

The Europeanization dynamic in the Republic of Moldova

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Resumo

A iniciativa política que visa aprofundar e reforçar as relações entre a UE e a Moldávia insere-se no contexto da Parceria Oriental, lançada em 2009 no âmbito da Política Europeia de Vizinhança. Este artigo visa identificar as vias de Europeização da Moldávia, considerando as tensões envolvidas na alternativa de cooperação e modelo para sociedade civil, instituições, políticas e economia, representada pela União Econômica Eurasiática. A Europeização ocorre de forma diferente no caso de países fora da UE, especialmente no caso das novas democracias que têm a UE como parceiro externo relevante. Tendo como ponto de partida a Agenda de Associação do Acordo de Associação, este artigo visa analisar as evidências da Europeização na Moldávia, observando os regulamentos, leis e alterações à lei implementados pelo Governo da Moldávia, conforme avaliado nos relatórios de implementação. A contribuição conceitual de Gawrich et al. (2009), assim como dados de diferentes fontes como o Banco Mundial e pesquisas selecionadas são utilizados nesta investigação. Espera-se contribuir com a criação de um modelo de análise que possa ser aplicado em outros casos e promover uma comparação do potencial impacto da Europeização nos países vizinhos da UE.

Palavras-chave: União Europeia; Parceria Oriental; Moldávia

Abstract

The policy initiative which aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the EU and Moldova is in the context of the Eastern Partnership, launched in 2009 within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The article aims to identify avenues of Europeanization of Moldova, considering however the tensions involved in the alternative of cooperation and modelling civil society, institutions, policies and economy, that is the Eurasian Economic Union. Europeanization works differently in the case of countries outside the EU, especially in the cases of new democracies having the EU as a relevant foreign partner. Departing from the Association Agenda of the Association Agreement, this paper aims to analyse the evidences of Europeanization in

Moldova by looking at the regulations, laws and amendments to law implemented by the Moldovan Government as assessed in the Implementation Reports. The conceptual contribution of Gawrich et al. (2009) will be useful, as well as data from different sources such as the World Bank and selected surveys. We expect to contribute by creating a model of analysis that can be applied in other cases and promote a comparison of the potential impact of Europeanization on the EU's neighbours' countries.

Keywords: European Union; Eastern Neighbours Partnership; Moldova

Introduction

The European Union (EU) is committed to the stability, development, and prosperity of former soviet countries. As countries geographically close to the EU, it has been of the EU's interest to support their development since the transition towards democracy. EU cooperation and financial support are linked to certain conditionalities, which Lavenex and Schimmelfennig¹ call EU's external governance, but for Gawrich et al.² the same phenomenon is seen as an external dimension of Europeanization.³ Europeanization consists of the phenomenon of the EU influencing other States and political spheres by sharing and spreading its routines, norms, values and institutions and also being influenced by them (*top-down* and *bottom-up* dynamics).⁴

The EU has developed over time an external dimension that puts it as an agent of democracy promotion and values' sharing. As for its neighbours, the case is even more so. Lavenex and Schimmelfennig⁵ believe this EU's external influence in its neighbours has evolved into a new third model since the European Neighbourhood Policy's creation, with functional cooperation between the administrations as another axis of EU's democracy promotion and value's sharing.

According to Gawrich et al.⁶, we can distinguish three dimensions of Europeanization research when reviewing the early 1990s' literature: i) *Membership Europeanization*, which refers to the impact of the EU on its member-states (current members); ii)

1 LAVENEX, Sandra; SCHIMMELFENNIG, Frank - "Concentric circles of flexible 'EUropean' integration: A typology of EU external governance relations".

2 GAWRICH, Andrea; MELNYKOVSKA, Inna; SCHWEICKERT, Rainer – "Neighbourhood Europeanization through ENP. The Case of Ukraine".

3 For further detail on Europeanization e. g. Börzel & Risse, 2000, 2003; Börzel, 1999, 2002, 2003; Featherstone & Kazamias, 2001; Featherstone & Radaelli, 2003; and Dyson, 1999.

4 Shortly, the top-down Europeanization process has been understood mostly by the impact and influence of EU's ideas, policies, institutions, norms, etc. toward the member-states, or even sub-national agencies and actors. On the other hand, bottom-up Europeanization can be defined as the "reorientation of a (sub-) national actor's champ d'activité towards supranational institutions, politics and/or policy-making" of the EU (McCauley 2011).

5 LAVENEX, Sandra; SCHIMMELFENNIG, Frank.

6 GAWRICH, Andrea; MELNYKOVSKA, Inna; SCHWEICKERT, Rainer – "Neighbourhood Europeanization through ENP. The Case of Ukraine", p.5.

Enlargement Europeanization, related to countries in the accession process and candidate countries (perspective members); and iii) *Neighbourhood Europeanization*, for those without membership perspective, also considered “EU’s neighbouring ‘outsiders’”.

We can identify Europeanization dynamics as a modernization⁷ mirror for former soviet countries. Geopolitics is the major factor in the European motivations. Located between the EU and Russia, the EaP’s countries can be considered strategic neighbours for the EU’s borders. Domestic economic structures of each EaP country have translated into different responses to the adaptation and adoption of cooperation and compatible policies and reforms regarding EU’s expectations. Thus, the bilateral relations with these countries have evolved at different paces.

In this article we intend to focus on Neighbourhood Europeanization, more specifically we look for concepts, theoretical constructions and data selection for Moldova. However, the large view of the contribution is to introduce a model to be applied to the six Eastern neighbours: Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, and Ukraine.

We consider the European Neighbourhood Policy⁸ (ENP) and the agreements within its framework as a *top-down* Europeanization process. The ENP is an EU foreign relations instrument for developing countries, including those in the neighbourhood willing to be closer to the EU. The ENP follows a blueprint for enlargement, as a response to the European Security Strategy (ESS). In 2003, the European Commission presented a new framework for relations with the Eastern and Southern Neighbours. Since the new policy was launched, the privileged neighbours started to create mutual commitments to build common values and actions for reaching a good governance, rule of law and the promotion of economic and democratic principles.

