

DOI: 10.20542/0131-2227-2023-67-2-52-66

EDN: DHNGUC

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OF ROMANIAN AND MOLDAVIAN POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE NEW POLITICAL REALITIES

Nataliya M. VELIKAYA,
ORCID 0000-0001-5532-844X, natalivelikaya@gmail.com
Institute of Socio-Political Research – Branch of the Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology
of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ISPR FCTAS RAS), 6, bld. 1, Fotieva Str., Moscow, 119333, Russian
Federation.

Roman A. TATAROV,
ORCID 0000-0003-2315-5008, tatarov-roman.93@mail.ru
Pridnestrovian State University, 128, October 25 Str., Tiraspol, 3300, Republic of Moldova.

Received 19.09.2022. Revised 29.09.2022. Accepted 25.10.2022.

Abstract. The article examines the features and main directions of interaction between political parties of the Republic of Romania and the Republic of Moldova from the early 1990s to the present day. Analyzing the historical prerequisites for stable ties between political parties of the two countries, the authors draw attention to the fact that they are based on the shared ideas of unionism and formation of a single political and cultural space between Romania and Moldova. The authors also examine conditions for close cooperation between the parties such as Moldova's choice of the European path of development, strengthening strategic partnership with Romania and the EU countries and ensuring security in the region. This research demonstrates that the high degree of the Romania's involvement in the Moldovan political processes creates special conditions for inter-party interaction, which covers different spheres of real politics. Considering political parties as important actors in the communication process that can influence political decision-making, the authors identify several areas of cooperation, including educational projects, youth initiatives, inter-party dialogue at various levels, activities of representative offices of Romanian parties on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, inclusion of Moldovan politicians in the electoral process in Romania. As a result, the research categorizes political parties of Moldova and Romania on the basis of their attitude to the ideas of unionism and main ideological priorities, into three groups. The authors emphasize that in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the agenda of cooperation between Chisinau and Bucharest is reduced to the points of Romania supporting Moldova's European path and the latter ensuring its own security and sovereignty. Under these circumstances, cooperation between political stakeholders of the two states is intensifying. This kind of interaction mainly covers the right flank of Moldovan parties. The multidimensional nature of political interdependence between the two sides of the Prut demonstrates the high degree of mutual involvement of parties of the two states in each other's internal affairs. The basic principle in political programs of Romanian and Moldovan parties is the idea of Uniri. This idea of building a single state has become the leitmotif of establishing communication channels between the main actors of the political process in Romania and Moldova, who are committed to a common European future.

Keywords: political parties, inter-party cooperation, unionism, Republic of Moldova, Romania, European integration.

About authors:

Nataliya M. VELIKAYA, Dr. of Sci. (Polit.), Professor, Deputy Director.
Roman A. TATAROV, Researcher at research laboratory "History of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic", Cand. Sci. (Polit.).

СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКОЕ ПАРТНЕРСТВО ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ ПАРТИЙ РУМЫНИИ И МОЛДОВЫ В НОВЫХ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ РЕАЛИЯХ

© 2023 г. Н.М. Великая, Р.А. Татаров

ВЕЛИКАЯ Наталья Михайловна, доктор политических наук, профессор,
ORCID 0000-0001-5532-844X, natalivelikaya@gmail.com
Институт социально-политических исследований (ИСПИ), Федеральный научно-исследовательский социологи-
ческий центр Российской академии наук (ФНИСЦ РАН), РФ, Москва 119333, ул. Фотиевой, д. 6, к. 1.

*ТАТАРОВ Роман Александрович, кандидат политических наук,
ORCID 0000-0003-2315-5008, tatarov-roman.93@mail.ru
Приднестровский государственный университет им. Т.Г. Шевченко, Республика Молдова, г. Тирасполь 3300, ул.
25 Октября, 128.*

Статья поступила 19.09.2022. После доработки 29.09.2022. Принята к печати 25.10.2022.

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются особенности взаимодействия политических партий Румынии и Республики Молдова с начала 1990-х годов до наших дней. Показано, что высокая степень вовлеченности Румынии в политические процессы в Молдове формирует особые условия для межпартийного взаимодействия. Рассматриваются темы, которые лежат в основе сотрудничества политических партий двух стран, а также основные направления сотрудничества: образовательные проекты, межпартийный диалог разного уровня, деятельность румынских партий на территории Республики Молдова, включение молдавских политиков в избирательный процесс Румынии.

Ключевые слова: политические партии, межпартийное сотрудничество, унионизм, Республика Молдова, Румыния, европейская интеграция.

INTRODUCTION

The cooperation between Romania and the Republic of Moldova within the new political landscape is reaching a qualitatively new level, which is connected with the transformed foundations of the existing world order and the actualisation of the Ukrainian factor in the system of international relations after the launch of the Special Military Operation on the territory of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. Under the conditions of dramatic and dynamic changes in the region, one can observe intensified interactions between Romanian and Moldovan political parties that represent the key actors of the political processes in the parliamentary and mixed-regime republics, influencing the decision-making process.

This research is specifically relevant due to the need for analysis and prognostication of Moldovan and Romanian political forces' behaviour during the period when Chisinau was granted EU candidate status and accompanied by the strengthening of the Romanian factor in Moldovan politics with the simultaneous weakening of Moscow's influence on the intra-regional processes.

It is important to pay attention to the changes in the political landscape of Moldovan politics over the past five years. During the last parliamentary elections in Moldova, the Party of Action and Solidarity (*PAS*), which traditionally advocates the Euro-Atlantic vector of the country's foreign policy, gained an absolute majority of votes. In Romania, for its part, the parliamentary elections of 2020 showed popular support for the Social Democratic Party (*PSD*) and the National Liberal Party, which have long-standing and strong friendly relations with the right-wing parties of Moldova. The Social Democratic Party of Romania is cur-

rently facing a crisis in its activities as a consequence of an undeniable decline in its credibility. However, the decline in the level of support for the Social Democratic Party does not mean that it has lost its mechanisms of influence on the Romanian political course. The authors cannot agree with the opinion that the Social Democratic Party is losing its position and will no longer be able to participate in the formation of the government [1], which currently includes, among other members, eight members of this political force. Against the background of the declining popularity of the Social Democratic Party in Romania, one can observe support of the opposition forces represented by the Union for the Salvation of Romania; the latter merged with the Party of Freedom, Unity and Solidarity (*USR PLUS*) in 2019, ran third in the 2020 elections (15.86% of votes), and shifted to the opposition, having developed a party programme claiming to create a system of effective governance of the country.

This alignment of forces can create additional opportunities for intensifying cooperation along the party lines and towards the Romanian deeper involvement in the Moldovan internal affairs, since, on the one hand, pro-Romanian and pro-European political parties play, today, a prominent role in the Moldovan Parliament, while, on the other hand, Romanian political forces seek additional sources of support for their policy demands outside Romania, among the expatriate community. This dictates the need for analysis and prognostication of these countries' interaction at the level of both international relations and civil society institutions.

