

# **Comparative Analysis of the Normative Power of the European Union and Europeanisation in Moldova and Georgia**

**Jelige: BAY024**

Pályamunka lezárása: 2024.06.06.

## Table of contents

|                                                                                                                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| I. Introduction .....                                                                                                               | 3  |
| II. Theoretical frame: the normative power of the European Union and the concept of Europeanization .....                           | 4  |
| II.1. The European Union as a normative power .....                                                                                 | 4  |
| II.2. Europeanization as a mean to spread the normative base of the EU .....                                                        | 6  |
| III. Historical overview of Moldova and Georgia, particularly regarding the Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts..... | 9  |
| III.1. Historical background of the Transnistria conflict .....                                                                     | 9  |
| III.2. Historical background of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts.....                                                       | 10 |
| III.3. The European Union's response to the Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts.....                                 | 13 |
| IV. Comparative analysis of the EU's normative power and Europeanization in the cases of Moldova and Georgia .....                  | 17 |
| IV.1. The European Union's Eastern Partnership strategy .....                                                                       | 17 |
| IV.2. The Russo-Ukrainian War's role in the European integration of Moldova and Georgia .....                                       | 21 |
| IV.3. The EU's normative power and the top-down Europeanization .....                                                               | 23 |
| IV.3.1. The Europeanization of Moldova .....                                                                                        | 23 |
| IV.3.2. The Europeanization of Georgia .....                                                                                        | 30 |
| IV.3.3. European integration and the latitude of Moldova and Georgia .....                                                          | 36 |
| IV.4. The political aggravating factors of the European integration of Moldova and Georgia .....                                    | 37 |
| V. Conclusions .....                                                                                                                | 41 |
| Sources .....                                                                                                                       | 43 |

## I. Introduction

There are numerous frozen conflicts on our continent, which can lead to potential security challenges and also to moral, political, and legal dilemmas for the European Union. From the island of Cyprus to Kosovo, we might find these kind of hotspots and anomalies. The purpose of this paper and research are to provide a comparative analysis of two states with the mentioned attitudes, actively opening in some way to the EU, through the prism of the Union's normative power and Europeanization. These two countries are Moldova and Georgia.

We hear relatively little about the European integration of these countries in the Hungarian public discourse. Nevertheless, the domestic and international scientific community is much more concerned with the EU's connections and relations with these two countries. I find it regrettable that these two nations are underrepresented in Hungary, as both states are part of conflicts that significantly influence the geopolitical reality on the continent, also the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia all play a significant role in both countries.

In this paper, I examine the handling of crises in the two mentioned states and the EU's role in European integration, applying the theoretical framework of normative power and Europeanization. I analyse how the EU has responded to the Transnistria and South-Ossetia crises, how it attempts to normalize and resolve them, and how the EU can influence the social and political systems of the two countries to make the strategic goal of EU membership realistic for Moldova and Georgia. *The main hypothesis of the paper is that, given the political impediments, Moldova and Georgia will not become EU members in the medium and long term.*

To make this paper happen, I used relevant Hungarian and English literature, studies, and book chapters, adding news and online articles related to the topic. In addition to the analysis and evaluation of secondary sources, primary sources are also part of the research material, such as EU documents and reports.

Following the introduction, the theoretical framework shall be presented, explaining what we mean by normative power and Europeanization, and then, after a historical overview, Moldova and Georgia are compared in terms of European integration.

## **II. Theoretical frame: the normative power of the European Union and the concept of Europeanization**

### **II.1. The European Union as a normative power**

This chapter aims to provide an understanding, of what we mean by the EU as a normative power and what is the concept of Europeanization. The concept of the normative power of the European Union was first elaborated in more detail by Ian Manners in his publication in 2002. Nevertheless, numerous studies have dealt with this particular topic. Manners approached the impact of the European Union on foreign policy processes theoretically, and in his interpretation, he formulates EU norms, behavioural patterns, and values for its own and other international actors, primarily aiming to achieve results in international politics through their dissemination.<sup>1</sup> Manners criticizes existing theories, primarily those related to civil and military power, arguing that these approaches oversimplify the external relations of integration. In contrast, the theory of normative power abstracts from EU policies and institutional frameworks, focusing much more on the symbolic component, essentially on the identity of the Union.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout its history, the EU has continuously developed normative elements that reflect the organization's identity and values for both member states participating in integration and external actors. These values should be adhered to by every country. Democracy, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights are all norms to be followed within the community, as mentioned in more detail by Manners in his study.<sup>3</sup> Manners identifies five norms which form the foundation of the Union's identity.

The five main values include peace, which forms the basis of European integration, the ideal of freedom, as well as the observance and protection of democracy, the rule of law, and universal human rights. Manners also mentions four "lesser" significant norms in relation to the normative basis of the EU, namely social solidarity, prohibition of discrimination, the concept of sustainable development, and the notion of good governance.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Anna Skolimowska: "The European Union as a 'normative power' in international relations. Theoretical and Empirical Challenges," Yearbook of Polish European Studies, Volume 18 (1), 2006, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Manners: "Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?". Journal of Common Market Studies (JCMS), Volume 40 (2), 2002, p. 239.

<sup>3</sup> Ian Manners, 2002: p. 241.

<sup>4</sup> Uo. p. 242.

Manners argues that merely possessing the aforementioned normative basis does not make the Union a normative power, as the mentioned values must be promoted and enforced within the community and in the EU's external relations as well. Manners distinguishes several ways of spreading and enforcing values and norms. By "infection-like spread," we mean that the dissemination of numerous European norms cannot be attributed to the conscious behaviour of the EU, but rather to the fact that other countries voluntarily adopt certain practices, rules, and policies from the European Union without any compensation. The tools of informal dissemination of norms include strategic declarations, such as those made by the rotating presidency or the President of the Commission, which announce a new policy. Manners also distinguishes what he calls procedural dissemination of norms, which essentially means the institutionalization of relations between the EU and a third country or other actor. This can take various forms, such as partnership agreements, interregional cooperation agreements, or association and enlargement processes. In the case of transfer, the EU engages in trade, provides aid, or offers technical assistance to third countries, during which the transfer of norms and values takes place. The EU's open norm diffusion occurs through the Union's physical presence in a third country or international organization, such as the presence of EU delegations in member states or through special representatives. The cultural filter constitutes the sixth form of norm diffusion in relation to the dissemination of norms. This method primarily influences the learning processes of a third actor, during which the party in question can learn, reject, or adapt norms and values encountered during discourse with the Union.<sup>5</sup>

Manners' work inspired Tomas Diez to attempt to elaborate further the concept of normative power. Diez states that normative power is the ability to shape and influence perceptions of what is "*normal*."<sup>6</sup>

The theory of normative power, however, raises numerous questions and contradictions, as highlighted by Anna Skolimowska. One such duality involves the quasi-competition between national interests and common European norms in shaping international relations. The contradiction becomes apparent in the EU's relationship with the "*Arab Spring*": while the EU welcomed democratization processes in certain countries, it actively supported Arab states with antidemocratic, authoritarian political systems. The conclusion of this

---

<sup>5</sup> Uo. p. 245.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Diez: Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'. Millennium, Volume 33 (3), 2005, p. 615.

contradiction is that while common European norms advocate for the promotion of democracy and a rejecting attitude towards oppressive regimes, member states had to reach agreements with authoritarian countries regarding migration, which couldn't have been achieved with a negative approach. The second problem is challenging to examine due to its complex nature. It focuses on whether the EU can be considered an effective normative power in international politics at all. It questions whether the will and norms of this organization indeed prevail in a given conflict, as the EU is typically not the sole actor in the process. Other players are also present, aiming to represent their own values and norms in international politics. The third issue concerning the EU's normative power is highly challenging to investigate in a relevant manner. This difficulty primarily arises from the fact that a supranational integration model, primarily concerned with foreign policy, does not yet exist. Therefore, in research, it is necessary to explore without the application of a model. Moreover, while examining a particular foreign policy issue, researchers may not necessarily encounter only EU norms, but other actors such as member states, corporations, or other international organizations may also arise.<sup>7</sup>

## II.2. Europeanization as a mean to spread the normative base of the EU

In addition to the theory of normative power, it is important to consider the concept of Europeanization. This concept serves as a tool for the Union to expand its normative basis, making it an essential aspect of research. Europeanization is not synonymous with the Union's international relations efforts, specific policies, or integration. Instead, it encompasses all of these aspects. The concept and content of Europeanization are continuously evolving, adapting to economic, social, and cultural challenges, reflecting the evolution of institutional frameworks and specific policies. The meaning of the term has changed over time, primarily understood in the context of transmitting Europe's norms, political systems, and authority.<sup>8</sup> The literature also mentions transnational cultural transmission in the context of Europeanization. In this case, norms are also transmitted by European countries to areas outside the continent. However, here the focus is primarily on cultural norms, identity transmission, and the adoption of behavioural patterns.<sup>9</sup>

Europeanization is also present in the adaptation of the institutional framework and public administration of individual countries to the norms represented by the Union. In this case,

---

<sup>7</sup> Skolimowska, 2006: p 119.

<sup>8</sup> Kevin Featherstone: "Introduction: In the Name of 'Europe'" In: Kevin Featherstone – Claudio M. Radaelli (eds.): *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, pp. 3-6.

<sup>9</sup> Featherstone – Radaelli (eds.), 2003: p. 7.

the dissemination of the normative basis primarily occurs as a consequence of EU membership, with member states seeking to harmonize their legal and institutional frameworks with the preferences and values demanded by the EU.<sup>10</sup>

The changes in the concept and significance of Europeanization in the literature are richly evident. Olsen distinguishes five categories of Europeanization: Europeanization as the expansion of the Union's borders, governance, and coordination at the EU level, the export of EU governance forms and political structures to third countries, a political strategy to strengthen and unify Europe, and the central penetration of national and local governance.<sup>11</sup>

According to the literature, Europeanization can be interpreted as the adaptation to EU policies as well. In this context, it primarily refers to the implementation and enforcement of the conditions for EU accession and the obligations associated with membership. However, this approach can also be encountered when examining the foreign policy of the Union. In the context of the Union's international relations, Europeanization is understood as the evolution of EU foreign policy coordination. For example, after joining the European Community, Ireland transformed its foreign policy to better align with the required norms. It's important to note that in this context, according to the literature, Europeanization also entails the involvement of some EU members in conflicts. The Europeanization of foreign policy became particularly significant during the establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, as a result of the Maastricht Treaty. While primarily initiated by the member states, the norms applied in the Union's foreign policy have also been adopted by countries seeking accession. Case studies have shown that aspiring countries have begun to transform their institutions and attitudes in the international political arena. Regarding Georgia and Moldova, structural changes in foreign policy can also be observed, along with the emphasis on elements necessary for "*Europeanness*", which will be discussed in more detail later.

After presenting the various aspects of the Europeanization term, it is worth interpreting this process according to its direction, as this will help us understand it in the dimensions of Moldova and Georgia. I will introduce the two directions of Europeanization: top-down and bottom-up Europeanization.

---

<sup>10</sup> Uo. p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Goran Bandov and Nikolina Herceg Kolman: "Research on Europeanization in Literature: From the Top-Down Approach to Europeanization as a Multi-Directional Process". Cadmus, Volume 3 (5), 2018, pp. 134-135.

*Top-down* Europeanization refers to the influence exerted by the EU on the policies and operations of a member state or a third country. In top-down Europeanization, but essentially in any such process, the most important condition is that there are differences in norms and values, as this indicates the need for reforms and adaptation. The less compatible a state's political processes, institutions, and policies are with those of the Union, the greater the pressure for adaptation during Europeanization.<sup>12</sup> As highlighted by Boglárka Koller, top-down Europeanization was significantly prominent during the eastern enlargement. This process featured a stronger emphasis on conditionality than in any previous enlargement processes, meaning that the accession of the countries involved was contingent upon the strict fulfilment of the conditions set by the EU.<sup>13</sup>

It is important to highlight that top-down Europeanization affects all three dimensions of the political relations of the concerned state, and within each intersection, the state must achieve the norms required by the Union. Regarding *policy*, it refers to the standards available tools and problem-solving approaches, in the context of political processes, *politics* encompasses interest aggregation and enforcement, as well as the forms of political discourse, and finally, concerning the political institutions of the state, *polity* refers to the adaptation of the country's political institutions and state traditions.<sup>14</sup>

In the context of the top-down approach, the literature identifies three EU instruments that can impact the Europeanization of a third country, each acting as a pressure mechanism. The first mechanism, known as positive integration, entails the EU establishing criteria and preferences that the concerned country must meet and strictly adhere to. Negative integration involves the removal of certain obstacles in the legislation of the country in question, thereby facilitating Europeanization without the EU specifying particular values and preferences. The third mechanism, termed intergovernmental integration, operates in areas where the EU's competencies are limited, essentially establishing an open coordination mechanism that provides a platform for discussing the reforms of the concerned country.<sup>15</sup> The emergence of the *bottom-up* perspective signifies an additional research framework, prompted by the realization during the development of Europeanization research that the top-down approach,

---

<sup>12</sup> Featherstone – Radaelli (eds.), 2003: pp. 9-11.