The ENP process is supported by an Action Plan (AP) prepared for neighbouring countries that are not in the EU’s enlargement agenda. The APs introduced specific degrees of goals in different countries in order to implement ENP’s policies. The APs would draw on a common set of principles and bilateral relations to contribute for regional and sub-regional cooperation to reinforce efforts to meet the objectives of the ESS. In this sense, different impacts of Europeanization can be found in the neighbours, especially if we consider the “neighbouring outsiders”.⁹ Thus, we have to consider each country individually to assess some measures of success of this initiative, particularly in light of the 10 years of the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

The EU contribute with financial assistance to the ENP’s countries as to promote reforms and adjustments, influencing policies, institutions, laws (political,

7 SPRUDS, Andris – “Introductory Remarks”.

8 The ENP is an EU programme for its South and Eastern neighbours to foster stabilisation, security and prosperity.

9 The EU’s neighbouring where there is no immediate accession perspective (GAWRICH, Andrea et al. 2009, p. 5).

economic, institutional, etc.) and enhancing their local and national transformation towards a democratic model in line with the EU's.

The ENP's policies are valuable for both the EU's and its neighbours' priorities in a variety of sectors, like key areas for stability: Democracy Promotion, Justice and Home Affairs, and Economic Cooperation and Trade. Thus, the adoption of EU-aligned regulations and norms and the institutional adaptation to accomplish the ENP policies can be observed as a measure of a *top-down* Europeanization.

Public surveys can help identify the *bottom-up* Europeanization process. Public opinion reveals when citizens' perception can be seen as a way of explaining the proper functioning of EU's institutions and standards, usually without the use of coercion mechanisms in the European daily life. Positive perceptions empower EU institutions and impact their effectiveness. That because compliance matters. In other words, the less a rule requires strength and coercion mechanisms to be obeyed, the more effective it is. Such effectiveness, however, depends on the extent to which this standard is recognized by the society that must respect it as legitimate.

The article enlightens the impact of the EaP after one decade of it. The result is a preliminary effort to create a series of variables and a set of data about Moldova's case, but looking at providing analytic instruments for studying other EaP countries.

Gawrich et al.¹⁰ draw on the concept of Europeanization to analyse EU's influence and rule transfer in the case of countries with no membership perspective. According to them, the lack of an ascension perspective potentially limits EU's leverage and effectiveness in exerting its influence and promoting its values and changes. This article's hypothesis is that Europeanization is a large phenomenon surrounding the integration region. The different levels of impact¹¹, however, could be measured as a function of the interests of a given country to build strong links with EU norms and values. Considering the case of the former soviet countries, especially when there is no perspective to become an EU member-state, the harmonization of laws, norms, the learning process from EU's institutions and democratic model is a decisive reference for the development of the new democracies from Eastern Europe.

Methodology

Exadaktylos & Radaelli¹² contribute to the debate on research design and causal analysis in European integration by considering the Europeanization as a sub-field to be

10 GAWRICH, Andrea; MELNYKOVSKA, Inna; SCHWEICKERT, Rainer – “Neighbourhood Europeanization through ENP. The Case of Ukraine”.

11 BÖRZEL, Tanja A.; RISSE, Thomas - “When Europe Hits Home: Europeanization and Domestic Change”.

12 EXADAKTYLOS, Theofanis; RADAELLI, Claudio M. 2009 - “Research Design in European Studies: The case of Europeanization”.

acknowledged. Once the EU exists, there is a new phenomenon to be explored not only regarding its member-states, but also in the neighbourhood outside of the EU's borders. Whether or not Europeanization, EU's existence has an impact on the neighbouring outsiders.

Thus, even "countries outside the EU are also going through the same process of change—for example, because they are part of the global process of diffusion" (see Saurugger 2005; Levi-Faur 2004, *apud* Radaelli 2000), as well as around a strategic geopolitical zone for the EU.

The EU has enlarged over time, and its member-states have been experiencing changes along the European integration. The EU introduced an innovative legal system, institutions, norms and laws, a new monetary system and a new citizenship. Thus, there is a large debate on the EU's impacts on social and political issues. Throughout the integration process, discussions about the designation of the phenomenon as a process of "Europeanization" emerged. Besides the discussion on the concept's formation, Börzel & Risse suggest a theoretical framework considering two types of research design, called *top-down* and *bottom-up* models of the EU spreading its values, norms, institutions, policies, and ideas.

In other words, at the same time we can focus on the phenomenon of European integration influencing the national level of the society and politics, there is a circular movement in this matter. National actors, political elites, civil society groups, policies, ideas and structures can also influence EU politics, policies, and structures.

Gawrich et al. consider three distinct phases and dimensions of Europeanization research, where each new dimension draws on and adds to the previous one¹³: *Membership Europeanization* (the impact of the EU on member-states); *Enlargement Europeanization* (the impact of the EU on countries with a clear EU-membership perspective); *Neighbourhood Europeanization* (the impact of the EU on "outsiders", countries with no immediate accession perspective).

As to assess Neighbourhood Europeanization in Moldova, this article firstly draws upon the ENP's Association Agreement (AA) and implementation reports as to trace the advances made in promoting change in Moldova by EU initiatives. More specifically, this paper will analyse four reports representative of the relationship between the EU and Moldova under construction: 'European Neighbourhood Policy in the Republic of Moldova Progress in 2014 and recommendations for actions'; the 'Progress Report on the Implementation of the Republic of Moldova – EU Association Agenda' and the 'Association Implementation Report', covering the 2014-2017 period. We will look at regulation and law changes (approved and adopted laws) outlined in the reports, as well as cooperation actions as evidence of Moldova's alignment with EU norms and strategies. This can be assessed as an

13 GAWRICH, Andrea; MELNYKOVSKA, Inna; SCHWEICKERT, Rainer – "Neighbourhood Europeanization through ENP. The Case of Ukraine", p.5.

indicator of *top-down* Europeanization in Moldova. That because the EU uses the prospect of further cooperation and strengthening of economic relations as a means of promoting harmonization with EU norms and regulation.

