approaches to the concept of radicalization can be identified.

According to the first approach, radicalization is a process of turning to violence as a means of transformation.

The second approach is related to an attempt to distinguish between the phenomenon of radicalization in the classical sense and violent radicalization.

Supporters of the third approach call for a distinction between the concepts of “radicalization” and “extremism,” recognizing that “radicalization” does not necessarily have to be associated with violence and terrorism, but even if it does, the violence from radicals has a different nature than the violence from extremists.

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<sup>17</sup> Apolosov Denis, Radikalizaciya kak social'no-politicheskoe yavlenie, in: “Obshchie voprosy obespecheniya nacional'oj bezopasnosti”, 2018, 3(23). p. 16–21.

<sup>18</sup> Sakaev Vasilii, Ponyatie radikalizacii: obzor nauchnyh podhodov v sovremennoj zarubezhnoj literature, in: “Antinomii”. 2021. V. 21, nr. 2. p.66. DOI 10.17506/26867206\_2021\_21\_2\_45

<sup>19</sup> Bovina Inna, Bovin Boris, Tihonova Anna, Radikalizaciya: social'no-psihologicheskij vzglyad (CHast' I), in: “Psihologiya i pravo”. V. 10, № 3, 2020. p. 120–142. DOI: 10.17759/psylaw.2020100309 (accessed 02.02.2023).

<sup>20</sup> Sakaev Vasilii, Ponyatie radikalizacii: obzor nauchnyh podhodov v sovremennoj zarubezhnoj literature, in: “Antinomii”. 2021. V. 21, nr. 2. p.48. DOI 10.17506/26867206\_2021\_21\_2\_45 (accessed 02.02.2023).

<sup>21</sup> Borum Randy, Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research, in: “Journal of Strategic Security”, №. 4, 2011, p. 37-62. <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1140&context=jss> (accessed 02.02.2023).

<sup>22</sup> McCauley Clark, The ABC model: Commentary from the Perspective of the Two Pyramids Model of Radicalization, in: “Terrorism and Political Violence”. V.34, nr. 3, 2020. p. 1-9. DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2020.1763964

Supporters of the fourth approach argue about the relativity of the concept and its dependence on the specific context<sup>23</sup>.

The following levels of radicalization should be distinguished: individual (radicalization of a person); microsocial (radicalization of a particular group); macrosocial (radicalization of society).

Radicalization includes the following stages:

1. Emergence and circulation of radical ideas in society;
2. Achieving a critical mass of supporters of radical ideas in society;
3. Transition to non-violent radical actions;
4. Transition to violent actions.

It is obvious that these stages do not always follow each other, and the process of radicalization does not necessarily include all four stages. It is quite possible that the processes of radicalization in society, having found their practical expression, will stop at the early stages. Therefore, considering the stage of development of radicalization processes, we can predict its potential risks<sup>24</sup>.

Based on our analysis, we have come to the following conclusion: in scientific understanding, radicalism is a broad sociocultural phenomenon that encompasses most spheres of life, including political, social, religious, economic, and so on. Radicalism is primarily characterised by goals, ideas, and values that are in deep conflict with reality and includes strategies for overcoming the identified contradiction.

Extremism actions aimed at a profound transformation of the current socio-political reality in accordance with the ideologically substantiated methodology of the ideal type, implemented in forms that are defined as illegal according to the state's legislation.

Radicalism in its most extreme form can only pose a threat to the stability of the regime, because it is, in essence, a worldview, theory, philosophy, judgement, methodology. Extremism poses a threat to the very existence of the state and tends to implement this threat through violent methods.

Radicalism is related to the process of radicalization as an ideological attitude to the process of its implementation.

The concepts under consideration – radicalism, extremism, and terrorism – essentially follow each other in the order of increasing social danger from radicalism to extremism and ultimately to its extreme manifestation – terrorism. However, neither radicalism nor extremism are necessary stages towards terrorism. Terrorism from the perspective of political science can be a method for solving extremist tasks which, in turn, are the extreme manifestation of radical political goals.

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# Xenophobia and Alienation. Apprehensions on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees

DR. GABRIELA GOUDENHOOF<sup>1</sup>

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PHD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA, ROMANIA,  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND COMMUNICATION

**Abstract:** *The identity of the migrant and refugee communities is built at the intersection of the many perceptions and representations that the exiles form and that partially overlap and sometimes do not resemble their own representations at all.*

*The degree to which a host society opens up economically, politically, legally, but especially culturally towards the communities of migrants and refugees, as well as their real integration possibilities, is the stake of a dynamic game that is difficult to predict.*

*The problem of transnational groups, the polarization of the experiences of their integration, of dual belonging to the homeland of origin and the one of adoption, where the world is divided between "here" and "there", generates frustrations and specific reactions, including strengthening the function of the collective imaginary.*

*Xenophobia and alienation are secondary effects of these experiences and are sometimes generated by the poor management of public policies or by poor communication processes against a background of pre-existing prejudices and current crises.*

**Key words:** *EU, xenophobia, alienation, identity, prejudices, host society*

## INTRODUCTION

Migrants and refugees often face alienation and this particularly happens the more willing they are to integrate into the host societies. More often than not they face xenophobia, and then alienation and xenophobia can become related in several ways. Xenophobia is defined as fear or dislike against people from other countries, feelings manifested as a negative attitude or prejudice towards migrants or refugees. Wondering from where the force of prejudice comes from, Pierre-André Taguieff, examining the relationships with foreigners and more generally with „otherness” defines xenophobia as „fear, and consequently the rejection, hatred, or desire for exclusion, of strangers”<sup>1</sup>. Mobilizing fears and aggression against foreigners, xenophobia is based on the false pretence of the threat to the political body that foreigners may pose.

Being a social construct of fear and oppression, alienation and marginalization of migrants cause discrimination, exclusion, hostility, and lead to insecurity, social isolation disconnection. Nevertheless, a vicious circle is been created increasing suspicion and hostility towards migrants and exacerbating their sense of alienation. When migrants are seen as outsiders and excluded from the

<sup>1</sup> **Gabriela Goudenhooff**, Associate Professor, PhD, Head of the Department of Political Science and Communication Studies, Member of the Board of Faculty of History, International Relation, Political Science and Communication, University of Oradea. With a BA in Philosophy and History, a Bachelor of Law studies and a PhD in Philosophy, particularly concerned to develop inter and cross disciplinary studies. In this respect she is the author of several articles, studies and scientific papers, books and projects in areas like political philosophy, social and political imaginary, diaspora, human rights, government, EU policy, communication and discourse analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> **Pierre-André Taguieff**, *The Force of Prejudice: On Racism and Its Doubles*, University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

social, economic, political and cultural life of the host community they become targets for more and more discrimination: unequal access on the labour market, education, healthcare etc. This, in turn, can lead to further marginalization and social exclusion, contributing to the wider development of xenophobic attitudes among the host community.

Therefore, addressing the alienation of migrants is important in reducing xenophobia and promoting social cohesion. This can be achieved through policies and initiatives that promote inclusion, diversity, and equal access to resources and opportunities for all members of the society, regardless of their background.

### **XENOPHOBIA: SOCIAL CONSTRUCT AND DISCOURSE**

Xenophobia is envisaged as a social construct since it is a societal phenomenon involving attitudes, behaviours and structures that marginalize and discriminate against individuals or groups based on their perceived otherness. Xenophobia isn't a natural phenomenon but something that communities and individuals construct and perpetuate through beliefs, stereotypes and actions. Nevertheless "prejudice, xenophobia, resentment, and hence racism may be seen as universal or natural for any group—an argument routinely used by all contemporary racist groups and parties, and presupposed by such racist slogans as "Les français d'abord," "British first," and the like"<sup>2</sup>. The types of slogans prioritizing nationalism are to be seen as problematic and harmful because they contribute to division, marginalization, exclusion based on race, ethnicity or nationality.

Xenophobia relates with other more benign social constructs like race, ethnicity, religion and nationality. Reflecting specific historical, cultural and social contexts in which it arises, xenophobia can differ in form and intensity across different societies and periods of time.

On the other hand, racism, prejudice and xenophobia have been conceived, quite often, as a discourse, composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, conceived as social practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which someone is speaking. Individuals are generally motivated in preserving or achieving positive social identities and xenophobia could be seen as "mechanisms through which positive distinctiveness and positive social identity are achieved"<sup>3</sup>. Also, one can examine xenophobia especially through the lens of critical discourse analysis. From this perspective xenophobia is not just a set of attitudes and behaviours but a specie of discourse that constructs social reality and identities, influencing public opinion and shaping policy and social practices. And when we say discourse, we mean all the ways in which language verbal and non-verbal is used in social life.

Teun Van Dijk is one of the most prominent scholars on discourse analytic studies of racism and on the discourse analysis method and racism theory. He examines the forces perpetuating racism as the discourses of elites in society.<sup>4</sup> Therewith, Van Dijk discusses how racist and xenophobic ideas are produced through language and discourse. Racist slogans are typically used by nationalist and populist movements and they reflect and reinforce xenophobia, fear, dislike, reluctance of people from other countries. This type of discourse is divisive and conflicting people by dividing them in opposite camps: "us" versus "them" implying that those who are not part of the „in-group" are less worthy or less deserving of rights, opportunities or resources. Discourses and slogans like this can oversimplify and distort the complex issue related to immigration, multiculturalism and national identity and they drive to alienation. They often imply a call to nostalgic notions like „historical and

<sup>2</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk, *Elite Discourse and Racism*, Sage, London, 1993, p.174.

<sup>3</sup> Echabe, A. E., & Castro, J. L. G., "Images of immigrants: a study on the xenophobia and permeability of intergroup boundaries" in *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 26(3), 1996, pp. 341–352, 342.

<sup>4</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk, op.cit.

homogeneous nations” ignoring modern nations which are not homogeneous but heterogeneous, being shaped by a large variety of influences.

But xenophobic discourse is not only the prerogative of the elites. It can occur in various ways and social contexts: political speeches, media coverage, social media, literature, everyday conversations.

The xenophobic speech is recognizable, according to the critical analysis of the speech by the recurrence of specific patterns, tropes and themes such as:

**Dehumanization or demonization and Othering** – foreigners are depicted in dehumanizing/demonizing terms. In this way they are reduced to either harmful stereotypes or to scapegoats for societal problems. The process of “othering” can involve various stereotypes, depicting immigrants as criminals, terrorists, or economic burdens.

Politicians always use the immigration topic in election campaigns to gain votes; local communities need someone to blame for budget dissipation or for the budget's deficiency, people are dissatisfied, they are affected by economic crises, unemployment, crime and the easiest way of bearing all of this is to find a scapegoat. Romanians and Bulgarians are an ad-hoc group and have become the new bone to be chewed in any opportunity. They came from the South East of Europe, they are associated with poverty, lack of education, poor skills and qualifications, no German language proficiency, are predisposed to abuse social welfare burdening the system, increasing the crime and the extremity. And these allegations are documented with numbers. Statistically the percent of immigrants exploded. But sometimes numbers are deceitful. We presented some data showing that the number of Romanians and Bulgarians in Germany is actually not so big and the welfare benefits<sup>5</sup> are not as burdened by this group as it is claimed to be. Not every Romanian and Bulgarian is poor or uneducated, many of them are high qualified, skilful, able to adapt and easily to be considered an asset not a risk.<sup>6</sup>

After lifting the restrictions on the labor market, in the EU in January 2014, many Western countries used the Romanians and Bulgarians who were going to invade these countries as scapegoats. In fact, the lifting of work restrictions for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens “encountered much resistance both in European political discourse and the media, as these migrants became demonised and presented as social and economic threats. In this article, we show how the Romanian press dealt with such discriminatory discourses against the Romanian migrants”<sup>7</sup>.

The Channel 4 documentary series *The Romanians Are Coming*, stressing the unfair depiction of the Romanian immigrants through its disproportionate focus on extreme poverty and the Roma community<sup>8</sup> is an example of inflammatory rhetoric in the UK.

In fact, the very modest number of Romanians and Bulgarians coming to work in UK is in high contrast to the inflammatory rhetoric used by populist politicians in their xenophobic and anti-immigration speeches.

<sup>5</sup> An example of Welfare benefit is *Arbeitslosengeld II*, *ALG II* or *Hartz IV*, which was a well-known type of financial assistance in Germany until 2023, when it was replaced by *Bürgergeld*, helping people in need to pay for basic needs when they have no income.

<sup>6</sup> Gabriela Goudenhooff, “Romanian and Bulgarian – Communication and Stereotypes about the Eastern European Integration Issues”, in *Studii Europene- ECSA Moldova*, ISSN 2345-1041, nr.5/2015, pp.203-218, Mihaela Daciana Natea, Protecting Traditional Knowledge through Historical Arguments, *Studia Universitatis Petru Maior Historia*, an 2017, pp. 173-178

<sup>7</sup> Breazu, P., & Eriksson, G. Romaphobia in Romanian press: The lifting of work restrictions for Romanian migrants in the European Union. *Discourse & Communication*, 15(2), pp.139–162, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Andreescu, F. C. (2019). *The Romanians Are Coming* (2015): Immigrant bodies through the British gaze. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 22(5–6), 885–907.

### “US VERSUS THEM” MENTALITY

A xenophobic discourse often constructs a binary between “us” (members of a dominant or majority group from the host society) and “them” (members of minority or immigrant groups), source of division, exclusion and hostility.

“Us versus them” mentality refers to a perception structured on a fundamental dichotomy between two groups and creating a fictitious in-group and an out-group where the in-group is invested with positive features and characteristic, whilst the out-group is depicted in a negative way; the two groups are also in competition and in conflict for limited resources.

The identity of the in-group (the host society is often contrasted with migrants’ identity even with regard to their own society). There is a criticism of migrants as renegades, “those who leave” coming from their own society of origin. The Romanians for instance developed an “us versus them mentality” about “those who left” to earn much more money, to have a better life versus “us who stayed” even in hard communist times, eating “soya beans”. Labelling migrants as “renegades” one simplifies and misrepresents the diverse motivations for migration. There are harsh realities grounding migration: economic crises, political instability, persecution, natural disasters, and many of them are often beyond individual control. Shifting the blame for societal problems onto those who leave, rather than examining systemic issues within the society might be contributing to migration. Also looking down on migrants and seeing them as renegades fails to consider the emotional and psychological toll of migration. Leaving one’s home is often dramatic and challenging by the prospect of integrating into a new society, learning a new language, adapting to a new culture, and coping with the potential of social support networks. Blaming those who leave one forgets the potential benefits of migration, the contribution of remittances, boosting economies, acquiring new skills and knowledges abroad and implementing them when returning home. Creating division between migrants and the home society perpetuates resentments and mistrust on both sides, damaging the potential for positive harmonious relations and mutual support.