<sup>13</sup> Koller Boglárka: Az európaizáció konceptuális és elméleti kérdései, különös tekintettel a Nyugat-Balkánra In: Koller Boglárka – Ördögh Tibor (eds.): Európaizáció a Nyugat - Balkánon, Dialóg Campus Kiadó, Budapest, 2019, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> Tanja A. Börzel – Thomas Risse: Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe. In: Kevin Featherstone – Claudio M. Radaelli (eds.): The Politics of Europeanization, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, p. 60.

<sup>15</sup> Bandov – Kolman, 2018: p. 138.

with EU pressure as the primary independent variable, is insufficient to account for all domestic changes. In contrast to commencing with EU policies and tracing their impact on domestic policies and actors, the bottom-up approach begins by analysing the domestic level before EU pressure is exerted. It then proceeds to track the country's participation in negotiations at the EU level, culminating in the process of implementing EU regulations.<sup>16</sup>

In summary, Europeanization represents a complex and multidirectional concept, indicating the impact on both the member states of the European Union and third countries, as well as the influence of the latter on EU decision-making and policies.

### **III. Historical overview of Moldova and Georgia, particularly regarding the Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts<sup>17</sup>**

#### **III.1. Historical background of the Transnistria conflict**

Situated between Romania and Ukraine, Moldova emerged as an independent nation following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Despite its strategic location, Moldova faces significant economic challenges, being one of the poorest countries in Europe and heavily reliant on agriculture. The majority of Moldova's population are of Romanian descent, fostering a shared cultural heritage between the two nations. Transnistria, a narrow region east of the River Dniester, is primarily inhabited by Russian and Ukrainian speakers. Concerns over potential integration with Romania during the Soviet Union's final years prompted Transnistria to unilaterally declare independence from Moldova in 1990.<sup>18</sup> The Transnistria conflict is unique compared to other post-Soviet conflicts. Since the ceasefire agreement of July 1992, there have been no significant violent clashes. However, there is a "*civilization gap*" in Moldova, characterized by differences in social psychology, perceptions, and geopolitical preferences. This gap results from historical experiences of belonging to different state structures, leading to distinct social climates and mentalities on either side of the Dniester River.<sup>19</sup>

Transnistria's unilateral declaration of independence was driven by the Moldovan Popular Front's promotion of the Romanian language and closer ties with Romania. This nationalist

---

<sup>16</sup> Uo. p. 138.

<sup>17</sup> A brief historical overview is necessary as a methodological element in this study because without it, the European integration of Georgia and Moldova cannot be adequately understood and coherently presented..

<sup>18</sup> BBC: Moldova country profile. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17601580>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>19</sup> John Beyer: Transnistria: In Search of a Settlement for Moldova's Breakaway Region. St Antony's International Review, Volume 6.(1), 2010, pp. 165-166.

stance bolstered conservative factions in Transnistria, who sought either independence or closer ties with Russia. Armed conflict erupted from March to June 1992, but a ceasefire was mediated by Russia, Ukraine, Romania, and Moldova, leading to the establishment of security zones.<sup>20</sup> The Russian-Moldovan agreement of July 1992 ended the quadripartite mechanism, side-lining Romania and Ukraine. An agreement in October 1994 called for the withdrawal of Russian troops within three years but tied this to granting autonomous status to Transnistria. Russia did not ratify the agreement, arguing that Transnistria's status should be addressed first, rendering the agreement ineffective.

In 2001, the Party of Moldovan Communists (PC) came to power, advocating closer ties with Russia. President Vladimir Voronin sought to bring Transnistria under Moldovan control, but negotiations stalled by mid-2003. Direct negotiations between Chişinău and Moscow, mediated by Dmitri Kozak, proposed an asymmetric federation favouring Transnistria. The Kozak Memorandum in late 2003 faced opposition within Moldova and lacked international support, leading Voronin to withdraw from signing it.<sup>21</sup> Public sentiment in Moldova opposed the memorandum, viewing it as an unacceptable concession to Russia. Widespread protests against government policies, particularly regarding the status of the Russian language, further complicated the situation. The memorandum's provision for a prolonged presence of Russian troops in Transnistria thwarted any prospects of peaceful resolution, and Voronin cancelled the signing ceremony with Russian President Vladimir Putin. This setback for Russian diplomacy forced Moscow to seek support from the OSCE<sup>22</sup> after months of rejecting dialogue.<sup>23</sup>

The Transnistria conflict remains unresolved, leaving Moldova's territorial integrity unfulfilled. Despite Russia's stated desire to withdraw its troops, a small military force remains in the breakaway region, perpetuating the stalemate.

### III.2. Historical background of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts

Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Georgia boasts a rich cultural heritage and traditions of hospitality and cuisine. Throughout history, Georgia has been a battleground for Persia, Turkey, and Russia, eventually falling under Russian annexation in the 19th

---

<sup>20</sup> Cristian Urse: Solving Transnistria: Any Optimists Left?. *Connections*, Volume 7 (1), 2008, pp. 57-58.

<sup>21</sup> Urse, 2008, pp. 60-61.

<sup>22</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

<sup>23</sup> Urse, 2008: pp. 61-62.

century. Following its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Georgia once again became a focal point for conflicting interests.<sup>24</sup>

The August 2008 conflict erupted on the night of August 7th with escalated military operations, including a significant ground assault on Tskhinvali. However, South Ossetia had been a region full of tensions long before this event. Vicken Cheterian notes three key points about the conflict:

1. In the early 1990s, the Georgian national movement, led by figures like Zviad Gamsakhurdia, pursued independence from the Soviet Union, largely ignoring the concerns of national minorities like the Abkhazians and Ossetians. These minorities, fearing the erosion of their rights, adopted a conservative stance favouring the Soviet state's preservation, leading to a triangular struggle: Georgia against the Soviet Union, Moscow resisting Georgia's secession, and the autonomous regions seeking protection from Moscow against Georgian nationalism.
2. The early 1990s marked the collapse of existing political institutions and the emergence of new ones. National independence was a political aspiration rather than a reality until the final dissolution of the USSR in December 1991. Even after, Georgia took years to establish its statehood. Conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia were often led by semi-official armed groups driven by national ideology and criminal interests.
3. Conflicts in Georgia in the early 1990s involved widespread mobilization and clashes between popular movements. This pattern was seen in neighbouring Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Chechnya. In contrast, the Balkans saw established elites manipulating the masses through nationalist ideologies, and Central Asia experienced the transformation of the nomenclature. In the Caucasus, mass mobilization under nationalist banners led to the overthrow of the ruling Communist elite, replaced by former dissidents and intellectuals.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout much of the 1990s, Georgian authorities adopted ambiguous policies toward Abkhazia and South Ossetia. While pledging peaceful resolutions, they also issued threats when de facto authorities rejected Georgian proposals. Tensions in South Ossetia reduced by

---

<sup>24</sup> BBC: Georgia country profile. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17301647>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>25</sup> Vicken Cheterian: The August 2008 war in Georgia: from ethnic conflict to border wars. *Central Asian Survey*, Volume 28 (2), 2009, pp. 155-157.

the late 1990s, but Abkhazia remained a challenging issue, with failed force attempts in 1998 and 2001 radicalizing the Abkhazian position.<sup>26</sup>

The rise to power of Putin and Saakashvili changed Moscow and Tbilisi's approaches to the Caucasus. Putin aimed to halt Russian influence's decline, and Saakashvili sought Georgia's reunification. Saakashvili prioritized modernizing the Georgian army, increasing the military budget significantly, and establishing strategic military bases. Efforts to assert control included pressuring South Ossetia's de facto authorities in 2004 and establishing pro-Georgian governments in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.<sup>27</sup> In the week leading up to August 7, 2008, clashes between Georgian troops and South Ossetian paramilitaries escalated. On August 7, a massive artillery attack from Georgian positions struck Tskhinvali, followed by a ground assault. Georgian authorities declared their intent to restore constitutional order. By midday on August 8, Georgian President Saakashvili claimed most of South Ossetia was liberated. However, within hours, Russian troops poured through the Roki tunnel, engaging Georgian forces. By August 10, Russian forces had pushed Georgian troops out of Tskhinvali. Russian air strikes targeted Georgian installations, severely damaging defences and communication systems.<sup>28</sup> Georgian authorities argued their attack was provoked by Russian military movements towards South Ossetia. A ceasefire agreement mediated by French President Nicolas Sarkozy was reached on August 12, 2008. Military operations ceased, and Russia withdrew troops from areas outside South Ossetia and Abkhazia on October 8, following the European Union Monitoring Mission's deployment.<sup>29</sup>

In 2008, a new status quo emerged, with Russia guaranteeing South Ossetia's security and economic revitalization. Russia provided substantial financial aid to South Ossetia, increasing its influence. The Georgian factor has become marginalized in South Ossetian politics. Tbilisi maintains that South Ossetia is an "occupied territory" and advocates for direct dialogue with its people. The most significant outcome of the 2008 war was Russia's recognition of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence, though they remain partially recognized states with close ties to Russia. The situation in South Ossetia reflects Moscow's

---

<sup>26</sup> Cheterian, 2009: pp. 157-158.

<sup>27</sup> Uo. pp. 158-159.

<sup>28</sup> Uo. pp. 159-160.

<sup>29</sup> Uo. pp. 160.

broader foreign policy in Eurasia and its relations with the West, with no immediate plans for formal incorporation into the Russian Federation.<sup>30</sup>

### III.3. The European Union's response to the Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts

Given their proximity to the European Union and their strategic significance as security assets, the European Union has responded to the crises in Georgia and Moldova with measured actions. In the case of *Moldova*, The European Union maintains a favourable reputation on both sides of the Dniester River and has amassed considerable expertise in conflict resolution. In 2005, the negotiation format on Transnistria was broadened with the inclusion of EU and US observers.<sup>31</sup> In 2003, the European Union implemented a visa ban on seventeen members of the Transnistrian leadership, aligning its actions with those of the United States to address hindrances to settlement efforts. Subsequently, the establishment of the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to Ukraine and Moldova in December 2005 contributed to enhancing transparency in cross-border trafficking. Notably, it curtailed smuggling activities along the Transnistrian segment of the border with Ukraine. Although EUBAM lacks executive powers, it operates through training and advisory mechanisms. EUBAM has achieved considerable success in assisting Ukrainian and Moldovan authorities in regulating trade flows into and out of Transnistria. Consequently, EUBAM's efforts have encouraged Transnistrian enterprises to redirect their focus towards Chisinau, thereby influencing both the business environment and the political landscape.<sup>32</sup> Responding to requests from Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities, the mandate of EUBAM was extended twice, with the latest extension reaching until 2015.<sup>33</sup>

Following the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union in 2007, the Republic of Moldova emerged as an immediate neighbor of the EU, necessitating a shift in approach towards addressing the Transnistrian issue. Consequently, the European Union embarked on several measures aimed at conflict resolution. Some of these initiatives focused on fostering a form of "economic integration" of the Transnistrian region into Moldova's common space. However, progress at the political level remained elusive. The only

---

<sup>30</sup> Sergey Markedonov: The South Ossetia conflict. In: Anton Bebler (ed.): "Frozen conflicts" in Europe, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Opladen - Berlin - Toronto, 2015, pp. 117-118.

<sup>31</sup> Natalya Belsiter: The Transnistrian conflict. In: Anton Bebler (ed.): "Frozen conflicts" in Europe, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Opladen - Berlin - Toronto, 2015, p. 50.

<sup>32</sup> Beyer, 2010: pp. 175-176.

<sup>33</sup> Natalya Belsiter: The Transnistrian conflict. In: Anton Bebler (ed.): "Frozen conflicts" in Europe, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Opladen - Berlin - Toronto, 2015, p. 50.

cooperation with the EU accepted by Transnistria's leadership pertained to humanitarian aid, social security, medical services, and environmental matters. In turn, the EU adopted a cautious approach, refraining from engaging in political matters to avoid antagonizing the authorities in Tiraspol. Nonetheless, the EU's position regarding the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic remained steadfast, recognizing it as part of Moldova. An essential aspect of the EU's contribution to conflict resolution has been its provision of financial support to various projects and initiatives. The European Union has actively promoted a gradual reconciliation between the conflicting sides by endorsing and funding projects on Confidence Building Measures (CBM). These initiatives encompass humanitarian and social projects, business development endeavours, as well as capacity-building efforts within communities and civil society.<sup>34</sup>

In 2010, negotiations commenced on an Association Agreement with the European Union, which includes a *Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement* (DCFTA). This agreement was eventually signed in June 2014, bringing both benefits and significant challenges. Some of the challenges, notably concerning Transnistria, underscore the potential advantages of incorporating the Transnistrian economy into the agreement's framework. Such inclusion could prove beneficial to all parties involved and contribute to the eventual resolution of the conflict. Another significant development initiated by the EU was the conclusion of an agreement on a visa-free regime in February 2014. This change, effective from April 2014, is anticipated to incentivize more residents of Transnistria to obtain Moldovan passports, thereby enhancing Chisinau's leverage in negotiations with Tiraspol. Thus far, the European Union has not pursued any measures to elevate its status in the negotiation process, remaining limited to the role of an observer. Transitioning to a full-fledged participant in negotiations would represent a logical and potentially advantageous step for the process.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, the European Union's response to the war in *Georgia* differed from its approach to the situation in Moldova. On August 22, 2022, the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia issued a statement reaffirming their unwavering commitment to conflict resolution. This commitment is demonstrated through the efforts of the EU Special Representative, and the ongoing presence of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) on the ground. Furthermore, the European Union reiterated its steadfast support for the

---

<sup>34</sup> Uo. p. 50.