We make use of Gawrich et al. concept for a qualitative analysis of Europeanization through ENP when distinguishing three dimensions of ENP's policies: Democracy Promotion; Justice and Home Affairs; Economic Cooperation and Trade. Democracy Promotion comprises the agenda items related to rule of law, civil society, human rights and fundamental freedom, while Justice and Home Affairs involves foreign and security policy and cooperation on justice, freedom and security. Finally, Economic Cooperation and Trade regards topics like employment, consumer protection, taxation, sectorial items, public health, research and innovation, technical regulations, standards, intellectual property rights and competition.

Secondly, we look at the variations in the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) as a proxy of policy improvements in the three dimensions of the ENP's policies. The aggregate indicators combine sources in six dimensions of governance as follows:

- Voice and Accountability: combines data sources to capture the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.
- Political Stability and Absence of Violence: assesses the likelihood of political instability and/or politically motivated violence, including terrorism.
- Governance Effectiveness: reflects the quality of public services and the civil service, and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.
- Regulatory Quality: assesses the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development.
- Rule of Law: captures the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence.
- Control of Corruption: assesses the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as the "capture" of the State by elites and private interests.

The WGI are aggregated indicators based on different data sources that collect the views of a large number of enterprises, citizen and expert survey respondents in

different countries, including Moldova. WGI's six dimensions relate to Gawrich et al. three dimensions and can be grouped within it. Given that these indicators are estimates based on a pool of governance indicators, year-to-year changes are difficult to assess and typically quite small, thus, we opted to include the estimates as follows: 1996, the WGI's first year and pre-EU policies; 2003, when ENP was launch; 2005, creation of AP for Moldova; and the 2009-2017 period.

These analyses will assess indicatives of *top-down* Europeanization. However, by analysing public opinion data from 'EU NEIGHBOURS east' project annual report on Moldova, a *bottom-up* perspective of Europeanization in Moldova can be drawn upon from the population's perception and information on the EU.

Since the EU is a result of regional integration, it is not built on mechanisms and strategies of popular participation that characterize democratic processes. It is in fact a model of cooperation between States that was initially supported by intergovernmental agreements according to rules of Public International Law. Considering the EU has achieved an unparalleled social and political integration by becoming a *polity*¹⁴, it is expected that it would accurate its *democratic deficit*, even *ex-post*. Not only because of the importance of the Union's legitimation, but also because democratic recognition implies the ability of its rules and policies to impact social behavior.

We start from the assumption that if public opinion data is positive in relation to the EU, its policies, standards, regulations and institutions are strengthened – the EU becomes thus more effective. In other words, perception data that reveals a good assessment of the EU's role, a positive view of being part of the EU, a representative capacity of its institutions, or if there is a perception of confidence or support towards EU's institutions, reveal an ability to make EU's policies more effective.

Institutions and norms work best when they are best evaluated, perceived as representative, fair and legitimate. The positive perception signals the EU is empowered and, as a consequence, greater compliance with EU's rules and policies are expected.

Compliance has a fundamental role in preventing the application of sanctions resulting from non-compliance with the norms and policies. An important concept here is the effectiveness of the norms. According to jurists as Bobbio¹⁵, a norm is more effective the less it needs to use its coercion and force mechanisms to be applied. Thus, prevention and compliance are the best mechanisms for recognizing the effectiveness of EU's standards.

The selected responses from the public opinion report assess the population's recent opinion on the EU and the values associated to it, but also reflects the heterogeneity within Moldova – which is corroborated by census data.

14 HIX, Simon - *The Political System of the European Union*.

15 BOBBIO, Norberto - *Teoria da Norma Jurídica*.

This article intends to develop a model of analysis for assessing the Europeanization in Moldova, both *top-down* and *bottom-up*. Once the model is developed and tested in the case of Moldova, it may be applied to the other EaPs Countries. EU's relations with its Eastern neighbours have been intensifying since the EaP, making it relevant to look deeper.

Results: Looking for evidences of Neighbourhood Europeanization in Moldova

A few failures and successes can be identified from a comparative analysis. In this paper we focus on the case of Moldova to design a model of analysis that could be a reference for other observations. Data and variables considered to analyse Moldova's case of Europeanization can be applied to other EU neighbouring outsiders countries.

The spreading of EU's values, norms, institutions, policies, and ideas might take place in several different ways. As Montesano et al.¹⁶ put it, within the framework of the ENP, Europeanization regards the ability of the EU to make use of its 'normative' clout as a mean to foster stability and development in target countries of its interest.

Both EU's concern to create a surrounding neighbourhood of well-governed countries to the East and South of its borders and the ever-closer proximity of Moldova to the EU's borders with the Eastern enlargements drove the increase of EU's interest in Moldova. According to Montesano et al. the inclusion of Moldova in the ENP in 2003 and the EU-Moldova AP from 2005 are evidence to that. These initiatives were further developed with the EaP policies from 2009 and coming to the signature of an AA and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA).¹⁷

From 2009 to 2017 the relationship between the EU and Moldova has deepened and widened in scope. New areas of cooperation, a larger alignment in democracy promotion and trade and investment initiatives summarized in certain events can be considered milestones of this intensification: the start of Autonomous Trade Preferences (2009); the start of EU/UNDP Confidence-Building Measures programme (2009); the AA/ DCFTA negotiations (started in 2010); Moldova joining the Energy Community (2010); the beginning of EU-Moldova Visa Liberalisation Dialogue (2010); the entry into force of the visa free regime for short stays (2014); the conclusion of AA/DCFTA and provisional application (2014); the replacement of the ENP AP by the Association Agenda (2014); the suspension of EU budget support after bank frauds (2015), and the AA fully into force (2016).

16 MONTESANO, Francesco; VAN DER TOGT; Tony; and ZWEERS, Wouter - The Europeanisation of Moldova: is the EU on the right track?, Clingendael Report, 2016.

17 From the EaP countries, only Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine have such type agreements with the EU.

The EU-Moldova relationship has already surpassed purely cooperation, including economic integration and deeper political cooperation. Evidence of that is the AA signed in 2014 and encompassing the AA/DCFTA, which according to the EU represents a qualitative step forward in EU-Moldova relations (EEAS 2015). As the signature and entry into force of the AA implied the establishment of an institutional framework and required mechanisms for its implementation, the Association Agenda replaced the ENP AP as the guideline to the EU-Moldova relationship. The spread of the EU model in a top-down orientation can be identified by the exportation of EU policies, institutions, norms and values towards Moldova.

