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## THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AS A POTENTIAL FAILING STATE?<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** The Republic of Moldova is a young post-Soviet country facing a continuous internal struggle in the definition of its identity given its location between two major geopolitical blocs – Euroatlantic and Eurasian. In consequence to the combination of several internal and external factors it has striven to stabilize its political scene, sustain economic growth and enhance defense capabilities since its creation. Yet the success is questionable and Moldova today manifests certain features of state fragility. The aim of the article is to answer the question whether Moldova can be regarded as a failing state and if so, which areas in terms of sectoral security are stricken the most by state fragility. The authors point to the shortcomings that Moldova exhibits in political, economic and military sectors of security and concludes that potential failure of Moldova may have serious geopolitical consequences given the interests of external actors, especially Russia. The authors also suggest that the future development of Moldova will depend to a large extent on the attitude and role of the European Union in regard to the stabilization of the state.

**Keywords:** Republic of Moldova, state failure, political security, economic security, military security.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In terms of its territory and population, Moldova is a small state located in the Eastern Europe. It is a young post-Soviet republic which stays out of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As a majority of the former Soviet Republics, Moldova also had to undergo the process of transformation, define its own domestic and foreign policy orientation and defend its statehood on the international scene right after its independence. However, Moldova struggles to accomplish these tasks even 25 years after its creation and it continues in the pursuit of its own identity which fluctuates from Euro-Atlantism to Euro-Asianism. Moreover, it faces unfavourable and turbulent political and economic development on the domestic scene, which affects its overall capacity to unify highly polarized society and to assure its citizens the adequate living standards.

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This analysis aims to find out whether Moldova can be qualified as a failing state and if so then which are the areas where the state fails the most. First of all, the emphasis is placed on the preconditions that contribute to the weakening, ultimately failing of Moldova. For purpose of this article we will understand under the term of a failing state all those states that are unable to fulfill efficiently their functions towards their citizens with a particular emphasis on the inability to maintain stable security environment consisting of particular security sectors. Hence, the topic will be approached in terms of sectoral security with a special regard on political, economic and military sectors in order to observe how the weakening of the state manifests itself in these particular areas. At the end, two possible scenarios of the future evolution of the situation will be outlined emphasizing the regional implications of Moldova as a potential failing state on the periphery of the European Union.

Beside scientific articles and publications we base the analysis on data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, the US Central Intelligence Agency, World Bank, SIPRI, OSCE as well as Transparency International.

## 2. PRECONDITIONS OF MOLDOVA'S FAILING

There are several factors that contribute to the weakening of Moldova and ultimately to its recognition as a potential failing state. These factors can be classified as historical, internal and external.

From the historical perspective, Moldova is a young state that lacks experience with its own statehood and political organization of central power. Moldova emerged as independent state in 1991, when it seceded from the Soviet Union. Afterwards, it aspired to integrate into Romania based on the common history with its neighbour as its former province [15]. Yet, this project has not been carried out and instead, Moldova had to undergo the transformation process towards democracy on its own [19] and to establish its own statehood despite the fact that it did not have enough experience with self-administration. The situation was further aggravated by the declaration of independence of Transnistria, the pro-Russian oriented separatist region in the Eastern Moldova. As a consequence, the central government in Chisinau lost de facto control over the Transnistrian territory, even though it has remained de jure a part of Moldova.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the lack of historical experience, the absence of the unique national awareness is another barrier in the successful establishment of statehood. The society is highly polarized and Moldova has not succeeded to provide such a model of identity that would have been attractive to all its citizens. This so called crisis of identity represents the major internal factor with a potential to weaken the state. It manifests itself in three adverse tendencies. At first, the proponents of pan-Romanian idea claim that Moldavian language and nation are nothing but the artificial product of the Soviet Union whose objective was to russify the people of Moldova. Hence, they advocate the idea of Moldova's integration in Romania [4]. The second camp is represented by those who defend Moldova as the independent state. Finally, the region on Transnistria is inhabited by pro-Russian thinking minorities that perceive Russia as their security guarantor and they entangle on the regular basis into the clashes with ethnic Moldovans.