An illustration of this picture is Romania, where there were voces expressing “Romanian’ hostility towards those who left Romania, not paying taxes and contributions to the healthcare system even though they have family (old parents and children) at home to take care of, towards those who forgot to contribute to education, healthcare, social assistance, but dare to criticize the system, towards the IT specialists who do not pay any taxes and expect quality and good services from a country they no longer support”<sup>9</sup>. According to this mentality diaspora does not qualify for a vote because “they left the country for selfish reasons, they do not contribute to the country’s welfare, they don’t know and don’t care about much”<sup>10</sup>.

The host society may perceive migrants as competitors for jobs: “They are taking our jobs”, developing a form of economic anxiety, which is a common sentiment in times of economic crises particularly, based on the belief that migrants, due to their willingness to work for lower wages or in unfavourable conditions, could displace native workers, leading to jobs losses or wage suppressions among the local population.

In this context, politicians’ discourses, subordinate to their electoral agenda, circulate through various media the anti-migrations topic; some of them have a populist justification, whilst others come from a larger, European context of broader radicalization of the right wing, anti-migration and xenophobic ideologies. Not incidentally, the influence of representatives of the critical discourse analysis school (CDA) labelled politicians’ discourses as containing elements of the new strategy of

<sup>9</sup> Gabriela Goudenhooff, *Going back home through one’s language. Romanian diaspora in Germany*, Editura Nomos, Baden Baden, 2016, p.55.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

racism (Euro-racism and xeno-racism) (Wodak, Van Dijk, Bulmer, Solomos, Lentin, Essed, Cole etc.)<sup>11</sup>.

The resentment might occur from labour market misunderstanding, in regards to the various number of jobs in an economy, where migrants can actually stimulate economic growth or fill the roles that local workers are unwilling or unable to perform. Migrants can also supply sectors like healthcare, IT, or agriculture. The narrative of migrants “taking jobs” can be used as a political tool (scapegoat strategy) by some politicians in order to stir up nativist sentiments and to divert attention from other issues in the host society.

## NATIVISM OR NATIONALISM

Xenophobic discourse often appeals to nationalist sentiments, asserting or emphasizing the superiority or rights and the primacy of the native-born or dominant ethnic group. They claim that the interests and rights of native-born or majority-group citizens should be prioritized over those of immigrants and or minorities. It can be exemplified in slogans like “France for the French”, “America first etc.

The prioritization of citizens’ needs over immigrants’ or minorities’, disregards the ethical perspective, as citizens and minorities or migrants should be equally perceived and treated; one should prioritize human rights and social justice, asserting that everyone deserves access to resources and opportunities. From this point of view, prioritizing citizens against others is discrimination. The idea that citizens are paying taxes and have a long-term vested interest in the society is often related to the perspective of limited resources and economic stability. There are differing views about whether and to what extent a country has obligations to non-citizens, and they are often influenced by political ideologies, economic conditions, cultural norms, and individual beliefs.

Slogans like “France for the French”, “America first” and so on, involve a nationalist perspective together with the belief that the nation’s culture and interests should be prioritized above all else and it can lead to policies that favour the majority or dominant group at the expense of minorities or outsiders. These slogans can also be interpreted as a form of populism because populist movements are usually claiming to represent “ordinary people” against a perceived elite or establishment. This political rhetoric promotes specific political identities and generates debates.

The ‘belonging’ feature is revisited in relation to a nation and nativist feelings are resuscitated. Cas Mudde defines nativism as entailing “a combination of nationalism and xenophobia. It is an ideology that holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (‘the nation’) and that non-native (or ‘alien’) elements, whether persons or ideas, are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-state”<sup>12</sup>. According to Mudde, “in Europe the nativism of the populist radical right has mainly targeted ‘immigrants’ (including guest workers and refugees) in the West and ‘indigenous minorities’ (e.g. Hungarians or Roma) in the East. The basis of the nativist distinction can be multifold – including ethnic, racial, and religious prejudices, which are often combined in one form or another. For example, Islamophobia, the prime nativist sentiment of the contemporary populist radical right, combines ethnic, religious, and sometimes even racial stereotypes. At the same time, populist radical right parties will use both socio-economic and socio-cultural motivations to ‘justify’ their nativism”<sup>13</sup>.

In Fukuyama’s view, national identity got a bad reputation lately “because it came to be associated with an exclusive, ethnically based sense of belonging known as ethno-nationalism. This type of identity persecuted people who were not part of the group and committed aggressions against

<sup>11</sup> Gabriela Goudenhoft op.cit.2016, p.58.

<sup>12</sup> Cas Mudde, *The populist radical right : a reader*, Routledge, New York, 2017, p.26

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem.

foreigners on behalf of co-ethnics living in other countries. The problem, however, was not with the idea of national identity itself; the problem was the narrow, ethnically based, intolerant, aggressive, and deeply illiberal form that national identity took”<sup>14</sup>.

Resentment and loss of status, fear of displacement are feelings and themes often associated with nativism (Hochschild, 2018) driving political attitudes and actions. Nationalism is in fact a political principle (Brubaker, 2019), holding that political and nation should be congruent, often related to discourse and power. Even though they are distinct nationalism and populism can combine in various ways.

## INVASION AND THREAT

The idea behind is that immigrants and foreigners are invading the country threatening its security<sup>15</sup>, culture or resources, with narratives of being overwhelmed or “swamped” by immigration.

The “immigration threat narrative” or the “nativism” has been part of the political and social discourse in many countries for a long time. It is grounded on fear and flourishes mainly in economic crisis periods, cultural change, social instability, perceived as threats to national security. Associated with this idea, the narrative often portrays immigrants and refugees as potential security risks, forgoing them with crime and terrorism. Several studies consistently argue against this idea showing that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than native-born citizens (Adelman & all., 2016)<sup>16</sup>. In fact, the relationship between immigration and crime is complex, depending on socioeconomic status, community support systems, education, the role of policing and criminal justice systems and so on.

The narrative also depicts immigrants as taking away jobs from native citizens and driving down wages. Even if this is possible in some sectors and regions one should notice the overall positive contribution of immigrants to economies, filling roles in different sectors, contributing as taxpayers and consumers etc.

## FEAR-MONGERING

Xenophobic discourse often involves the spread of fear, particularly fear of immigrants or foreigners. This fear is related usually to crime, economic competition, cultural change, or threats to national security or identity.

Invoking threatening narratives about outsiders or “others”, xenophobic discourse spreads fear and this idea was documented from differing academic perspectives:

From a socio-linguistic perspective, fear is generated through dehumanizing or threatening language. As we already mentioned above immigrants are often framed as a “wave” or “invasion”, an image with anxiety potential of being “overwhelmed” or “taken over” by them. Also, they are depicted as dangerous or harmful groups.

From a psychological perspective, the fear capitalizes on innate in-group/out-group biases. As scholars documented, there is a natural tendency for individuals to favour their own group (the in-

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<sup>14</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018, New York, p.107.

<sup>15</sup> Natea Mihaela Daciana, “Identitate națională și proprietate intelectuală”, în *Actele Unirii*, Cornel Sigmirean, Silviu Moldovan, Cristina Preutu, (coord.), Editura Hamangiu, București, 2018

<sup>16</sup> Adelman, R., Reid, L. W., Markle, G., Weiss, S., & Jaret, C., „Urban crime rates and the changing face of immigration: Evidence across four decades”, in *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 15(1), 2016, pp. 52–77. The study illustrates how immigration impacted the decrease of crime and violent behaviour in Usa for a period of time from 1970 to 2017.

group) and to discriminate others (the out-group) (Stephan and Renfro, 2002). Exacerbating this bias one could lead to heightening fear and aggression.

From a political science perspective fear is a potent tool in xenophobic discourse used for manipulation and control and this discourse is often transformed into propaganda. Leaders can consolidate power, justify questionable policies, even rally support by stirring up fear.

From a media studies perspective, fear in xenophobic discourse is often amplified through sensationalist reporting and misinformation. Media can contribute to the dissemination and amplification of xenophobic sentiments by uncritically publishing fear-inducing narratives.

## CULTURAL PURITY AND LOSS

The main idea of this perspective is that immigration and multiculturalism threaten the “purity” or traditional identity of the nation.

There is a concern regarding the influx of migrants or refugees perceived as a threat to the “imagined purity” or traditional identity of nations. But the assumption of a pre-existing “purity” in any nation’s identity is questionable since national identities are complex and multifaceted constructs that have evolved over time, influenced by a lot of factors: geography, history, cultural exchange, political dynamics, economic developments etc. Nations have history that include migration, cultural influences, a mix of languages and religious influences and several melted traditions. The impact of colonialism and of Imperialism are also to be taken into consideration as factors shaping national identities. From a Constructivist perspective, nations are dynamic social constructions influenced by shared history, collective memory, state institutions, governed by a permanent reconstruction over the time. Globalization has accelerated the blending of cultures and identities. Transnationalism has brought not only economic flows of goods and money, but flows of ideas, people and information across national borders, making national identities more fluid and complex.

Also, these ideas on “purity” can involve nostalgia for a supposed past when society was more homogenous as opposed to a present where hybridity, creolization, mixture occurred. But the problem of using terms as *hybridity* comes from the odd nature of the term in biology and from the untruthfulness of the assumption of a pre-existing purity that one would come back to somehow. On the other hand, the term is related to the idea of being halfblooded, which implies inferiority and abnormality.<sup>17</sup> The very idea of a “pure” national identity is being tied to narratives and myths delivered and propagated for political and ideological reasons.

One could not overlook the benefits of multiculturalism besides the challenges involved: diversity of thought, ideas, problem-solving approaches, innovation and creativity; significant economic benefits both for host and origin countries; cultural enrichment enhancing the quality of life and broadening horizons for all members of society; social cohesion and mutual understanding shaping a stronger society; global understanding and cooperation between nations; many cultural and educational perspective and diverse learning environments onto the educational systems, and last but not least tolerance and empathy, enriching human values, challenging preconceptions, reducing prejudices and promoting mutual acceptance.

## ALIENATION. WHY DOES IT MATTER?

If integration represents the ideal, the positive concept and the goal for both migrants and the host society, alienation is the risk and the opposite term with negative connotation and effects for both migrants and communities. The term is labelled as a “chaotic concept”, individualized,

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<sup>17</sup> Goudenhoft, op.cit.



contested and contextual<sup>18</sup>, but it's applied to a framework of several core domains: “employment, housing, education and health, assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights; processes of social connection within and between groups in the community; and barriers to such connection, particularly stemming from lack of linguistic and cultural competences and from fear and instability”<sup>19</sup>.

Integration is the process that involves migrants and refugees establishing a new life and feeling at home in the new society.

Migrant alienation is an experience of social isolation, but at the same time a dislodgement from one's self, from one's identity, from the values that formed someone. This can cause harm in very different ways: social, economic, moral, psychologic and even as political marginalization of people and communities.

Social alienation challenges the possibility of integration in host societies. Migrants are often facing challenges in integrating into social networks, they face social exclusion from community participation, they are overwhelmed by feelings of isolation.

Economic alienation implies the difficulty in finding employment, recognition of foreign qualifications, lower wages compared to native-born individuals, unfair working conditions, leading to economic marginalization.

Cultural alienation refers to cultural differences between the homeland and the host land. It might include differences in languages, social norms, life philosophy, values, customs and so on.

Political alienation is about lack of political rights and political participation, the representation of the migrant in the host country is often affected, leading to feelings of political disempowerment.

Discrimination and prejudices from the host country can intensify psychological alienation among migrants. Unfair or prejudiced treatment of different categories of people, particularly on the grounds of race, ethnicity and so on, can have a negative impact on migrants intensifying their sense of alienation. They feel disconnected both from the origin country and from the host society. They experience feelings of isolation and loss, loneliness and lack of belonging.

Alienation can lead to fragmentation of society and increase social tensions. This can be deciphered in the decrease in participation in communal activities and civic engagement. In the context of labour, alienation negatively impact the productivity, job satisfaction, and work-life balance.

Psychological effects lead not only to loneliness and isolation but often drive to stress and affect mental health, where depression and anxiety occur.

Alienation can lead to increased political unrest and instability. Alienated individual might feel disenfranchised and disengage from political processes, or they may channel their dissatisfaction into protest movements or radical ideologies. Many studies document the relationships between marginalization, alienation and radicalization (Kosrokhavar, 2017, Bhui et al, 2014, Schmid 2013, Silber & Bhatt 2007) etc. Farhad Khosrokhavar<sup>20</sup> emphasizes in his book, *Radicalization*, the role of social, economic, and political alienation in the process of radicalization, arguing that a sense of marginalization and identity crisis, often experienced by second-generation immigrants, can make individuals susceptible to extremist ideologies which are spreading nowadays especially due the internet on various platforms, where individuals are seeking for a sense of community and belonging. The author ends his book showing that beside the individual responsibility or religious or ideological

<sup>18</sup> Robinson, V., “Defining and Measuring Successful Refugee Integration”, Proceedings of ECRE International Conference on Integration of Refugees in Europe, Antwerp, November 1998. Brussels: ECRE.

<sup>19</sup> Ager, A., & Strang, A., „Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework”, in *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(2), 2008, pp.166–191.

<sup>20</sup> Farhad Khosrokhavar; Jane Marie Todd, *Radicalization: Why Some People Choose the Path of Violence*, The New Press, New York, 2017.

radicalism we have to address “the malaise of modern societies— which Durkheim viewed as a relaxation of the social bond— combined with economic exclusion within a mass culture that is egalitarian by its very essence” which gives rise to “a new malady” - radicalization. “If citizenship is defined as economic and social integration into a society, then the affliction of some while others prosper in a globalized world devoid of true global citizenship will continue to haunt all citizens in the form of radicalized terrorism”<sup>21</sup>.

So the reason why alienation and lack of social cohesion matter nowadays is not only because they affect marginalized people, migrants and refugees but also because they endanger our societal stability and hope for a peaceful world.

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# The Impact of Ethnocentrism on the Communication of Young People in a Multicultural Environment

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DR. STELA SPÎNU

NICOLAE TESTEMIȚANU STATE UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY, THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Abstract:** *We live in the era of globalization and are witnessing profound economic, political, and cultural transformations. In the context of the continuous process of international integration, the world has separated into two hostile camps: the followers and the opponents of globalism. Against the background of the controversial discussions between the two camps about the probability of success or failure of the globalist plan, there is increasing talk about ethnocentrism. In the present study, we will interpret the concept of ethnocentrism from the perspective of the globalization process, we will elucidate the existing relationships between the phenomena of ethnocentrism, xenocentrism, and cultural relativism; we will analyze the impact of ethnocentrism on the communication of young people in a multicultural context.*

**Keywords:** *EU, globalization, ethnocentrism, xenocentrism, cultural relativism.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**W**e live in the era of globalization and are witnessing profound economic, political and cultural transformations. New realities, values, principles, rules, etc. manage our life and activity, influence our way of thinking and acting, challenge us to change, help us overcome the fear of instability, but also the uncertainty for the subsequent day.