Top-down impacts of Europeanization in Moldova

The Association Agenda foresees a number of domestic adjustments to EU directives and standards. Wolczuk¹⁸ highlights the key instrument in achieving the AA's set goals of political association and economic integration with the EU is legal approximation. For the partner country this means taking on extensive, binding commitments to align its laws and institutions with the *acquis* in order to stimulate political and economic development and institutional modernization.¹⁹

The analysis of the implementation reports indicates the changes promoted by Moldova's Government to harmonize and approximate its domestic norms with the EU's, as well as the improvement in cooperation.²⁰ By looking at the regulations, laws and amendments to laws taking place in the 2014-2017 period, it was possible to identify changes in the three elected dimensions. As expected, the pressure to comply with the Association Agenda for the implementation of the AA and the DCFTA certainly speeded up Moldova's normative alignment with the EU. In fact, most of the law and regulations adopted regard the economic cooperation and trade dimension. This dimension involves a lot of sectorial improvements, as well as harmonization of standards necessary for accessing EU's internal market. An important part of the DCFTA is aligning Moldovan trade-related laws to selected EU legislative acts (EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2019).

18 WOLCZUK, Kataryna - "The Development of an Institutional Framework for the Implementation of the Association Agreements in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine: a comparative perspective."

19 The *acquis communautaire* is the set of norms and laws, substantive rules and policies – all which composes the EU Community Law system.

20 When assessing the reports, we considered cooperation examples the implementation of dialogue and working groups, trainings with external support or upon external orientation, valuation visits from the EU, access to information from European sphere (e.g. database access) and actions defined as improvement in the bilateral or multilateral cooperation of Moldova and the EU and its member-states.

Table 1. Approved and adopted laws and regulations under the three dimensions²¹

		DEMOCRACY PROMOTION	JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS	ECONOMIC CO- OPERATION AND TRADE RELATED
Implementation of the ENP in the Republic of Moldova Progress (2014) and recommendations for actions	Laws and amendments to laws:	07	04	30
	Regulations:	-	-	01
	Cooperation efforts:	07	06	14
Progress Report on the Implementation of the Republic of Moldova– EU Association Agenda (Sep. 2014– Mar. 2016)	Laws and amendments to laws:	10	03	50
	Regulations:	08	02	29
	Cooperation efforts:	04	21	19
Association Implementation Report on Moldova 2016	Laws and amendments to laws:	04	03	13
	Regulations:	-	-	01
	Cooperation efforts:	01	02	04
Association Implementation Report on Moldova 2017	Laws and amendments to laws:	06	03	17
	Regulations:	01	-	05
	Cooperation efforts:	01	05	06

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on data from the Implementation of the ENP in the Republic of Moldova Progress in 2014 and recommendations for actions; Progress Report on the Implementation of the Republic of Moldova – European Union Association Agenda and the Association Implementation Reports on Moldova (2016 and 2017).

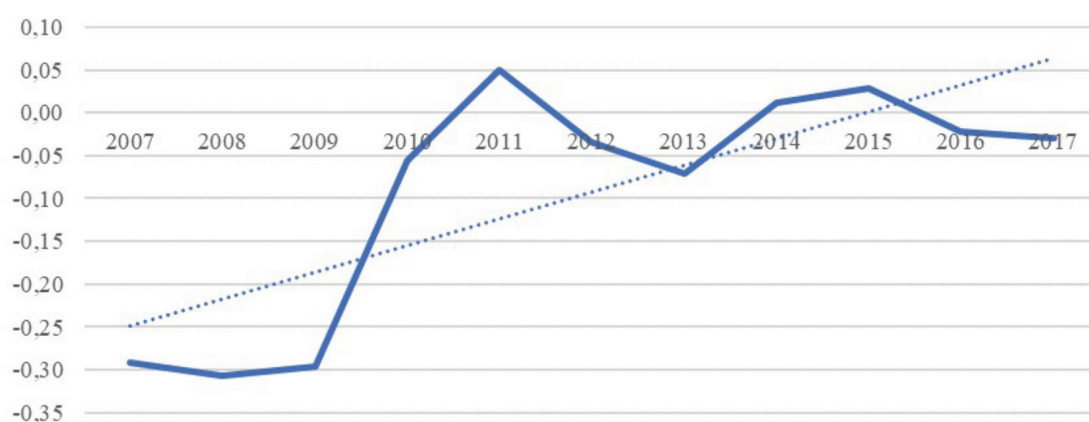
By looking at the governance indicators for Moldova, it is possible to note that ten years after the first available data (1996-2005) all estimates presented a

21 The five priority areas of the AP and AA were grouped within Gawrich et al. (2009)'s three dimensions from as follows: democracy promotion includes the topics in the political dialogue and reform priority area; justice and home affairs comprises foreign and security policy and cooperation on justice, freedom and security; economic cooperation and trade comprises the topics of similar name.

deterioration, signalling the country's sensitive condition.²² The creation of an AP for Moldova within the ENP does not seem to have significantly improved the country's governance in any aspect until the EaP in 2009. However, when comparing the latest data available with 2005 and 2009 numbers, it is possible to note significant improvement in most of the categories, evidencing the country's progress following closer cooperation and integration with the EU.