The problem of identity makes it impossible to create a strong state on the basis of nationalism or patriotism. The non-existent relation between the state represented by political institutions on one hand and the nation on the other hand threatens the loyalty of citizens to the government as well as the accountability of the government to its people. Under these circumstances, political institutions focus primarily on the protection of their own interests and they become more vulnerable to corruption, which further contributes to the weakening of the state and decline of loyalty and trust. As a result of the non-functional power apparatus, the society faces deepening frustration and reviving debate over the reunification with Romania. At the same time, another part of the population tends to incline

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<sup>1</sup> Transnistria has been ever since recognized only by unrecognized states: Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabach. It is supported de facto also by Russia.

towards Russia [2]. The polarization of the society in terms of national identity thus exacerbates the political stability of the state and to a certain extent it affects the orientation of political parties. The Communist Party and the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova both advocate the idea of national uniqueness and they incline towards the cooperation with Russia, while on the other end of the spectrum, there are progressive pro-European parties that strive for the integration of Moldova in the European Union. These two adverse dynamics on the political scene of Moldova are not only the result of inter-structural discrepancies, but they reflect also geopolitical aspects.

In the case of Moldova, geopolitical interests of foreign actors represent the major external factor with the impact on the ability of the state to successfully consolidate as an efficiently functioning political entity. Due to its geographic location between Ukraine that falls under the Russian sphere of interest, and Romania, the EU member state since 2007, there is a collision of interests between two important geopolitical players: Russia and the EU. Both of them support certain parties or actors within Moldovan political scene in order to promote their strategic goals [7]. On one hand, Russia advances the idea of independent Moldova in order to maintain its influence in Transnistria. Pro-Russian separatists strictly refuse the idea of integration in Romania or in the EU. On the other hand, the EU bolsters Moldova's efforts to build a stable state regarding the fact that Moldova is located on the EU periphery and its fragility has regional security implications [18]. The EU believes that stabilization of Moldova can be achieved by providing support for its pro-European orientation and integration efforts. Since 2004 Moldova has been a part of the European Neighbourhood Policy in order to strengthen political rapprochement and economic integration of the EU and its South-Eastern neighbours [6, p. 50]. However, this approach is in collision with Russian interests, therefore, it risks to deepen social cleavages and to provoke further destabilization. Even though Moldova strives for the EU membership, it is still far from fulfilling the integration criteria. The main obstacles stem from political instability and unfavourable economic development which evoke that Moldova as a state is failing to efficiently fulfil several of its core functions.

### **3. STATE FAILURE IN TERMS OF SECTORAL SECURITY**

One of the core state functions is to assure stable security environment which consists of particular security sectors, therefore, we opted for sectoral approach to the security in the analysis of state failure with a particular attention on the manifestation of state fragility in political, economic and military sectors that are interconnected and mutually conditioned. These three sectors of security will be subject of further analysis of Moldova's fragility in order to answer the question whether Moldova can be qualified as a (potential) failing state.

#### **3.1. POLITICAL SECTOR OF SECURITY**

Moldova's political scene is characteristic by democratic deficit, oligarchization and politicization of institutions, insufficient transparency and weak institutional framework. Since the last decade, Moldova has faced contested parliamentary elections, unstable coalition governments, inability to achieve consensus among political parties, frequent fluctuations within the government, repeated dissolution of the parliament and early elections, corruption scandals, decline in the trust in political institutions and anti-government demonstrations.

Moldova as a young state lacks historical tradition of political parties and since the beginning it has been failing in establishing effective modern party system. Political parties have resembled rather movements grouped around charismatic leaders [2] and the decisive factor in parliamentary elections has often been the reputation of politicians instead of political program. Pre-electoral promises are fairly populist, and there is no dialogue between the ruling elite and voters, who are extremely

distrustful against their representatives<sup>1</sup>. Based on the above-mentioned crisis of identity and influence of the two geopolitical players, there are two main tendencies prevailing in the party system of Moldova. On one hand, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova are backed by the pro-Russian oriented electors, while on the other end of the spectrum, there are progressive pro-European parties.