In the context of the continuous process of international integration, the world has separated into two hostile camps: the followers and the opponents of globalism. As a rule, the former are representatives of individualistic cultures, who support and promote the harmonious evolution of different economic, social, political, cultural systems, but also the social cohesion, cultural homogenization, transnationalism, cultural relativism, etc. The second camp belongs to anti-globalists, representatives, in particular, of collectivist, ethnocentric, traditional, relatively homogeneous cultures. They appreciate this process as the source of social inequity, the decline of national sovereignty and the disappearance of the traditional state.

Against the background of the controversial discussions between the two camps, about the probability of success or failure of the globalist plan, there is increasing talk about *ethnocentrism*, a phenomenon associated with globalism, which manifests itself in a double sense: an isolationist one, through which ethnic specificity is preserved in a primitive sense and, implicitly, the cultural one; the second, an expansionist one, by which a certain cultural individuality is extended (through imposition, free assumption, aggression, persuasion, etc.) over other areas, regions, ethnic groups, countries, etc.<sup>1</sup>.

In the present study, we will interpret the concept of ethnocentrism from the perspective of the globalization process, we will elucidate the existing relationships between the phenomena of ethnocentrism, xenocentrism and cultural relativism; we will analyze the impact of ethnocentrism on the communication of young people in a multicultural context.

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<sup>1</sup> Zaiț Dumitru, Globalizare și ethnocentrism/ Globalization and Ethnocentrism, in „Management intercultural”/ „Intercultural Management”, vol. 3, nr.4, 1-7, 2001, p. 3, available here: [https://seaopenresearch.eu/Journals/articles/MI\\_4\\_1.pdf](https://seaopenresearch.eu/Journals/articles/MI_4_1.pdf)

## 2. ABOUT ETHNOCENTRISM

*Ethnocentrism* is a response of the opponents of the globalization process, representing a multidimensional and complex phenomenon, which involves value judgments on other ethnic groups by reference to their own values, norms, systems. Originally, the term *ethnocentrism* was used by the Polish sociologist and political scientist Ludwig Gumplowicz in his work “Grundriss der Soziologie” (1885); later, in 1900, the *ethnocentric* determinative is taken up in research by the American anthropologist William John McGee. He considered *ethnocentrism* as an early step in the evolution of the human mind, implying that his own society, the USA, around the turn of the 19th century was not ethnocentric<sup>2</sup>.

In 1906, the concept of *ethnocentrism* was applied by Sumner in his work “Folkways”. According to the American sociologist, *ethnocentrists* are individuals or certain groups, who consider themselves unique and superior to others, having a careless attitude towards representatives of other cultures. In the same context, Sumner analyzes the terms *in-group* and *out-group*, which he calls two sides of the same coin representing a universal relationship. In the author’s hypothesis, the idea of superiority of the in-group and hostility towards the out-group dominates<sup>3</sup>.

In social psychology, the main study of ethnocentrism was carried out by Adorno and his colleagues in the classical study “The Authoritarian Personality” (1950). In this study, *ethnocentrism* referred to „group relations generally; it had to do not only with numerous groups toward which the individual has hostile opinions and attitudes but, equally important, with groups toward which he is positively disposed”<sup>4</sup>.

In order to realize the essence of ethnocentrism, it should be analyzed from a diachronic and synchronic perspective. No nation, culture or language would have survived in a society devoid of ethnocentric attitudes. In this context, ethnocentrism becomes an expression of the spiritual state (more or less extreme) of the individual or the ethnic collective, which involves anti-globalist opinions, attitudes and behaviors. For ethnocentrists, the history of the nation and the cultural specificity is valuable, because it discerns their knowledge and experiences, it helps them to realize who they are and where they come from, what the value and meaning of life is, what goals and objectives they are going to achieve in order to preserve their uniqueness, originality and specificity, etc. They are focused on their own success, trying to disrupt the globalizing offensive of the economic, political and social sectors and to reject cultural homogenization.

Over time, *ethnocentrism* has had its positive and negative effects. Referring to the positive aspects, we point out its contribution to the preservation of national identity and dignity, the preservation and promotion of spiritual and cultural values, patriotism, the language and history of a nation. As for the negative effects, we note the subjectivism in the tendency to rank cultures based on one’s own perceptions, opinions, attitudes, discouraging cultural borrowings, neglecting differences, avoiding dialogue with representatives of other cultural environments, showing skeptical and devaluing attitudes towards them by appealing to

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<sup>2</sup> Ethnocentrism. Reflections on Medical Anthropology, Sjaak van der Geest & Ria Reis (editors), Aksant Academic Publishers, Amsterdam, 2002, p. 2, available here: [https://www.sjaakvandergeest.socsci.uva.nl/pdf/medical\\_anthropology/Ethnocentrism\\_book.pdf](https://www.sjaakvandergeest.socsci.uva.nl/pdf/medical_anthropology/Ethnocentrism_book.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Stela Spînu, The role of ethnocentric and xenocentric attitudes in intercultural communication, in „Administrarea Publică. Revistă metodică-științifică trimestrială”, Nr. 3 (107) iulie - septembrie 2020, p. 37, available here: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348442727\\_The\\_role\\_of\\_ethnocentric\\_and\\_xenocentric\\_attitudes\\_in\\_intercultural\\_communication](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348442727_The_role_of_ethnocentric_and_xenocentric_attitudes_in_intercultural_communication)

<sup>4</sup> Ayşe Dilek Öğretir, Sezai Özçelik. The study of ethnocentrism, stereotype and prejudice: psycho-analytical and psychodynamic theories, in „Journal of Qafqaz University”, Nr 24, 2008, p. 237, available here: <https://www.secretintelligence.service.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ethnocentrism.pdf>

- ❖ stereotypes and prejudices;
- ❖ discrimination;
- ❖ cultural genocide, etc.

❖ *Stereotypes and prejudices in the support of ethnocentrism*

*Stereotypes* represent blueprints or models, which can be applied in relation to other people, depending on the circumstances or conditions of dialogue. They have a slow, lasting and stable evolution. *Stereotypes* are maintained artificially through three processes: *selective perception* (the observer retains only the passages that are of particular interest to him and ignores the others), *selective interpretation* of data in accordance with the elements of the stereotype, and *confirmation of the rule by exceptions*<sup>5</sup>.

*Ethnic stereotypes* are formed and maintained, as a rule, in multicultural environments, where representatives of various ethnic groups are forced to coexist and communicate. Obviously, they perceive the behavior, the way of thinking and acting of the other from the perspective of their own culture, trying to generalize, simplify and reproduce them succinctly (positive, negative or neutral), thus showing a subjective attitude towards others, neglecting what is essential, noticing only the similarities, ignoring the differences.

*Stereotypes* become the core of *prejudices*, which, in turn, represent specific forms of thinking with a negative connotation and defiant attitudes. Prejudices are present in all cultures, being caused by differences in perception of what is new and unknown. They are based on feelings contrary to reason (whether on fear or dislike, hatred or contempt, etc.); they are not based on objective data or personal experience, do not involve reflection or critical analysis; they are devoid of evidence. The causes of forming and appealing to prejudices are determined by the desire to dominate, to be superior towards the one next to you, to impose new opinions by devaluing truths<sup>6</sup>.

Thus, ethnic stereotypes, along with prejudices, are specific to ethnocentrism, being used to judge facts, people, realities, at the same time influencing the relationships and behavior of group members, promoting pseudo-morality, subjectivism, discouraging critical thinking and tolerance for diversity and intercultural dialogue.

❖ *From ethnic stereotypes to discrimination*

In the most straightforward definition, *discrimination* is the unequal treatment of similar individuals placed in the same situation but who differ by one or several characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, gender, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, or other categorical statuses<sup>7</sup>. *Ethnic discrimination* is based on issues of language, religion, nationality, based on individual or collective prejudices and stereotypes, causing unfair or abusive behavior.

In multicultural environments, ethnic *discrimination* can take several forms: *avoidance* (bypassing people belonging to certain ethnic groups, artificially creating difficult conditions for coexistence in the same sociocultural environment), *segregation* or *marginalization* (the intentional concentration and isolation of a minority ethnic group in a certain space, in accordance with certain customs, norms, laws, etc.); *violence* (the use of force and power against members of minority ethnic groups).

<sup>5</sup>L. Plugaru, M. Pavalache, *Educație interculturală/ Intercultural education*, Sibiu, Editura Psihimedia, 2007, p. 66, available here: [http://www.oportunitatiegale.ro/pdf\\_files/Educatie%20Interculturala.pdf](http://www.oportunitatiegale.ro/pdf_files/Educatie%20Interculturala.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Stela Spînu, Șocul cultural, rezultat al persistenței stereotipurilor etnice/ Culture shock, resulting from the persistence of ethnic stereotypes, in „Teoria și practica administrării publice: Materiale ale Conferinței științifico-practice internaționale”, Chișinău, Tipogr. „Print-Caro”, 2022, p. 140.

<sup>7</sup> Rosita Fibbi, Arnfinn H. MidtbøenPatrick Simon, *Theories of Discrimination*, available here: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350731562\\_Theories\\_of\\_Discrimination](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350731562_Theories_of_Discrimination)

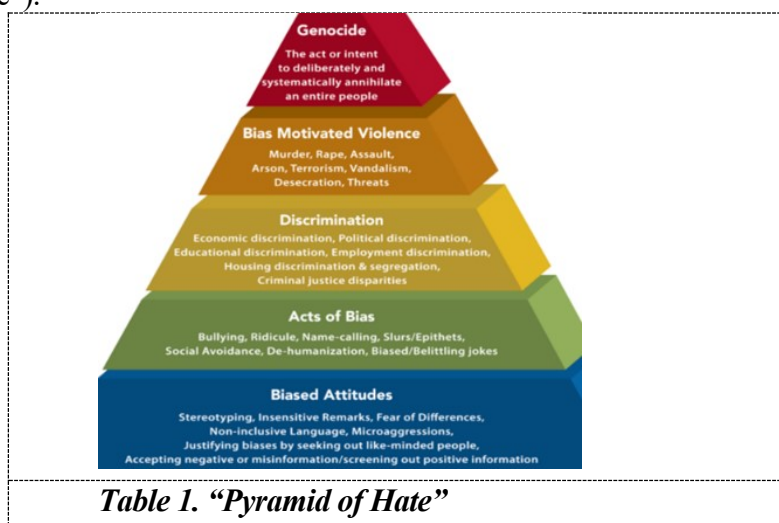
*Ethnic discrimination* is based on abusive, aggressive, uncontrolled behavior in accordance with individual or collective stereotypes and prejudices about the superiority or inferiority of a culture, ethnic group, etc. Discrimination discerns numerous negative effects, such as: blocking critical thinking, changing behavior, creating barriers to communication, violence, etc. In this context, familiarity with international non-discrimination policies and practices are welcome and useful.

❖ *Cultural genocide – a form of discrimination*

*Genocide* is the most extreme denial of the right to self-determination. It is a twentieth-century expression for an old and odious practice, namely, the partial or comprehensive extermination of a distinct people<sup>8</sup>. Examples of such crimes against humanity are the extermination of the Armenians by the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, the massacre of the Jews by the Nazis in the Second World War, the genocide in Cambodia, the Holocaust in Rwanda, etc.

In practice, the destruction of a population often begins with an attack on its culture, especially its language, monuments and religious institutions. *Cultural genocide* has a well-defined structure, being focused on the creation of artificial problems within state institutions responsible for the cultural, linguistic and religious education sector. The application of acts of genocide against representatives of certain nations, ethnicities, races or religions causes strong emotions and devastating consequences, leading to unpredictable, violent behavior or self-isolation.

Referring to the negative effects caused by stereotypes, discrimination and genocide, the “Pyramid of Hate” promoted by the Anti-Defamation League becomes conclusive (Table 1. “Pyramid of Hate”).



### 3. ETHNOCENTRISM VS XENOCENTRISM AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

*Ethnocentrism* is a phenomenon opposite to *xenocentrism* and *cultural relativism*. *Xenocentrism* is characterized by deviant behavior from traditional values, norms and attitudes, being encountered more frequently in societies in transition, which will withstand several crises (economic, political, cultural, etc.). Xenocentrists, being excited by the expansion of globalism and the desire to improve their social condition, underestimate their own culture, being easily influenced,

<sup>8</sup>Genocide. The Princeton Encyclopedia of Self-Determination, available here: <https://pesd.princeton.edu/node/446>

manipulated or assimilated by the representatives of other cultures, whose values, norms and attitudes they consider vital and clearly superior. They support cultural diffusion (including aspects related to religion, food, clothing, etc.), easily adapt to new conditions, tend to an open dialogue with representatives of other cultures, and often become hostile to their own culture.

The increase in the number of xenocentric people in the society speaks of the existence of several economic, political, social or cultural problems, etc., which should be identified and solved by the authorities. Otherwise, xenocentrism will become a reason for citizens to immigrate to another state, considered clearly superior.

Opposite to xenocentrism and ethnocentrism is *cultural relativism*, a phenomenon associated with globalization, which promotes the common good of different cultural groups, favoring and encouraging unity through diversity, gradual changes, mutual respect, honesty, political, economic, religious, linguistic, etc. pluralism, creating an atmosphere based on trust and respect for self and others, support for cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experiences between groups.

Therefore, *cultural relativism* is the only trend that would support the success of the globalists, would help them achieve their proposed goals; while *ethnocentrism* and *xenocentrism* would represent barriers to an open, successful dialogue.

#### 4. THE IMPACT OF ETHNOCENTRISM ON THE COMMUNICATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE. CASE STUDY

Young people of different ethnicities have always had a benevolent attitude towards everything new and unknown, positively appreciating the phenomenon of globalization. On the other hand, thanks to this, they have the possibility to continue their studies abroad, to familiarize themselves with new things, to make new friends, overcoming the cultural shock much easier than older people, etc.

In this context, the opinion of young people, belonging to different ethnicities, cultures, religions, about ethnocentrism, xenocentrism and cultural relativism is of interest. Pursuing this aim, we conducted an opinion poll among students, representatives of Romanians and Russians (country of origin – Republic of Moldova) and Indians (country of origin – India), who study at the State University of Medicine and Pharmacy “N. Testemițanu”.