The significant role of political parties in Romanian and Moldovan life should be noted. This offers great opportunities for their influence on the

foreign policy of both countries. In the Republic of Moldova, which represents a parliamentary republic in terms of governance, the political parties that win parliamentary elections form the government and approve the president's nominee for prime minister [source 1].

In Romania, which is a mixed-form parliamentary/presidential republic, the political parties that are elected to the two-chamber parliament composed of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies form the legislative branch of government. The parties play an important role as well in the formation of the executive power in the country. The Romanian President nominates a candidate for the post of Prime Minister after consulting with the party that gained an absolute majority at the parliamentary elections, and in case there is no such majority, with the parties represented in parliament. The parties have broad opportunities to control the government, which is formed through negotiations with/and among them and which is responsible to parliament [source 2].

The problem of interaction between Romanian and Moldovan political institutions is traditionally covered in the Russian research literature in the context of the formation of a common political and cultural space and the possible integration of Moldova and Romania [2, 3]. The Moldovan academic and political discourse often considers the activity of political parties in connection with the justification of the need for Moldova to choose the European integration path. In this context, separate attention is paid to Romania's policy towards the Republic of Moldova, including their position in the field of education and culture, which is dominant for the formation of a new identity in Moldova [4]. A significant segment of modern discourse addresses the issues of interaction between Romania and Moldova in the context of the Moldovan-Transdniestrian conflict and the relations with Russia [5, 6].

The functioning of political parties in Moldova and Romania in the historical context is covered in research papers by Igor Munteanu and Mihaela Miroiu [7, 8]. The peculiarities of the formation of political parties in Moldova as well as the process of inclusion of unionist ideas in Moldovan politics are reflected in the works by Dumitru Furman [9] and Ileana Racheru [10].

However, contemporary works on the interaction of Romanian and Moldovan political parties

are extremely scarce in national political science, which highlights the relevance and novelty of the present study.

The purpose of the present article is to fill the existing gap in contemporary political science, to describe the main collaboration areas of the Romanian and Moldovan political parties, and to scrutinise the content of this cooperation discourse, which can influence political decision-making.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL FRAMEWORK OF INTERACTION BETWEEN MOLDOVAN AND ROMANIAN PARTIES

The disintegration processes in the post-Soviet space that were influenced by the nationalist forces in a number of former Soviet republics in terms of their pace and direction proved to be clearly manifested in Moldova as well. The distinctive feature of Moldovan state-building projects was not the declared idea of sovereignty as such, but the concept of a unified Romanian state openly expressed after the overthrow of Nicolae Ceaușescu in Romania, the concept of which subsequently imposed special responsibility on Chisinau and Bucharest in the process of shaping the bilateral agenda after 1991.

The thesis on the need to put the project of unification of Moldova with Romania (Unirea) into practice became the core of ideological constructs on both banks of the Prut. The strengthening of unionist ideas in the Moldovan political field by the beginning of the 1990s, the emergence of political parties advocating unionism, and the spread of pan-Romanian sentiment in Romania created a basis for the emergence of a special form of interdependence of political forces, of the two states, that reacted in one way or another to the increasing prominence of the Unirea project in the Moldovans' and Romanians' public opinion.

On the other hand, a strong anti-unionist trend emerged across the Moldovan SSR which led to the declaration of Transdniestria as a sovereign state and resulted in the emergence of political forces in Moldova that opposed the possibility of a union with Romania in every possible way.

In fact, the identity-based split of the Moldovan society predetermined the emergence of Ro-

manianism and Moldovenism¹ in the country for many years – as special forms of the cultural and historical community of Moldovan people, conceptually reflected in the works by Moldovan researchers of the 20th – early 21st centuries [11, 12].

The adoption of the Law “On Functioning of Languages on the Territory of the Moldavian SSR” in 1989, securing the status of the Moldovan language as the state language, was a decisive event for the formation of the Romanian national identity form in modern Moldova. The same concerns the “Conclusion of the Supreme Soviet Commission of the Moldovan SSR on Political and Legal Assessment of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Treaty of 23 August 1939”, which declared the formation of the Moldovan SSR (Soviet Socialist Republic) in 1940 as illegal – thus the territory of Bessarabia, which became part of the Soviet Union, was to remain within Romania, as it used to be between 1918 and 1940 [source 3]. According to some representatives of Moldovenism, an attempt was made in that period to impose the linguistic regime aimed at social re-stratification on ethnic grounds [13, p. 13]. The Romanian ambitions for the Moldovan territory are based on some historical, cultural, and political factors serving to be a basis for the Greater Romania (*România Mare*) project – the unification of lands that once were part of the Romanian Kingdom (1881–1947), which is well covered in the scholarly literature [14, 15].

It should be noted that most of the Romanian politicians supported, though not always publicly, the unionist aspirations of Moldovan political forces. This concerns the National Salvation Front, National Liberal Party, and Democratic Party – which used to have quite stable positions in the Romanian Parliament in the early 1990s. The nationalist Greater Romania Party (GRP), which gained representation in both chambers of the Romanian Parliament during the regular 2000 election, was publicly committed to building a strong Romania and restoring the country’s pre-1940 borders. A characteristic feature of GRP’s political behaviour was its willingness to form coalitions with the left-wing parties (e.g. Social Democratic Party) and liberal right-wing parties (National Liberal Party, Democratic Party), which ex-

¹ The ideology of Moldovenism is based on the idea of recognising Moldovans as a separate ethnic group based on certain historical grounds towards the existence of a separate Moldovan state.

pressed their interest in cooperating with the unionists in 2003.

The ideas of unionism were proclaimed in the early days of independent Moldova by the Popular Front of Moldova and the Bloc of Peasants and Intellectuals, which included such political parties as the Alliance of Free Peasants, Congress of Intellectuals of the Republic of Moldova, Christian Democratic League of Women of Moldova, Christian Democratic Party of Moldova, and National Liberal Party. In fact, it was set up in order to unite the nationalists adhering to moderate positions, with the view of the subsequent formation of a common, joint position [16, p. 56].

Nevertheless, the parliamentary elections of 1994 showed that the Moldovan society perceived the highlights declared by the unionists quite abstemiously. Only 9.21% of citizens supported the political forces oriented towards unification with Romania. However, the events from 30 years ago laid a solid foundation for the promotion of the ideas of a union state comprising of Romania and Moldova, which is currently viewed as one of the stable forms of interdependence between the political forces of the two states.

One can agree with colleagues that Romanian political structures use the “soft power” instruments with great success [17, p. 3], which leads to the growing popularity of Romania in the public opinion of the Moldovan population. In particular, Romania officially finances the activities of a number of non-profit unionist organisations, including major media. A number of Romanian educational programmes for Moldovans have become very popular as well as Romanian schools subordinated directly to Bucharest, functioning on the territory of the Moldovan state. The practice of acquiring dual citizenship is widespread [18, p. 74]. In addition, about one million Romanian citizens reside in Moldova at present.

All this reinforces Romania’s role as Moldova’s economic partner and a lobbyist for its interests in the EU.