<sup>35</sup> Uo. p. 51.

independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.<sup>36</sup>

The mandate of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus (EUSR)<sup>37</sup> must align with the EU's policy objectives in the region. The objectives of the EUSR are as follows: to assist Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in implementing political and economic reforms, particularly in the areas of rule of law, democratization, human rights, good governance, development, and poverty reduction; to prevent conflicts in the region in accordance with existing mechanisms and to contribute to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, including promoting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons; to engage constructively with key stakeholders concerning the region; to encourage and support increased cooperation among the states of the region, especially between the states of the South Caucasus, on issues such as economic development, energy, and transportation; to enhance the effectiveness and visibility of the European Union in the region.<sup>38</sup> Based on the policy objectives, the mandate of the EUSR, with respect to Georgia, includes the following responsibilities:

- developing contacts with governments, parliaments, judiciary, and civil society in the region;
- encouraging Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to cooperate on regional issues of common interest, such as common security threats, the fight against terrorism, trafficking, and organized crime;
- contributing to the settlement of conflicts;
- intensifying the European Union's dialogue with the main interested actors concerning the region.<sup>39</sup>

Besides the EUSR and the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia, the third important EU entity in Georgia (which will be discussed later in this paper) is the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM). The EUMM is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission of the European Union. It was deployed in September 2008 following the end of the war. The EUMM's priorities are to ensure that hostilities do not resume, to facilitate the resumption of a safe

---

<sup>36</sup> Delegation of the European Union to Georgia: Remarks by the Acting Head of EU Delegation 14 years after the August 2008 Russia-Georgia war. [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/remarks-acting-head-eu-delegation-14-years-after-august-2008-russia-georgia-war\\_en?s=221](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/remarks-acting-head-eu-delegation-14-years-after-august-2008-russia-georgia-war_en?s=221). (2024.06.06.)

<sup>37</sup> Since November 13, 2017., Mr. Toivo Klaar has been serving as the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia.

<sup>38</sup> Grevi Giovanni: Pioneering foreign policy - The EU special representatives, European Union Institute for Security Studies, Brussels, 2007, p. 53.

<sup>39</sup> Grevi, 2007: pp. 53-54.

and normal life for local communities living on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Lines (ABL) with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, to build confidence among the conflict parties, and to inform EU policy in Georgia and the wider region.<sup>40</sup> The mandate of the EUMM will expire on the 14th of December 2024.<sup>41</sup> Despite the EU's commitment and actions, a major criticism from Georgia regarding the 2008 war is that the West did not take serious measures against Russia that could have harmed Moscow's integrity and economy.<sup>42</sup> In June 2014, Georgia signed the *Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area* (DCFTA) with the European Union, which came into force in 2016. This marked a significant first major step for Georgia towards EU membership, establishing a framework for political association and economic integration with the EU.<sup>43</sup>

As conclusion for this chapter, the overarching narrative in the cases of Moldova and Georgia (as well as Ukraine), is framed under the umbrella of European values for those willing to embrace them. This narrative proposes tools for political rapprochement, including the EU Monitoring Mission, the EU Special Representative, the European Neighbourhood Policy, and the Eastern Partnership (which shall be discussed on the next chapter of this paper). These initiatives have led Georgia and Moldova to adopt EU-oriented foreign policies. However, there remain certain gaps in this approach. Notably, these initiatives do not provide new partners and prospective members with protection from Russian aggression, as evidenced by the outbreak of war in Ukraine in 2014 and 2022.<sup>44</sup> Overall, the European Union is actively engaged in both countries through its delegations, missions, and representatives. The EU's objectives include building confidence in these nations, preserving peace, and normalizing their respective situations. Despite these normative efforts, the conflicts remain unresolved, and it is unlikely that the EU's interventions will fundamentally alter the situations in Georgia and Moldova.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> EUMM: Our Mandate. [https://www.eumm.eu/en/about\\_eumm/mandate](https://www.eumm.eu/en/about_eumm/mandate). (2024.06.06.)

<sup>41</sup> EUR-Lex: EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia – EUMM Georgia. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-monitoring-mission-in-georgia-eumm-georgia.html>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>42</sup> Gokhan Ergocun: Russia faced no sanctions over 2008 war with Georgia, says country's premier. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/russia-faced-no-sanctions-over-2008-war-with-georgia-says-countrys-premier/2904822#>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>43</sup> European Commission: Georgia - Membership status: candidate country. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/georgia\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/georgia_en). (2024.06.06.)

<sup>44</sup> David Matsaberidze: Russia vs. EU/US through Georgia and Ukraine. *Connections*, Volume 14 (2), 2015, p. 84.

<sup>45</sup> Richard G. Whitman – Stefan Wolff: The EU as a Conflict Manager? The Case of Georgia and Its Implications. *International Affairs*, Volume 86 (1), 2010, pp. 102-103.

## **IV. Comparative analysis of the EU's normative power and Europeanization in the cases of Moldova and Georgia**

### **IV.1. The European Union's Eastern Partnership strategy**

In 2004, the European Union introduced its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with the aim of embodying its role as a "*force for good*" in relations with neighbouring countries. This initiative was aligned with the aspirations outlined in the European Security Strategy of 2003, which sought to create a world characterized by justice and opportunity for all, with the EU committed to proactive engagement toward this objective. Initially, the ENP seemed to reflect this ambition of being a positive force in international affairs quite effectively. The 2004 ENP strategy paper articulated the EU's desire to promote stability, security, and well-being for all through the use of incentives rather than sanctions and by fostering cooperation based on mutual consent and interests. Consequently, the policy appeared notably balanced in its consideration of interests and values, characterized by a soft approach devoid of coercive elements, and marked by a generous provision of material assistance.<sup>46</sup> Hence, the understanding of the European Neighbourhood Policy and its Eastern dimension is crucial, particularly in the cases of Moldova and Georgia. These nations, nestled within the Eastern periphery of the European Union, navigate intricate geopolitical landscapes while striving for closer integration with European institutions. The ENP serves as a framework through which Moldova and Georgia pursue enhanced political, economic, and social ties with the EU, aiming to bolster stability, prosperity, and resilience. This chapter examines the significance of the ENP in general, elucidating its role in shaping their development trajectories and fostering closer alignment with European norms and values.

The European Neighbourhood Policy guides the European Union's interactions with 16 neighbouring countries, spanning both the Eastern and Southern regions. To the South, these include Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia, while to the East, they encompass Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Launched in 2003 and refined throughout 2004, the ENP was conceived to prevent the emergence of new divides between the expanded EU and its neighbours, instead fostering prosperity, stability, and security for all involved. It upholds core values of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. Following the tumultuous 'Arab Spring' events,

---

<sup>46</sup> Esther Barbé – Elisabeth Johansson-Nogués: The EU as a Modest 'Force for Good': The European Neighbourhood Policy. *International Affairs*, Volume 84 (1), 2008, p. 81.

the ENP underwent reviews in 2011 and 2015. However, recognizing the substantial shifts in the neighbourhood after 2011, further scrutiny of the ENP became imperative. Consequently, a *Joint Communication outlining the primary lines of this review* was issued on the 18th of November, 2015, following public consultation involving partner countries, international organizations, social partners, and civil society. The revised ENP places paramount importance on stabilizing the region across political, economic, and security dimensions. It also underscores two key principles: a differentiated approach, acknowledging the diverse aspirations of partner countries while better serving EU interests and those of its partners, and increased ownership by both partner countries and EU Member States.<sup>47</sup>

From 2021 to 2027, the European Union channels support for the implementation of the ENP through the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI – Global Europe). The NDICI – Global Europe is endowed with an overall allocation of 79.462 billion EUR, with 19.3 billion EUR specifically designated for the neighbourhood.<sup>48</sup>

The Eastern Partnership (EaP), inaugurated in 2009 as a distinctive Eastern extension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, endeavours to enhance both the political and economic ties between the European Union, its Member States, and six Eastern European and South Caucasus nations: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus<sup>49</sup>, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Embedded within the EaP's objectives is the facilitation of numerous global policy agendas, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the UN 2030 Agenda, with its Sustainable Development Goals. Aligned with the overarching aim delineated in the Global Strategy for the foreign and security policy of the European Union, the EaP seeks to boost stability, prosperity, and resilience of the EU's eastern neighbouring countries.<sup>50</sup> Over its evolution, the EaP has served as a catalyst for closer collaboration between the EU and its partner countries. The pivotal EaP Summit of November 2017 ushered in a novel approach with the adoption of the '*20 Deliverables for 2020*' reform agenda. This comprehensive roadmap aimed at achieving tangible improvements in people's lives across four key policy

---

<sup>47</sup> European Commission: European Neighbourhood Policy, What is it?. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy_en). (2024.06.06.)

<sup>48</sup> European Commission: European Neighbourhood Policy, What is it?. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy_en). (2024.06.06.)

<sup>49</sup> Belarus was suspended due to its involvement in the Russian-Ukrainian war.

<sup>50</sup> European Commission: Eastern Partnership. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/eastern-partnership\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/eastern-partnership_en). (2024.06.06.)

domains: stronger economy, governance, connectivity, and society, with a focus on gender, civil society, media, and strategic communication. The new EaP agenda is structured around two pillars: investment, supported by a 2.3 billion EUR Economic and Investment plan in grants, blending, and guarantees, with the potential to mobilize up to 17 billion EUR in public and private investments. This plan encompasses initiatives tailored for each partner country and a governance pillar aimed at sustaining investments and fostering resilient and equitable societies that prioritize inclusivity. Based on the new EaP agenda, the following are the main targets for 2025:

- investing in competitive and innovative economies;
- investing in the rule of law (*all high level officials declare their economic assets and these statements are verified*);
- investing in sustainable and smart connectivity (*3,000 km of main roads and railways built or upgraded*);
- investing in people and knowledge societies (*70,000 individual mobility opportunities for students and staff, researchers, young people*);
- investing in security and cyber resilience;
- investing in sustainable energy (*250,000 households reduce energy consumption by at least 20%*);
- investing in environment and climate (*3 million people gain access to safe water services; air quality monitored and improved in 300 cities*);
- investing in health resilience (*850,000 health workers vaccinated and benefit from improved equipment and working conditions*);
- investing in inclusive, gender-equal, and diverse societies, and strategic communication (*2,500 local civil society organisations, 120 independent media outlets and 2,000 journalists supported*);
- investing in digital transformation (*80% of households have affordable access to high speed internet*).<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, while the Eastern Partnership has the potential to serve as a pillar for productive collaboration between the European Union and its partner countries within the

---

<sup>51</sup> European Commission: Eastern Partnership. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/eastern-partnership\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/eastern-partnership_en). (2024.06.06.)

designated framework, it is not devoid of shortcomings and facing many criticism. Tom Theuns outlines two general criticisms regarding the ENP:

- 1) *The presence of contradictory goals*: the ENP was inherently ambidextrous in its approach to achieving political objectives through economic means. On one hand, it aimed to foster economic cooperation and access to the EU common market, while on the other hand, it aspired to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law according to EU standards. These dual objectives were perceived as complementary in the pursuit of "a zone of friendly neighbourhood". Indeed, while economic and market reforms are not explicitly stated as goals of the European Neighbourhood Policy, there is a nuanced perspective regarding their role within the framework. Economic conditionality is commonly perceived as a mechanism for incentivizing reform in other areas, particularly in the realms of democracy promotion, the rule of law, and human rights, which are central components of the ENP's objectives. Economic incentives are designed to support reform agendas desired by the EU, thereby aligning with the notion that these agendas should originate from the partner countries themselves. However, it is evident at various junctures that economic objectives are also treated as specific goals of the ENP. For instance, a regional report on the Eastern Partnership in 2011 notably positions reforms in democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in service to economic reforms. This dual perspective underscores the complex interplay between economic incentives and broader political objectives within the ENP framework.<sup>52</sup>
- 2) *The presence of contradictory incentives*: not only do the goals pursued by the ENP appear contradictory, but the manner in which the EU incentivizes these goals also conflicts with the objective of democracy promotion. The ENP offers enhanced economic integration and preferential access to EU markets as incentives, yet these incentives are contingent upon adherence to certain conditions. Specifically, neighboring countries seeking to avail themselves of trade benefits are required to adopt elements of the EU regulatory framework, known as the *acquis communautaire*. However, these economic reforms run counter to the goal of democracy promotion and self-government. For instance, the 2011 joint communication highlights free trade agreements as incentives, but specifies that