According to the answers received (*Table 2. Opinion poll*), the majority of young Romanian-Bessarabians are followers of xenocentrism and cultural relativism; Russian students share ethnocentric and relativistic attitudes, Indian respondents are promoters of ethnocentrism. It is obvious that these trends cannot ultimately contribute to a successful dialogue between young people; they will cause and maintain a social distance.

| <i>Categories of respondent</i> | <i>Ethnocentrism (%)</i> | <i>Xenocentrism (%)</i> | <i>Cultural relativism (%)</i> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Romanian</i>                 | 10                       | 60                      | 30                             |
| <i>Russian</i>                  | 45                       | 20                      | 35                             |
| <i>Indian</i>                   | 65                       | 10                      | 25                             |

**Table 2. Opinion poll**



## 5. CONCLUSIONS

As a result, against the backdrop of discussions about the eventual success or failure of globalism, *ethnocentrism* remains a major challenge for humanity, shared in particular by the older generations. Young people are much more flexible in their thinking, dynamic in their actions and appreciate, in particular, the positive parts of the globalization process. Xenocentric attitudes prevail among students from the Republic of Moldova, which speaks of the persistence of political, economic and cultural problems, but also of their desire to emigrate to states with a prosperous economy and a better standard of living. It is worth mentioning the collectivist and ethnocentric spirit that characterizes Indian students, who prefer to avoid dialogue with representatives of other cultures.

In this sense, intercultural communication and education would serve to overcome ethnocentric or xenocentric behavior, influencing young people's perception of traditional values; it would cause profound changes in attitude and behavior towards diversity.

In order to overcome ethnocentric or xenocentric attitudes and behaviors, the following steps are welcome:

- promoting intercultural education with the aim of developing attitudes, knowledge and skills to understand diversity, to neglect the hierarchization of cultures, facilitate an empathetic, tolerant, efficient and dignified intercultural behavior;
- suppression of prejudices and stereotypes about moral, intellectual, physical, etc. characteristics, attributed to various ethnic, racial and religious groups by trying to know their ethnonym and ethnicity;
- preventing and combating discrimination by implementing anti-discrimination policies;
- learning foreign languages and developing intercultural sensitivity by participating in mobility projects, organizing cultural and scientific events, etc.

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# European Union Policies and Strategies to Counter Russian Propaganda and Disinformation

ILIE FLORIN CEUȘAN, PhD student

GEORGE EMIL PALADE UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE, PHARMACY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF  
TÂRGU MUREȘ, ROMANIA

**Abstract:** Contemporary Russian propaganda and disinformation are part of a broader historical phenomenon, in which information has been used as an essential means to achieve Russia's foreign policy goals. Thus, there are elements of continuity and innovation between the communist propaganda of the Soviet period (1917-1991) and that of the hybrid war in Crimea (2014), which escalated with the aggression of 24 February 2022.

The propaganda and disinformation actions carried out by the Russian Federation against the European Union represent a major threat to the European project aimed at undermining and eroding citizens' confidence in European construction.

We attempt to reconstruct, from a historical perspective, and analyse, in a documentary and interpretative manner, the evolution of the approach to Russian disinformation at EU level, starting from the challenges related to the operationalisation of concepts, the creation and consolidation of the institutional architecture, as well as the existing challenges in the implementation of response policies and strategies.

**Key Words:** EU policies, Russia, Disinformation, Propaganda, East Stratcom

## I. RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA. OLD TRICKS IN A NEW CONTEXT

In Russian strategic planning, long-term perspectives are significant but often ignored and continuity can be expressed in different ways depending on time, opportunity, events and context.<sup>1</sup>

Propaganda and disinformation as part of information warfare have been widely used since the Soviet era, then refined in the Cold War to justify Russia's geopolitical actions and interests, and now to legitimize Russia's claimed great power state of imperialism and a revisionist policy, accelerated with the coming to power of Vladimir Putin, who has labelled the breakup of the USSR as the greatest catastrophe of the last century<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cristina Juola (eds.), Hanna Smith, "Hybrid CoE Trend Report 1: Putin 4.0 Trends – Is there anything new?", European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, 2019, p.8 accessed on 11.10.2022 <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Hybrid-CoE-Trend-Report-1.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Legucka Agnieszka, "Russia's long term campaign of Disinformation in Europe", 2020 accessed at 26.11.2022 <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/81322>. Maria Costea, Costea, Simion (2015, ISI Journal article) "Ukraine between EU and Eurasian Regional Project in 2013", p.113-131, in Transylvanian Review (Center for Transylvanian Studies and the Romanian Academy), Vol. XXIV, Supplement No. 1, 2015. Costea, Maria, Costea Simion (2011, ISI journal article), „The Management of the EU's Eastern Partnership Project: A New Stage in the European Neighbourhood Policy”, p.409-433, in Transylvanian Review (Center for Transylvanian Studies and the Romanian Academy), Vol. XX, Supplement No. 4, 2011. Costea, Maria, Costea, Simion, (2015, ISI proceedings article), „Challenges of the EU in the migrant/Refugee Crisis in 2015”, p.166-175, in vol. Discourse as a form of multiculturalism in literature and communication. History ad cultural mentalities Tirgu-Mures, Arhipelag XXI Press, 2015.

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Russian narratives are based on alternative discourses that question the legitimacy of the European project by discrediting its core values: democracy, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms. The aim is to polarise society within the Member States and influence the EU's internal decision-making processes to Russia's advantage, for example to abolish the economic sanctions imposed after the annexation of Crimea and Russia's aggression against Ukraine and to include Russia in the public debate on European security.

The means and instruments used by the Russian Federation in the information war against the European Union are diverse and include several levels, both public and private, but all linked to Russian status: diplomats, secret services, state-funded think tanks and foundations (such as Ruskiy Mir, Rossotrudnichestvo), multi-language TV stations (such as Russia Today), fake news agencies and multimedia services (Sputnik), social media, social and religious groups and cross-border structures, funding of far-right political parties and other organisations, capture of institutional elites within the EU and/or Member States to undermine the European project<sup>3</sup>.

The Kremlin's information strategy complements the policy of accelerating bilateral relations, economic cooperation and joint projects with some EU Member States in order to weaken coherence and undermine EU policies, a concrete example of which is Hungary<sup>4</sup>.

The concerns of the Baltic and Scandinavian states and those of Central and Eastern Europe, which have long been exposed to Russian information warfare, to draw attention to this phenomenon have frequently been labelled as Russophobia by some Western states, but since 2014, with the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, there has been a major shift in European policy on dealing with this seemingly new phenomenon<sup>5</sup>.

The European Union needed a new approach to counter Russia's hybrid actions, with disinformation playing a key role.

## II. EUROPEAN POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN KEY PUBLIC POLICY DOCUMENTS

The European Union approaches the fight against disinformation as part of the hybrid war waged by the Russian Federation against European democratic values from a holistic, society-wide perspective, aiming to involve EU institutions, media platforms, civil society and the media in building resilience against this phenomenon.

EU policies and strategies aim at strengthening differentiated strategic communication tailored to the situational context in the Eastern Neighbourhood and Member States, critical media literacy, co-regulating the social media space with key stakeholders and supporting independent journalism.

A constant concern of the EU has been to refine common definitions and methodologies to operationalise appropriate ways of responding to the increasingly complex and diversified forms of foreign interference and manipulation of the information environment by the Russian Federation. In order to combat this phenomenon, it had first to be defined, make the public aware of it and establish appropriate response measures.

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<sup>3</sup> European Parliament resolution of 23 November 2016 on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties (2016/2030(INI)), accessed on 04.07.2022 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0441\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0441_EN.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> ING2 Committee Hearing on Russian interference in the UE: THE DISTINCT CASE OF Hungary and Spain. 27 October 2022, Brussels accessed on 02.11.2022 [www.politicalcapital.hu](http://www.politicalcapital.hu)

<sup>5</sup> Vilmer Jean-Baptiste Jeangène, Escorcía Alexandre, Guillaume Marine, Herrera Janaina, *Information Manipulation: A Challenge for Our Democracies*, report by the Policy Planning Staff (CAPS) of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Institute for Strategic Research (IRSEM) of the Ministry for the Armed Forces, Paris, August 2018, p.49

At EU level the term “disinformation” was initially used in the context of the war in Syria in 2011<sup>6</sup> and 2012<sup>7</sup> in EU Council decisions on some restrictive measures against Syria, referring to media outlets (Cham Press TV, Al Watan, General Organisation of Radio and TV aka Gort) that “participate in campaigns to spread disinformation and incite violence against demonstrators”.

In the context of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, there has been an increase in EU efforts to address Russian disinformation campaigns, but the terminology used at the level of the European institutions was not uniform, which has delayed a coherent approach to the phenomenon.

The European Council referred to “Russian disinformation campaigns”<sup>8</sup>, while the Parliament used the term “propaganda” alone or in conjunction with “disinformation” in its resolutions on EU-Russia<sup>9</sup> relations and the review of the Neighbourhood Policy<sup>10</sup>.

An additional challenge has been the low level of awareness among some Member States of this phenomenon, a context that, in 2016, led the European Parliament to call on EU actors to address the current lack of clarity and consensus on what counts as propaganda and disinformation, to develop, in collaboration with EU Member States' media representatives and experts, a common set of definitions and to collect evidence and data on propaganda consumption<sup>11</sup>.

Based on the findings<sup>12</sup> of a High Level Expert Group (HLEG) of academics, online platforms, media and civil society, the Commission defined disinformation as “a verifiably false or misleading set of information which is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to deliberately mislead the public and which is likely to cause public harm. Public harm includes threats to democratic political and policy-making processes as well as threats to public goods such as the protection of the health of EU citizens, the environment or security”<sup>13</sup>.

The first concrete response against disinformation came from the European Council in its conclusions of 19-20 March 2015, which underlined “the need to counter Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns and invited the High Representative of the European Union, together with the Member States and the EU institutions, to prepare an action plan on strategic communication in this regard and the establishment of a communication team as a first step of this strategy”<sup>14</sup>.

In March 2015, the East StratCom Task Force was established within the Strategic Communication Division of the European External Action Service. Its objectives are to effectively communicate and promote EU policies towards the Eastern Neighbourhood; to strengthen the overall media environment in the Eastern Neighbourhood and Member States, including by supporting press freedom and strengthening independent media; and to improve the EU's ability to anticipate, address and respond to Russian disinformation activities.

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<sup>6</sup> Council Decision 2011/782/CFSP of 1 December 2011 concerning restrictive measures against Syria and repealing Decision 2011/273/CFSP accessed on 11.10.2022 available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011D0782>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11-2015-INIT/en/pdf>, p. 5

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2015-0225\\_RO.html#def\\_1\\_5](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2015-0225_RO.html#def_1_5)

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<sup>13</sup> Communication of the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach, 26 April 2018, COM(2018) 236 final p1, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0236>

<sup>14</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11-2015-INIT/en/pdf>, p. 5

The group provides analytical support for evidence-based communications and policy and has a specific mandate to address disinformation and manipulative foreign interference in the information space and raise awareness of disinformation, information manipulation and pro-Kremlin interference, exposing attacks against the EU, its Member States and the EU's Eastern neighbours<sup>15</sup>.

EUvsDisinfo is East StratCom's flagship project, and its main objective is to raise public awareness and understanding of Kremlin disinformation operations and to help citizens in Europe and beyond develop resistance to information and media manipulation in the digital environment<sup>16</sup>.

In April 2016, the European Commission and the High Representative adopted the Joint Communication on Countering Hybrid Threats as part of the EU's policy of an integrated approach to security and defence, and included massive disinformation campaigns using social media platforms to control political discourse or to radicalise, recruit and coordinate intermediary actors as potential vectors of hybrid threats. Most of the actions defined aim to improve situational awareness, with specialised mechanisms set up to share information with Member States and support EU decisions in the field of strategic communication<sup>17</sup>.

The EU Threat Fusion Cell has been established within the EU Intelligence Analysis Centre (EU INTCEN) which is part of the European External Action Service (EEAS) to receive and analyse classified and open-source information from different stakeholders on hybrid threats, which is distributed to Member States and supports decision-making processes at EU level. Since January 2017, the Cell has launched the “Hybrid bulletin”, a regular publication on hybrid threat analysis, distributed directly to EU institutions and bodies and to national contact points.

The European Centre for Countering Hybrid Threats was launched by Finland in 2017; along with ten EU Member States, Norway and the US are founding members, while the European Union and NATO have been invited to support the Steering Committee. The Centre's mission is to foster strategic dialogue, as well as to conduct research and analysis, to cooperate with communities of interest to improve resilience and responsiveness, all with the aim of contributing to countering hybrid threats<sup>18</sup>.

A series of key policy documents on countering Russian disinformation were developed by the Commission and the High Representative in 2018, which sought to address both the challenges of a common EU understanding of disinformation, to create the appropriate response modalities (institutional, co-regulatory, educational, strategic communication) and to protect European elections from Russian interference.

On 26 April 2018, based on the findings of the HLEG report and an extensive public consultation process, the European Commission published a Communication entitled: “Fighting misinformation online: a European approach”<sup>19</sup> which contains general principles and objectives that should guide actions to raise public awareness of and combat misinformation.

The Commission proposed that a multi-stakeholder Forum (made up of major online platforms, software companies and advertising industry representative bodies) should develop a Code of Best Practice on misinformation, create an independent European network of truth-checkers, ensure secure and resilient electoral processes, boost education through the development of critical and digital skills, including in the media, support quality journalism as an essential element of a

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/_en)

<sup>16</sup> <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/>

<sup>17</sup> Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council *Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats a European Union response JOIN(2016) 18 final*, p.4 accessed on 11.10.2022 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016JC0018>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/>

<sup>19</sup> Communication of the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, *Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach*, 26 April 2018, COM(2018) 236 final p1, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0236>

democratic society, a coordinated strategic communication policy to counter false narratives about Europe and combat disinformation inside and outside the EU.

A self-regulatory Code of Best Practice on Disinformation was signed in October 2018 and the main online platforms that signed up voluntarily committed to improve the transparency, accountability and reliability of their services and to take specific measures before the European Parliament elections in May 2019<sup>20</sup>. This was complemented by the Digital Services Act (DSA) which came into force on 16 November 2022 and classifies disinformation or election manipulation as systemic risks.

A key programmatic document in tackling disinformation is the Action Plan against Disinformation developed by the European Commission and the High Representative on 15 December 2018. It sets out the main actions to combat disinformation through a coordinated approach at the level of the EU institutions and Member States and outlines priority actions to be taken by different actors ahead of the 2019 European Parliament elections.

Russia's disinformation actions, framed in a hybrid context, are identified as the biggest threat to the EU and require a strengthened response focused on 4 main areas: 1) improving the capacity of Union institutions to detect, analyse and report disinformation, 2) strengthening coordinated and joint actions to combat disinformation; 3) mobilising the private sector to combat disinformation; 4) informing citizens and improving resilience in society<sup>21</sup>.

The Rapid Alert System (RAS) is an important element of the EU's overall approach to combating disinformation and is one of the four pillars of the Action Plan. It is a dedicated digital platform to facilitate the exchange of information related to disinformation campaigns and to coordinate the responses of EU institutions and Member States. The RAS draws on open-source and academic information, fact-checkers, online platforms and international partners<sup>22</sup>.

In 2020, the European Commission proposed the European Democracy Action Plan/ EDAP<sup>23</sup> which sets out establishes a strengthened EU policy framework and specific measures to: 1) promote free and fair elections and strong democratic participation; 2) support free and independent media; and 3) combat disinformation.