UNIONIST PRIORITIES IN THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE POLITICAL FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND ROMANIA

The new realities in the global system of relations, caused by the collapse of the Warsaw

Treaty Organisation and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, had a significant impact on the Romanian government's strategic pivot towards integration with NATO and the European Union, which resulted in Romania's accession to the North Atlantic Alliance in 2004, as well as its accession to the EU in 2007.

The appearance of unionist parties on the Moldovan political scene against this backdrop was accompanied by the increasing influence of Bucharest on the Moldovan internal political process; the latter's position consequently got transformed into a political capital of forces seeking support from Romanian political parties, and finding it successfully, even after the all-Moldovan referendum of 1994, when 97.9% of citizens voted for the sovereign, independent, and neutral status of the Moldovan state.

At the same time, the predominant majority of Romanian political parties perceive Moldova as a second Romanian state; the question of whether the party is in power or in opposition is secondary. It should be added that back in the late 1990s, Romania made it possible for Moldovan citizens to acquire citizenship, which was a significant step towards their total passportisation. Romania's accession to the European Union and NATO created extremely attractive conditions both for Moldovan citizens interested in seeking earnings abroad and for the political class and some intellectuals acting as agents of Romanian interests in Moldova.

The perspective of European integration for Moldova, which became a priority for the country's foreign policy, has been accepted as the main direction by Moldovan political parties proposing a broad agenda for gradual integration into the European community. It should be noted that the path to the European Union through the integration of the Republic of Moldova with Romania is a priority adhered to, not only by the unionist parties, but also by some right-wing Moldovan political forces, which actualises the widespread use of populist slogans in real policy [19].

The creation of mechanisms for supporting Romanian compatriots outside Romania is a priority of the Romanian leadership and one of the theses of Romanian political parties' policy documents regardless of their ideological orientation. These priorities are successfully promoted in Moldova where Romanian political forces gain access to influencing the socio-political processes of the

neighbouring country through the conclusion of inter-party agreements with their Moldovan counterparts. As a rule, the context of such cooperation is built around the idea of European integration and Romania's special role as an EU member able to lobby Moldovan interests in Europe. In 2022, Romania's representatives in the European Union openly spoke about lobbying Moldova's interests. In particular, Dacian Cioloş, a member of the European Parliament and of the Union for the Salvation of Romania, stated: "It is time to make it clear that we are an all-round advocate of the Republic of Moldova in the EU in terms of politics, administration and finance, and we should not apologise for this, adhering to this position firmly" [source 4].

In support of Moldova's European aspirations, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Romanian National Liberal Party and the right-wing parties of Moldova: Party of Action and Solidarity, Dignity and Truth Platform, and Liberal Democratic Party. The said Romanian political party, which is a major party in the Romanian Parliament, deemed this agreement as one of the elements of support for compatriots living in Moldova and an opportunity to influence the political processes in the Moldovan state through allied relations with the political parties of the Republic of Moldova. The practice of sustainable collaboration of Romanian political parties with Moldovan ones evidences the high popularity of pan-Romanian ideas among the Moldovan political elite; it makes it possible as well to view the right-wing forces in the Moldovan politics as conditionally split into a number of factions depending on the strength of their adherence to the idea of Unirea.

The first group of political parties in the Republic of Moldova comprises the forces openly advocating unionist ideas: Democracy at Home Party (*PPDA*), National Liberal Party (*PNL*), Save Bessarabia Union Party (*USB*), Romanian Popular Party (*PPR*), and National Unity Party (*PUN*). It is worth mentioning that the level of support for unionist ideas on the part of Moldovan citizens is quite high; in 2022, according to *iData*, the sociologists registered an increase in the share of Moldovan citizens supporting the union with Romania – from 37.5% in January to 44% in March. Notably, the pro-Romanian sentiment is getting strengthened in parallel with the loss of popularity of the eastern vector associated with the Russian

Federation and the integration of Moldova into the Eurasian Economic Union, considering that the trust in the latter has fallen from 48% to 40% only [source 5].

The second group of right-wing political forces is represented by actors advocating integration with the European Union, though not rejecting the possibility of unification with Romania, which sets the path to the EU: Liberal Democratic Party, Party of Action and Solidarity, European People's Party of Moldova, and Building Europe at Home Party. According to the *iData* survey, about 54% of the respondents support the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union and 27% of Moldovans would agree with the accession of the country to the North-Atlantic Alliance. These figures correlate with the fact that President Maia Sandu advocating European integration (Party of Action and Solidarity) enjoys the highest level of trust (over 31%) among the respondents [source 5].

The policy documents of these parties contain a provision on the need to interact with Romania as Moldova's key ally in Europe.

The third group is represented by a number of left-wing Moldovan parties; this political bloc is heterogeneous with regard to the prospects of unification with Romania, with no prominent, particularly spirited supporters of unionism. Therefore, the well-established inter-party links between the Moldovan leftists and the Romanian political forces are of a fragmentary character.

The largest leftist party in Moldova – the Party of Socialists – is a supporter of Moldovenism, so any issues related to the prospects of Moldova's integration with Romania are perceived extremely painfully by the socialist leaders and are treated by them as a threat to Moldovan statehood. Moreover, unionism was destined to ban in Igor Dodon's electoral programme [source 6]. However, this thesis of the election campaign has remained unaccomplished. At the same time, any attacks against Moldovenism are so far perceived by representatives of the Party of Socialists extremely painfully. As an example, former president Dodon demanded that Romanian ambassador Daniel Ionița be expelled beyond the Prut after the latter's words about the "primitive Moldovenism" of the Republic [20, p. 5].

Finally, the ȘOR Party and the Democratic Party (*PDM*) keeping to left-of-centre positions,

being in fact populist movements, cannot be fully considered as promoters of Romanian interests in Moldova owing to the pronounced business interests of their members which, though, may not be able to compete with Romanian business elites. The left-wing parties are more oriented towards Russian-speaking voters, while the right wing tends towards pro-European and pro-Romanian views shared by a significant section of the titular ethnic group. However, this picture is to some extent misleading and simplified due to the rather diffused identity of the Moldovan population, which encompasses an extensive variety of nationalities that are mainly oriented to socioeconomic thesis programmes of Moldovan political forces. Besides, the practice of "political tourism" is widespread in Moldova, when members of some party become adherents of directly opposite values supported by their opponents. For instance, Ion Ceban, Mayor of Chisinau and a member of the Party of Socialists, announced the institution of the National Alternative Movement (*MAN*), a pro-European political party.

The analysis of Romanian parties' activities focused on Moldovan affairs leads to the conclusion on the presence of multidirectional movements in Romania, which in fact largely predetermine the Romanian policy at the present stage.

The first movement should include Romanian political forces that openly declare the need to join the "second Romanian state", thus realising the "Greater Romania" geopolitical project: Alliance for the Union of Romanians (*AUR*), People's Movement Party (*PNP*), United Romania Party (*PRU*), and Greater Romania Party. An important actor concerned about the integration of Moldova and Romania is civil society, with some part of it engaged in vigorous activities to bring the two countries closer. For instance, back in 2012, the Unionist Platform for Action developed the "Pact across Bessarabia". This policy document was signed by 607 candidates – representatives of all political parties and associations of Romania, of which more than 100 participants were elected to the Romanian Parliament [source 7]. The unification of Moldova with Romania was to be a culminating event in 2018, on the one-hundredth anniversary of Moldovan joining the Romanian kingdom.