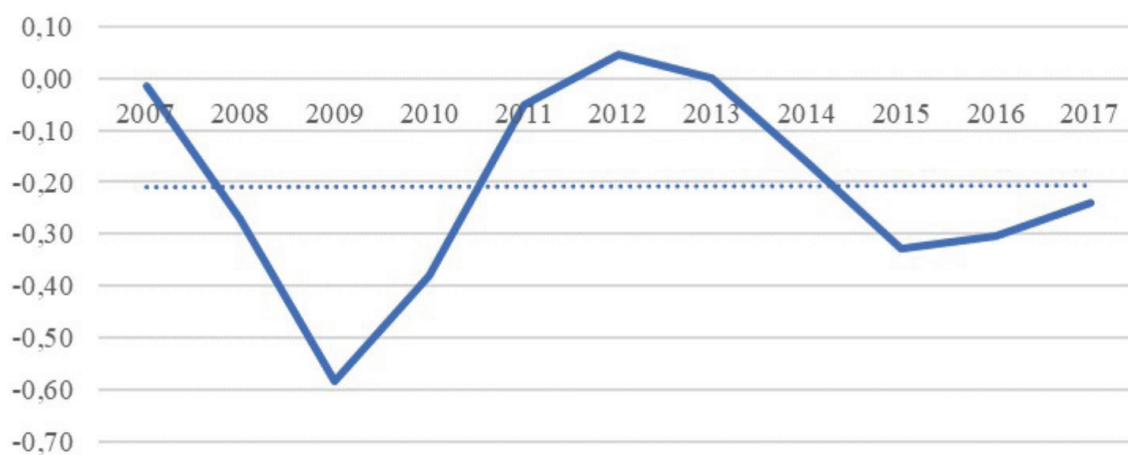
The graphics below present the estimates from the six WGI indicators for the 2007-2017 period with a trend line (dotted line) in order to better illustrate the indicators in the past decade.

Graphic 1. Voice and Accountability, 2007-2017



Source: World Bank, WGI, 2019.

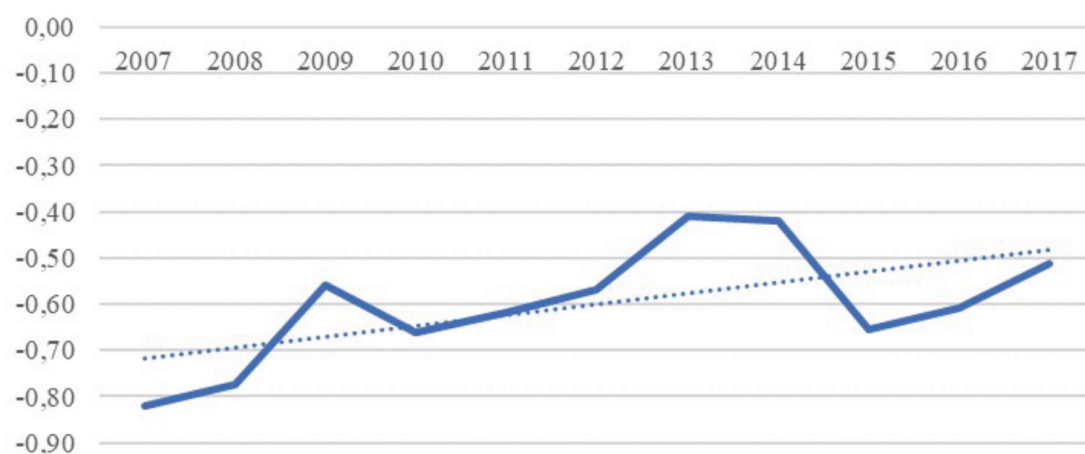
Graphic 2. Political Stability and No Violence, 2007-2017



Source: World Bank, WGI, 2019.

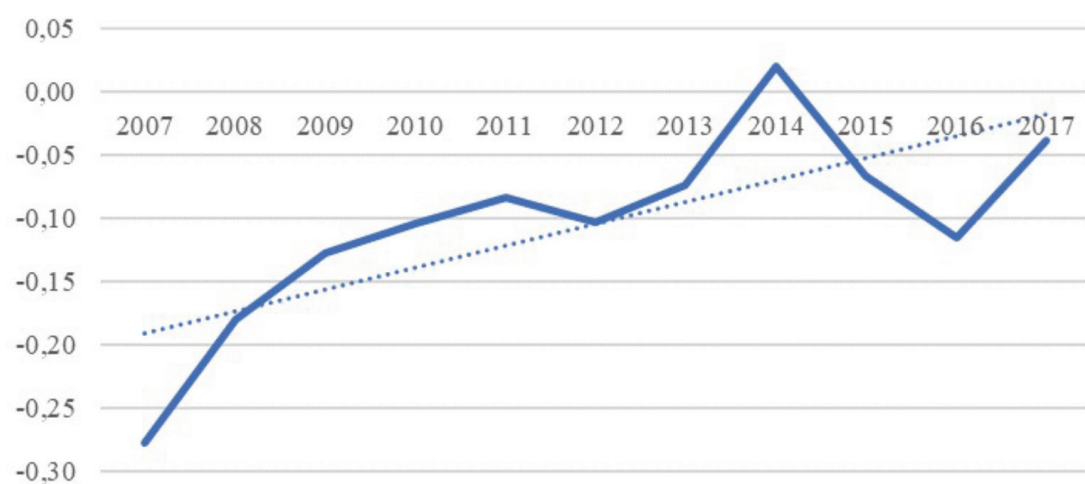
22 See Appendix - Estimates for the table with estimates.

Graphic 3. Government Effectiveness, 2007-2017



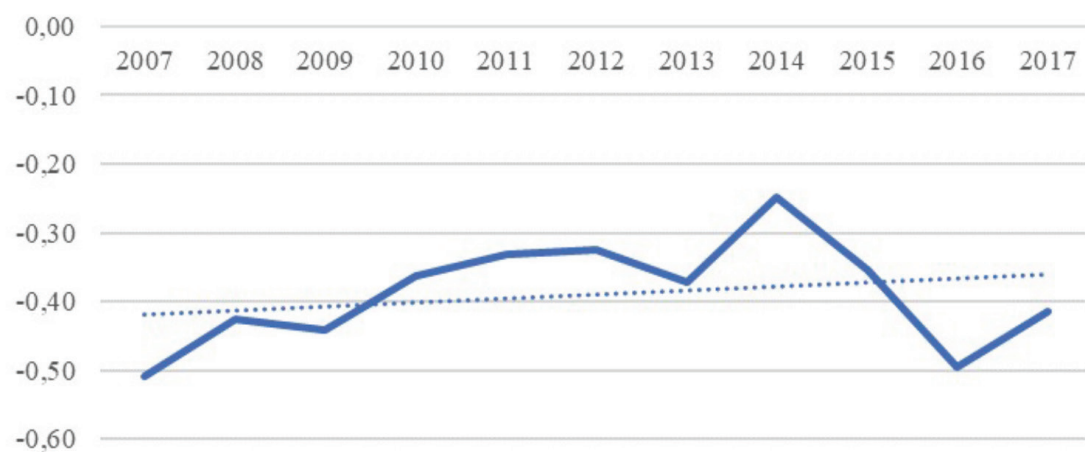
Source: World Bank, WGI, 2019.