---

<sup>52</sup> Tom Theuns: Promoting democracy through economic conditionality in the ENP: a normative critique. *Journal of European Integration*, Volume 39 (3), 2017, pp. 294-295.

beyond tariff elimination, these agreements should progressively foster closer integration between the economies of Southern Mediterranean partners and the EU single market, including actions such as regulatory convergence. This requirement for regulatory convergence poses challenges to the sovereignty and self-governance of partner countries, thus complicating the ENP's democracy promotion objectives.<sup>53</sup>

#### IV.2. The Russo-Ukrainian War's role in the European integration of Moldova and Georgia

Russia presents a paradox for these nations concerning EU integration. Russia acts as a primary obstructive force, impeding their path towards EU membership, but on the other hand, the war initiated by Moscow in Ukraine has paradoxically accelerated their accession process. The negative aspects of Russia's role in both cases are examined in the third chapter. Due to Moscow's foreign policy aspirations, the territorial integrity of Moldova and Georgia are compromised, with Russian armed forces actively deployed in these nations. Furthermore, the possibility of Russian invasion looms over these countries, particularly if Moscow perceives their EU membership as a threat. This potential for aggression underscores the precarious nature of Moldova and Georgia's European aspirations in the face of Russian geopolitical interests. However, the war in Ukraine has altered the EU's attitude towards Moldova and Georgia, leading to an increased willingness to support their integration efforts.

Due to the war in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia applied for EU membership on March 3, 2022. On June 17, 2022, the European Commission presented its opinions on the applications submitted by Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova. Regarding *Moldova*, the European Commission concluded that the country has a solid foundation to achieve the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and the protection of minorities. Macroeconomic policies have been reasonably sound, and progress has been made in strengthening the financial sector and business environment, although key economic reforms still need to be undertaken. Additionally, Moldova has established a solid basis for further alignment with the EU acquis.<sup>54</sup> In the case of *Georgia*, the European Commission assessed that Georgia also has a foundation in place to achieve stability in institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and protection

---

<sup>53</sup> Tom Theuns, 2017: p. 294.

<sup>54</sup> European Commission, 2022: Commission Opinion on the Republic of Moldova's application for membership of the European Union. (COM(2022) 406 final), European Commission, Brussels, 25 p.

of minorities. Georgia had achieved a good degree of macroeconomic stability and had a sound record of economic policy with a favorable business environment. However, further reforms were necessary to improve the functioning of its market economy.<sup>55</sup> Overall, the Commission recommended that Georgia and Moldova be granted the perspective to become members of the European Union, contingent upon addressing a number of priorities before being granted candidate status (the Commission's opinion outlined nine steps that Moldova needed to address in order to progress on the path to the EU, and twelve steps for Georgia as well, also which shall be discussed in a later chapter in this paper).

On June 23, 2022, the European Council adopted its conclusions regarding the membership applications of Moldova and Georgia (while also addressing the Western Balkans and Ukraine). The European Council recognized the European perspective of Moldova and Georgia and the future of these countries and their citizens lay within the European Union. The European Council has decided to grant the status of candidate country to Ukraine and to the Republic of Moldova, also the European Council is prepared to grant candidate country status to Georgia once it has addressed the priorities specified in the Commission's opinion on Georgia's membership application.<sup>56</sup> In the case of Georgia, on December 14, 2023, the European Council granted candidate status to the nation, conditional upon the fulfillment of the relevant steps set out of the twelve Commission recommendations.<sup>57</sup>

At the moment of writing this paper, accession negotiations have commenced with Moldova, while Georgia was granted candidate status in December 2023. The EU is expressing its solidarity with these nations.<sup>58,59</sup> The conclusion of this chapter shall be that despite the Russian threat and the war in Ukraine, the accession process of Moldova and Georgia has been accelerated as a result. While many obstacles remain, which will be examined later, the EU is openly encouraging these nations as they strive to achieve their strategic goal of EU membership by meeting the set objectives.

---

<sup>55</sup> European Commission, 2022: Commission Opinion on Georgia's application for membership of the European Union. (COM(2022) 405 final) European Commission, Brussels, 25 p.

<sup>56</sup> European Council, 2022: European Council meeting (23 and 24 June 2022) – Conclusions. (EUCO 24/22), General Secretariat of the Council, Brussels, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> European Commission: Georgia - Membership status: candidate country. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/georgia\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/georgia_en). (2024.06.06.)

<sup>58</sup> European Commission: Factsheet: The EU and Moldova. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/FS\\_22\\_1667](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/FS_22_1667). (2024.06.06.)

<sup>59</sup> European Commission: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell with the European Commission on the adoption of the “transparency of foreign influence” law in Georgia. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement\\_24\\_2628](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_24_2628). (2024.06.06.)

### IV.3. The EU's normative power and the top-down Europeanization

The strategic goal of both Moldova and Georgia to become members of the European Union needs their adherence to a rigorous process of Europeanization, fundamentally framed by the *Copenhagen criteria*. These criteria delineate the essential prerequisites for any aspiring EU member state, encompassing political, economic, and administrative dimensions. Firstly, the *political criteria* demand the establishment and maintenance of stable institutions that ensure democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and the protection of minorities. This encompasses a commitment to democratic governance, including free and fair elections, an independent judiciary, and robust civil liberties. Secondly, the *economic criteria* require the presence of a functioning market economy. This involves not only the existence of market-based economic mechanisms but also the capacity to withstand competitive pressures and market forces within the EU. For Moldova and Georgia, this entails substantial economic reforms aimed at enhancing economic stability, improving competitiveness, and fostering sustainable economic growth. It also necessitates the creation of a conducive environment for investment, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Finally, the *administrative and institutional capacity criteria* underscore the necessity for effective implementation of the *acquis communautaire*, which constitutes the accumulated legislation, legal acts, and court decisions that make up the body of EU law. Prospective member states must demonstrate that they possess the institutional frameworks and administrative capabilities required to adopt, enforce, and comply with these obligations. This includes the development of competent public administrations, effective regulatory bodies, and a robust legal framework that aligns with EU standards.<sup>60</sup>

#### IV.3.1. The Europeanization of Moldova

In 2003, Moldova's reception of the ENP initiative was marked by mixed sentiments. On one hand, there was new optimism about Moldova's potential European future, while on the other, there was disappointment that the new policy did not offer a path to EU membership. For the enlarged Union, EU membership for Moldova was not considered an option from the start of the ENP.<sup>61</sup> EU rules and norms started to transfer to Moldova. However, the 2004 ENP Country Report by the Commission highlighted concerns over the state of democracy and the lack of economic reforms in Moldova. In 2006, Benita Ferrero-Waldner visited

---

<sup>60</sup> European Commission: Accession criteria. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary/accession-criteria\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary/accession-criteria_en). (2024.06.06.)

<sup>61</sup> Giselle Bosse: The EU's Relations with Moldova: Governance, Partnership or Ignorance?. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Volume 62 (8), 2010, p. 1300.

Chisinau to remind President Voronin of the need for further reforms in human rights, minority protection, and the rule of law. The European Parliament also adopted several resolutions criticizing human right abuses in Moldova. Successive ENP progress reports by the Commission focused on assessing EU 'rule-transfer' and criticized Moldova's lack of progress in aligning its laws with EU standards. The Commission noted deficiencies in areas such as the conduct of the 2007 local elections, judicial reform, the implementation of an anti-corruption strategy, and safeguards against torture and ill-treatment. It also pointed out deficits in the implementation of laws on public assembly, suggesting that there was '*room for further improvement*' in dialogue and cooperation with civil society. Furthermore, the Commission lamented the lack of economic and social reforms, particularly in monetary policy and poverty reduction, and highlighted the slow progress in Moldova's efforts to implement regulatory reforms to facilitate trade with the EU and attract foreign direct investments.<sup>62</sup>

While Moldova made little progress in adopting EU rules and standards in certain areas, the Commission did note advancements in areas where effective cooperation between the EU and Moldova occurred. One example of such successful collaboration was the EUBAM initiative.<sup>63</sup> Overall, the promotion of democracy and good governance holds a central place in the EU's policy towards Moldova. Additionally, freedom of media and expression, along with reinforcing administrative and judicial capacity, were and still are high priorities for the EU. The support for "*democratic development and good governance*" also received a significant portion of the National Indicative Program (NIP) budget for 2007-2010, with between 52.4 and 73.4 million EUR were allocated to this priority.<sup>64</sup>

Beside the EU's high level efforts, there is another actor which is rather important in this case. In 2007, *Romania* joined the EU, which state became a crucial element in Moldova's path towards EU integration. In January 2006, Romanian President Traian Băsescu declared strong support for Moldova's bid to join the EU. In July 2006, he proposed a union with Moldova to President Voronin, suggesting that Romania and Moldova could join the EU together. However, Voronin refused the offer, and Băsescu respected this decision, stating that Romania would assist Moldova in finding its own path to EU integration.<sup>65</sup> Romania

---

<sup>62</sup> Bosse, 2010: p. 1301.

<sup>63</sup> Uo. p. 1301.

<sup>64</sup> Arne Niemann – Tessa de Wekker: Normative power Europe? EU relations with Moldova. European Integration online Papers, Volume 14 (14), 2010, p. 14.

<sup>65</sup> Conțiu Șoitu – Daniela Șoitu: Europeanization at the EU's External Borders: the Case of Romanian–Moldovan Civil Society Cooperation, European Integration, Volume 35 (5), 2010 pp. 495-496.

and Moldova share similar cultures, the same language, and historical heritage. This represents an important difference between Moldova and Georgia's cases regarding EU integration.

Since 2012, the EU has referred to Moldova as its most important partner committed to the Eastern Partnership initiative. Compared to other EaP partners, Moldova consistently performed better leading up to the 2013 EaP Vilnius Summit. After agreeing to the Association Agreement and obtaining visa-free travel to the EU in 2014, Moldova became very ambitious about EU integration. The Moldovan government actively lobbied the European Commission and EU member states for a pledge that by 2018, a roadmap with a clear membership perspective would be established.<sup>66</sup> Starting January 1, 2011, Moldova began issuing only biometric passports, fulfilling a key requirement for Moldovan citizens to travel visa-free to the EU. Additional reforms in migration flow management, border management, and Ministry of Internal Affairs reforms were also underway. In efforts to facilitate travel within the EU, Moldova and Romania signed an agreement on local border traffic. Since March 2010, Moldovan citizens residing within 30 kilometres of the Romanian border can travel visa-free to the border zone in Romania using local traffic permits. The opening of two new Romanian consulates in Cahul and Bălți had further facilitated the issuance of these permits and visas for Romania.<sup>67</sup> After a period of relative success, Moldova's situation began to deteriorate, and by 2018, it had clearly moved into the camp of EaP underperformers. Consequently, its attitude and expectations regarding the EaP became less ambitious and idealistic. Corruption scandals and banking fraud significantly damaged Moldova's credibility, forcing it to take a backseat to Ukraine and Georgia. Prior to the 2017 EaP Summit in Brussels, Moldova aimed to launch a strengthened bilateral dialogue with the EU in areas less focused on the value-based reform agenda, such as security and defence, with an emphasis on addressing hybrid issues and threats.<sup>68</sup> EU-Moldova relations further deteriorated after a court controversially annulled the local election results in Chisinau in June 2018, which had been won by Andrei Nastase, leader of the Justice and Truth Party. In response, the EU suspended all disbursements of its macro-financial assistance and budget support programs. This led to an even colder phase in the EU-Moldova dialogue, marked by increased uncertainty. Subsequently, in 2019, the ruling Democratic Party of Moldova

---

<sup>66</sup> Iurie Gotișan: Eastern Partnership and Moldova. *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, Volume 28. (1/2), 2019, pp. 94-95.

<sup>67</sup> Iurie Gotișan: Is the Eastern Partnership a Development Incentive for Moldova?. *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, Volume 19 (3), 2010, p. 74.