Moldovan political scene was relatively stable between 2001 and 2009 when the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova had absolute majority in the parliament, so it was able to rule without necessity to create coalition. However, the stability was maintained at the expense of democratic development, as this period which corresponds to the presidency of Vladimir Voronin from the Communist Party, exhibited features of authoritative regime. By contrast, instability and tensions culminated on the political scene and within the society in 2009 and 2014/2015, when the above-determined aspects of fragile political system of Moldova manifested in the full scale.

Parliamentary elections in April 2009 pointed to the fragility of the Communist rule. Communists obtained again the absolute majority of parliamentary seats despite pre-electoral polls indicating considerably different results. For this reason, the opposition did not recognize the results and designated elections as rigged. Street protests emerged and they escalated into violent demonstrations and attacks against governmental institutions. The police took strict measures against protesters including the practices violating human rights such as bad treatment of detained and torture. This era is called the "Twitter revolution" and politicians refer to it as to the attempt to overthrow the regime [15]. Despite the absolute majority the Communists lacked one vote to be able to elect the president without support from the opposition as this act required 3/5 majority. However, the opposition boycotted presidential elections, which inhibited Communists from electing the president even for the second time. This led to the fall of the Communist government [4]. The acting president dissolved the parliament and new parliamentary elections were held in July 2009. Even though the Communist Party confirmed the strongest position, it did not obtain the absolute majority of votes and the government was formed instead by a coalition of pro-European parties, so called Alliance for European integration. But even this time the parliamentary parties were not able to achieve compromise regarding the presidential candidate, which resulted again in early elections. The following elections in 2010 proved the weakening position of the Communists and the increasing strength of pro-European parties that created a coalition in January 2011.

From 2009 the Moldovan political scene was repeatedly paralyzed as the parties were unable to achieve consensus, the parliament was repeatedly dissolved and early elections took place. Thus, there were certain periods de facto without government. In 2012 the political crisis was partially overcome when Nicolae Timofti was elected the president of the Republic and he sought to implement reforms. Yet, despite certain progress, these reforms did not concern the key areas such as the fight against corruption and transformation of justice system [8].

The last elections up to now occurred in November 2014. The establishment of the government did not get along without complications and the process lasted for two and a half months. The subsequent year 2015 was extremely unfavourable for Moldovan political scene as there were several changes in government. Moreover, political scene was marked by increased tensions in regard to unsatisfactory investigation of banking scandal that occurred in 2014. Tensions and inefficient functioning are related to the fact that political system of Moldova resembles rather to oligarchy than functioning democracy. The power is traditionally held by a narrow group of oligarchs, who are blamed of being concerned primarily with the protection of their own interests. These oligarchs are represented especially by people gathered around Vlad Plahotniuc, who is one of the most influential politicians and

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<sup>1</sup> In the recent polls more than 92% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of political life in Moldova and almost 90% think that the government does not comply with the will of citizens. Only 5.9% trust the president of the Republic, while 6.8% trust the Parliament, 7.4% are loyal to the government, and finally, the confidence in the political parties is on the level of 7.9%. The most trusted figure on the Moldovan political scene in 2016 was the current president Igor Dodon, yet the confidence was only on the level of 8.2% [2].

businessmen in Moldova with ambitions for the highest state positions<sup>1</sup> [2]. The second pre-eminent oligarch on the Moldovan political scene was Vladimir Filat, who was devoid of parliamentary mandate in 2015 when he was accused of participation in the banking fraud that he had allegedly initiated [9]. In this context he was also accused of a bribe in the amount of 250 million USD [14].

In February 2015 both oligarchs participated on a government under the name of Political Alliance for European Moldova. It consisted of the Democratic Party of Moldova headed by Plahotniuc and the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova with Filat as its leader. However, this bi-coalition was quite weak. It lacked required support in the parliament therefore it opted for the cooperation with ideologically different Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova that performed de facto as a coalition party [9]. Though, the coalition was threatened by internal discrepancies and disputes between the two oligarchs which resulted in the fall of the government in June 2015. The subsequent coalition was formed by democrats, liberal democrats and the Liberal party. Valeriu Strelet from the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova became Prime Minister, but after less than 100 days in office he was subject of motion forcing him to step down and consequently his party withdrew to the opposition. These events followed Filat's arrest<sup>2</sup> when the nexus between Filat and Strelet provoked suspicion that the Prime Minister himself might be involved in the bank fraud.