The work to create due preconditions for Moldova's accession to Romania continued in 2015, when a parliamentary group of 40 deputies, *Pri-*

etenii Unirii, was set up with the purpose to develop an action plan towards integration. Although the unification did not take place in 2018, this was not an obstacle to the activation of Romanian Unionist political forces. In this context, the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (*AUR*) established in 2019 has been active across Romania and Moldova. Its participation in the 2020 elections, where it received 9.08% of votes, was a success. The party scored the most votes in the Romanian diaspora in Italy, Spain, France, and Cyprus. Promoting traditional values and opposing the liberalisation of gender relations in Romanian society, *AUR* is popular among the people who traditionally support the Romanian Orthodox Church in Judeţ like Suceava, Constanta, Alba, etc. This political force is also popular with some part of the population in towns and localities of the Republic of Moldova; it has already been announced that it will open its representative office in Chisinau. With regard to the fact that the Alliance for the Union of Romanians has adopted some theses of the Unionist Platform which gave political birth to the current leader of the Alliance, George Simion, one can talk not only about the interdependence of the unionist Moldovan parties with the Romanian ones but also about the congeniality of ideological views of a certain section of civil societies in the two states. One should also mention such an organisation as The New Right, which shares the traditions of the extreme right nationalist organisation The Iron Guard that existed in 1927–1941. At present, this organisation with about 6,000 supporters has a branch in Moldova [7, p. 410].

The second movement encompasses Romanian moderate political parties supporting the ideas of unionism, though not declaring openly the priority of the Unirea project in Romania's foreign policy. Such forces include the National Liberal Party, Social Democratic Party, the Union for the Salvation of Romania and the Party of Liberty, Unity and Solidarity (*USR PLUS*), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats of Romania, *Pro România*, the National Union for the Progress of Romania, Conservative Party (*PC*), and Christian Democratic People's Party (National Țărănesc Party). The latent form of unionism is also peculiar to Romanian political parties, including those forming a parliamentary majority. These parties are parliamentary, having been holding positions of power in the Romanian state for a long time and setting the guidelines for the country's internal and

foreign policy. Therefore, the previously launched Romanian projects towards integration with the territory of Moldova could not have been adopted without their approval by the major political parties which, in particular, supported the adoption of the 2018 declaration on unification with the Republic of Moldova, which demonstrates the level of popularity of unionist ideas among the Romanian political class.

It is important to realise that the idea of integrating “two riverbanks of the Prut” is popular among Romanian citizens as well. According to the *Inscop Research* conducted in 2022, 74.5% of the polled Romanian citizens supported the union with Bessarabia/Republic of Moldova [source 8].

Of particular note is the position of the Democratic Union of Hungarians of Romania (*UDTR*), which represents the interests of a Hungarian minority living in the Romanian state and its sub-ethnic groups (Secui and Changoshi). It advocates granting special status to the Secui province: its autonomy was proclaimed on 5 September 2009 by a congress of local Secui representatives; its representative mission in the European Parliament was opened in 2011. Bucharest reacted extremely painfully to these events, filing a protest and deeming the formation of the Secui region as illegal and representing a prerequisite for separatism and irredentism. This is why the Democratic Union of Hungarians of Romania, as one of the parliamentary parties, does not always agree with Bucharest's internal and foreign policy priorities. In 2009, this party strongly opposed granting Romanian citizenship to residents of Moldova, and in 2018, it refused to sign a declaration of unification with the Republic of Moldova. Zoltán Szabó, a representative of the Democratic Union of Hungarians of Romania, noted that Romania recognised the Romanian people's right to self-determination in Moldova but repeatedly rejected the claims to local, cultural, or territorial autonomy by Hungarians living in the Erdély region (Transylvania) [source 9]. At the same time, *UDMR* supported Moldova's European aspirations, as stated by Dénes Seres, this party's representative in the Romanian parliament, at a joint session of Moldovan and Romanian parliaments: “We welcome the application for Moldova's accession to the European Union, deeming it as an evolution which is profound and encouraging” [source 10].

Thus, the interdependence of political parties in Romania and Moldova with respect to the unification of the two states is determined by the popularity of the idea of a common state on both banks of the Prut, which, although popular, still does not enjoy universal support.

MECHANISMS AND FORMS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES

The sustainable forms of interaction between Moldovan and Romanian political parties are manifested at the level of inter-party communication, in the process of formalisation of common priorities and declaration of joint approaches to their achievement. The formation of the new Moldovan national elite and displacement of the former Soviet nomenclature by it was accompanied by the professionalisation and specialisation of elite groups, mainly through acquiring Western education, mainly in Romania, the USA, and EU countries. One cannot but mention the fact that, in addition to being provided with budget-funded places for studying at Romanian universities, representatives of the Moldovan political elite have Romanian citizenship. This forms a special phenomenon within Moldova's political class – the Romanian regional political elite, which is quite in line with the concept of the “second Romanian state”.

The external factor has been one of the central props in the formation of the Moldovan political elite and subsequent aspirations of the Moldovan state towards sovereignty and the union with Romania. This often results in a low level of pragmatism in Moldovan politics, which tends to focus on political and ideological projects rather than the elaboration of measures towards the socio-economic development of the country.

Considering the political parties as an integral part of political communication between Moldovan and Romanian political elites, it is necessary to emphasise that the Moldovan reality, like in most of the post-Soviet countries, clearly demonstrates the factor of regionalisation of elites. Territorial affiliation becomes a significant career advantage that makes it possible to use the well-functioning mechanism of recruiting new human resources where people, among other things, are bound by the ties of a fellow-countrymen community that

do not allow any political ambitions of individual party members to transgress the limits allowed by the party leadership. The relative consolidation within different Moldovan political forces is a component ensuring their longevity, which means that they can be regarded by Romania as partners having due inner strength and characterised by a highly structured hierarchy maintained by prominent leaders who inspire confidence in stable party course.

The support of allies in Moldova in the course of the political struggle remains an important element of real politics for Romanian parties, though it often has a point-like character. Being inherently heterogeneous, the unionist movement in Moldova tends to continuously seek support from official Bucharest which, as a matter of fact, is not inclined to support the entire spectrum of pan-Romanian parties. Thus, a certain system is formed, in which major Romanian parties are forced to withdraw from open support of the most aggressive nationalist parties of Moldova and, rather, concentrate it on moderate right-wing parties whose victory would bring mutually beneficial cooperation in the perspective and allow for the accumulation of some political capital for future elections. For instance, being in alliance with the Party of Action and Solidarity, the National Liberal Party supported the former's leader Maia Sandu at the presidential election. The experts testify that Maia Sandu nominated her candidacy for the election after consulting with the Romanian leadership – representatives of the National Liberal Party and some persons related to it [source 11].