In order to design<sup>24</sup> appropriate policy responses, depending on the actor, channel used and impact, the Commission refines the definition of disinformation and proposes a distinction between misinformation, disinformation, information influence operations and information interference in space.

Despite the differentiation included in the EDAP, there is a clear need for further work towards more refined common definitions and methodologies. With regard to one of these phenomena - the activities of foreign actors - the EEAS has begun to analyse and bring together in a coherent approach

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<sup>20</sup> Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions on the implementation of the Communication *Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach*, COM (2018) 794 final, accessed on 04.07.2022 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0794>

<sup>21</sup> Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions *Action Plan against Disinformation* JOIN (2018) 36 final, p.5 accessed on 04.07.2022 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018JC0036&qid=1682541612586>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/factsheet-rapid-alert-system\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/factsheet-rapid-alert-system_en)

<sup>23</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions *On the European democracy action plan*, JOIN 790 final (2020), accessed on 04.07.2022 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0790>

<sup>24</sup> James Pamment, *The EU's role in fighting disinformation: Crafting a new disinformation framework*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Working Paper, September 2020 accessed on 10.10.2022 <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/07/15/eu-s-role-in-fighting-disinformation-taking-back-initiative-pub-82286>

and common understanding the different elements with a view to operationalising their use, which will allow for possible future coordinated or joint responses. In this context, it is suggested to use the term 'foreign intelligence manipulation and interference' rather than 'disinformation', as this more accurately captures the issue at hand. Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) describes a pattern of behaviour, mostly unlawful, that threatens or has the potential to negatively impact political values, procedures and processes. Such activity is manipulative in nature, carried out in an intentional and coordinated manner. Actors of such activity may be state or non-state actors, including their proxies within and outside their own territory<sup>25</sup>.

The European Court of Auditors/ECA concluded, on its special report about disinformation, that the EU action plan against disinformation was relevant but incomplete, and even though its implementation is broadly on track and there is evidence of positive developments, some results have not been delivered as intended. EU spending on tackling disinformation has been relatively low to date: €50 million between 2015 and 2020. With reference to the EUvsDisinfo project, the ECA pointed out that it has been crucial in raising awareness about Russian disinformation but the fact that it is hosted by the European External Action Service raises some questions about its independence and ultimate purpose, as it could be perceived as representing the EU's official position. While the rapid alert system has facilitated information sharing among Member States and EU institutions it was not used to its full potential for coordinating joint responses to disinformation and common action. The ECA report recommended the need to improve coordination at EU level, to increase member states' commitment to the use of the Rapid Alert System, to improve the monitoring and accountability of social platforms and to include disinformation as part of a coherent EU media literacy strategy<sup>26</sup>.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

The European Union has established a coherent and unified framework for action to combat Russian disinformation in which a whole-of-society approach may be the only viable long-term solution. Disinformation is a cross-border phenomenon involving actors, target groups and multipliers and the response needs to be integrated, reinforced and adaptive, involving coherent strategic communication at the level of the EU institutions but also at the level of the Member States who are responsible for translating these policies into the national context.

An essential component of strategies to combat disinformation remains the media education of society through the development of critical skills to identify potentially damaging news, and in this context, an important role falls to university elites in the educational processes of those they educate.

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<sup>25</sup> European External Action Service (EEAS). October 2021. "Tackling Disinformation, Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference. StratCom Activity Report." [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/2021-stratcom-activity-report-strategic-communication-task-forces-and-information-analysis\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/2021-stratcom-activity-report-strategic-communication-task-forces-and-information-analysis_en)

<sup>26</sup> European Court of Auditors, *Disinformation affecting the EU : tackled but not tamed. Special report No 09, 2021*, Publications Office, 2021, p. 4-5, accessed on 10.10.2022 <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2865/337863>



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## Multiculturalism and Political Correctness: Theoretical-Conceptual Aspects

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MARGARETA BELTEI

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, CHISINAU, MOLDOVA STATE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, PHD STUDENT

**Abstract:** In this article the author will analyze the relationship between multiculturalism and political correctness through theoretical-conceptual aspects, which are based on the same idea, namely on respect for cultural diversity and the national identity of a person. As a political theory, multiculturalism is present on the territory of a state, more than a cultural community, based on the values and practices that its members share, and as a political practice, political correctness is based on the idea that people should care, not to express or act in a way that could offend, exclude or marginalize socially disadvantaged or discriminated people. At the current stage, in the process of analyzing the national identity of a person, political correctness (PC) is considered as a strategic component of multiculturalism, because PC draws attention to human rights that must be respected and recognized publicly, and any form of abuse against man, whether in physical, verbal or psychological form, needs to be punished and held accountable according to the international legislative norms of the UN Charter.

**Keywords:** multiculturalism, political correctness (PC), cultural diversity, national identity, human rights.

**P**olitical correctness (PC) is observed as a strategic component of multiculturalism, because PC draws attention to human rights that must be respected and recognized at the public level, and any form of abuse against a person, whether in physical, verbal or psychological form, is to be punished and held accountable according to the international legislative norms of the UN Charter. Multiculturalism, actually, supports human rights, but this term focuses on multicultural rights at a more complex level than on human rights.

According to Feischmidt M., a Hungarian researcher, multiculturalism is meant to defend the right of existence of each culture within a society that presents cultural diversity and the reason for its conception is to oppose the strategies of cultural and identity homogenization of the country, which are characteristic of modernity. The strategic essence of homogenization is associated with a tyrannical, repressive or unsatisfactory aspect whereas, as an alternative, the strategies of heterogenization and cultural diversity emphasize differentiation, recognition, tolerance and acceptance of diversity.<sup>1</sup> Feischmidt explains from her point of view that from the perspective of multiculturalism, each culture has the right to preserve its own identity, and at the level of state policy, this is manifested by the idea that diversity must not only be tolerated, but also supported, and against this background, two directions of political actions are suggested: the first direction is the pluralistic transformation of national organizational institutions and services, and the second direction is the creation of institutions, in which ethnic minorities can preserve their cultural heritage, without thus losing their chance to social equality.

Huzum E., a Romanian researcher, believes that multiculturalism is based on the idea of a good society, and multiculturalist visions of a prosperous and a solidary society, every time being invoked the legitimization of an important series of public policies. According to Huzum E, the legitimization of such policies is the fundamental goal of all multiculturalist thinkers and among the most typical of these policies are, for example, the removal of some laws regarding ethnic minorities in conflict with their beliefs or cultural practices, the representation of ethnic minorities in the political institutions of the state, knowledge of the native and international language at a high

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<sup>1</sup> Feischmidt, M. Multiculturalismul: o nouă perspectivă științifică și politică despre cultură și identitate. <http://altera.adatbank.transindex.ro/pdf/12/002.pdf> (accessed la 07.03.2023).

qualification level, etc.<sup>2</sup> Multiculturalism, especially social justice multiculturalism, presupposes a policy of cultural accommodation in which the state and government institutions have the moral obligation to create conditions for newcomers, i.e. immigrants and refugees, to feel at home, and no cultural and national minority should feel disadvantaged or neglected by the native cultural majority. On the opposite level of cultural accommodation, is assimilationism, according to which multicultural states must pursue a policy of cultural homogenization, that the existence of a common national culture for all is a condition of true cohesion between the members of this society. However, the theory of assimilationism imposed by the state is criticized, especially for the fact that it can generate major social conflicts.

Closely related to the notion of multiculturalism is political correctness (PC). Faist T., a British analyst, considers political correctness a concept as widespread as multiculturalism because it determines the mechanism of behavior in various situations of social and political interaction. Political correctness consists of norms or rules that seek to avoid language, behavior or policies that cause offense, discrimination or damage to certain groups in society, mostly minorities. To a certain extent, the political discourse and practice of political correctness can be seen both as a precedent and as an integral part of the manifestation of multiculturalism.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, political correctness is a mechanism for following the belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated.<sup>4</sup> In the American Heritage Dictionary, political correctness, or politically correct, means a way of conforming to a particular sociopolitical ideology or point of view, especially to a liberal point of view concerned with promoting tolerance and avoiding offense in matters of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation<sup>5</sup>.

A Canadian researcher, Ayim M<sup>6</sup>, determined three important factors of “political correctness” (PC): identifying real and trivial problems that are attributed to PC; analyzing the problems for those involved in PC; and finding solutions on these problems by conferring a sense of legitimacy on the opposition movement. The researcher also identified differences between the arguments directed towards ideological content of PC and PC methodology. Arguments directed at the ideological content of PC are divided into arguments threatening freedom of expression, arguments threatening intellectual and academic freedom and the argument leading to the degradation of human values. And the arguments directed at the PC methodology are divided into the dispute that the PC commits the very evils it addresses and uses unfair means to achieve its own interests, that racist and sexist discourses in educational settings must be limited and punished, the reduction of toxic influences on policies which promote the victimization of oppressed groups. It means that political correctness is not only correct but also morally obligatory for a multicultural society.

Ellis F., a British researcher, explains that the first use of the term political correctness dates back to the period between 1895 to 1921, when Lenin was trying to achieve two goals: the first goal

<sup>2</sup> Huzum., E. Ce este multiculturalismul? Idei și valori perene în științele socio-umane. Studii și cercetări, Ana Gugioman (coord), Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Faist, T. The Blind Spot of Multiculturalism: From Heterogeneities to Social (In) Equalities, Bielefeld: COMCAD, 2012. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/15986772.pdf> (accessed 07.03.2023).

<sup>4</sup> Politically Correct. (n.d.). In Merriam-Webster dictionary online. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/political%20correctness> (Accessed 07.03.2023).

<sup>5</sup> Politically Correct. (N.D.). In The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language. Houghton Mifflin Company. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Political+Correctness> (Accessed 07.03.2023).

<sup>6</sup> Ayim., M. (1998). Just how correct is political correctness? A critique of the opposition's arguments. *Argumentation*, Vol 12, Nr.4, p.445.

was to secure his power over his fellow revolutionaries, and the second goal, was to consolidate the control of the Bolshevik party over the new Soviet state, after the First World War 1917-1918.<sup>7</sup>

A political analyst from U.S., Epstein B<sup>8</sup>, considers PC a “Leninist correctness”, because it was used as a political and ideological weapon of propaganda against the enemies of political opposition, against those values and ideas which were not compatible or a threat to Communists and Bolsheviks. Virtually every sector of the radical movement was overtaken by Soviet parties in the late 1960s. In the case of the USA, sometimes, during the anti-war movement in 1960-1980, PC was used as a tool by activists such as straight white men against other activists, who campaigned on the side for women rights of different races and LGBT rights, fighting for the rights of sexual identity and sexual orientations.

Another British researcher, Lind B<sup>9</sup>, mentions that the term PC was described as a dangerous term, considered an ideological movement, as it has destroyed the lives of tens of millions of people in Europe, Russia, China, and even in the whole world since the 20th century, in the two World Wars, namely through mass ethnic cleansing, forced colonization of territories and indigenous populations killing, illegal and massive mass deportations, torture, chemical and harmful experiments, destruction and diminution of indigenous culture replacing it with a fake culture, as a propaganda project, and the fabrication of false historical sources of national and native linguistic identity. Lind B., considers PC, a negative term and a threat to human rights, and related to another non-democratic term, called Cultural Marxism. Because if we observe clearly and logically from an analytical and historical point of view, we need to understand that political correctness is viewed as Cultural Marxism because Marxism is the social and economic theory developed by Karl Marx, but Cultural Marxism, is a conspiracy theory misrepresenting the Frankfurt School as being responsible for modern progressive movements, identity politics and political correctness. Political correctness and Cultural Marxism are based on the following similarities:

- first of all, both terms, PC and Cultural Marxism are totalitarian ideologies that tend to diminish the rational and creative thinking of a person.

- second, the Cultural Marxism and political correctness, both have a unique history because, when it comes to economy, Marxism says that all history is determined by ownership of production, then cultural Marxism and political correctness, is determined by power, over other groups who are deemed undesirable.

- Third, to Marxism, certain groups, such as workers and peasants, are positioned among the better and more privileged classes, and in the case of the bourgeoisie, national intellectuals, and landowners such as landlords and tenants, they are considered an immoral class and must be punished. Nowadays, cultural Marxism and PC, hold certain privileged classes or groups as privileged, such as feminists, African-Europeans or African-Americans, Latin Americans, Jews, homosexuals, lesbians, transsexuals, atheists, independent intellectuals, these groups are determined as victims against white superior patriarchy and are seen as on the side of good, regardless of the status and position they hold. Whereas white, European men are seen as on the side of evil, the equivalent of the bourgeoisie class in Marxist economics.

- Fourth, Cultural Marxism and PC use a strategy of expulsion because for example, the communists took over a country like Russia, they expropriated the bourgeoisie and confiscated their property. Similarly, Cultural Marxism and PC take over a college campus, expropriate through things like admissions quotas. For example, when a student of Muslim religious affiliation and ethnic

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<sup>7</sup> Ellis, F. (2002). Political correctness and the ideological struggle: From Lenin and Mao to Marcuse and Foucault. *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies*, Vol.27, Nr.4, p.409.

<sup>8</sup> Epstein, B. (1992, February 26). ‘Political correctness’ and identity politics. In *These Times*, p.16.

<sup>9</sup> Lind, B. (2000, February 5). The origins of political correctness. URL: <http://www.academia.org/the-origins-of-political-correctness/> (Accessed 07.03.2023).

Arab affiliation with superior qualifications is denied admission to a college in favor of a European Christian, who is not as well qualified, then the Muslim student is expelled.

- And finally, both terms, Cultural Marxism and PC have a method of analysis of doing an act of ending a legal agreement in constructive way and that is the dissolution. Because in essence, dissolution is a process by which any text takes over, any original cultural meanings are either destroyed or modified, by reintroducing a new culture and a new national identity. For Marxism, this process happened during the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and for Cultural Marxism from the 80s until present, the dissolution process happened in the form of political correctness.

However, since the late 80s and 90s, there has been another change in the approach to the definition of political correctness, albeit in a completely different manner than the original used in the past, that is in totalitarian ex-communist countries. A British researcher Hughes G<sup>10</sup>, explains that the respective term, PC, entered the consciousness of the Western public with the opening of the debate in the United States of America about the supposed advantages and disadvantages of political correctness in the democratic world, which quickly reached from the academic level to the public space. The debate took place in universities, but because of the prevalence of university education in the American society, the term PC became an object of widespread interest in all political and governmental institutions.

An American journalist, Bernstein R.,<sup>11</sup> critically observes PC as a phenomenon that leads to an increased level of intolerance, which leads to shutting down the debate of free speech and free critical discourse, which leads to a pressure or risk being accused of changing sexist, racist and homophobic rhetoric. Bernstein identified some of the key areas influenced or shaped by political correctness such as affirmative action, race and gender issues, and environmentalism, and then presented his own perception of the given phenomenon: one central picture, which has its roots in the 1960s, where for centuries western society has been dominated by what is called “the European patriarchal power structure” or “a patriarchal hegemony”. And everyone except straight white men has suffered some form of repression and been denied a cultural voice or prevented from celebrating what is commonly called “the diversity of the individual identity of man in general”.