The contemporary Prime Minister Pavel Filip was nominated in January 2016, however, his nomination did not get along without numerous demonstrations. The major objection against his nomination concerned his relations to Plahotniuc. Both are members of the Democratic Party of Moldova labelled by media as a party of opportunists and corrupt politicians, who instead of providing political agenda focus on how to gain profit and financial benefit for themselves [21]. Despite protests Filip was designated Prime Minister and he holds the post until present. Yet, the pro-European orientation of Moldova is not that outright. The first direct presidential elections were held in December 2016 and they led to the designation of Igor Dodon from the Socialist Party, which was unable to form a coalition after the parliamentary elections in 2014 despite obtaining majority of votes. Hence, there is a non-standard situation in Moldova, when a pro-Russian president was elected in a state, where the government advocates pro-European policy. The situation can instigate further tensions in the society and on the political scene, which could threaten future development of Moldova.

Beside loyalty of people towards political institutions and accountability of institutions towards citizens, another aspect of effective statehood is based on the ability of central government to execute sovereignty over the entire state territory. Yet, Moldova faces shortcomings in fulfilling also this criterion as the government in Chisinau does not control the separatist region of Transnistria. As a consequence, the central government lack administration of over 10% of the territory and more than 30% of state borders, which means that persons can enter the territory under Chisinau control through Transnistria without verification of their identity [2]. This represents potential threat to national security of Moldova and ultimately it may have broader regional security implications.

Another weakness of Moldova is insufficient rule of law and unwillingness of political parties to deal with corruption and reform justice system, even though, proactive approach of the government in these two areas is crucial in order to increase trust in state institutions. As far as judiciary is concerned, its major problem is politicization or dependence on the ruling elite. This is rooted in the Soviet tradition, when decision-making of judges was subjugated by the will of politicians. This tradition was renewed especially during the Communist rule when judges were directly subordinate to the president Voronin and they served to intimidate his political opponents. After the fall of the Communist government courts were controlled especially by Vlad Plahotniuc [2]. The judiciary remains a powerful tool to enforce the will of politicians by means of corruption and intimidation and nothing indicates that contemporary politicians would be willing to depoliticize the justice system. Any attempt of judges

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<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of 2016 Plahotniuc aspired to the position of Prime Minister however the president refused to nominate him because of the suspicion of criminal activities and money laundering. Moreover, Plahotniuc was allegedly monitored also by Interpol [21].

<sup>2</sup> According to some allegations, the arrest of Filat was fabricated by his opponents in order to eliminate him from the political scene [21]. They argue that justice system in Moldova is too politicized and during Filat's arrest it was controlled by his rival, Plahotniuc. Hence, Filat's arrest is sometimes interpreted as selective justice executed in favour of those in charge of judiciary.

to decide independently or in contradiction to the will of the ruling elite does not get along without consequences.

The inefficiency of the political system is caused not only by the apathy of politicians towards reform and interests of the population, but also by a significant corruption that hinders the development of the state. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index released by the Transparency International, Moldova ranks the 123<sup>th</sup> out of 176. Considering other European countries, only Ukraine is more corrupt according the index [3]. The fight against corruption is insufficient especially because the institutions in charge are highly politicized and the will of politicians is almost non-existent. The politicization of institutions, corruption and oligarchization make it impossible to improve the living standards of Moldovans and enhance economic growth. Economy represents another area which suffers from Moldova's failing.