<sup>68</sup> Gotișan, 2019: p. 95.

pursued a more controversial direction in its reforms, utilizing all available resources to bolster its political standing and seize power following the February parliamentary elections.<sup>69</sup>

From 2016, political relations between the EU and Moldova were at their lowest. Despite this, Moldova has become more economically dependent on the EU market than it was a decade ago, largely due to the impact of the DCFTA. However, with the altered political circumstances from early June 2019 and the new pro-reform technocratic government led by Maia Sandu, the Association Agreement and Moldova's European integration process were back on track as the cornerstones of Moldova's foreign and domestic policy. This created a historical momentum for the country to rebuild its fragile democracy and opened up a new window of opportunity for resuming and deepening Moldova's Association process with the EU, within the framework of the EaP.<sup>70</sup>

By 2022, the Moldovan case has demonstrated the effectiveness of incentive-based methods, aside from the membership perspective, in influencing changes in domestic policy, despite facing negative repercussions. European institutions exerted influence on Moldova's domestic policy by applying conditionality without offering a clear membership perspective. They explicitly demanded Moldova's adherence to legal commitments and provided incentives such as increased bilateral cooperation and democracy assistance. As a result of the EU's efforts and priorities, Moldova implemented significant reforms in its legislative, political, and economic systems, thereby paving a clearer path toward EU membership following the war in Ukraine.<sup>71</sup>

Moldova has traversed a lengthy road on the path to EU integration. The already mentioned European Commission opinion on the Republic of Moldova's application for membership highlighted nine steps for Moldova to progress in its integration process. On November 8, 2023, the European Commission published its report on Moldova regarding its readiness for EU membership. The report showcases the nine recommended steps and Moldova's efforts to enhance these necessary elements: Regarding *step 1* (complete the essential steps of the recently launched comprehensive justice system reform across all institutions in the justice and prosecution chains) Moldova has overhauled its judicial framework and sought guidance

---

<sup>69</sup> Uo. p. 96.

<sup>70</sup> Uo. pp. 96-97.

<sup>71</sup> Maria Ruxandra Lupu: External democracy promotion in Ukraine and Moldova: the impact of the European Union. Danish Institute for International Studies, Volume 2010 (21), 2010, pp. 23-24.

from the Venice Commission on crucial laws, including reforms for the Supreme Court of Justice, the external assessment of judges and Supreme Court candidates, the Prosecutor's Office, and disciplinary measures for judges and prosecutors, this step is not yet completed by Moldova.<sup>72</sup> *Step 2* involved addressing the shortcomings identified by OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe/the Venice Commission. Moldova adopted the electoral code in 2022, which was drafted in cooperation with OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission. Additionally, nine other laws were submitted for review, and recommendations from these organizations are currently being addressed, this step is completed according to the report.<sup>73</sup> The *third step* involves reaffirming the commitment to combat corruption at all levels by taking decisive steps towards proactive and efficient investigations. According to the report, Moldova has adopted legislation to reform special investigation activities, protect whistleblowers, and delineate the competencies of anti-corruption institutions. New legislation facilitating investigations in absentia has been applied in more than 20 corruption cases. In 2022, the number of investigations, convictions, and prison sentences for corruption cases increased. However, Moldova needs to ensure that anti-corruption institutions operate within a clear organizational structure and with adequate resources. This step had not been completed at the time of writing this paper.<sup>74</sup> *Step 4* involves implementing the commitment to "*de-oligarchisation*," while *step 5* focuses on strengthening the fight against organized crime. Moldova completed both steps. Regarding *step 4*, Moldova has adopted an action plan that pursues a strategic approach to de-oligarchisation. This includes setting up an inclusive and robust mechanism for coordinating and monitoring, and demonstrating implementation with clear timelines and planning of sectoral interventions. Moldova has also addressed the supervision and control of political party financing through amendments to the electoral and criminal codes.<sup>75</sup>

In the context of *de-oligarchisation*, it is crucial to emphasize the liberalization of certain Moldovan goods exported to the European Union markets. Two of Moldova's leading export sectors to the EU, *metals and vegetable products*, are evidently entrenched in a rent-seeking coalition between major exporting companies and the ruling political elites. The key player in Moldova's metals sector, which accounted for 9.5% of total exports to the EU in 2020, is the state-owned company Metalferos. This company has been a significant source of rent-

---

<sup>72</sup> European Commission, 2023: Republic of Moldova 2023 Report. SWD(2023) 698 final, European Commission, Brussels, pp. 8-9.

<sup>73</sup> European Commission, SWD(2023) 698 final ,2023: p. 9.

<sup>74</sup> Uo. p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> Uo. p. 9.

seeking, manipulating economic operations involving scrap metal. Recently leaked documents from Moldova's General Prosecutor's Office revealed that, prior to the liberalization of the scrap metal market in the latter half of 2019, oligarchic networks operated a scheme to purchase scrap metal at artificially low prices by depressing local market prices. They then sold the metal at higher prices through proxy companies to Metalferos, which held a monopoly on scrap metal exports due to a regulation from 2002. Consequently, Metalferos became the primary exporter of metals to the EU and has maintained this position. Media reports indicate that revenues from Metalferos were used to finance the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) while it was in power from 2015 to 2019, under the control of oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc. Additionally, a recent report disclosed numerous discriminatory actions by Moldovan state authorities against Metalferos' competitors, aimed at undermining their business activities despite the formal de-monopolization of the scrap metal market in 2019. This evidence suggests that rent-seeking practices remain prevalent, even after Plahotniuc fled Moldova in the summer of 2019 to avoid prosecution. Another significant export sector in Moldova dominated by rent-seeking coalitions between monopolists and the state is vegetable products, including nuts, oil seeds, vegetable oil, and grain. This sector accounted for about 21% of total exports to the EU in 2020. These coalitions promoted state aid policies, allowing key players to access financial resources preferentially. For instance, Monicol SRL, owned by Dumitru Vicol, has increased its market share since 2014 due to state aid and connections with oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc, the unofficial leader of the Democratic Party of Moldova. Similarly, the production of oilseeds and vegetable oils saw increased export shares between 2007 and 2020. About 90% of Moldova's sunflower oil processing is controlled by TransOil, which, with Plahotniuc's support, maintained a monopoly and expanded its transportation capacities. This allowed TransOil to dominate the local grain market and export sector by controlling prices and infrastructure. Dominant exporters leveraged political connections for preferential treatment, benefiting from EU market access while supporting ruling parties. Since 2019, pro-European forces have attempted to dismantle these monopolies. Recent anti-monopoly legislation under Sandu's leadership aims to weaken monopolies in the metal and nut industries.<sup>76</sup> These presented processes indicates that, although Moldova is capable of implementing certain policy measures within its framework, it continues to face significant challenges, particularly in combating the influence of oligarchs within the national industry.

---

<sup>76</sup> Julia Langbein – Denis Cenuşa – Irina Guruli: EU trade liberalisation, sectoral coalitions and development: insights from Moldova and Georgia. *Journal of European Integration*, Volume 46 (2), 2024, pp. 221-222.

Regarding step 5 Moldova adopted a new sectoral development strategy for the prevention and fight against organized crime for the period 2022-2025. This strategy supports the implementation of the integrated home affairs strategy (2022-2030), which was adopted in September 2022. Additionally, Moldova has implemented a mechanism for extended confiscation, made amendments to the law on combating money laundering, and approved a national asset recovery program.<sup>77</sup>

*Steps 6, 7, 8, and 9* were also completed by Moldova. The sixth step addressed the importance of increasing the capacity to deliver on reforms and provide quality public services. Step 7 required completing the reform of Public Financial Management, including improving public procurement at all levels of government. Step 8 aimed to enhance the involvement of civil society in decision-making processes at all levels, while step 9 focused on strengthening the protection of human rights. Moldova adopted a new Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2023-2030, and following a functional review of the ministries, a significant number of new positions were created to strengthen the capacity of institutions for EU accession. Moldova also passed a law to increase salaries for certain categories of public servants and adopted legislation addressing public capital investment projects and low-value public procurements, along with a National Programme for the Development of the Public Procurement System. The country established unified rules for public investment projects financed from the state budget, and established a Platform for dialogue and civic participation in the Parliament's decision-making process. The country also adopted a new programme for the development of civil society organizations and a law on access to information of public interest. Moldova also amended its regulation on the grant financing mechanism to strengthen the financial sustainability of civil society. Moldova transposed the Istanbul Convention into national legislation, strengthened the Equality Council, and improved the institutional capacity of the Ombudsman, and the country adopted programmes to promote and ensure gender equality, support the Roma population, and implement strategies for strengthening inter-ethnic relations.<sup>78</sup>

Moldova has made several crucial implementations within its political and legislative framework, completing a significant number of the Commission's recommendations. Although the EU is openly addressing the possibility of actual membership for Moldova, and the nation has taken serious steps toward this goal, it still faces critical problems that

---

<sup>77</sup> European Commission, SWD(2023) 698 final, 2023: pp. 9-10.

<sup>78</sup> Uo. pp. 10-11.

may entirely block its EU integration. These factors will be examined further later in this paper.

#### *IV.3.2. The Europeanization of Georgia*

After the Rose Revolution<sup>79</sup> in 2003, Georgia entered a new phase of political transition focused on the challenge of building a functioning and modern state free from corruption and criminality. By 2013, the result seems to be relatively impressive. However, the way it was achieved raised some doubts about Georgia's capability to construct a state with solid democratic values. Georgia, had no experience in statehood, has faced real challenges in reconciling state-building and democracy.<sup>80</sup> The Rose Revolution of 2003 in Tbilisi also gave a significant boost to Georgia's alignment with a European identity.<sup>81</sup>

Regarding the economic features of Georgia, the most important products of agriculture include fruits, citrus fruits, and both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Significant industries in Georgia also encompass metallurgy, which leverages the country's copper resources, alongside the production of machinery and chemicals. Despite possessing extensive hydroelectric resources, Georgia heavily relies on imports to satisfy its energy needs. Since 2000, Georgia's economy has been on a growth trajectory, with inflation being successfully managed. Nevertheless, the state consistently faces a challenge in tax collection, managing to gather only about 60% of due taxes. Despite this issue, economic reforms appear to be yielding positive results. A crucial asset for the country is the Baku–Ceyhan oil pipeline, which traverses Georgia. This pipeline not only generates substantial revenue from transit fees but also diminishes the country's reliance on Russian energy supplies. Similarly strategic is the gas pipeline currently running from Baku to Tbilisi, which is intended to transport Azerbaijani gas to Europe via Turkey.<sup>82</sup> We shall note the anticorruption measures which facilitated rapid economic development. Funds raised from the fight against corruption were invested in infrastructure reconstruction and initiatives to attract foreign

---

<sup>79</sup> The Rose Revolution was a peaceful and popular uprising that resulted in the ousting of President Eduard Shevardnadze's government. The catalyst for the revolution was allegations of extensive electoral fraud during the parliamentary elections held in November 2003. Demonstrations, organized by opposition parties and civil society organizations, culminated in the storming of the parliament building in Tbilisi and the subsequent resignation of President Shevardnadze. The revolution marked the ascension of the United National Movement led by Mikheil Saakashvili, who assumed the presidency and initiated wide-ranging political and economic reforms in Georgia.

<sup>80</sup> Nona Mikhelidze: Juggling Security, Democracy and Development in the Caucasus: What Role for the EU?. IAI Working Papers, Volume 2013 (13), 2013, p. 4.

<sup>81</sup> Tamar Gamkrelidze: The project of Europe: a robust attempt to redefine Georgian identity. East European Politics, Volume 35 (3), 2019, p. 357.

<sup>82</sup> Garay Zsolt: Az Európai Unió és a Kaukázusi országok kapcsolatrendszere. EU Working Papers, Volume 2008 (1), 2008, p. 56.

investment. Also, the democratic elections and successful transfers of power were widely seen as a triumph for Georgian democracy.<sup>83</sup>

The Russian aggression against Georgia in 2008 significantly heightened the EU's interest and involvement in its Eastern frontiers.<sup>84</sup> To examine the incidence and nature of the network mode of governance in EU-Georgia relations, it is essential to provide an overview of the institutionalized forms of their interaction. Since Georgia's independence in 1991, relations with the EU have evolved through various stages of institutionalization and deepening. Initially, following Georgia's independence, the EU viewed the South Caucasus as a region prone to conflict. Concerns over ethnic violence and state instability in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's dissolution were significant. During this period, EU-Georgia relations focused on humanitarian aid, conflict management, and nuclear safety, lacking a cohesive long-term policy for the country or the region. The European Parliament was the first EU institution to engage in structured relations with Georgia, establishing annual inter-parliamentary meetings, forming a European Parliament Delegation for the South Caucasus, and participating in election monitoring. In 1996, EU-Georgia relations took an institutionalized turn with the signing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which came into force in 1999. This agreement served as the legal foundation for bilateral relations until it was replaced by the Association Agreement in 2016. The PCA established a framework for cooperation, including a council for dialogue between the EU Commission, Council officials, and Georgian government representatives, a committee of senior civil servants with sectoral sub-committees, and a parliamentary cooperation committee. These institutions operated on a bilateral basis, bringing together EU and Georgian counterparts. In addition to trade, investment, economic, legislative, and cultural cooperation, the PCA also encompassed political dialogue and a specific section on cooperation regarding democracy and human rights.<sup>85</sup>

Since the development of the EaP, the EU has maintained a longstanding commitment to supporting Georgia. As the largest financial contributor, the EU provided substantial assistance to Georgia between 2014 and 2021. This support included 819.2 million EUR in grants under the European Neighbourhood Instrument, 166 million EUR through the Macro-

---

<sup>83</sup> Mikhelidze, 2013: p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> David Darchiashvili – David Bakradze: The EU Eastern Partnership initiative and Georgia. *Politeja*, Volume 5 (62), 2019, p. 123.