The mechanisms of involving Moldovan political forces in the Romanian political system deserve special attention. The major Romanian parties are continually working towards expanding collaboration with Moldova, including by opening their regional representative offices on the territory of the neighbouring country. As noted by Adrian Dupu, State Secretary of the Romanian government's Department for Relations with the Republic of Moldova, “the Romanians from the left bank of the Prut are joining the National Liberal Party en masse, while *PNL* is strengthening its leading positions across the Romanian parties in Bessarabia” [source 12].

Providing a broad range of opportunities to Romanian compatriots living in Moldova in terms of their self-realisation in the political sphere, Bucharest tends to help numerous citizens of the

neighbouring country to build a full-fledged political career in Romania.

One of the weighty tools for the inclusion of Moldovan politicians in the Romanian political process is their participation in Romanian parliamentary elections. The practice of involving Moldovans in the election campaign on a party list basis began as far back as in 2000, when Ilie Ilașcu, a war criminal [21] who commanded a raiding terrorist group organised by Moldovan special services during the conflict in Transdnistria in 1992, was elected to the Romanian Senate from the “Greater Romania” party.

Owing to the peculiarities of the Romanian electoral system², representatives of Moldovan political parties enjoying passive suffrage secured by Romanian law can be entered on the lists of candidates for the election campaign. For instance, during the Romanian parliamentary elections of 2020, Iurie Leancă, head of the European People’s Party of Moldova, ran on the lists of the *Pro România* party; Ana Guțu – a representative of the Party of National Unity – on the lists of the People’s Movement Party; Ion Hadârcă – chairman of the Liberal Reformist Party – on the lists of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats of Romania.

Another significant mechanism of involving Moldovan representatives in the political process in Romania is their empowerment. This way, in January 2021, Ludovic Orban, Prime Minister of Romania and chairman of the National Liberal Party, appointed Ana Guțu, a representative of the Moldovan unionist National Unity Party, to the position of State Secretary of the Department for Relations with the Republic of Moldova. Eugen Tomac, a European Parliament member representing Romania, noted: “This is an important signal that our country is sending to Romanians from the other side of the Prut” [source 13].

There exists an interesting, if not unique, political practice: Romania provides an opportunity for Moldovan political forces to participate in shaping a common European policy and to

² The Chamber of Deputies consists of 308 representatives elected in 42 multi-mandate constituencies by proportional representation; 4 representatives are elected in a single foreign constituency, also by proportional representation, and 17 deputies are representatives of ethnic minorities. The Upper Chamber – the Senate – is formed by 136 representatives from 42 constituencies.

lobby Moldovan interests in the European Parliament, which is secured by the Moldovan political parties representatives’ right to run for the European Parliament on Romanian political party lists. For instance, 11 candidates from Moldova ran for election on Romanian party lists in 2020: Vyacheslav Sharamet on the *PSD-UNPR-PC Alliance* list; Ana Guțu, Viktor Chumak on the National Liberal Party list; Alexandru Leșco and Mircea Lupan from the People’s Movement Party; Lucia Gurduza from the Christian Democratic National Țărănesc Party; Gheorghe Triboi and Alexandru Strimbanu from the Civic Force Party; Alecu Renice, Andrei Dumbrevyanu, and Alexei Palancian from the Ecologist Green Party. Although none of these candidates made it to the European Parliament, the experience of such participation shows the nature of the interconnection of Romanian political forces with Moldovan political parties.

The undertaken analysis shows the great importance attached by the political parties of Romania and Moldova to the idea of the unification of the two states. However, although the supporters of unification in both countries are numerous, steadily voting for unionists at regular elections, the traditions of Moldovenism based on the concept of an independent Moldovan state are still strong in Moldova. A number of representatives of left-wing parties – and right-wing parties to a lesser extent – base their pre-election pledges on the ideas of Moldovenism.

In the academic community, however, the prospects of unionism are assessed differently. Some researchers tend to consider the Unirea project as an objective process associated with the deliberate policy of political forces in Bucharest and Chisinau towards the formation of a single state [22, 23] that could be divided on the model of two German states – FRG and GDR – that existed in the 20th century.

The others see the prospects of the future model of Romanian and Moldovan relations as based on the existence of two independent states [24] having their own identity codes, like Austria and Germany at present.

It has also been argued that the Unirea project is only a political myth because of the need to infuse large financial resources in the integration of the two countries, which resources

are not available in either Bucharest or Chisinau [source 14].

It should be noted that after 24 February 2022, the tendency of Romanian involvement in the internal affairs of Moldova has intensified, as well as the communication between Moldovan and Romanian political forces. The priority towards European integration in Moldova's policy, promoted by Romania, became a consolidating basis of interaction between the two actors. The joint session of the Moldovan and Romanian parliaments in June 2022 strengthened the cooperation between the two states, and Romania declared that it would contribute in every possible way to Moldova's receiving EU candidate status without any conditions. Furthermore, the adopted summary document endorsed by all parties proclaims the "unity based on common language, history, culture, traditions, values and European aspirations" [source 15].

Eugen Tomac, a European Parliament member, spoke quite openly about Moldovan integration into Romania, stating that Moldova, unlike Ukraine and Georgia, has an alternative way to defend itself, namely by unification with Romania [source 16]. It can be assumed that Romanian political forces will continue to initiate discussions at international platforms on the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces in Transnistria. The situation when PACE members from Romania, Ukraine, France, Estonia, the UK, Georgia, and Turkey claimed the Assembly's official admission of the fact of Russian occupation of a certain territory of Moldova seems to be characteristic in this context [source 17]. Such collaboration did not go unnoticed by Moscow, when Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of the Security Council, stated that the Romanian efforts to take over Moldova were intensifying and that Chisinau was following in the footsteps of Ukraine [source 18].

One can continually observe the increasing involvement of major political parties in Moldovan politics. Iurie Ciocan, chairman of the Moldovan branch of the Social Democratic Party of Romania, noted during the conclusion of the agreement on the development of a strategic partnership with the Democratic Party of Moldova: "Our purpose is to inform Romanian citizens (living in the Republic of Moldova – N.V., R.A.) about PSD activities in Romania, to organise campaigns in support of Moldovan citizens. We have developed several joint events based on the cooperation agreement

between PDM and PSD in Romania. The first campaign to take place this autumn is the organisation of a joint forum of elected local government representatives from PDM and PSD in order to initiate joint cooperation projects for the benefit of people" [source 19].

It should be added that cooperation between Romania and Moldova also takes place at the level of public youth organisations, both political and those operating in the field of education, culture, and sports. The Romanian Ministry of Education and Research offers scholarships for participation in the summer school under programmes addressing the issues of the linguistic and cultural identity of the Romanian civilisation, organised by Romanian universities. In addition, it has arranged 1000 places in recreation camps for schoolchildren and students within the ARC camp programme financed and organised by the Department for Romanian Affairs. Partnerships between different universities are being actively developed, and the practice of mutual recognition of diplomas issued in the two states has been consolidated. For its part, the Republic of Moldova provides Romanian students with 100 places in school camps.