### 3.2. ECONOMIC SECTOR OF SECURITY

Moldova is the poorest country in Europe with low living standards which do not reach even the level from the era when Moldova was part of the former Soviet Union [2]. According to the available data released by the National Bureau of Statistics the average wage in 2015 corresponded to 241.2 USD. [16] Moreover, according to the American Central Intelligence Agency, 20.8% of the population in Moldova found itself under the poverty line in 2013. From the economic perspective Moldova is far behind the rest of Europe. In 2016 the GDP in PPP per capita placed Moldova at 170<sup>th</sup> position out of 230. None of the European countries performed worse [22]. In 2009 Moldova's GDP in PPP per capita corresponded to one half of the same indicator evaluated in Albania, the second poorest country in Europe [15, p. 140].

Economy suffered especially in consequence of the corruption scandal which involved one state and two private banks of Moldova. At the end of 2014 approximately 1.025 billion USD was stolen, which corresponds to 1/8 of the annual Moldova's GDP. Moldova reacted to the remarkable deficit in the state budget by imprinting more bank notes. This led to the devaluation of the currency [5] and increasing inflation, which exceeded 9% in 2015. As a result, banking sector occurred at the edge of collapse and the state was threatened by potential bankrupt. Moreover, banks were accused of being involved in the Russian money laundering in the total amount of 20 billion USD during the previous seven years [14]. Following these circumstances the second half of 2015 was marked by recession and the GDP decreased in 2015 by 0.5% which had negative impact on foreign direct investments. The situation was aggravated also by the frequent alterations within the ruling coalition throughout the year. The chaos prevailing on the political scene and periods without government slowed down negotiations with the International Monetary Fund concerning the financial help necessary to avoid bankrupt. Moreover, the aid from the IMF conditioned financial assistance from the EU [24]. The fact that the EU was waiting until Moldova signed agreement with the IMF appears quite controversial because without any external help Moldova would have probably collapsed, which Russia could have turned ultimately to its profit. Advocates of the pro-Russian orientation who promote the integration of Moldova in the Eurasian Economic Union instead of the European Union, could take advantage from the deepening disappointment if the EU stayed passive. The agreement between Moldova and the IMF was finally signed and in November 2016 a loan to Moldova was approved which relaxed the pressure on public finances [13]. Since 2016 Moldovan economy has been gradually recovering and the GDP achieved the annual growth of 2%. Yet, inflation remains still a problem. Even though it slowed down in 2016, it remained relatively high, on the level of 7.4% which ranks Moldova 190<sup>th</sup> out of 227 [22]. In terms of European countries only Ukraine has higher level of inflation.

Specificity of Moldovan economy is its dependency on remittances from approximately one million Moldovans<sup>1</sup> who work abroad, especially in Russia and Ukraine [22]. At the same time, these countries have a strategic significance for Moldovan energy sector, as Moldova is fully dependent on Russian

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<sup>1</sup> This number is enormous given that Moldova itself has 3.5 million inhabitants. The high number of people working abroad reveals much about the low level of living standards in Moldova.

energy supplies delivered via Ukraine. Therefore, Moldovan economy is extremely vulnerable to the development in Russia and Ukraine which forces Moldova to seek new ways of possible diversification. In this context, Romania may play an important role.

Besides Russia, the EU is also an important player in terms of Moldova's economic performance. In 2014 Chisinau signed the EU Association agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement facilitating Moldova's access to the European market [6]. However, Moldova was negatively affected by the Russian ban on agricultural products imported from the EU. The ban was harmful to Moldova all the more that Russia is one of its key trade partners and agriculture represents the crucial sector for its economic growth. Hence, the economic sector also points to the geopolitical significance of Moldova. The Republic is located between two major political and economic projects, the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union. There is a risk that if the EU does not satisfy economic expectations of Moldova, or it adopts passive attitude towards the state, the Moldovan society will opt for the alternative project where Russia would assume the role of its "patron". The EU wants to prevent that a state on its periphery fails as it would have implications on the security within the EU, just as it fears that Moldova would get under the auspices of Russia. Therefore, the EU strengthens its activity in the region and it executes pressure on the government in Chisinau to adopt necessary reforms. The success of the European policy towards Moldova may shape the future orientation and destiny of the country.