<sup>85</sup> Thijs Rommens: The Eastern partnership in Georgia. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Volume 50 (2), 2017, p. 116.

Financial Assistance programme in the form of loans and grants to bolster socio-economic development, and 159.6 million EUR from foreign policy instruments. The EU's assistance to Georgia focuses on policy development and comprehensive reforms.<sup>86</sup>

The European Union and other financial institutions have collaborated closely to support Georgia's reform efforts. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank have allocated 2.3 billion EUR and 1.6 billion EUR in loans respectively. Georgia's citizens have enjoyed visa-free travel to the Schengen area since March 2017. Also since 2014, Georgia has progressively expanded its participation in EU programmes. Currently, Georgia takes part in Horizon Europe, Creative Europe, EU4Youth, and the Black Sea Interreg programme, and has recently joined the Customs programme. Georgian organisations and individuals also benefit from specific actions under the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programme.<sup>87</sup>

Within the framework of EaP, the EU has five main initiatives (flagships) for Georgia aimed at boosting its integration with the EU (there are two flagship initiatives that aim to directly connect Georgia with the EU). The *Black Sea connectivity* is a top priority for Georgia. The flagship on Black Sea Connectivity aims to enhance integration of the Georgian market with the EU market by deploying a submarine fiber optic cable. One step towards closer ties between Georgia and the EU Member States involves increasing and reinforcing *direct transport connections in the Black Sea*. This flagship initiative will include developing new ferry and feeder services, as well as refurbishing ports. These efforts will promote trade in goods and facilitate the movement of people by establishing direct links with the EU Member States.<sup>88</sup>

On December 8, 2023, the European Commission, similar to Moldova, published a report on the EU enlargement process concerning Georgia. The report presented twelve steps for Georgia to significantly enhance its EU integration, along with an evaluation of Georgia's progress in these steps.<sup>89</sup> *Step 1* concerns addressing the issue of political polarization. Regarding this priority, regular ministerial question times are being held in the Georgian parliament, with efforts underway to initiate cross-party discussions, particularly on reforms

---

<sup>86</sup> European Commission, 2022: Commission Opinion on Georgia's application for membership of the European Union. COM(2022) 405 final, European Commission, Brussels, pp. 2-3.

<sup>87</sup> Commission, COM(2022) 405 final, 2022: p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> European Commission, 2021: Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 Eastern Partnership priorities. SWD(2021) 186 final, European Commission, Brussels, pp. 29-31.

<sup>89</sup> Due to the vast number of steps involved, only the most important ones will be addressed in this paper.

related to the EU path. However, the use of harsh rhetoric persists, with incidents of disinformation regarding the EU. *Step 2* aims to ensure the full functioning of all state institutions. Regarding this aspect, amendments to the rules of procedure have strengthened parliamentary oversight functions and increased ministerial hearings. These oversight prerogatives should be further utilized by enabling the establishment of parliamentary investigative committees and allowing opposition parties to participate in the overseeing of the security services. The Georgian parliament adopted amendments on the functioning of the National Bank of Georgia in an expedited manner, overriding a veto by the President. These amendments have raised concerns regarding the National Bank's independence.<sup>90</sup>

*Step 3* involves adopting and implementing a transparent and effective strategy for judicial reform. In this case, non-judge members of the High Council of Justice (HCJ) were elected. In June 2023, the parliament adopted amendments to the Law on Common Courts and drafted additional amendments in September 2023, addressing some of the most important recommendations of the Venice Commission. Georgia should continue to pursue a comprehensive and effective reform of the judicial system, ensuring the independence, accountability, and impartiality of all judicial and prosecutorial institutions, with a particular focus on reforming the High Council of Justice.<sup>91</sup>

*Steps 4 and 5* focus on combating corruption and preventing "*oligarchization*." The parliament has passed a legislation to form an Anti-corruption Bureau to oversee and coordinate Georgia's anti-corruption policy and make recommendations. Furthermore, Georgia should continue developing and improving the action plan for de-oligarchization to ensure comprehensive coverage of key areas with effective measures and clear institutional arrangements. *Steps 6 and 7* aim to strengthen the fight against organized crime and to undertake stronger efforts to guarantee a free, professional, pluralistic, and independent media environment. Regarding step 6, the Government has implemented the 2023-2024 Action Plan for the National Strategy against Organized Crime. Georgia has enhanced its cooperation with Europol and member states, while in the case of step 7 Georgia has amended the Law on Broadcasting to align with principles of the EU's Audiovisual Media

---

<sup>90</sup> European Commission, 2022: Georgia 2023 Report. SWD(2023) 697 final, European Commission, Brussels, p. 9.

<sup>91</sup> European Commission, SWD(2023) 697 final, 2022: p. 10.

Service Directive focusing on issues like preventing incitement to violence and hatred, and protecting minors.<sup>92</sup>

By the end of 2023, Georgia had completed only three out of the twelve steps. *Step 9* is about to strengthen the efforts to promote gender equality, while *step 11* is regarding to enact legislation requiring Georgian courts to proactively consider European Court of Human Rights judgments in their deliberations. In an inclusive process, the parliament adopted a package of draft laws aimed at complying with the Istanbul Convention, instituting mandatory Gender Impact Assessments for all legislative acts, and enacting various amendments to combat violence against women. Also, the parliament adopted a legal package establishing mechanisms to ensure that Georgian courts reference European Court of Human Rights decisions. This package also facilitates access to these decisions and supports the professional development of judges, prosecutors, and defence lawyers. The legislation received unanimous support and was voted in favour by all parties. Finally, *step 12* aims to ensure that the nomination process for a new Public Defender (Ombudsperson) prioritizes the selection of an independent candidate and is conducted transparently. In February 2023, a new Public Defender was appointed with the support of opposition MPs. The Public Defender's Office maintains a high level of credibility within Georgian society, thus the Commission deemed this step completed.<sup>93</sup>

Despite the EU's and Georgia's efforts, the population's aspirations for political security, economic stability, and cultural modernization are overshadowed by concerns over by political turmoil and a potential erosion of national identity. Nevertheless, EU integration is seen as the sole viable path forward for the country. Georgians openly demonstrate their pro-European stance to the global community, yet they frequently face the challenge of reconciling their doubts and national sentiments in domestic discourse. This dual role occasionally causes confusion, a sentiment also mirrored in national opinion surveys.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, in the case of Moldova, oligarchs continue to play a significant role in Georgia's economy as well. During the period from 2004 to 2020, *minerals*, particularly copper ore, were Georgia's primary export commodity to the EU. The key market player during this time was RMG Copper, owned by Mining Investments LLC, controlled by Russian billionaire Dmitriy Troitskiy since 2019. Troitskiy and other Russian businessmen had previously

---

<sup>92</sup> Uo. p. 11.

<sup>93</sup> Uo. pp. 11-12.

<sup>94</sup> Lia Tsuladze: On Europeanisation, national sentiments and confused identities in Georgia. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Volume 50 (2), 2017, pp. 131-132.

controlled RMG B.V., the former owner of RMG Copper. The *metals* sector in Georgia is closely intertwined with the country's ruling elites. However, its importance for exports to the EU diminished notably after the DCFTA came into effect. According to the company's website, Georgian Manganese LLC (GM) is the leading producer of ferroalloys and manganese ore in Georgia. From 2006 to 2013, 75% of GM's shares were owned by Privat Group, one of the most opaque and closed Ukrainian holdings. During this period, its founders Igor Kolomoisky and Henadiy Boholyubov were among the five richest individuals in Ukraine. In 2013, Privat Group transferred GM to Georgia American Alloys, a US-based company assumed to be registered offshore in Luxembourg.<sup>95</sup>

In May 2024, the Georgian parliament approved a highly controversial new law in its third and final reading. The law imposes strict regulations on NGOs and classifies those receiving foreign funding as "*foreign agents*." This legislation, resembling a Russian law known for its detrimental impact on civil society, was initially introduced by the ruling party, Georgian Dream, in 2023. This bill has been criticized by the EU and has the potential to damage EU-Georgian relations.<sup>96</sup> Another important obstacle is the conflict between Georgia and Russia.<sup>97</sup>

Despite the challenges, the EU remains potentially the best choice for Tbilisi. Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity are threatened by Russia, compelling the ruling elites in Tbilisi to seek closer ties with the EU. As noted by a Georgian politician prior to the pivotal EaP summit in Vilnius in 2013, the Russia-Georgia war forced Georgia to pivot towards the EU. Similarly, following the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, deeper integration with Russia became unfeasible for Georgia's political elite, solidifying European integration as the sole viable long-term option (yet Russian influence still persists in certain sectors of the Georgian economy). Also, "*Europe*" as an identity factor also plays a significant role in reshaping Georgia's national identity. Georgian political elites identify their country as a part of Europe, aiming to reclaim their historical position after the disruption caused by Soviet rule.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>95</sup> Langbein – Cenusa – Guruli, 2024: pp. 225-226.

<sup>96</sup> Emil Avdaliani: Georgia's Foreign Agent Law Could Presage a Geopolitical Realignment. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/russia- Eurasia/politika/2024/05/georgia-protests-geopolitics?lang=en>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>97</sup> Lili Di Pippo: The Externalization of JHA Policies in Georgia: Partner or Hotbed of Threats?. European Integration, Volume 31 (1), 2008, pp. 116-117.

<sup>98</sup> Kornely Kakachia – Bidzina Lebanidze – Volodymyr Dubovyk: Defying marginality: explaining Ukraine's and Georgia's drive towards Europe. Journal of Contemporary European Studies, Volume 27 (4), 2019, p. 459.

### *IV.3.3. European integration and the latitude of Moldova and Georgia*

As examined in the previous parts of this chapter, while Moldova and Georgia share some similar latitudes regarding EU integration, detailed analysis reveals that Moldova holds a distinct advantage over Georgia in certain aspects:

1) Moldova benefits from a close ally within the EU, Romania. The two nations share the same language, culture, and history, which strengthens their bilateral relationship. Romania is fully committed to Moldova's EU membership aspirations, and it is expected that Bucharest will continue to support Chişinău in this regard in the future. In contrast, Georgia lacks a similar allied nation within the EU that could potentially provide internal support for its EU integration efforts.<sup>99</sup>

2) Geography is also a significant factor in this context. It is generally easier to align with EU norms when a nation shares a border with the EU. Moldova benefits from this proximity, as it shares a border with an EU member countries. This geographical closeness facilitates trade and travel, making it more convenient for Moldovan citizens. In contrast, Georgia is geographically farther from the EU and does not share a direct land border with EU member states. This lack of proximity and direct road connections into the EU presents greater logistical challenges for Georgia compared to Moldova.<sup>100</sup>

3) Despite both Moldova and Georgia having been granted candidate status by the EU, the Commission has highlighted significantly more steps for Georgia to complete compared to Moldova. This discrepancy underscores Moldova's more advanced position in EU integration compared to Georgia.<sup>101</sup>

4) There are some negative factors in Moldova's political landscape that could potentially hinder the EU integration process, however, the government is expected to remain pro-European. Despite the presence of oligarchs in Moldova, the country is making efforts to adhere to the European Commission's recommendations. In contrast, political turmoil and instability are prevalent in Georgia. Tensions are escalating, and Tbilisi has received significant criticism from Western countries

---

<sup>99</sup>Şoitu-Şoitu, 2010: pp. 495-496.

<sup>100</sup> James Wesley Scott – Ilkka Liikanen: Civil Society and the 'Neighbourhood' — Europeanization through Cross-Border Cooperation?. *European Integration*, Volume 32 (5), 2010, pp. 423-424.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Emerson – Tinatin Akhvlediani – Denis Cenusă – Veronika Movchan – Artem Remizov: *EU Accession Prospects of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia -first responses to the conditions set by the European Commission*, CEPS, Stockholm, 2023, pp. 21-31, pp. 33-42.

regarding the recent adoption of legislation resembling Russia's foreign agent laws.<sup>102</sup>

In conclusion, this chapter affirms that both Moldova and Georgia have traversed a considerable path towards EU integration. Each country has achieved notable milestones aimed at advancing their integration, resulting in the granting of candidate status. Upon detailed examination of the Europeanization processes in Moldova and Georgia, Moldova emerges as significantly ahead of Georgia in this regard.