Vigorous interaction between the units of young Moldovans party members and their Romanian counterparts takes place within the framework of inter-party relations; in addition, the practice of internships and further cooperation, including collaboration along the civil society lines, has been established.

The undertaken analysis makes it possible to assert that the above practices of interaction between Romanian political forces and Moldovan political parties reflect a specific form of their cooperation regardless of their spread across different sectors of the political party spectrum.

The cooperation between Romania and Moldova in the matters of settlement of the Moldovan-Transnistrian conflict should be dwelled upon separately. This conflict, remaining unresolved since 1992, has taken the form of a regional conflict, and its parties are internationally recognised as parties to this conflict, with the status and rights enshrined in international documents. It is important to note that the Russian Federation is endowed with the status of guarantor of peace and security in the Moldovan-Transnistrian settlement process on the banks of the Dniester,

which status is secured by the presence of Russian peacekeeping forces in Transdniestria.

Considering this conflict as an internal affair of Moldova, Romania, as an international mediator within the EU, can influence the nature of its settlement, in particular, through the conclusion of bilateral agreements with Chisinau. Romania in fact implements a number of programmes to modernise Moldova's defence potential, which represents an integral aspect of its negotiating position, promoting the realisation of EU programmes in Moldova and Transdniestria. However, this does not imply any real cooperation of political parties in Romania and Transdniestria for the reason that no direct political dialogue between Bucharest and Tiraspol is maintained. This dialogue is conducted indirectly through Brussels and Chisinau.

CONCLUSIONS

A broad range of issues subject to in-depth cooperation between Moldova and Romania in today's realities should be noted; the political parties of the two states play a huge role in this process. Representing different electorate groups, Moldovan and Romanian political forces, guided by political party elites, show a sustained interest in enhancing further interaction between different institutions, political and social actors of both countries.

In the long run, one should expect more in-depth cooperation between Romanian political parties and Moldovan pro-European and pro-Romanian political forces. This process will probably be directly dependent on how events in Ukraine develop and on the trend of the evolvement of Russian relations with the EU in the context of the application of bilateral sanctions. The inter-party

interaction between Chisinau and Bucharest, despite the seeming heterogeneity of political forces involved in it, will not lose relevance due to high commitment to union values on the part of Romanian citizens of which 70% favour the unification of the two states, and due to the growing numbers of supporters of unionist ideas in Moldova as such, mainly among young people. This will enable the parties on both banks of the Prut to develop efforts for all-round interaction: from those along the lines of youth-oriented party structures to inter-party meetings and inclusion of Moldovan politicians in the Romanian and European electoral processes, as well as the development of links aimed to intensify the trade and economic cooperation between the two states.

It is important to emphasise that the political capital in the Romanian political field can be acquired by forces offering efficient mechanisms for strengthening the Romanian state; one of them is the accession of Moldova, which is considered by Bucharest to have been originally a native Romanian land. This has a direct impact on the construction of the architecture of political relations and the political process in Moldova.

The idea of Unirea will remain a link between Moldovan and Romanian political forces for a long time to come, regardless of whether the idea of Unionism or the concept of Moldovenism is prevalent among Moldovan political parties. This process increasingly seems to be a practical manifestation of the unity and struggle of opposites based, in this case, on the development and accumulation of the parties' capacity to realise their main functions – the struggle for power and use of available power resources to pursue the interests of forces represented by them.

REFERENCES

1. Гуселетов Б.П. Итоги парламентских выборов в Румынии. *Аналитическая записка ИЕ РАН № 46*, 2020 (№ 229), сс. 1-8.
Guseletov B.P. Results of parliamentary elections in Romania. *Analytical note of IE RAS No. 46*, 2020 (no. 229), pp. 1-8. (In Russ.) Available at: <http://doi.org/10.15211/analytics462020>
2. Бардин А.Л., Баринов И.И. Проблемы национального развития и консолидации политических пространств (на примере Молдовы и Румынии). *Полис. Политические исследования*, 2018, № 6, сс. 99-111.
Bardin A.L., Barinov I.I. Problems of National Development and Consolidation of Political Spaces (on the Example of Moldova and Romania). *Polis, Political studies*, 2018, no. 6, pp. 99-111. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17976/jpps/2018.06.07>
3. Азаренкова А.А. Генезис, состояние и перспективы европейской интеграции Румынии и Республики Молдова. *Государственное регулирование общественных отношений*, 2020, № 4 (34), сс. 48-56.

- Azarenkova A.A. Genesis, state and prospects of European integration of Romania and the Republic of Moldova. *State regulation of public relations*, 2020, no. 4 (34), pp. 48-56. (In Russ.)
4. Драган А.И. Политика Румынии в отношении Република Молдова на современном этапе. *Проблемы постсоветского пространства*, 2019, т. 6, № 1, сс. 74-83.
Dragan A.I. Romanian policy towards the Republic of Moldova at the present stage. *Post-Soviet Issues*, 2019, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 74-83. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://doi.org/10.24975/2313-8920-2019-6-1-74-83>
5. Corneanu C. Romania, Rusia și geopolitica conflictului transnistrean. *Plural. History. Culture. Society. Journal of History and Geography Department*, “Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University, 2021, № 2, pp. 142-156.
Corneanu C. Romania, Russia and the geopolitics of the Transnistrian conflict. *Plural. History. Culture. Society. Journal of History and Geography Department*, “Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University, 2021, no. 2, pp. 142-156. (In Rom.) Available at: https://doi.org/10.37710/plural.v9i2_10
6. Татаров Р.А. Приднестровская молдавская республика в региональной палитре формирования зон действия геополитических проектов в Причерноморье. *Власть*, 2018, № 9, сс. 248-254.
Tatarov R.A. The Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic in the regional palette of the formation of geopolitical project zones in the Black Sea region. *Vlast*, 2018, no. 9, pp. 248-254. (In Russ.)
7. Miroiu M. *Ideologii politice actuale*. Iași, Polirom, 2012. 472 p.
Miroiu M. *Current political ideologies*. Iasi, Polirom, 2012. 472 p. (In Rom.)
8. Munteanu I. *Political review and parties recommendations legislation for reform in Moldova*. Chisinau, 2010. 256 p.
9. Фурман Д.Е. Молдавские молдаване и молдавские румыны. Доклады Института Европы, № 206. Москва, Институт Европы РАН, 2007. 134 с.
Furman D.E. *Moldovan Moldovans and Moldovan Romanians. Reports of the Institute of Europe, no. 206*. Moscow, Institute of Europe RAS, 2007. 134 p. (In Russ.)
10. Racheru I. Reunification scenario. Political forces and civil society actors in Romania and the Republic of Moldova that promote the reunification. How realistic is the reunification scenario? *Elections 2019 In Moldova: New Challenges and New Opportunities for Cooperation within Ukraine—Moldova—Romania Triangle*. 2018, pp. 53-57.
11. Ghibu O. *De la Basarabia rusească la Basarabia românească*. Cluj, 1926. 197 p.
Ghibu O. *From Russian Bessarabia to Romanian Bessarabia*. Cluj, 1926. 197 p. (In Rom.)
12. Frunțașu Iu. *O Istorie etnopolitică a Basarabiei. 1812–2002*. Chișinău, 2002. 592 p.
Frunțashu Iu. *Ethnopolitical history of Bessarabia. 1812–2002*. Chisinau, 2002. 592 p. (In Rom.)
13. Шорников П.М. *Общинное дело. Материалы к истории русского этнокультурного движения в Молдавии*. Назария С.М., науч. ред. и др. Ин-т соц.-полит. исследований и регионального развития, Ассоц. Историков и политологов “Pro-Moldova”. Тирасполь, 2019. 224 с.
Shornikov P.M. *Community business. Materials for the history of the Russian ethno-cultural movement in Moldova*. Nazariya S.M., ed., et al. Institute of Social and Polit. research and development of the region, Assoc. historians and political scientists “Pro-Moldova”. Tiraspol, 2019. 224 p. (In Russ.)
14. Назария С.М. Вопрос о Бессарабии в советско-румынских отношениях в начале 20-х годов и попытка его мифологизации в румынской историографии. *Вестник Дагестанского государственного университета*, 2013, вып. 4, сс. 39-47.
Nazariya S.M. The question of Bessarabia in Soviet-Romanian relations in the early 20s and its mythologization in Romanian historiography will follow. *Bulletin of the Dagestan State University*, 2013, no. 4, pp. 39-47. (In Russ.)
15. Назария С.М. “Объединение” Бессарабии с Румынией в свете международного права и позиция самих бессарабцев. *Научные ведомости Белгородского государственного университета. Серия: История. Политология*, 2014, № 15 (186), сс. 68-75.
Nazariya S.M. “Unification” of Bessarabia with Romania in the light of international law and the position of the Bessarabians themselves. *Scientific sheets of the Belgorod State University. Series: History. Political Science*, 2014, no. 15 (186), pp. 68-75. (In Russ.)
16. Kulik A., Pshizova S., eds. *Political Parties in Post-Soviet Space: Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and the Baltics*. London, 2005. 282 p.
17. Емельянов А.И., Родионова А.С. “Мягкая сила” в румыно-молдавских отношениях. *Огарев-Online*, 2018, № 6 (111), сс. 1-7.
Emelyanov A.I., Rodionova A.S. “Soft power” in Romanian-Moldovan relations. *Ogarev-Online*, 2018, no. 6 (111), pp. 1-7. (In Russ.)
18. Путинцев И.С. Внешняя политика Румынии после вступления в НАТО и ЕС. *Мировая экономика и международные отношения*, 2019, т. 63, № 11, сс. 66-75.