Despite the foreign aid from the part of the EU or Russia, Moldovan economy remains fragile and vulnerable especially in regard to unresolved internal problems such as corruption, political instability and weak institutions as well as in regard to frozen conflict in Transnistria and the development in Russia.

### 3.3. MILITARY SECTOR OF SECURITY

Similarly to political and economic sectors of security, the military one faces in Moldova also several challenges and problems, that weaken its statehood in sense of ability to effectively fulfil its functions, provide citizens with public goods and services and protect them against internal and external threats.

The first problem is economy-related. According to economic indicators, Moldovan government allocated almost constantly from 2010 to 2016 only 0.3% of GDP to defence, which has placed Moldova among the countries with the lowest defence budget [11; 12; 22]. Nevertheless, the budget does not respond neither to the needs of the army, which is rather out-of-date in terms of equipment, nor to the security challenges, risks and threats, which stem from external and internal security environment of Moldova, especially in respect to the frozen conflict in the Eastern part of the country and Russian ambitions in its near neighbourhood that escalated in 2014 in the annexation of Crimea and in the support for pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine. Insufficient economic potential of Moldova reduces chances for transformation and modernization of the armed forces so that they were capable to ensure national security and defence by their own means. Hence, in this matter Moldova needs to rely primarily on the EU and NATO. NATO has been playing an important role in strengthening military capabilities of Moldova and enhancing democratic control of the armed forces already since 1994, when Moldova became member of the Partnership for Peace program [5]. The aim of the transformation is to build the armed forces capable of deployment into the operations of collective security.

Given the inadequate efficiency of the Moldovan army and persisting security threats in the Eastern part of the state, there are foreign troops deployed on the territory of Moldova. First of all, there are the troops operating within the OSCE Mission to Moldova aimed at finding a solution to the conflict in Transnistria, improve the rule of law, ensure arms control, advocate human rights and freedom of press and monitor the course of elections [1; 17]. Along with the OSCE troops, the Russian soldiers have been deployed in Transnistria since its declaration of independence in 1992 [10; 20]. In addition to the military presence, Russia supports Transnistria also by arms supplies.

Moreover, there were also American soldiers present on the territory of Moldova in 2015 participating in the joint US-Moldovan military training. The presence of American soldiers provoked negative reactions within the pro-Russian part of the society and it escalated into protests. While the right-wing parties are in favour of the integration of Moldova in NATO and they perceive the USA as a partner, the left-wing parties with Socialists on the head regarded the training as military occupation in violation of the neutrality of the state [23]. Hence, the military sector of security also reflects the antagonistic pro-European and pro-Russian tendencies prevailing in the polarized Moldovan society.

At the same time the military sector is affected by unfavourable economic situation and political instability in the Republic of Moldova. Moldova, as a considerably weakened state with geo-strategically important location does not have enough capabilities and abilities to ensure its security alone and to face external and internal threats by its own means. Instead, it should seek the cooperation with organizations of collective security. This cooperation should not only react to the contemporary security challenges, but it should help Moldova to embark on the road of transformation in order to increase its defence capacities. To achieve this end, it is indispensable for Moldova to reach political stability and economic growth, which would enable to overcome the above-mentioned aspects of a failing state.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis demonstrates that Moldova exhibits serious shortcomings in political, economic as well as military sectors of security that threaten its ability to fully exercise its functions and commitments to the citizens. These three sectors influence each other mutually and their functioning is interdependent, hence the weakening in one area affects also another sector. Moldova's failing is the most striking in the areas of political instability, rule of law, independence of judiciary, corruption, insufficient transparency and democracy, social discontent, immigration, economic crisis and technologic deficiency of the armed forces. Political instability, economic weakness and military deficiency result from the combination of several above-determined and analysed factors that contribute to the overall fragility of the state, in some areas eventually to its failing.

State failure always provokes serious risks. In case of Moldova these risks are related to the geopolitical competition between two players, Russia and the EU, whose bilateral relations are nowadays extremely strained. As Moldova is located on the boundary between the sphere of influence of these two actors, it finds itself in the position of a buffer zone or potential "battle field". Hence, the stability of Moldova is in the best interest of the EU and its member states.

