



The transition and Europeanization process in the Republic of Moldova

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Brief historical aspects of the Republic of Moldova and of the Moldovans

The territorial factor and statehood:

1. The ***inexperience of the state building*** until 1991 – Moldovan territory was part of the USSR and before that of Romania, the Russian and Ottoman Empire.
2. The current Moldovan ***borders were artificially fixed*** during the Soviet period – the geopolitical border is inside the State (to East, North and South)  separatist movements (in Transnistrian region and UTA Gagauzia).
3. The inheritance of the ***inefficient and weak bureaucratic institutions*** from the Soviet period  the lack of the educated political elite and with a reformist spirit.

Brief historical aspects of the Republic of Moldova and of the Moldovans

The identity factor:

- After the Second World War the local population was arbitrarily divided into **2 different groups** (Romanians and Moldovans).
- **Differentiation** between Romanians and Moldovans, the Moldovan and Romanian languages; as well the promotion of a positive Moldovan identity and the demonization of the Romanian identity.
- **The process of Russification** among the Moldovan population during the Tsarist and Soviet period, marked the consciousness, mentality and language of the local population.

Brief historical aspects of the Republic of Moldova and of the Moldovans

External (geopolitical) factor:

1. **Russian factor** - which fully dominated this territory during a century and a half (1812 – 1918 and 1945 - 1991)
2. **European factor** - which lacked before 1991 and which until recently had limited influence.
3. **Romanian Factor** – which is perceived with the union of the Republic of Moldova and Romania.

Political culture vs. Democratization process of the State institutions vs. Democratic values in society

Political dimension of the Moldovan transition:

- Immediately after the proclamation of Moldova's independence, early parliamentary elections were not organized, this allowing the old politicians (Soviet politicians) to keep the power and adapt quickly to new political realities, dominating practically the domestic environment of the country.
- Political spectrum fragmented → Unstable political parties →
→ Weak institutionalization of political parties.
- For the political parties, own interests are more important than the national interest → Big disparity between parties and population and in consequence distrust in political parties.
- Political parties built around the leader → lack of sustainability.

Political culture vs. Democratization process of the State institutions vs. Democratic values in society

Institutional dimension of the Moldovan transition:

1. **Unstable institutional evolution** → three forms of governments:
 - *Presidential* – from December 1991 to July 29th, 1994;
 - *Semi-presidential* – from July 29th, 1994 to July 5th, 2000;
 - *Parliamentary* - from July 5th, 2000 until present.

2. The institutional transition has led to **important changes** in the following domains: economy, taxation, monetary policies, education, healthcare, defense, environmental protection, social protection.

3. The excessive **politicization** of the State institutions:
 - incomplete reforms in justice and anticorruption bodies,
 - low trust in the State institutions,
 - negative impact on the activity effectiveness and decision making process.

Political culture vs. Democratization process of the State institutions vs. Democratic values in society

Social and Moral dimension of the Moldovan transition:

- 1. *The lack of internal civil consensual identities* → **Conflicts:****

 - between generations (young people vs. old people);
 - linguistic one (Moldovan language vs. Romanian language);
 - geopolitical one (pro-Romanians / pro-Europeans vs. pro-Russians)

- 2. *Moldova is not firmly engaged to building its European collective identity:***
 - Political establishment - Moldovan Electorate divided equally into two antagonistic groups (pro-Western and pro-East);
 - Informational space (where the Russian media dominates).

Political culture vs. Democratization process of the State institutions vs. Democratic values in society

Difficulties and paradoxes of the Moldovan transition:

- **Paradox of the State** - in the process of new state building, the communist system did not collapse completely, this leading to imperfect nature of the new political institutions.
- **Paradox of elites** - the "new elite" was formed from the old communist staff.
- **Paradox of the living standard and social security** - have not realized people's expectations.
- **Paradox of the democracy** – the achieved socio-economic progress were not sufficient in order for the new institutions to attract massive popular support.
- **Paradox of the time** - any change takes time, but people cannot wait indefinitely for the results.
- **Paradox of the morality** - people expected more justice and equity after the transition to the democracy system, which does not exist in our days because a lot of politicians and civil servants have enriched and a big part of the population has become poorer.

Political culture vs. Democratization process of the State institutions vs. Democratic values in society

Perspectives of the Moldovan transition:

- At the level of the collective consciousness, the transition will end when the people will not talk about it.
- As a result of reforms implemented with the assistance of foreign development partners, attributes of a democratic state and of citizens' representation were created.
- Due to the geopolitical situation in the region and the young generation which is a pro-European one  the transition process towards the democratic and European values is becoming irreversible  the systemic transformations will produce later the desired effects.

Moldova's European path: focus on the political and social areas

Realities of the European integration process of Moldova:

- 2005 – 2015 – during 10 years RM officially declared the European integration process as a main priority of the Moldovan foreign policy:
 - EU – Moldova Action Plan and Autonomous Trade Preferences –2005;
 - EU – Moldova Association Agreement and DCFTA – 2014;
 - Visa – free regime for Moldova – 2014.



All these documents aim to deepen political and economic relations between Moldova and the EU, and to gradually integrate Moldova into the EU Internal Market.



- 62% of the Moldovan exports are oriented to the EU and 50% of the Moldovan imports coming from the EU;
- The biggest investors within Moldovan economy coming from the EU countries (Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Romania).

Moldova's European path: focus on the political and social areas

Association Agreement EU – RM and institutional reforms:

The EU – Moldova Association Agreement and DCFTA, was ratified by all EU member states and beginning 2016 will be fully implemented



The AA represents a reform agenda for Moldova, based on a comprehensive programme of Moldova's approximation of its legislation to EU norms.



- Institutional reforms (mainly reforms of the judiciary sector);
- Economical and financial reforms;
- Reforms in education, social and pension fields
- Transnistrian settlement process (*from 2016 to implement DCFTA within the Transnistrian region*)

Moldova's European path: focus on the political and social areas

European values vs. Traditional Moldovan values

Historically and genetically the Moldovan nation is an European one
(Latin language, Christian religion, culture and traditions are similar with the Romanian ones and close to the European ones)



The biggest part of the Moldovan population support the EU principles :

- Rule of law and strong democratic institutions;
- Human rights and non-discrimination;
- Elimination of corruption;
- Market economy and loyal competition;
- Social protection and solidarity.



All polls show that these problems are the main concern of the Moldovan citizens and are included in the programs of all political parties.

Conclusions

- It is necessary to recognize the **Moldovan transition as a repaired historical process** for this territory, which was occupied by Tsarist Empire in 1812 and the Soviet Union in 1944.
- Many people are convinced that in these 20 years, we got into **the mid transition** from the communist regime to democracy, from the centralized economy towards a market economy.
- We **cannot identify the true and profound social changes** in our country, because the transitions practices reflect sometimes the old communist behavior.
- The **transition in our country is still far from end**; we are only at **the beginning of the second phase** of the transition process, because in Moldova the institutions are not yet stable and predictable in order to determine a true economic and political transformation.
- Nevertheless, the RM is practically on the way to an **irreversible process** of economic and social integration within the great European family, due to the historical and geopolitical factors, as well as due to the pressure of the internal factors, such as the pro-European young generation and the economic needs of the State.