- Putintsev I.S. Foreign policy of Romania after joining NATO and the EU. *World Economy and International Relations*, 2019, vol. 63, no. 11, pp. 66-75. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://doi.org/10.20542/0131-2227-2019-63-11-66-75>
19. Великая Н.М., Татаров Р.А. Неизменные союзники и непостоянные интересы: “маятник” нового популизма в Республике Молдова. *Современная Европа*, 2021, № 4 (140), сс. 43-50.
Velikaya N.M., Tatarov R.A. Permanent allies and unstable interests: the “pendulum” of the new populism in the Republic of Moldova. *Contemporary Europe*, 2021, no. 4 (140), pp. 43-50. (In Russ.) DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15211/soveurope42021140150>
20. Sinteze și Dezbateri de Politică Externă. Newsletter-ul este realizat de Mădălin Necșuțu, redactor-coordonator. *Buletin Lunar*, Iunie 2021, no. 6 (184). 11 p.
Foreign Policy Syntheses and Debates. The newsletter is made by Mădălin Necșuțu, editor-coordinator. *Monthly Bulletin*, June 2021, no. 6 (184). 11 p. (In Rom.)
21. Волкова А.З. Дело террористической группы Илашку. Бендеры, Полиграфист, 2010. 104 с.
Volkova A.Z. *The case of the terrorist group Iashku*. Bendery, Poligrafist, 2010. 104 p. (In Russ.)
22. Ghimpu Gh. *Conștiința națională a romanilor moldoveni*. Chișinău, GARUDA – ART, 2002. 500 p.
Ghimpu Gh. *The national consciousness of the Moldovan Romanians*. Chisinau, GARUDA – ART, 2002. 500 p. (In Rom.)
23. Marinescu C. *Preludiu la aniversarea centenarului Marii Uniri: 1918–2018: “Momente cruciale din lupta romanilor pentru independență și unitate națională. Ecouri internaționale”*. Iași, Danaster, 2015. 308 p.
Marinescu C. *Prelude to the centenary anniversary of the Great Union: 1918–2018: “Crucial moments in the struggle of the Romanians for independence and national unity. International echoes”*. Iasi, Danaster, 2015. 308 p. (In Rom.)
24. *История Молдовы*. Ассоциация историков и политологов “Pro-Moldova”. Назария С.М., Бенюк В.А. и др., ред. Кишинев, 2016. 747 с.
History of Moldova. Assoc. historians and political scientists “Pro-Moldova”. Nazaria C.M., Benyuk V.A. et al., eds. Chisinau, 2016. 747 p. (In Russ.)

SOURCES

1. *Constitution of the Republic of Moldova*. Available at: https://www.constcourt.md/public/files/file/Actele%20Curtii/acte_en/MDA_Constitution_EN.pdf (accessed 20.09.2022).
2. *Constitution of Romania. Chamber of Deputies*. Available at: <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=371> (accessed 20.10.2022).
3. Заключение Комиссии Верховного Совета ССР Молдова по политико-юридической оценке Советско-Германского договора о ненападении и дополнительного Секретного протокола от 23 августа 1939 года, а также их последствий для Бессарабии и Северной Буковины. № 41. 28 июня 1990 года. *Российское историческое общество*.
Conclusion of the Commission of the Verkhovna Rada of the Moldovan SSR on the political-juridical assessment of the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty and the additional Secret Protocol of August 23, 1939, and their consequences for Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. № 41. 28.06.1990. *Russian historical society*. (In Russ.) Available at: <http://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/72300-zaklyuchenie-komissii-verhovnogo-soveta-ssr-moldova-po-politikoyuridicheskoy-otsenke-sovetsko-germanskogo-dogovora-o-nenapadenii-i-dopolnitelnogo-sekretnogo-protokolaot-23-avgusta-1939-goda-a-takzhe-ih-posledstviy-dlya-bessarabii-i-severnoy-bukoviny> (accessed 20.09.2022).
4. Dacian Cioloș la RFI: Integrarea progresivă în UE, o soluție pentru Rep. Moldova și Ucraina. *RFI Romania*, 16.06.2022.
Dacian Cioloș on RFI: Progressive integration in the EU, a solution for the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. *RFI Romania*, 16.06.2022. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://www.rfi.ro/politica-146456-dacian-ciolos-aderare-ueucraina-moldova> (accessed 21.09.2022).
5. Numărul unioniștilor, în creștere accelerată în Moldova: cel mai recent sondaj arată că 44% dintre ei vor unirea cu România. 07.04.2022. *G4media.ro*.
The number of unionists is growing rapidly in Moldova: the latest survey shows that 44% of them want union with Romania. 07.04.2022. *G4media.ro*. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://www.g4media.ro/numarul-unionistilor-in-crestere-accelerata-in-moldova-cel-mai-recent-sondaj-arata-ca-44-dintre-ei-vor-unirea-cu-romania.html> (accessed 26.06.2022).
6. Предвыборная программа кандидата в Президенты Республики Молдова Игоря Додона. *E-democracy*. The electoral program of the candidate for the President of the Republic of Moldova Igor Dodon. *E-democracy*. (In Russ.)