But an American analyst, Moller D<sup>12</sup>, has a different point of view from Bernstein, claiming that political correctness is an attempt to promote the legitimate interests of certain groups in the public sphere. However, this type of norm brings with it certain costs that should not be neglected, sometimes in the form of conflict with other values we value, sometimes by creating an internal schism that threatens us with collective irrationality. PC thus generates dilemmas. According to Moller D., PC represents a method to establish norms of speech or sometimes, of behavior, which are believed to: protect vulnerable, marginalized or historically victimized groups; and which work by shaping public discourse, often by inhibiting speech or other forms of social signaling; and that they should avoid insulting and offending, a low sense of self-esteem by offending the sensibilities of such groups or their allies. PC is strongly promoted, especially through the media, although less common in post-Soviet countries, where religious traditions are quite influential. PC often begins to appear as a very strong type of censorship, paying attention to the freedom of expression. Any statement, which is borderline, even said in jest, can become a pretext for unpleasantness, dismissal

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<sup>10</sup> Hughes, G. *Political correctness: a history of semantics and culture*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. URL: <https://www.pdfdrive.com/political-correctness-a-history-of-semantics-and-culture-d18855974.html> \Political Correctness A History of Semantics and Culture ( PDFDrive ),pdf ( Accessed 07.03.2023).

<sup>11</sup> Bernstein, R. (1990, October 28). The rising hegemony of the politically correct. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/10/28/weekinreview/ideas-trends-the-risinghegemony-of-the-politically-correct.html> ( Accessed 07.03.2023).

<sup>12</sup> Moller, D. Dilemmas of Political Correctness. In: *Journal of Practical Ethics*. Volume 4, Issue 1, 2016. URL: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f80be5a21d29366e84a124e/t/6064f8089bd4fa0504306e71/1617229832677/Dilemmas+copy.pdf> (accesat 10.03.2023).



and even social ostracism. PC is often perceived as a kind of practice, a type of behavior, in which people are prohibited from using specific words or expressions that certain groups of people may find offensive.

The researchers from Republic of Moldova, Țurcan G<sup>13</sup>., and from Romania, Farcaș A-D<sup>14</sup>., proposed various new words and expressions, various substitutes to name the representatives of a minority for PC. And these lexical proposals are sometimes manifested by the appearance of strange terms, such as “green operator” instead of “sweeper”. Under the influence of the idea of political correctness, words and expressions that were commonly used a few years or months ago become inappropriate, crude and controversial. It is expected that a modern person in a democratic society should avoid words and expressions that may offend or humiliate others. But sometimes, instead of solving real problems, people just change the terms. Also, special attention is paid to the words used for a certain minority that can have the opposite effect, emphasizing their status as special or weak. This can prevent prejudice, racism, etc. from really being overcome. And simply changing words will not improve relations between different groups of people. Political correctness tries to base itself on a culture of total surveillance. And everything that goes against the dogma of multiculturalism is condemned by the representatives of certain aggressive groups. As a result, in some countries the polarization of society is becoming stronger than ever.

In conclusion, we can state that multiculturalism, is an important idea about the harmonious coexistence of different cultures within the same society, but it brought disappointments, especially to immigrants, ethnic minorities, and indigenous populations, through political correctness. In many ways, PC manifests more often the totalitarian characteristics, by trying to control not only the behavior and expression, but sometimes even the thoughts of individuals. As for the positive aspects, PC is useful as a co-defense strategy against discrimination and violence against human rights and cultural rights, so it needs to be revised, since the content of some elements came from totalitarian ideology and exaggerations of some words. In order to solve the problems faced by multiculturalism, socio-cultural integration courses are mandatory for immigrants; the further implementation and development of intercultural education; the recognition of values in multicultural diversity, by valuing what other cultures offer; encouraging the contribution of diverse groups; empowering people to strengthen themselves and others to achieve their maximum potential by being critical of their biases; and celebrating rather than just tolerating the differences in order to bring about unity through diversity. Multiculturalism and PC appears as a solution for the problems of modern societies and must remain as a strategic solution and not as an obstacle to the development of human well-being.

The first correlation between multiculturalism and PC determines the mechanism of behavior in various situations of social and political interaction. The second correlation between these two terms is maintaining balance by taking urgent, accountable, and publicly transparent action. If political correctness requires the search for solutions, to avoid language, behavior or policies that cause offense, discrimination or damage to some groups in society; most often the ethnic minority, immigrants and refugees, and multiculturalism demands from the state institutions, regionally and globally, where immigrants must be helped not only to preserve their own culture, but also help to interact easily as members of the society, with the aim of not being socially isolated or discriminated against for indirect or direct reasons of cultural differences and identity or nationality of a person.

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<sup>13</sup> Țurcan., G. Multiculturalism și corectitudine politică. In: Teoria și practica administrării publice. 21 mai 2021, Chișinău. Chișinău, Republica Moldova: Tipografia Print-Caro, 2021, pp. 183-186. URL: [https://ibn.idsi.md/vizualizare\\_articol/141933](https://ibn.idsi.md/vizualizare_articol/141933) ( Accessed 07.03.2023).

<sup>14</sup> Farcaș AD., Corectitudinea politică în societatea multiculturală. În: Jurnal Buletin Stiintific, seria A, Fascicula Filologie, Editura UT Press, Vol. 28, Nr.1, 2019, p. 367-376. URL:[http://bslr.ubm.ro/files/2019/30.Farcas\\_Ana\\_Daniela\\_\(367-379\)\\_BSLR\\_2019\\_.pdf](http://bslr.ubm.ro/files/2019/30.Farcas_Ana_Daniela_(367-379)_BSLR_2019_.pdf)

The third correlation is that these two terms come as a warning to leaders from the Western countries, which is to diminish populism of policy in the form of selective camps, to not play dirty games for political interests, and the political practice of PC can be seen both as a useful strategy and as an integral part of the manifestation of multiculturalism, in order to ensure that the native population does not feel neglected and discriminated in favor of immigrants, refugees and the ethnic minority and vice versa, and giving support and attention to the cultural identity not only to those who come to the host country, but also to those who receive them in the host country.

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# Transnistria and the War in Ukraine – 31 Years of Active Separatism

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ANDREI GUȚU<sup>1</sup>

PRESIDENT OF THE JAPANESE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Abstract:** *The Transnistrian problem has become a global topic today, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine, which disrupts the social and political peace in the Republic of Moldova and which cannot be solved even 31 years since the breakaway has been established in Transnistria, through war, together with the 14th Army. There are still pressures being made on Moldovan Romanians in Transnistria, through various non-democratic methods and with serious violations of human rights.*

**Keywords:** *EU, Transnistria, separatism, war, undemocratic, pressures, army.*

## INTRODUCTION

It has already been 31 years since the Republic of Moldova was divided territorially by the establishment of an illegal, separatist regime in the Transnistrian area, which applies a policy contrary to the Constitution and Moldovan laws, aiming at de-nationalizing the territory of its own culture, at russification, manipulation of the population and spreading of Russian propaganda. Some historians address this problem by referring to the past, namely to a possible avoidance of separatism through the Union of the Republic of Moldova with Romania in 1991, when the third Grand National Assembly was organized in Chisinau, and which gave birth to the independent and sovereign state, united and indivisible Republic of Moldova. After the fall of the Ceaușescu dictatorial regime, the Union came very close, especially since thousands of people in Chisinau demanded this but, according to some sources, the Iliescu government would have refused this proposal. If the Union of the Republic of Moldova with Romania had been possible then, it would certainly not be a separatist zone today, nor would it be possible to use it as a destabilization tool by Moscow.

Today, we only have to identify tangible solutions for settling the Transnistrian conflict, on a diplomatic and peaceful path, in common with the United States of America, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. These three important actors cannot be avoided by the authorities in Chisinau, given the strong position they have in the world in terms of security, geopolitics, as well as the social-economic field. It is natural that we cannot forget the abhorrent attack organized at Moscow's directives in March 1992 on an independent and sovereign country, which had every right to decide its own fate and live freely. Freedom will surely come, and for this perseverance, love of country, and loyalty to one's own law, culture, language, and history are required.

## THE HISTORY OF TRANSNISTRAN SEPARATISM

Separatism in Transnistria began to develop since the Soviet period, when between 1924-1930, the communist authorities in Moscow began to build an autonomous region of Transnistria, called the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova (ASSM) with the capital in Tiraspol,

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<sup>1</sup> Andrei Guțu – Bachelor in history, master degree in law, master degree in management. History teacher at Omega High School in Târgu Mureș, Romania. Co-founder and president of the Japanese Institute of Management in the Republic of Moldova, trainer in communication and management.

which was the capital of the Republic of Moldova and where large part of the population spoke a neolatin language (Russified Romanian). The Transnistrian territory was dominated by the Soviets, who had unlimited possibilities to rule the area and to de-nationalize it in all respects, forcing the inhabitants to obey Russian laws and speak Russian, without granting them rights to preserve their own national values.

The origin of the Transnistrian conflict has other connotations, namely, it comes to light with the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the political forces in Chisinau were fighting for independence, and the establishment of the Romanian language as the state language in the Republic of Moldova. A large part of the business and political leaders of Transnistria wanted to keep the Russian language on Transnistrian territory and remain under Soviet rule. Many of these criminal groups were supported by Moscow, in order to fight those who wanted freedom. These actions led to division and the emergence of many political conflicts, violent protests and later military actions.<sup>2</sup>

The year 1990 was an important year for Kremlin-backed groups: instigating and exploiting the dissatisfaction of the Russian population with the loss of the dominant position of the Russian language and the fear of Moldova's reunification with Romania, the authorities of the new Transnistrian Republic, with the complicity of the Soviet armed forces, expanded their territory, resorting to violence. In 1992, they controlled almost the entire left bank of the Dniester River and the large industrial city Tighina/Bender on the right bank.<sup>3</sup>

On September 2, 1990, the "Transnistrian Moldovan Republic" (NSR) was proclaimed. On August 25, 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of MR adopted the declaration of independence of the new Republic. On August 27, 1991 the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Moldova, whose territory included the districts on the left bank of the Dniester. The Moldovan Parliament called on the Government of the USSR "to begin negotiations with the Moldovan Transnistrian Government on the illegal occupation of the Republic of Moldova and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Moldovan territory".<sup>4</sup>

The war in Transnistria, also known as the Russian-Moldovan War, began on March 2, 1992, when guards and Cossacks caused an incident in the town of Dubasari, by attacking the Moldovan police in the area who came to stop a conflict, which forced the police to shoot at a Cossack, who died on the spot.

Later, the police headquarters was attacked by guards and Cossacks, who took the police officers prisoners and disarmed them. It is important to note that this action was planned by the pro-Russian forces, in order to find a pretext for military action in the area. In reality, the true causes of the emergence of "frozen conflicts" must be sought in the complex processes that took place in the last years of the Soviet Union. It is absolutely obvious that the warheads on the territories of "rebel" republics were inspired, stimulated and used by the Centre, which was interested in maintaining effective control over all Union republics, using this instrument to counter their natural aspirations for sovereignty, freedom and national rebirth.<sup>5</sup>

2 March 1992 - plateau of Cosnita: this day has entered history as the day of the pro-separatist forces triggering the armed conflict in the eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova. Guards, Cossack mercenaries and representatives of the 14th Army stormed the national police headquarters

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<sup>2</sup> Cornel Ciurea, Dominic Fean, *Conflictul Transnistrean după 20 de ani*, Raport al unui grup de experți internaționali, Editor: Centrul pentru Studii Europene (OSW), Chișinău, 2011, p. 7

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, p. 7

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.wikiwand.com/ro/R%C4%83zboiul\\_din\\_Transnistria](https://www.wikiwand.com/ro/R%C4%83zboiul_din_Transnistria)

<sup>5</sup> Ion Stăvilă, Gheorghe Bălan, *Conflictul transnistrean: Eșecul reglementării unui conflict care poate fi soluționat*, Studii de Securitate și Apărare, Publicație științifică în Revista Militară, nr. 2 (4), Chișinău, 2010, p. 6

in Dubasari. There were human casualties as a result of the clashes. The special-purpose police brigade came to the aid of their colleagues, the native population.<sup>6</sup>

Also on March 2, 1992, the Republic of Moldova became a full member of the United Nations (UN), and this fact deeply disgruntled the separatists who further destabilized the situation in Transnistria. By agreeing to become a part of the UN, the Republic of Moldova attaches great importance in promoting democracy and human rights, maintaining international peace and security, economic and social development, respecting the principles of international law and the rule of law. This policy was also valid for Transnistria, but the separatist authorities rejected the path of peace and continued to support mercenaries in the war. On March 3, 1992, the village of Cocieri was attacked, and the next day, the separatists entered the village of Cosnita, attacking several Moldovan policemen. Other localities followed, including Grigoriopol, Tighina, Bender and Tiraspol. On March 15, the Government of the Republic of Moldova appealed to the guards and Cossacks to lay down their weapons by March 17, 1992. Subsequently, on March 19, 1992, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova proposed a compromise, presenting the draft granting the status of a free economic zone to Transnistria and a modification of the territorial administration, but without success.<sup>7</sup>

The separatist authorities appealed to the people on the left side of the Dniester, then asked for support from the Russian Federation. In response, the Russian Foreign Minister made a press statement, urging the authorities in Chisinau to act in strict accordance with the provisions of international law, and to respect human rights and national minorities. On April 1, 1992, Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a decree that placed the 14th Army and several military units deployed in Moldova under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation. This decree was an illegal act because, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the autonomous territories passed into the possession of the republics in whose territory they were and no one could send a foreign army into the area.<sup>8</sup>

## TRANSNISTRIAN SEPARATISM AFTER 31 YEARS OF EXISTENCE

For the Republic of Moldova, the year 2023 marked 31 years of active separatism in Transnistria, 31 years without concrete and viable solutions to resolve the “frozen” conflict. The 5+2 format is so far the only diplomatic negotiation platform aimed at finding a solution to the Transnistrian conflict between Moldova and the unrecognized state of Transnistria. Negotiations in the Transnistrian settlement process in the 5+2 format cannot take place since the start of the war in Ukraine by the Russian Federation. Under these conditions, the Chisinau authorities must continue discussions with Tiraspol in other existing formats, such as the 1+1 format, which means continuing the dialogue with the separatist authorities on the left of the Dniester in the common interest of all those who are on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, and the most important thing in this regard is the maintenance of peace and stability.<sup>9</sup>