#### IV.4. The political aggravating factors of the European integration of Moldova and Georgia

The previous chapter provided a detailed presentation of the Europeanization of Moldova and Georgia, including an examination of their internal turmoils. In this chapter, I aim to explore geopolitical aspects that could potentially impede these nations' EU membership despite the efforts of the EU, Moldova, and Georgia. The Human Development Index<sup>103</sup> could be enhanced, the economy bolstered<sup>104</sup>, and the political and judicial frameworks improved in both Moldova and Georgia.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, the idea of EU membership has gained traction in both societies<sup>106</sup>, particularly amidst the war in Ukraine. As of my current writing, two major factors potentially hinder Moldova and Georgia from becoming EU members in the medium and long term.

The *first major factor* is the aforementioned paradoxical state, Russia. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has accelerated the EU integration of Moldova and Georgia, but Moscow still remains one of the biggest actors that might hinder these nations' EU-related aspirations. Russia is still stationing military assets in Moldova's breakaway region, Transnistria, and according to international law, actively occupying South Ossetia and Abkhazia in

---

<sup>102</sup> Felix Light: Georgia's pro-EU Generation Z spearheads 'foreign agent' protests. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/georgias-pro-eu-generation-z-spearheads-foreign-agent-protests-2024-05-15/>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>103</sup> UNDP: Human Development Index (HDI). <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>104</sup> The World Bank: Georgia – Overview. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/georgia/overview>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>105</sup> European Commission: Statement by President von der Leyen on the Commission's opinions on the EU membership applications by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/hu/statement\\_22\\_3822](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/hu/statement_22_3822). (2024.06.06.)

<sup>106</sup> RFE/RL: Georgia, Moldova Celebrate EU Decisions To Advance Their Membership Bids. <https://www.rferl.org/a/georgia-moldova-celebrate-eu-candidate-status/32732665.html>. (2024.06.06.)

Georgia.<sup>107</sup><sup>108</sup> One of the main reasons for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine was the possibility that Ukraine (at least according to the Russian paradigm) might become a NATO member, which would mean that the West would be closer to Russia's border.<sup>109</sup> While Moldova and Georgia might become EU members, Russia would interpret this as a significant step towards potentially becoming NATO members as well. According to analysts, if the war in Ukraine ends with a Russian victory, Moldova might become the next target for Moscow. Although militarily neutral and non-NATO, Moldova has increased defence spending over the past year and recently approved a new national security strategy that identifies Russia as a main threat. The strategy aims to raise defence spending to 1% of GDP. Additionally, Georgia maintains a substantial military force, as memories of the 2008 war may still be active in the minds of some Georgians.<sup>110</sup> Also, previous revisionist speeches from the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, as well as Kremlin actions and official doctrines, all suggest that Russia views Moldova as *'historical Russian territory'*. These statements may trigger concern among the government of Moldova and EU officials. Since the Ukraine war, it is clear that Moscow might use its military assets to gain territory through war.<sup>111</sup> Also, in the case of an open military conflict between Moldova and Georgia, the Russian *casus belli* might be similar to the case of Ukraine: protecting Russian civilians in both nations. Separatist elements in Transnistria have already called on Moscow for protection.<sup>112</sup> The EU would face significant challenges and considerations if confronted with the risk of an open conflict with Russia over the integration of Moldova and Georgia. If Moscow were to suddenly set the EU membership of these nations as a red line, it would escalate tensions and pose a serious geopolitical dilemma.

---

<sup>107</sup> Madalin Necsutu: Russian Troop Movements in Transnistria Alarm Moldova. <https://balkaninsight.com/2023/04/21/russian-troop-movements-in-transnistria-alarm-moldova/>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>108</sup> US Department of State: Marking Fifteen Years Since Russia's Invasion and Occupation of Georgia. <https://www.state.gov/marking-fifteen-years-since-russias-invasion-and-occupation-of-georgia/>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>109</sup> Taras Kuzio: Why Russia Invaded Ukraine. Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development, Volume 2022 (21), 2022, p. 46.

<sup>110</sup> Voanews: Moldova Faces Multiple Russian Threats as It Seeks EU Membership. <https://www.voanews.com/a/moldova-faces-multiple-russian-threats-as-it-seeks-eu-membership-/7521654.html>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>111</sup> Orysia Lutsevych – Valeriu Pasha: Is Moldova a new battleground in Russia's war <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/03/moldova-new-battleground-russias-war>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>112</sup> France24: Pro-Russian separatists in Moldova seek Moscow's 'protection'. <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20240229-pro-russian-separatists-in-moldova-seek-moscow-s-protection>. (2024.06.06.)

Russia might also destabilize and hinder Moldova and Georgia through its assets. Russia has a significant advantage in exercising "soft power" in Moldova and Georgia due to the nations' historical ties with Imperial and Soviet Russia, which have left lasting impacts.

In the case of Moldova, the proportion of the population that speaks Russian is notably large. Many families with Romanian or Moldovan surnames use Russian as their primary or secondary language at home. Additionally, Russian-language films, television shows, and concerts continue to enjoy a considerable audience in Moldova. Moscow has long pursued direct political influence in Moldovan politics. During former President Vladimir Voronin's campaign for a second term, after he had shifted his alignment from Russia towards the European Union, Moldovan authorities took action against Moscow's interference. They arrested, deported, and blocked "*political technologists*" sent from Russia to organize and finance opposition to Voronin. Key figures in the Russian presidential administration, such as Vladislav Surkov and Modest Kolerov, sponsored pro-Russian youth groups in Transnistria and right-bank Moldova.<sup>113</sup>

In 2014, Chisinau authorities blocked the activities of "Our Party" (Partidul Nostru), a newly founded and highly popular pro-Russian group. The party's leader, Renato Usatii, who was later elected mayor of the Russophone stronghold Balti, was connected to and allegedly financed by Vladimir Yakunin, the Chief of Russian Railways. Many believed that "Our Party" was a project backed by the Kremlin. From the very beginning, Moldova has remained, albeit unenthusiastically, within Russia's sphere of influence. By the end of Voronin's first term, Moldova had explicitly shifted towards a pro-European stance, a change formalized in the 2005 Moldova-EU Action Plan. Since the establishment of a pro-European coalition in 2009, Moldova has consistently aimed for European integration, much to Moscow's dismay. It is likely that Russia will continue to disapprove of Moldova's increasing association with the EU.<sup>114</sup>

Just like Moldova, regarding Georgia, Russia still might use its assets to destabilize the country, hindering its EU integration. Russian soft power is increasingly visible in Georgian mass media. Pro-Russian newspapers, known for their strong anti-Western stance, are gaining popularity. Newspapers and news agencies like Sakinform, Asaval-Dasavali, Alia, and Georgia and the World are widely circulated and among the most read by the Georgian

---

<sup>113</sup> William H. Hill: More than a Frozen Conflict: Russian Foreign Policy Toward Moldova, Atlantic Council, New York, 2018, p. 8.

<sup>114</sup> Hill, 2018: pp. 8-9.

public. A brief look at the headlines from the Georgia and the World news agency, which also produces a weekly printed newspaper, reveals a strong resemblance to old Soviet-style propaganda. Many headlines inform readers that "*A Eurasian Union would be fine for us*" and assert that "*Russia is our eternal neighbour.*" Coverage of Western countries often highlights negative stories.<sup>115</sup>

Notably, Russia also uses NGOs to foster an anti-Western attitude in Georgia. Typically, the founders of pro-Russian NGOs and the participants in their conferences and meetings are often the same individuals. For example, Nana Devdariani, the former public defender, has founded several pro-Russian organizations such as "*Caucasian Cooperation*," "*The Center of Global Studies*," and the "*People's Orthodox Christian Movement*." Another notable figure is Archil Chkoidze, leader of the EC, who is frequently quoted by Russian propaganda media and is also behind the establishment of the "*Erekle II Society*." Yet another important aspect of the anti-Western discourse includes xenophobic and homophobic narratives that portray the U.S. and EU as destructive forces threatening traditional social institutions in Georgia. Meanwhile, Russia is depicted as a powerful defender of Orthodox Christianity. Many Georgians view Christianity as the cornerstone of their identity and faith, the only means by which their culture can be preserved amid globalization.<sup>116</sup>

The *second major factor* is an unlikely one. Moldova's and Georgia's territorial integrity is not fulfilled, and there is a precedent in the EU where a member state, the Republic of Cyprus, was admitted under similar conditions. Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkey invaded the north in response to a military coup on the island supported by the Greek government.<sup>117</sup> The island was effectively partitioned, with the northern third governed by a Turkish Cypriot administration and the southern two-thirds by the internationally-recognized government led by Greek Cypriots. Under international law, Cyprus is considered to be under military occupation by Turkish forces.<sup>118</sup> Cyprus' integration into the European Union is unique within the history of EU enlargement due to the island's complex political situation. This integration process was not only distinctive but also fraught with controversy,

---

<sup>115</sup> Sergi Kapanadze: Russia's Soft Power in Georgia – A Carnivorous Plant in Action In Sergi Kapanadze - Toms Rostoks (eds.): *The Different Faces of "Soft Power": The Baltic States and Eastern Neighborhood between Russia and the EU/ Ed*", Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Riga, 2015, pp. 174-175.

<sup>116</sup> Eka Janashia: *Russia Enhances Soft Power in Georgia through Local NGOs*. <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/13243-rujssia-enhances-soft-power-georgia-local-ngos.html>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>117</sup> BBC: Cyprus country profile. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17217956>. (2024.06.06.)

<sup>118</sup> UN Department of Public Information: *The Blue Helmets: a review of United Nations peace-keeping*. UN Department of Public Information, New York, 1990, pp. 306-308.

particularly concerning the Turkish Cypriot community. The Turkish Cypriots were excluded from influencing the accession discussions and were actively kept out of the negotiation process.<sup>119</sup>

The integration process of Cyprus into the European Union was prolonged and characterized by significant political maneuvering and controversies, making it a critical experience for the EU, its member states, and its institutions. The case of Cyprus might have set a precedent, albeit a problematic one. Due to the complexities associated with integrating a nation whose territorial integrity is not fully established, it is improbable that a candidate country facing similar issues would achieve EU membership in the medium or long term. Even if the EU is fully committed to integrating both nations of Moldova and Georgia, the situation on Cyprus serves as a cautionary example for EU institutions and member states. The experience with Cyprus suggests that integrating nations with incomplete territorial integrity can pose significant challenges. If the EU were to attempt the integration of additional countries facing similar issues, it could introduce further complications and set a concerning precedent for future enlargement processes.<sup>120</sup>

In this chapter, two major elements are highlighted as the most significant negative factors affecting the potential EU membership of Moldova and Georgia: the influence of Russia and the precedent set by Cyprus. The political influence, and actual threat of Russia poses substantial challenges to the integration of these countries into the EU. Additionally, the complex and controversial integration of Cyprus, a country with unresolved territorial issues, serves as a warning. This precedent suggests that the EU might face considerable difficulties in admitting countries with similar territorial disputes, complicating their accession processes.

## **V. Conclusions**

The situations of Moldova and Georgia are complex, primarily due to their histories of military conflict, which resulted in the loss of control over parts of their territories. Moldova has not regained administrative control over Transnistria, and Georgia faces similar challenges with South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The European Union has developed its relations with these nations, making efforts to normalize these conflicts. It has established

---

<sup>119</sup> Torma Tamás: Ciprus az EU-ban: a megalakulástól a csatlakozásig. *Külügyi Szemle*, Volume 2004 (1-2) 2004, pp. 161-162.

<sup>120</sup> Harry Anastasiou: Cyprus as the EU anomaly. *Global Society*, Volume 23 (2), 2009, p. 131.

offices, sent delegations and special representatives, and provided significant financial assistance to boost their economies.

The EU's Eastern Partnership marked a rather important moment in the Europeanization of Moldova and Georgia, institutionalizing more their relations with the EU. The outbreak of war in Ukraine accelerated their EU integration processes, and both countries achieved EU candidate status after fulfilling some key steps outlined by the European Commission.

Despite the EU's positive communications and the evident commitment of Moldova and Georgia to EU integration, several significant hindrances remain. Internal political challenges persist, including issues such as corruption and oligarchic influences. In Georgia's case, new regulations regarding foreign agents have been met with disapproval from EU officials and institutions. Although these internal challenges are addressable, two primary factors may impede the actual EU membership of Moldova and Georgia.

Firstly, there is the potential threat of Russian military intervention. Should Moscow perceive the EU integration of these nations as a threat to its geopolitical security, it might resort to force, as evidenced by the war in Ukraine. Secondly, the EU's experience with Cyprus's integration serves as a significant precedent. Similar to Moldova and Georgia, Cyprus struggles with issues of territorial integrity. This historical experience suggests that integrating countries with unresolved territorial disputes can create complex legal and political challenges within the EU, potentially slowing down the integration process for Moldova and Georgia.