Graphic 4. Regulatory Quality, 2007-2017



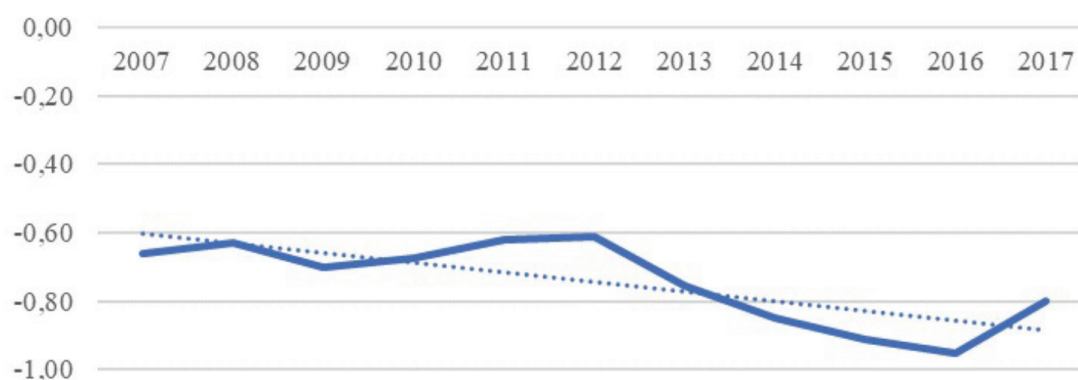
Source: World Bank, WGI, 2019.

Graphic 5. Rule of Law, 2007-2017



Source: World Bank, WGI, 2019.

Graphic 6. Control of Corruption, 2007-2017



Source: World Bank, WGI, 2019.

Most indicators present a positive trend for the period assessed in the graphics, except for the Political Stability and No Violence indicator, which fluctuated a lot over the period and shows a flat trend; and the Control of Corruption indicator, which presented a negative trend. These are aspects in which Moldova has been having difficulty in implementing and promoting change according to the implementation reports analysed.

Control of Corruption is a problem Moldova has not yet managed to efficiently tackle, which reflects in this indicator's evolution over time. Conversely, the ups and downs of Political Stability and No Violence indicator may reflect the country's attempts to implement reforms in this area following EU's indications in the AP and Association Agenda during the last decade. Also, there is a connection between political stability and the issues the country has faced regarding corruption, which may have jeopardized some of its improvements. The 2017 estimates indicate that control of corruption and government effectiveness have the weakest governance indicators, having a significant space for improvement.

Bottom-up impact of Europeanization in Moldova

The *bottom-up* Europeanization can be defined as the influence and impact understood from the reorientation of a (sub-)national actor's *champ d'activité*²³ towards EU institutions, policies, politics, values and the perception of the EU phenomenon.

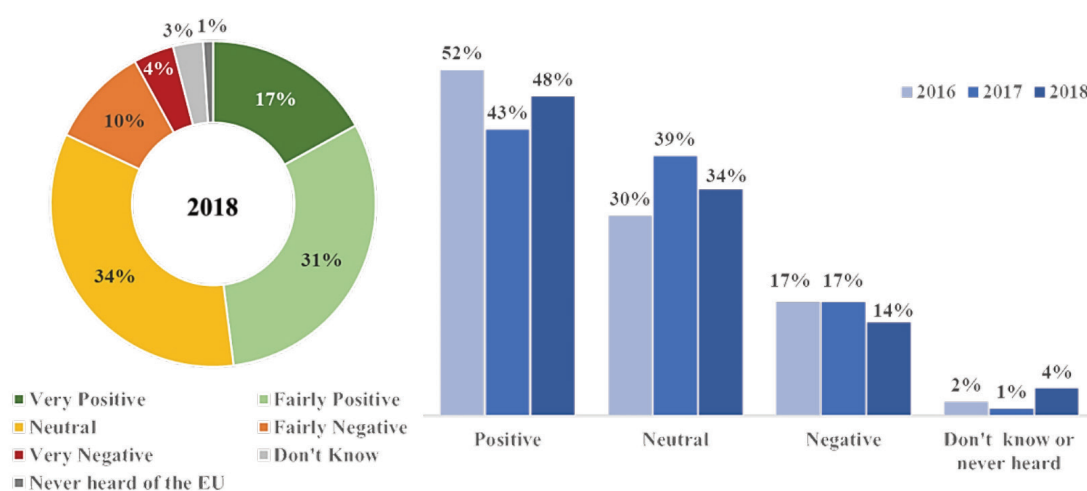
We consider that the increase of the good evaluation and positive perception of the EU's institutions, economy and politics correspond to a way to legitimate the

23 McCauley, Darren - "Bottom-up Europeanization Exposed: Social Movement Theory and Non-State Actors in France".

EU. The conviction that the law and institutions represent the people and reflect justice promotes compliance and effectiveness. Thus, a *bottom-up* Europeanization can be assessed from the analysis of perception data, if they reflect a good evaluation, a positive vision and attitudes facing the EU influence in their countries and societies.

According to the survey's data, around half of Moldovan citizens have a positive image of the EU, representing an increase when compared to the previous year's report.

Figure 1. The EU's Image in Moldova



Source: 3rd wave Annual Survey Report for Moldova, 2018.

However, significant differences were found within most socio-demographic groups, reflecting the country's heterogeneity. Of the 48% that have a positive image of the EU, 95% are native Romanian speakers, 61% are young citizens, 75% classify as highly educated citizens and 62% reside in the centre of the country. Ethnic diversity is a significant feature of Moldova's population, as Table 2 illustrates, with different geopolitical orientations (Russia-led and Western-led), which in its turn reflects on the public perception of the EU.