It is important to mention that the interests of the Russian Federation in the Transnistrian region have a considerable role in the evolution of the conflict. First of all, Russian interests are geostrategic. The Russian side considers its presence on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, including military, as a possibility to exercise influence in the Balkan area. Second, Russia's interests are political in nature. The withdrawal of military troops could be considered as a concession to the West and would deprive Russia of certain levers of influence in the given area. Consequently, the

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<sup>6</sup> Valentina Ursu, *Râul de sânge*, Editura Basarabia, Chişinău, 1993, p. 9

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.wikiwand.com/ro/Cronologia\\_conflictului\\_din\\_Transnistria](https://www.wikiwand.com/ro/Cronologia_conflictului_din_Transnistria)

<sup>8</sup> <https://dreptmd.wordpress.com/referate/constructie-europeana/conflictul-transnistrean-si-republica-moldova/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.ipn.md/ro/negocierile-in-formatul-52-sunt-blocate-dialogul-trebuie-7965\\_1095222.html](https://www.ipn.md/ro/negocierile-in-formatul-52-sunt-blocate-dialogul-trebuie-7965_1095222.html)

geostrategic and political interests that Russia has in the Transnistrian region explain the political, economic and military support given by this country to the Tiraspol regime.<sup>10</sup>

By obtaining independence in the Republic of Moldova, the National Liberation Movement achieved its primary goal on the right bank of the Dniester, but not in Transnistria, a component part of the Republic of Moldova, remaining a serious and unresolved problem.<sup>11</sup>

For 31 years, the most problematic issue for the government in Chisinau has been called Transnistria. The most interesting thing is that according to a survey carried out in 2006, the solution of the Transnistrian issue is only in fifth place (4.5%) in terms of public interest. The Transnistrian problem is a difficult task, especially since, in reality, the Republic of Moldova has never had effective control over its part.<sup>12</sup>

During all these 31 years of separatism, the Tiraspol authorities carried out a series of reforms in education with the aim of denationalizing the young generation, changing their own history, and imposing a false history of manipulation and “brainwashing”. Also, the Romanian language was practically prohibited in all educational units, except for one high school, which was the “Lucian Blaga” Theoretical High School in the municipality of Tiraspol. This institution faced a series of problems, for example, in August 2021, the separatist regime suspended the activity of the institution for at least 3 months on the grounds that the election of the director was not done according to internal regulations. Of course, this was just a pretext to close the last school that still kept the true values and transmitted the historical truth to the students studying in the high school. Over time, there have been many proposals to resolve the Transnistrian conflict, one of the solutions being the 3 D Strategy, an apparently easy concept in theory but very difficult to put into practice. This strategy meant following three actions (words) starting with the letter D, such as: 1. Democratization; 2. Decriminalization; 3. Demilitarization.<sup>13</sup>

Another proposal that endangered the sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova was the Kozak Plan, invoked by the Kremlin and named after its initiator, Dmitri Kozak (former deputy prime minister of the Russian Federation). This plan was proposed in 2003 and aimed at a definitive settlement of the conflict between the authorities in Chisinau and Tiraspol, through the federalization of the Republic of Moldova, and the Russian army had to be stationed in the area for 20 years, from 2003 until 2023. In this regard, massive protests were organized in Chisinau in which the citizens declared very clearly that they were against the Kozak Plan. Fortunately, at the last moment the government in Chisinau rejected the project, on the grounds that it was unconstitutional.<sup>14</sup>

It is certain that the population protesting in the streets played an essential role in rejecting the plan, especially since many citizens realized that it was a trap in which Russia wanted to pull the Republic of Moldova, the “Annexation in Law”. On June 9, 1992, in Helsinki, the presidents of Moldova, Romania and the Russian Federation signed an agreement on the termination of the military operation, and on June 21 of the same year, in Moscow, Mircea Snegur, the president of the Republic of Moldova together with the president of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, in the presence of Igor Smirnov, the leader of the separatists from Transnistria, signed the agreement to end the war definitively.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Constantin Solomon, Artur Gumeniuc, *Conflictul transnistrean și procesul de negocieri în formatul 5+2*, Articol publicat în Revista Moldoscopie (Probleme de analiză politică), nr. 3 (XLII), Chișinău, 2008, p. 17

<sup>11</sup> Anatol Țăranu, *Aspecte ale istoriei începutului conflictului transnistrean*, Articol publicat în Revista de istorie a Moldovei, p. 149

<sup>12</sup> Dan Dungaciu, *Cine suntem noi? Cronici de la Est de Vest*, Editura Cartier, Chișinău, 2009, p. 278

<sup>13</sup> Dan Dungaciu, *Basarabia e România?* Editura Cartier, Chișinău, 2011, p. 97

<sup>14</sup> Vladimir Zencenco, *Transnistria între Moldova, Ucraina și Rusia*, Editura Neverland, București, 2022, p. 194

<sup>15</sup> Ion Costăș, *Transnistria 1989-1992: Cronica unui război „nedeclarat”*, Editura RAO, București, 2012, p. 478

## TRANSNISTRIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

It is obvious that Transnistria cannot be forgotten, even during the war in Ukraine, but must be carefully monitored to avoid military conflicts in the area and take care of the safety of the population. With the war in Ukraine, the tension has also increased in the Republic of Moldova, some believing that the same situation could happen in Transnistria, and several residents even left their own homes, going to other countries or settling in Chisinau. For the Republic of Moldova, the situation with Transnistrian separatism is complicated, and an important step to ensure social-political stability is to strengthen the state's security by establishing sustainable relations with international bodies, the countries of the European Union, the United States of America, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. One thing is clear, the tactic by which Russia tore Moldova in two in 1992 is being applied today in Ukraine, perhaps even more harshly.

In December 2022, representatives of the Government of the Republic of Moldova announced that the Chisinau authorities intended to develop a new plan for the reintegration of the Transnistrian region into the Republic of Moldova, and the role of Romania and the European Union should increase in the negotiation process.<sup>16</sup>

For many years, Transnistria has been a “black hole” of Europe, as stated in a European Parliament report in 2002, where human rights and freedom of the press are violated. It is clear that the war that is taking place in Ukraine today forces the competent institutions of the Republic of Moldova to rethink new border security tools and invest in the innovation of protection systems against external threats. Since the war in Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, several provocative actions have been organized in Transnistria, in various forms, which tried to destabilize the area and, according to some experts, provoke violent actions among the population. The authorities in the Russian Federation were trying to blame others and not themselves, with various unfriendly and outlandish statements, such as: “A strike on Transnistria would be a strike on Russia”. The illegal presence of the troops of the Russian Federation on the territory of Transnistria, as well as of a paramilitary contingent of the so-called separatist force structures, is a destabilizing factor for the Republic of Moldova, officials from the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Moldova have stated numerous times. Of course, we can't just stick to official statements, concrete solutions must be sought with the involvement of capable people. However, the war in Ukraine was a reason to persevere even more in order to resolve the Transnistrian conflict, to see things better and to be more cautious. It is natural for the Republic of Moldova to continue to demand the withdrawal of Russian military forces from its territory, which have been staying illegally for 31 years.

Against the background of the war in Ukraine, the current government has adopted some important decisions to strengthen the national army, and more and more people from Transnistria are applying for Moldovan passports as a means of survival.<sup>17</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Our duty, of civilized and democratic states, is to respect every people and their sovereignty, to avoid conflicts that may lead to the separation of territories or the emergence of separatist areas. The world can only progress through unity and solidarity, through the preservation of moral and cultural values, through respect for human rights and the search for political, diplomatic and economic consensus. The Transnistrian problem is a lesson that we must learn and that can strengthen us even more against those who want regress and division. We are glad that, today,

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<sup>16</sup> <https://revista22.ro/opinii/ileana-racheru/reintegrarea-transnistriei-o-oportunitate-ce-nu-trebuie-ratata-de-chisinau-i>

<sup>17</sup> <https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/r%C4%83zboiul-din-ucraina-%C8%99i-solu%C8%9Bia-pentru-transnistria/31992482.html>

business people and more and more ordinary citizens from across the Dniester have begun to appreciate the prospects and benefits arising from Moldova's proximity to the European Union and would not like to lose the opportunities with which they have already become accustomed. This would mean that the Transnistrian problem can also be solved by citizens living in the area who would advocate democratization and Europeanization. I believe that promoting measures to strengthen confidence and security, simultaneously with supporting the population, stimulating the development of enterprises and promoting exports from the Transnistrian region, carrying out some social-cultural-economic projects, with the support of international organizations, would be a viable solution to strengthen those two banks of the Dniester.

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## Polish Social Security in the Aftermath of COVID-19

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DR THOMAS IRENEUSZ

MANS WARSAW, POLAND

**Abstract:** *The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities in labour markets, reversing the employment growth seen since the global financial crisis of 2007-08 and accelerating the arrival of changes dubbed the 'future of employment'. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the long-term changes already triggered by the fourth industrial revolution.*

**Keywords:** *EU, Poland, COVID, crisis, economy, social security, media, democracy*

### INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak has severely tested a significant number of public institutions. In a short formulation, it is possible to present the view that the dangers arising from the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus have significantly damaged the structures of the Polish state. Many years of neglect, as well as insufficient definition of potential threats, meant that the public health service was not prepared for such a strong and radical disruption to its functioning. In order to maintain adequate operability, the forces and resources of other entities shaping security, including, among others, the Polish Armed Forces, were involved. In addition, solutions that had not been attempted in recent Polish history became necessary. Restrictions were placed on the exercise of a universal form of civil rights and freedoms.

As a result of political actions, the constitutional tools of one of the three states of emergency were not used. Although the validity of the solutions taken at the time should not be questioned, the regulations established were met with numerous legislative controversies in the first place. The outlined political decisions that were taken during the first wave of the COVID-19 epidemic were not shaping up as fully identical to effective crisis management. The idea of political interest mainly revolved around the presidential election process that had begun and the desire to maintain executive power. The lack of expected effectiveness of state instruments, as well as the chaos in the conduct of the political narrative, resulted in the public increasingly expressing widespread criticism of the ruling camp. This is evidenced, among other things, by the presented results of a survey that was conducted in early May 2020. The content of the above discussion clearly confirms the hypothesis adopted in the introduction. The emergence of the first wave of the COVID-19 epidemic was a phenomenon that significantly strained the ability of numerous institutions of the Polish state to respond appropriately. Although the actors characterized in the article show a clear advantage in the context of establishing and maintaining national security, the pandemic crisis contributed to legitimate doubts about the overall effectiveness and efficiency of state mechanisms. The dynamic development of the epidemic, typical of the first wave of cases, necessitates a redefinition of the relevant concepts and scenarios for maintaining adequate internal security. The course of the outbreak also highlighted glaring problems in ensuring adequate supply chains, especially at the level of products for the personal protection of medical staff. In this context, it becomes important to build up richer strategic reserves that will allow adequate levels of health security to operate for longer. Further action should focus on conducting an in-depth analysis of the current legislation that serves to ensure safety. The accelerated legislative work on the eve of the emergence of an increased

number of diseases illustrates the significant chaos in the context of the developed and applied legal mechanisms<sup>1</sup>.

In the near future, therefore, consideration should be given to establishing new normative acts that will enable comprehensive and rapid action to be taken in the context of security. The materialisation of detailed considerations is a document bearing the rank of a strategy - the 2020 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, which, at the final stage of preparation, was enriched with issues concerning the COVID-19 epidemic. Attention should also be drawn to the announcements concerning legislative work on the Act on National Security Management and the Act on Civil Protection and Civil Defence. The counter-threat undertakings specific to the COVID-19 epidemic will continue to be one of the most significant challenges for numerous homeland security actors for a long time to come. In view of the above recommendations, a key action should be to gather all lessons learned to date and conduct ongoing analysis to enhance overall effectiveness.

### EXAMPLES:

The first case of coronavirus was diagnosed in Poland on 4 March 2020, and in the following days measures were taken to protect community life. From 14 March, in Poland we turned into a state of epidemic emergency, from 15 March a sanitary cordon was introduced at the Polish borders, and from 20 March an epidemic state was in force.

From March, further restrictions were introduced, including on civil rights and freedoms, among others. Rectors cancelled classes for students, mass events were cancelled, schools (public and non-public), kindergartens, crèches were closed, Poland's borders were closed to air and rail traffic, an obligatory quarantine was introduced for persons crossing the border by land, a ban was introduced on public assemblies of more than 50 people, including state and religious assemblies, assemblies of more than 2 people were banned, restrictions were introduced on the movement of public mass transport and on foot, and participation in religious ceremonies of more than 5 people was banned, parks, boulevards and beaches were closed. Restrictions were also introduced on business activities, including the suspension of cinemas, theatres, opera houses, swimming pools, fitness clubs, amusement and play parks, saunas and solariums, hairdressing, beauty and tattoo parlours, as well as the prohibition or restriction of the organisation of fairs, congresses, cultural and sporting events, the restriction or prohibition of the operation of retail establishments, hotels, restaurants and mass catering establishments. The bans and restrictions introduced have affected the performance of businesses and the performance of the national economy.

According to a study by the COVID-19 Team of the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences: "SARS-COV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2) is a typical virus of animal origin and is the cause of COVID-19 (coronavirus disease-19), which is classified in the zoonosis group. It is in this group that the vast majority of human diseases are classified. SARS-COV-2 is another virus after SARS and Zika that has been very rapidly displaced from its original ecological niche, but the difference lies in the severity of the health effects of such an intense global spread of a new disease. Importantly, findings to date indicate that COVID-19 spreads between humans in all known geographical settings. Another very important aspect can be added to the above characterisation: SARS COV-2 is a virus that has changed the face of the modern world. A few key dates should be pointed out in this regard: - 17 November 2019. - COVID-19 outbreak in the city of Wuhan, Hubei province, central China, - 24 January 2020. - France was the first in Europe to officially report the first cases of SARS-COV-22 infection, - 11 March 2020. - recognition of COVID-19 disease as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation, - 4 March 2020, the first case

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<sup>1</sup> Bartosz Włodarczyk, Institutions of the Polish State vis-à-vis the threats posed by the Covid-19 epidemic [in:] 'Political Studies' No. 49/4, pp. 82-83.

of coronavirus was detected in Poland. From then on, nothing was the same. The virus has left its mark on many areas: economic, social or legal. It is therefore reasonable to analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on selected spheres.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an epidemic emergency in Poland, and many countries imposed a state of emergency. The convention resulted in significant restrictions on the operation of domestic agri-food operators, which included the following areas: - restrictions on the movement of people (e.g. logistics, tourist traffic, labour emigration, etc.) and goods and services, which adversely affected international trade, - restrictions on the operation of HoReCa businesses, which resulted in a decline in demand for food commodities, - deterioration in the labour market and a decline in household incomes, resulting in a decline in expenditure on food commodities.