Despite the efforts of Moldova, Georgia, and the EU, this paper concludes that, *given the political impediments, Moldova and Georgia will not become EU members in the medium and long term.*

## Sources

- 1) Anna Skolimowska: "The European Union as a 'normative power' in international relations. Theoretical and Empirical Challenges," Yearbook of Polish European Studies, Volume 18 (1), 2006, pp. 111-131.
- 2) Arne Niemann – Tessa de Wekker: Normative power Europe? EU relations with Moldova. European Integration online Papers, Volume 14 (14), 2010, pp. 1-41-
- 3) BBC: Cyprus country profile. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17217956>. (2024.06.06.)
- 4) BBC: Georgia country profile. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17301647>. (2024.06.06.)
- 5) BBC: Moldova country profile. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17601580>. (2024.06.06.)
- 6) Conțiu Șoitu – Daniela Șoitu: Europeanization at the EU's External Borders: the Case of Romanian–Moldovan Civil Society Cooperation. European Integration. Volume 35 (5), 2010 pp. 495–506.
- 7) Cristian Urse: Solving Transnistria: Any Optimists Left?. Connections, Volume 7 (1), 2008, pp. 57-75.
- 8) David Darchiashvili – David Bakradze: The EU Eastern Partnership initiative and Georgia. Politeja, Volume 5 (62), 2019, pp. 117-140.
- 9) David Matsaberidze: Russia vs. EU/US through Georgia and Ukraine. Connections, Volume 14 (2), 2015, pp. 77-86.
- 10) Delegation of the European Union to Georgia: Remarks by the Acting Head of EU Delegation 14 years after the August 2008 Russia-Georgia war. [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/remarks-acting-head-eu-delegation-14-years-after-august-2008-russia-georgia-war\\_en?s=221](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/remarks-acting-head-eu-delegation-14-years-after-august-2008-russia-georgia-war_en?s=221). (2024.06.06.)
- 11) Eka Janashia: Russia Enhances Soft Power in Georgia through Local NGOs. <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/13243-rujssia-enhances-soft-power-georgia-local-ngos.html>. (2024.06.06.)
- 12) Emil Avdaliani: Georgia's Foreign Agent Law Could Presage a Geopolitical Realignment. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/russia- Eurasia/politika/2024/05/georgia-protests-geopolitics?lang=en>. (2024.05.26.)

- 13) Esther Barbé – Elisabeth Johansson – Nogués: The EU as a Modest 'Force for Good': The European Neighbourhood Policy. International Affairs, Volume 84 (1), 2008, pp. 81-96.
- 14) EUMM: Our Mandate. [https://www.eumm.eu/en/about\\_eumm/mandate](https://www.eumm.eu/en/about_eumm/mandate). (2024.06.06.)
- 15) EUR-Lex: EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia – EUMM Georgia. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-monitoring-mission-in-georgia-eumm-georgia.html>. (2024.06.06.)
- 16) European Commission, 2021: Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 Eastern Partnership priorities. SWD(2021) 186 final, European Commission, Brussels
- 17) European Commission, 2022: Commission Opinion on Georgia's application for membership of the European Union. (COM(2022) 405 final) European Commission, Brussels
- 18) European Commission, 2022: Commission Opinion on the Republic of Moldova's application for membership of the European Union. (COM(2022) 406 final), European Commission, Brussels
- 19) European Commission, 2022: Georgia 2023 Report. SWD(2023) 697 final, European Commission, Brussels
- 20) European Commission, 2023: Republic of Moldova 2023 Report. SWD(2023) 698 final, European Commission, Brussels
- 21) European Commission: Accession criteria. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary/accession-criteria\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary/accession-criteria_en). (2024.06.06.)
- 22) European Commission: Eastern Partnership. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/eastern-partnership\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/eastern-partnership_en). (2024.06.06.)
- 23) European Commission: European Neighbourhood Policy, What is it?. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy_en). (2024.06.06.)
- 24) European Commission: Factsheet: The EU and Moldova. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/FS\\_22\\_1667](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/FS_22_1667). (2024.05.26.)
- 25) European Commission: Georgia - Membership status: candidate country. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/georgia\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/georgia_en). (2024.06.06.)

- 26) European Commission: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell with the European Commission on the adoption of the “transparency of foreign influence” law in Georgia.  
[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement\\_24\\_2628](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_24_2628).  
(2024.06.06.)
- 27) European Commission: Statement by President von der Leyen on the Commission's opinions on the EU membership applications by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.  
[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/hu/statement\\_22\\_3822](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/hu/statement_22_3822).  
(2024.06.06.)
- 28) European Council, 2022: European Council meeting (23 and 24 June 2022) – Conclusions. (EUCO 24/22), General Secretariat of the Council, Brussels, 8 p.
- 29) Felix Light: Georgia's pro-EU Generation Z spearheads 'foreign agent' protests.  
<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/georgias-pro-eu-generation-z-spearheads-foreign-agent-protests-2024-05-15/>. (2024.06.06.)
- 30) France24: Pro-Russian separatists in Moldova seek Moscow's 'protection'.  
<https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20240229-pro-russian-separatists-in-moldova-seek-moscow-s-protection>. (2024.06.06.)
- 31) Garay Zsolt: Az Európai Unió és a Kaukázusi országok kapcsolatrendszere. EU Working Papers, Volume 2008 (1), 2008, pp. 49-60.
- 32) Giselle Bosse: The EU's Relations with Moldova: Governance, Partnership or Ignorance?. Europe-Asia Studies, Volume 62 (8), 2010, pp. 1291-1309.
- 33) Gokhan Ergocun: Russia faced no sanctions over 2008 war with Georgia, says country's premier. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/russia-faced-no-sanctions-over-2008-war-with-georgia-says-countrys-premier/2904822#>. (2024.06.06.)
- 34) Goran Bandov - Nikolina Herceg Kolman: "Research on Europeanization in Literature: From the Top-Down Approach to Europeanization as a Multi-Directional Process". Cadmus, Volume. 3 (5), 2018, pp. 134-144.
- 35) Grevi Giovanni: Pioneering foreign policy - The EU special representatives, European Union Institute for Security Studies, Brussels, 2007, 165 p.
- 36) Harry Anastasiou: Cyprus as the EU anomaly. Global Society, Volume 23 (2), 2009, pp. 129-151.
- 37) Ian Manners: "Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?". Journal of Common Market Studies (JCMS), Volume 40 (2), 2002, pp. 238-258.

- 38) Iurie Gotișan: Eastern Partnership and Moldova. *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, Volume 28. (1/2), 2019, pp. 94-113.
- 39) Iurie Gotișan: Is the Eastern Partnership a Development Incentive for Moldova?. *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, Volume 19 (3), 2010, pp. 58-77.
- 40) James Wesley Scott – Ilkka Liikanen: Civil Society and the ‘Neighbourhood’ — Europeanization through Cross-Border Cooperation?. *European Integration*, Volume 32 (5), 2010, pp. 423–438.
- 41) John Beyer: Transnistria: In Search of a Settlement for Moldova’s Breakaway Region. *St Antony's International Review*, Volume 6.(1), 2010, pp. 165-187.
- 42) Julia Langbein – Denis Cenușă – Irina Guruli: EU trade liberalisation, sectoral coalitions and development: insights from Moldova and Georgia. *Journal of European Integration*, Volume 46 (2), 2024, pp. 213-234.
- 43) Kevin Featherstone: "Introduction: In the Name of 'Europe'" In: Kevin Featherstone-Claudio M. Radaelli (eds.): *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, pp. 3-26.
- 44) Koller Boglárka: Az európaizáció konceptuális és elméleti kérdései, különös tekintettel a Nyugat-Balkánra In: Koller Boglárka – Ördögh Tibor (eds.): *Európaizáció a Nyugat - Balkánon*, Dialóg Campus Kiadó, Budapest, 2019, pp. 15-29.
- 45) Kornely Kakachia – Bidzina Lebanidze – Volodymyr Dubovyk: Defying marginality: explaining Ukraine’s and Georgia’s drive towards Europe. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Volume 27 (4), 2019, pp. 459-462.
- 46) Lia Tsuladze: On Europeanisation, national sentiments and confused identities in Georgia. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Volume 50 (2), 2017, pp. 125-133.
- 47) Lili Di Puppò: The Externalization of JHA Policies in Georgia: Partner or Hotbed of Threats?. *European Integration*, Volume 31 (1), 2008, pp. 103-118.
- 48) Madalin Necșutu: Russian Troop Movements in Transnistria Alarm Moldova. <https://balkaninsight.com/2023/04/21/russian-troop-movements-in-transnistria-alarm-moldova/>. (2024.06.06.)

- 49) Maria Ruxandra Lupu: External democracy promotion in Ukraine and Moldova: the impact of the European Union. Danish Institute for International Studies, Volume 2010 (21), 2010, pp. 7-28.
- 50) Michael Emerson – Tinatin Akhvlediani – Denis Cenusă - Veronika Movchan - Artem Remizov: EU Accession Prospects of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia -first responses to the conditions set by the European Commission, CEPS, Stockholm, 2023, pp. 21–31.
- 51) Natalya Belsiter: The Transnistrian conflict. In: Anton Bebler (ed.): "Frozen conflicts" in Europe, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Opladen - Berlin - Toronto, 2015, pp. 45-57.
- 52) Nona Mikhelidze: Juggling Security, Democracy and Development in the Caucasus: What Role for the EU?. IAI Working Papers, Volume 2013 (13), 2013, pp. 2-17.
- 53) Orysia Lutsevych – Valeriu Pasha: Is Moldova a new battleground in Russia's war?. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/03/moldova-new-battleground-russias-war>. (2024.06.06.)
- 54) RFE/RL: Georgia, Moldova Celebrate EU Decisions To Advance Their Membership Bids. <https://www.rferl.org/a/georgia-moldova-celebrate-eu-candidate-status/32732665.html>. (2024.06.06.)
- 55) Richard G. Whitman – Stefan Wolff: The EU as a Conflict Manager? The Case of Georgia and Its Implications. International Affairs, Volume 86 (1), 2010, pp. 87-107.
- 56) Sergey Markedonov: The South Ossetia conflict. In: Anton Bebler (ed.): "Frozen conflicts" in Europe, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Opladen - Berlin - Toronto, 2015, pp. 111-119.
- 57) Sergi Kapanadze: Russia's Soft Power in Georgia – A Carnivorous Plant in Action In Sergi Kapanadze – Toms Rostoks (eds.): The Different Faces of "Soft Power": The Baltic States and Eastern Neighborhood between Russia and the EU/ Ed", Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Riga, 2015, pp. 162-183.
- 58) Tamar Gamkrelidze: The project of Europe: a robust attempt to redefine Georgian identity. East European Politics, Volume 35 (3), 2019, pp. 357-371.
- 59) Tanja A. Börzel – Thomas Risse: Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe. In: Kevin Featherstone- Claudio M. Radaelli (eds.): The Politics of Europeanization, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, pp. 57-81.
- 60) Taras Kuzio: Why Russia Invaded Ukraine. Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development, Volume 2022 (21), 2022, pp. 40-50.

- 61) The World Bank: Georgia – Overview.  
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/georgia/overview>. (2024.06.06.)
- 62) Thijs Rommens: The Eastern partnership in Georgia. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Volume 50 (2), 2017, pp. 113-123.
- 63) Thomas Diez: Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe’. *Millennium*, Volume 33 (3), 2005, pp. 613-636.
- 64) Tom Casier: The Unintended Consequences of a European Neighbourhood Policy without Russia. *The International Spectator*, Volume 54 (1), 2019, pp. 76-88.
- 65) Tom Theuns: Promoting democracy through economic conditionality in the ENP: a normative critique. *Journal of European Integration*, Volume 39 (3), 2017, pp. 287-302.
- 66) Torma Tamás: Ciprus az EU-ban: a megalakulástól a csatlakozásig. *Külügyi Szemle*, Volume 2004. (1-2.) 2004, pp. 158-188.
- 67) UN Department of Public Information: The Blue Helmets: a review of United Nations peace-keeping. UN Department of Public Information, New York, 1990
- 68) UNDP: Human Development Index (HDI). <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>. (2024.06.06.)
- 69) US Department of State: Marking Fifteen Years Since Russia’s Invasion and Occupation of Georgia. <https://www.state.gov/marking-fifteen-years-since-russias-invasion-and-occupation-of-georgia/>. (2024.06.06.)
- 70) Vicken Cheterian: The August 2008 war in Georgia: from ethnic conflict to border wars. *Central Asian Survey*, Volume 28 (2), 2009, pp. 155-170.
- 71) Voanews: Moldova Faces Multiple Russian Threats as It Seeks EU Membership. <https://www.voanews.com/a/moldova-faces-multiple-russian-threats-as-it-seeks-eu-membership-/7521654.html>. (2024.06.06.)
- 72) William H. Hill: More than a Frozen Conflict: Russian Foreign Policy Toward Moldova, Atlantic Council, New York, 2018, 20 p.