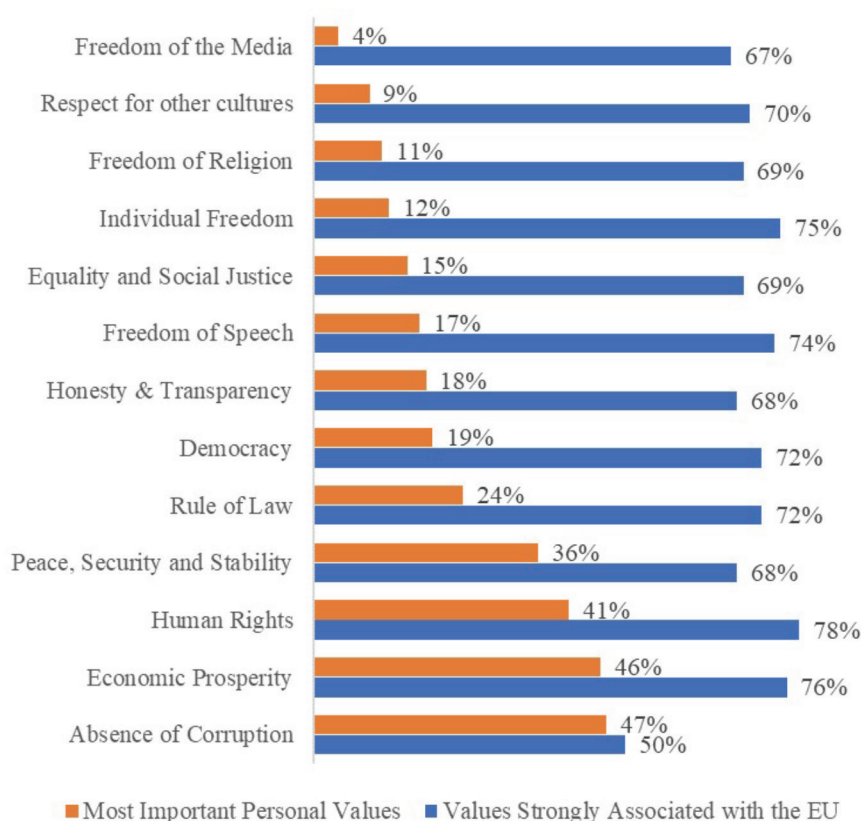
Table 2. Ethnic structure of the population in Moldova - 2004 and 2014 censuses

	Persons		as % to the total		as % of total population that declared ethnicity	
	2004	2014	2004	2014	2004	2014
Total population	3 383 332	2 804 801	100,0	100,0	x	x
<i>Population that declared ethnicity including</i>	3 369 312	2 754 719	99,6	98,2	100,0	100,0
Moldovans	2 564 849	2 068 058	75,8	73,7	76,1	75,1
Ukrainians	282 406	181 035	8,4	6,5	8,4	6,6
Russians	201 218	111 726	5,9	4,0	6,0	4,1
Gagauzs	147 500	126 010	4,4	4,5	4,4	4,6
Romanians	73 276	192 800	2,2	6,9	2,2	7,0
Bulgarians	65 662	51 867	1,9	1,8	1,9	1,9
Gypsies	12 271	9 323	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,3
Other ethnicities	22 130	13 900	0,7	0,5	0,7	0,5
<i>Population that not declared ethnicity</i>	14 020	50 082	0,4	1,8	x	x

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 2014.

The AP and the AA are embedded in values. When it comes to values, the percentage of Moldovan citizens who have heard of the EU tend to associate all the values in the query with the EU, according to the survey's report, as follows:

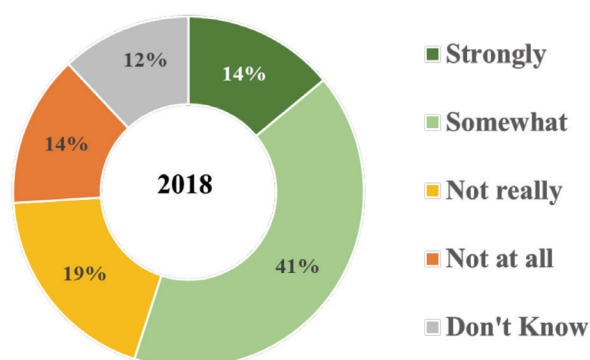
Figure 2. Values strongly (or very strongly) associated with the EU and three most important personal values



Source: 3rd wave Annual Survey Report for Moldova, 2018.

The three most important personal values appointed for most of the respondents happen to be key topics in the Moldova-EU relations, strengthened over time with the AA and the DCFTA. Nonetheless, the most important personal value for 47% of the Moldovans is the absence of corruption, which is only strongly associated with the EU for 50% of the interviewees.

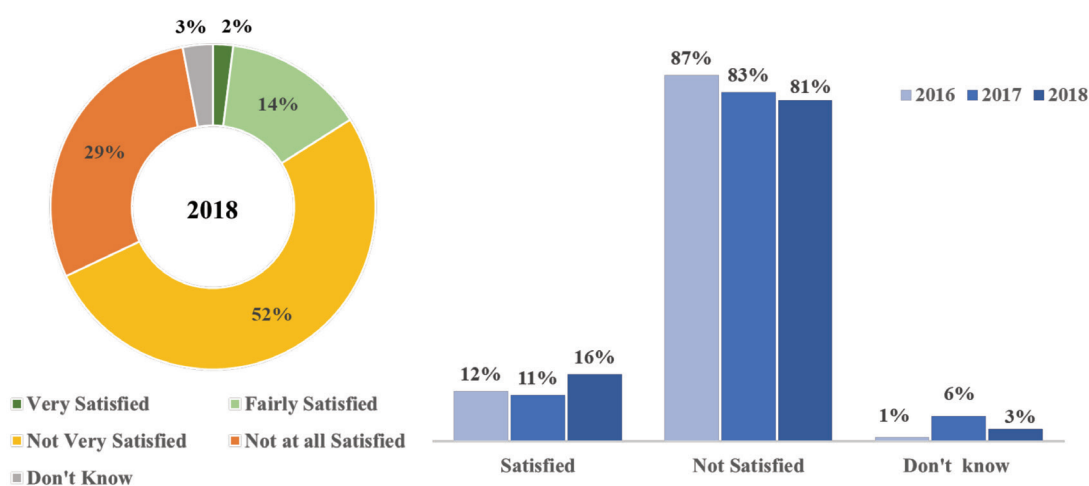
Figure 3. Opinion on the statement: “The EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in our society”



Source: 3rd wave Annual Survey Report for Moldova, 2018.