Available at: <http://www.e-democracy.md/files/elections/presidential2016/electoral-program-igordodon-2016-ru.pdf> (accessed 01.04.2022).

7. Peste 100 de senatori și deputați din actualul Legislativ al României au constituit grupul “Prietenii Unirii”. *Moldova.org*.

More than 100 senators and deputies from the current Romanian Legislature formed the “Friends of the Union” group. *Moldova.org*. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://www.moldova.org/peste-100-de-senatori-si-deputati-din-actualul-legislativ-al-romaniei-au-constituit-grupul-prietenii-unirii/> (accessed 26.06.2022).

8. Neîncrederea publică: Vest vs. Est, ascensiunea curentului naționalist în era dezinformării și fenomenului știrilor false. Sondaj de opinie la nivel național realizat de INSCOP Research în parteneriat cu Verifield. Perioada de culegere a datelor: 11–18 ianuarie 2022. Eșantion: 1162 respondenți. Eroare: 2.9%. Metoda de culegere: interviuri telefonice. *STRATEGIC Thinking Group*.

Public distrust: West vs. Est, the rise of the nationalist current in the era of disinformation and the phenomenon of fake news. National opinion poll conducted by INSCOP Research in partnership with Verifield. Data collection period: January 11–18, 2022. Sample: 1162 respondents. Error: 2.9%. Collection method: telephone interviews. *STRATEGIC Thinking Group*. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://www.strategichinking.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/31.01.2022-Capitolele-4-si-5-Sondaj-INSOCOP-STG-GMF.pdf> (accessed 21.09.2022).

9. *Parlamentul României a votat Declarația de Unire cu Republica Moldova*. 29.03.2018.

The Romanian Parliament voted on the Declaration of Union with the Republic of Moldova. 29.03.2018. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://www.trt.net.tr/romana/lume/2018/03/29/parlamentul-romaniei-a-votat-declaratia-de-unirecu-republica-moldova-940459> (accessed 21.06.2022).

10. Rezoluția Comisiei Comune pentru Integrare Europeană dintre Parlamentul R. Moldova și Parlamentul României de susținere a R. Moldovei pentru aderarea la UE, adoptată la București. 15.04.2022. *Ziarul de Gardă*.

Resolution of the Joint Commission for European Integration between the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and the Parliament of Romania supporting the Republic of Moldova for EU accession, adopted in Bucharest. 15.04.2022. *The Guard newspaper*. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-externe/rezolutia-comisiei-comunepentru-integrare-europeana-dintre-parlamentul-r-moldova-si-parlamentul-romaniei-de-sustinere-a-r-moldoveipentru-aderarea-la-ue-adoptata-la-bucuresti/> (accessed 21.06.2022).

11. Întâlnire secretă dintre Maia Sandu și Klaus Iohannis. Detalii. 24.07.2020. *Noi.md*.

Secret meeting between Maia Sandu and Klaus Iohannis. Details. 24.07.2020. *Noi.md*. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://noi.md/md/politica/intilnire-secreta-dintre-maia-sandu-si-klaus-iohannis-detalii> (accessed 01.09.2022).

12. Partidul Național Liberal (PNL) din România a creat organizația locală PNL Chișinău. 13.09.2020. *Radio Europa Libera Moldova*.

The National Liberal Party (PNL) from Romania created the local organization PNL Chisinau. 13.09.2020. *Radio Europe Free Moldova*. (In Rom.) Available at: [https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/partidul-na%C8%9Bionalliberal\(pnl\)-din-rom%C3%A2nia-a-organiza%C8%9Bia-local%C4%83-pnl-chi%C8%99in%C4%83u/30836369.html](https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/partidul-na%C8%9Bionalliberal(pnl)-din-rom%C3%A2nia-a-organiza%C8%9Bia-local%C4%83-pnl-chi%C8%99in%C4%83u/30836369.html) (accessed 01.03.2022).

13. Ana Guțu pleacă de la PUN, după numirea sa în funcția de de secretar de stat în Guvernul României. 17.01.2020. *Radio Chișinău*.

Ana Guțu is leaving PUN, after her appointment as secretary of state in the Government of Romania. 17.01.2020. *Radio Chisinau*. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://radiochisinau.md/ana-gutu-pleaca-de-la-pun-dupa-numirea-infunctia-de-de-secretar-de-stat-in-guvernul-romaniei-102216.html> (accessed 01.04.2022).

14. “Униря” – как весеннее обострение: Жителям Молдовы раздадут парабеллумы, чтобы они могли отстреливаться! *Комсомольская правда*, 16.03.2018.

“Uniria” is like a spring aggravation: Parabellums will be handed out to the inhabitants of Moldova so that they can shoot back! *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, 16.03.2018. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://www.kp.md/daily/26806/3841222/> (accessed 04.05.2022).

15. Declarație comună a Parlamentelor României și Republicii Moldova. *Parlamentul Republicii Moldova*, 18.06.2022.

Joint declaration of the Parliaments of Romania and the Republic of Moldova. *The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova*, 18.06.2022. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://multimedia.parlament.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Declaratie-comuna.pdf> (accessed 04.09.2022).

16. Tomac: Rep. Moldova nu va intra în UE mai devreme de 15–20 de ani, dar are o soluție de rezervă: unirea cu România. *RFI România*, 25.05.2022.

Tomac: Rep. Moldova will not enter the EU for 15–20 years, but it has a backup solution: the union with Romania. *RFI România*, 25.05.2022. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://www.rfi.ro/politica-145792-tomac-republica-moldovaue-unire-romania> (accessed 04.09.2022).

17. Council of Europe Designates Transnistria “Russian Occupied Territory”. *BalkanInsight*, 16.03.2022. Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/03/16/council-of-europe-designates-transnistria-russian-occupied-territory/> (accessed 04.05.2022).
18. Medvedev warns against Romania and Moldova working together. *Romania-Insider*, 27.06.2022. Available at: <https://www.romania-insider.com/medvedev-romania-moldova-working-together> (accessed 04.07.2022).
19. Partidul Social Democrat din Romania și-a deschis oficiul în R. Moldova. *Stiri.md*, 25.08.2022.
The Social Democratic Party from Romania opened its office in the Republic of Moldova. *Stiri.md*, 25.08.2022. (In Rom.) Available at: <https://stiri.md/article/politica/partidul-social-democrat-din-romania-si-a-deschis-oficiul-in-r-moldova> (accessed 04.09.2022).