In terms of Moldova's future, there are two main scenarios depending upon the fact whether Moldova will continue to fail and what direction its foreign policy will pursue. On the one hand, if Moldova succeeds to stabilize its political scene and confirms its pro-European orientation, the EU and NATO might play a crucial role in its further stabilization, economic recovery and military transformation. However, such a development would probably not get along without a reaction from the part of Russia given its vital interests in its near neighbourhood which manifest in Moldova by the support of separatist ambitions of Transnistria. Moreover, Russia aims to integrate Moldova in the Eurasian Economic Union, which however, is not compatible with the potential membership of Moldova in the European Union. In addition, the society within Moldova is not explicitly inclined towards the integration in the EU, eventually NATO, hence there is a risk that Moldova could turn into "another Ukraine".

The alternative scenario concerns the situation if Moldova would not cease to fail or it would stagnate. This could occur as a result of insufficient help from the part of extern actors, primarily the EU, especially if it assumed apathetic attitude towards this region and decided to withdraw. Even if this scenario seems improbable as it is in the best interest of the EU to maintain stable periphery, yet the interests of the EU should be considered in the broader context of the contemporary events. At the

present, the European Union has to deal primarily with its own internal problems related to migration crisis and Brexit. Taking into account this context, saving Moldova does not appear as vital for the EU. In a similar way it is perceived also in the eyes of citizens of the EU member states who claim that the European Union should first of all manage its own problems. However, the passive attitude of the EU towards its failing periphery could provoke now security challenges and it could incite strong Euroscepticism in Moldova. Russia could profit from this situation as Moscow would recognize the opportunity to fill the vacuum created after the withdrawal of the EU. For Europe it would mean a serious security challenge that will have to be dealt with.

Both of these scenarios point to the fact that the situation in Moldova has impact on the security environment of the EU. It can be thus argued, that the EU cannot afford to ignore the development in Moldova. In addition, state failure affects also migration, hence, if the living standards will not improve, there could be an increasing number of economic migrants not only in Russia and Ukraine, but due to the pro-European orientation of the current government, more and more Moldovans might search for better living conditions also in the EU. Furthermore, Chisinau cannot control the outer border of Transnistria, hence persons can enter the territory of Moldova without the knowledge of appropriate state organs. The territory can be thus used by criminals that look for a shelter or safe haven for their activities. This is enabled also by prevailing corruption and inefficient law enforcement. Taking into account all above-analysed aspects, Moldova can be regarded as a failing state that represents a security challenge for Europe. It should be in the interest of the EU to stabilize Moldova and avoid its collapse that would have even more serious geopolitical and security consequences.

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Косарова Домініка, Ушяк Ярослав. Республіка Молдова як потенційно недієздатна держава? *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, **4** (3-4) (2017), 50–59.

Республіка Молдова – це молода пострадянська країна, яка стикається з безперервною внутрішньою боротьбою у визначенні її ідентичності з огляду на її розташування між двома основними геополітичними блоками – євроатлантичним та євразійським. Внаслідок поєднання декількох внутрішніх та зовнішніх факторів вона прагне стабілізувати свою політичну ситуацію, підтримувати економічне зростання та зміцнювати оборонні можливості з моменту її створення. Проте успіх викликає сумніви, і Молдова сьогодні проявляє певні риси крихкості держави. Метою статті є відповідь на питання, чи можна вважати Молдову недієздатною країною, і якщо так, то які сфери з точки зору секторальної безпеки найбільшою мірою постраждали від крихкості держави. Автори вказують на недоліки Молдови в політичному, економічному і військовому секторах безпеки та роблять висновок, що потенційний крах Молдови може мати серйозні геополітичні наслідки з урахуванням інтересів зовнішніх дійових осіб, особливо Росії. Автори також припускають, що майбутній розвиток Молдови в значній мірі залежатиме від ставлення та ролі Європейського Союзу щодо стабілізації держави.

**Ключові слова:** Республіка Молдова, крах держави, політична безпека, економічна безпека, військова безпека.