While over half of the respondents agree the EU fosters traditional values in Moldovan society, most respondents seem to be unsatisfied with the way democracy works in Moldova (81%). Nonetheless, there has been an improvement in the public satisfaction with democracy in Moldova since 2016. Even though it is not possible to establish a causal relation, the repercussions in society of the AA, which entered into force in 2016, may have been captured by the public opinion survey. Further improvements should be expected in the years to come.

Figure 4. Satisfaction with the way democracy works in Moldova



Source: 3rd wave Annual Survey Report for Moldova, 2018.

The analysis of the public opinion survey prompts further connections related to identification with the EU. As Cram²⁴ puts it, conscious or explicit identification with the EU may also emerge in the latent political community as the EU becomes a meaningful presence for its citizens. The deepening in EU-Moldova relations beyond purely cooperation has also reflected in the population's perception and identification with EU's norms and values, as Figure 2 shows. The attachment and identification of the European public with the EU gives to its policies, norms and institutions legitimacy and compliance – and that is particularly true for the case of the neighbouring countries.

Also, it is important to note that a growing identification with the EU opposes the Russian identification still very present in the country.²⁵ Cram²⁶ states that to appreciate functional benefits, individuals must experience those benefits and for identification to occur they must relate those experiences and benefits to the level of authority concerned. The amounting of EU's actions in Moldova and cooperation between member-states and the country have certainly increased the reaped experiences and benefits by the population.

Discussion

The neighbourhood matters for the EU. Considering the former soviet countries, there is a strong influence from the EU regarding the geopolitical situation of the Eastern countries. EU's influence in the Eastern countries can be seen as a win-win game in the region. The EU spread its norms, institutions and compromises on the one hand; while on the other hand, the Eastern countries are benefited by the improvements in their economy, stability, democracy and external relationships.

Some preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the Europeanization measured by the *top-down* and *bottom-up* aspects in the case of Moldova. When more direct benefits are involved, the pace of change increases. EU's trade importance in Moldova grew after the episodes of Russia's sanctions against Moldova in 2014.²⁷ Back then, Russia had been Moldova's main trade partner, but the AA/DCFTA changed that. Thus, *top-down* Europeanization seems to occur without significant trouble in the economic cooperation and trade dimension.

24 CRAM, Laura - "Does the EU Need a Navel? Implicit and Explicit Identification with the European Union".

25 Given the ethnic differences, as previously mentioned.

26 *Idem, Ibidem.*

27 CALUS, Kamil - "Russian Sanctions Against Moldova. Minor effects, major potential".

Corruption is still a major issue in Moldova, and EU's influence in matters related to it is more limited. The WGI Control of Corruption indicator shows a deterioration trend from 2007 to 2017, indicating that despite EU's influence and the AA, benefits have not been reaped yet.

When it comes to democracy promotion, not coincidentally human rights and rule of law were the most important values identified by the survey respondents. Deutsch et al.²⁸ refer to a 'double process of habit-breaking', that is, the process through which citizens, exposed to the benefits available from a new level of governance, can start to break the habit of allegiance to the existing political unit. Thus, we could argue the more citizens are exposed to an EU-touched environment, the more the recognition that EU's values, norms and actions might coincide with the existing expectations. The expectations' fulfillment also promotes the legitimation of EU's institutions.

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APPENDIX – Estimates

	VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY		POLITICAL STABILITY AND NO VIOLENCE		GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS		REGULATORY QUALITY		RULE OF LAW		CONTROL OF CORRUPTION	
	E	SD	E	SD	E	SD	E	SD	E	SD	E	SD
1996	0,02	0,24	0,01	0,41	-0,22	0,18	-0,07	0,31	-0,12	0,20	-0,44	0,28
2003	-0,49	0,15	-0,13	0,30	-0,67	0,20	-0,45	0,18	-0,52	0,18	-0,85	0,17
2005	-0,55	0,16	-0,40	0,31	-0,75	0,18	-0,46	0,16	-0,36	0,15	-0,67	0,14
2009	-0,30	0,14	-0,59	0,27	-0,56	0,22	-0,13	0,17	-0,44	0,14	-0,70	0,15
2010	-0,06	0,13	-0,38	0,26	-0,66	0,21	-0,10	0,17	-0,36	0,13	-0,67	0,14
2011	0,05	0,13	-0,05	0,25	-0,62	0,21	-0,08	0,16	-0,33	0,13	-0,62	0,14
2012	-0,03	0,12	0,05	0,23	-0,57	0,21	-0,10	0,17	-0,32	0,13	-0,61	0,13
2013	-0,07	0,12	0,00	0,24	-0,41	0,20	-0,07	0,17	-0,37	0,13	-0,75	0,13
2014	0,01	0,13	-0,16	0,20	-0,42	0,21	0,02	0,18	-0,25	0,14	-0,85	0,13
2015	0,03	0,13	-0,33	0,21	-0,65	0,22	-0,07	0,17	-0,35	0,14	-0,91	0,13
2016	-0,02	0,12	-0,30	0,21	-0,61	0,20	-0,11	0,17	-0,49	0,15	-0,95	0,13
2017	-0,03	0,13	-0,24	0,21	-0,51	0,20	-0,04	0,18	-0,41	0,14	-0,80	0,12

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on World Bank's WGI, 2019. E=estimates ranging from approximately -2.5(weak) to 2.5(strong) governance performance; SD=standard errors. Reasons for the selection of the years: 1996-the first year available; 2003-ENP creation; 2005-created an ENP AP for Moldova; 2009-EaP was created with impact on the intensification of relations between EU-Moldova.