During the first pandemic period, the high risk of drought was also a significant threat to the national agri-food sector. Rainfall in May has improved field crops and permanent plantations, but significant production and commercial risks remained. Industries that reported high seasonal demand for hired labour experienced difficulties in carrying out work (e.g. harvesting). Another production risk remained the risk of ASF and avian influenza, as well as the continuing embargo on exports to Russia of certain agricultural products. Taking these market conditions into account, the following industries experienced the greatest economic difficulties in 2020: - poultry, which exports 47.5 percent of its production, and difficulties with exports have resulted in a large part of production being stored. However, the poultry industry is characterised by a short production cycle and operators could flexibly adapt production to demand conditions, - beef, which exports about 80% of its stock, and difficulties in exporting and a long production cycle pose a major distribution risk, - dairy, which exports in processed form about 38% of its raw material supply, and difficulties in exporting result in oversupply on the internal market. Intervention measures (e.g., subsidies for private storage) have a short-term stabilising effect on the market, as after a certain period accumulated stocks will have to be sold on the market. - The pork sector continues to restructure, and imports of piglets play a major role in the rearing structure. The threat of African swine fever spreading to more areas of the country remains serious. The deterioration of the income situation of households and the economic difficulties of companies in the HoReCa sector may adversely affect demand on the internal market<sup>2</sup>.

In our opinion, Poland has a chance to “bounce back” faster and stronger than a large part of European economies. This is due to a number of factors, including: an exceptionally small role of tourism-related industries in the economy (which has suffered the negative effects of the pandemic most severely and probably for the longest period of time); diversification and balance of the domestic economy at the starting point; a relatively large (in relation to GDP) size of anti-crisis measures taken by the government and the central bank; a strong link between Polish industry and the German economy, for which forecasts are optimistic (there is a good chance that Germany will be the leader in recovering from the recession, e.g. due to the exceptionally large scale of the German economy); a potentially large allocation of funds for Poland from the new EU anti-crisis programme, some of which were available as early as 2021.

Nearly 90 per cent of companies in Poland reported business disruptions due to social isolation and changes in customer behaviour. For more than a third of companies (35.3% of them), the decrease in revenue exceeds 50% compared to the same period in the previous year. This is a shock that companies have not faced since the beginning of the system transformation. The CSO's data shows that even at the height of the financial crisis, in the first half of 2009, the decrease in total revenue of companies with fewer than 250 employees did not exceed a few per cent on an annual basis. The severity of the current disruption is therefore incomparable to previous events in the

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<sup>2</sup> Piotr Szajner, Impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the situation on agricultural markets in Poland [in:] 'Insurance in agriculture - Materials and studies 1 (73/2020), p. 91.

history of the Polish market economy. The greatest drop in revenue was recorded by micro companies employing from 2 to 9 employees. In this group, almost half of the companies are experiencing a drop in revenue of more than 50%. However, this does not mean that the situation for larger companies is safe. Among companies with 50 to 249 employees, one in five companies, and one in three small companies, i.e., those with 10 to 49 employees, are experiencing a sharp drop in revenue in excess of 50%. Support for these groups will also be very important and necessary in the next phase of the crisis. In addition to revenue declines, late payments from customers are also a very important problem. Liquidity problems are experienced by more than 50 per cent of companies. Liquidity risks are a huge problem even in those sectors of the economy that are not in the front line of the crisis. This is the case, for example, in industry, where up to 70% of companies signal a problem with late payments. This can put even companies that maintain production at risk of losing liquidity, resulting in bankruptcy<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, it may be very important to maintain access to working capital finance for companies that are fulfilling orders on an ongoing basis. The companies most affected by the effects of the pandemic are those operating in the consumer services sector, and relatively the least affected are construction and business services companies.

In the survey data reviewed, there was not a single company in the consumer services sector that did not suffer a drop in revenue, with more than 60% fearing a drop in revenue by more than half, compared to the same period last year. In other sectors, there is a small proportion of companies whose managers are not concerned about lower revenues next month: 17% in construction, 15% in business services, 7% in industry and 6% in trade. Correspondingly, 35% and 41% of companies operating in industry and trade forecast a decrease in revenue of more than 50%. An analogous pattern of responses is found in questions about companies' ability to maintain liquidity. There is no significant difference between the situation of companies trading abroad and those operating only on the domestic market. Significantly worse than the average is the situation of importers. How should this be interpreted? It is probably not due to differences in the disruption of international trade in goods. It is possible that the relatively better situation of exporters compared to importers is influenced by the fact that there are more construction companies and companies in the business services sector among exporters. Additional factors in this situation may be the weakening of the zloty and potential demand for imported non-core goods. One third of companies are reducing employment in response to the economic shock. The largest number of such companies is among small enterprises - as many as 42.5%. By contrast, in the group of medium-sized companies, with 50 to 249 employees, a quarter have already started or are planning layoffs. This supports the conclusion that the smallest companies feel the greatest shock, while larger companies may be slightly more resistant to short-term shocks. The majority of companies (59.3%) are unable to maintain liquidity without making staff redundant for longer than three months.

The pandemic has accelerated technological transformation in many ways: the development of IT infrastructure, remote working solutions, online communication and meetings, online shopping, robotisation and automation of certain processes. Many of these transformations will permanently affect the way companies and markets operate. One example is the likely change in the employment model of corporations - the use of remote working will permanently increase, which will affect, on the one hand, the change in companies' need for office space (the likely high uptake of the remote, rotating, mobile workstation model), but also the change in the housing needs of employees (setting aside and adapting space for remote working).

The accelerated digitalisation, automation and robotisation of many areas of the economy is creating major challenges in the labour market, especially for those with the lowest skills. More and more occupations will require digital and technical competences, and automation may increasingly

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<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, p. 92.

affect occupations and jobs that have not previously been worth automating due to the still low cost of unskilled labour. Companies are likely to cut lower-paid jobs that require less competence that can be replaced by technology first and to a greater extent. As a result, very low-skilled people will find it increasingly difficult to find sources of income. Consequently, the pandemic is likely to hit the economically weakest social groups the hardest and result in widening income inequalities, at least up to a certain point. If these phenomena intensify, it is possible that, in the longer term, this will result in strong pressure on governments to redress income inequalities, e.g., by significantly increasing taxation and tax progressivity, implementing solutions such as basic income.

When asked whether this marks the end of the golden age of Western democracy and economic systems, the answer is that it is difficult to say whether it is the end, but the situation is conducive to a widening danger zone, as economic crises and financial imbalances have emerged over the past decades. Private and public debts have accumulated, which can be difficult to maintain over time. Growth stimulated by globalisation, technology and migration has led to a widening inequality of income and wealth, which is affecting social unrest. Technologies will cut jobs, change professions and even transform industries. There is global climate change, pandemic and emerging technologies, and 'surveillance states'. So, there are many issues that challenge market economies, which is why the best economic system is a mixed system, which is an economy where the government provides a wide range of public services. In an economy there are those who move forward and those who are stagnant. Inclusive economic growth must therefore be taken into account. The labour market has become more flexible. Despite this, according to the World Economic Forum's assessment, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities in labour markets, reversing the employment growth seen since the global financial crisis of 2007-08 and accelerating the arrival of changes dubbed the 'future of employment'. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the long-term changes already triggered by the fourth industrial revolution, which has consequently accelerated<sup>4</sup>.

The research reported in this publication aimed to show the trauma of a pandemic or more precisely, the mechanisms of the emergence of this trauma and the interconnections between its various elements. The objective has been achieved. Thanks to the research results obtained we can, to some extent, describe both the causes of trauma and its main representations.

The fact that a pandemic is a powerful psychological trauma on a massive scale has not been known for a long time. Many psychologists and psychiatrists have spoken about it. However, these statements lacked evidence. It is only speculation and more theoretical considerations or knowledge coming from observations of patients in psychotherapists' offices. Hence, the idea arose to gather evidence and see to what extent a sociological concept of trauma would be able to capture the psychosocial effects of a pandemic. Pandemic trauma is present in Polish society. Considering the sources of this trauma, it should be pointed out that the coronavirus pandemic caused cultural trauma. In addition to the threat to life and health, the loss of control over one's life has become its main cause. Attention is drawn to this fact, emphasising that for the vast majority of Western societies, until recently life was essentially predictable. And this unpredictability that has emerged, the risk that we are no longer at risk not only of economic or prestige failure, but of much worse things - this is something that causes anxiety on a grand scale. To the greatest extent, this problem is likely to affect the middle class. Because of its functions in society, it has suffered a shock under the collapse of the cultural norms it has internalised. This has happened because the middle classes, by virtue of their education, feel free, look to the future with confidence and trust in their own strength. They are motivated to make an effort, work hard and invest in their own development. The pandemic has

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<sup>4</sup> Marek Smoleń, Paweł Smoleń, Challenges of the future for the Polish economy in the face of the effects of the pandemic [in:] "Poland and the world in the crisis caused by covid-19 - economic, social and legal aspects", Kielce 2021, pp. 80-81.

taught society a lesson in humility. It has made people aware of the fragility of human existence and shown that the certainties of the past are losing their anchors and are being replaced by helplessness and uncontrollable risks. Initial trauma was followed by secondary trauma, which was triggered by lockdown.

This involves the introduction of constraints related to social distance, the closure of institutions, and changes in life habits. In other words, the trauma was caused by the government's actions to stop the rapid spread of COVID-19. There are also unintended consequences of these actions, which hit economic interests. Here as before - the middle class has been most affected by the loss of resources. The lockdown itself hit entrepreneurs and people employed in administration, tourism, hospitality and services. The middle class was also more often deprived of various goods and values. The closure of cultural, entertainment and sporting establishments and the closing of borders have made it impossible to satisfy higher-order needs, creating frustration and anxiety. In addition, there are current traumas - fear induced by the media through information about the pandemic, the dangers that may come after the pandemic, the more dangerous mutation of COVID-19, the coming economic crisis, attempts by the government to restrict freedom, the destruction of the state by enemies of democracy, etc. These traumas are induced to a large extent by the media and politicians, calculated to mobilise the electorate and keep the iron-fisted electorate in combat readiness. One could refer to the earlier division between the dominant and the dominated and point out that these two groups are influenced by different media and have different sensibilities. For one class, an event represents a trauma, while in the other it is disarmed and deconstructed.

## CONCLUSIONS

In Poland, there are generally several systems for reporting medical data on infectious diseases. Thus, we have epidemiological surveillance carried out by the National Sanitary Inspectorate and the National Institute of Public Health - PZH (EpiBase system), we have a powerful database of services in the National Health Fund, as well as databases being implemented within the e-Health Centre e-prescription and e-referral, and the Threat Monitoring System. In the face of a pandemic, a module has been created as part of the Epidemiological Surveillance System, but additionally systems dedicated to COVID-19-related activities were also developed, namely the EWP system and the COVID-19 Clinical Register of Patients at the Institute of Cardiology (IKARD).

The EWP system was initially used to monitor people in quarantine on arrival in Poland when the borders were closed. Subsequently, it was expanded to include a module for registering all persons in quarantine, completed by the Sanitary Inspectorate, and a module for ordering publicly funded COVID-19 tests - here data is entered by hospitals (via the IKARD system), the Sanitary Inspectorate and laboratories performing the tests, and more recently by GPs via the e-cabinet system. Doctors caring for COVID-19 patients in hospitals have been required to complete detailed clinical data on the course of the disease in the IKARD register.

Together, these systems represent an exceptionally rich data set; unfortunately, each was built on a different platform, uses different classifications and vocabularies, and their integration is still incomplete. This is because initially the integration concerned functional solutions mainly concerning the system's ability to automatically order tests.

Healthcare resources, including bed occupancy and ventilator use, were monitored separately. The sorting out of data and the channels through which it flows is therefore a task facing state services. This fight also calls for an important role for the media, whose enormous media duty includes avoiding sensationalism and fake news, those unsupported by solid research and scientific expertise. A self-respecting media should not contribute to infodemia, i.e., information overload, generated during and about the epidemic. It is estimated that hundreds of millions of pieces of

information (sic!) have been generated about the COVID-19 pandemic since it began. Some of this is reliable, some not.

So much of this information reaches the average person that it is difficult for him or her to assess the value and credibility of individual news items, analyses or assessments. It was therefore difficult for him to form a rational picture of the epidemic and to decide how to act appropriately during it. This led to chaos in social action. Much of the infodemia was generated in good faith, but by people without sound knowledge. There is also much evidence that a sizable portion of infodemics were generated in bad faith and were created by troll armies or bot factories. Their purpose was to undermine the country in question<sup>5</sup>.

In a nutshell, only a small amount of information circulating online and by word of mouth in the public is reliable. This is usually information produced by specialists, scientists, very experienced science popularizers or science journalists. It should also be the task of a self-respecting media to create authorities, i.e., people who are trusted by the public. It should also be the task of the media to filter information, to separate credible from questionable or even false information, or at least to indicate which of the information propagated in e.g., social media is wrong or questionable.

For this, the media should have an institutionalised mechanism for quick cooperation with verified experts. After all, their knowledge is intensively accumulated and will systemically require constant updating, as this is the nature of a proper scientific process.

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<sup>5</sup> Jerzy Duszyński (ed.) "Understanding covid-19. Development of the team at the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences". Warsaw 2020, pp. 43-44.

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Faculté Libre de Droit, 60 Boulevard Vauban BP 109, 59016 Lille Cedex France  
Tel. 0320159688, E-mail: international@icl-lille.fr  
www.univ-vatholille.fr

Faculte Libre de Droit Institut Catholique  
de Toulouse  
31 Rue de la Fonderie BP31068 Toulouse Cedex 7  
Tél: 05 61 36 81 22 Fax: 05 61 36 81 37  
E-mail: secr.univ2@ict-toulouse.asso.fr



Mouvement Européen Nord  
219 bis, bd de la Liberté, BP 1134, 59 012 Lille Cedex, France  
Tél. : 03 20 52 72 89, Fax : 03 20 97 73 60, E-mail: mouveuropeen@wanadoo.fr  
<http://www.mouvement-europeen.org/section/>

Association «Confrontations» (Paris, France)  
4 Place de Valois 75001 Paris, Tel. 0033142605241,  
E-mail: courriel@confrontations.fr  
www.confrontations.fr



University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Sciences and Technology of Târgu-Mureș,  
Gheorghe Marinescu Street no 38, Târgu Mureș, 540139, România  
Tel.: +40 265 215.551, Fax: +40 265 210.407  
E-mail: rectorat@umftgm.ro , www.umfst.ro/en/home.html



Babeş-Bolyai University  
Faculty of European Studies  
1, Mihail Kogalniceanu Street  
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Tallinn Law School at Tallinn University of Technology  
Akadeemia tee 3, 12618 Tallinn, Estonia  
Tel.: 003726202430 Fax: 003726202429  
E-mail: tls@ttu.ee, www.ttu.ee/tallinn-law-school



Université de Beira Interior (Portugal)  
Convento de Sto. António, 6201-001 Covilha  
Tel:+351(275)319700 Fax:+351(275)319057, www.ubi.pt

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