

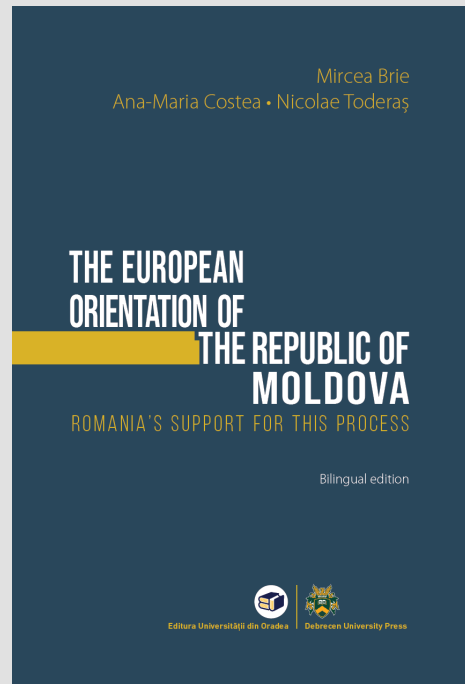
Book Review of: Mircea Brie, Ana-Maria Costea and Nicolae Toderaş

Orientarea Europeană a Republicii Moldova. Demersuri de sprijinire din partea României / The European Orientation of the Republic of Moldova. Romania's support for this process

Editura Universităţii din Oradea;
Debrecen University Press, 2025,
218p

ISBN 978-606-10-2446-9,
ISBN 978-963-615-260-4

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This book was achieved with the assistance of European Institute of Romania in the framework of the research programme SPOS 2024, namely *The European orientation of the Republic of Moldova. Romania's support for this process*.

Chapter one is entitled *Introduction and methodology*. In this chapter it is pointed out the evolution of the relations between Republic of Moldova and European Union. The intergovernmental conference from Luxembourg from June 25, 2025 marked the beginnings of the negotiations of the adherence of Republic of Moldova to European Union. In 2016, it was signed the Association agreement between Republic of Moldova to European Union which had foreseen the creation of a free trade area between the two zones. Another important moment was May 21, 2024, when EU signed with the Republic of Moldova a partnership for security and defence. According to the predictions, Republic of Moldova will probably adhere to EU in 2030. In this broader context, Romania has the role to promote Romanian language and culture in the Republic of Moldova. The region was affected by the annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation in 2014, followed by the

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invasion of Ukraine by the Russians after February 2022 (Bărbulescu; Brie, & Toderaş, 2016; Brie, 2016; Brie, 2021b).

The authors points out that, in spite of these political challenges, EU accepted the fact the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to become its candidate states in spite of the growing opposing of Moscow in the year 2023. The two countries started, in consequence, the negotiations for adherence to EU. The authors define the purpose of this collective work: „The present study has as target the analysis of the relations between the Republic of Moldova and European Union and to identify the main domains in which Romania can offer expertise and transfer of good practices in the field of European Integration” (transl.) (Brie et al., 2025: 22).

The present volume intends to further analyse the following objectives: “The analysis of the dynamics of the process of European integration of the Republic of Moldova in the contemporary geopolitical context”, “The achievement of a SWOT analysis concerning the evolution and the dynamics of the process of European integration of the Republic of Moldova”, “The identification, analysis and evaluation of the modalities by which Romania can contribute to the consolidation and expansion of the progresses achieved by Republic of Moldova in an integrative process”, “The construction of certain alternative scenarios concerning the political and geopolitical evolution”, “The formulation of certain recommendations which to sustain the acceleration of the implementation of the necessary reforms in the view of bringing closer the Republic of Moldova and the European Union”, “the formulation of certain recommendations of public communication in order to support the authorities from the Republic of Moldova in the promotion of the process of European integration”.

Chapter 2 is entitled, *The European integration process of the Republic of Moldova in the current geopolitical context*. The authors focus on the evolution of geopolitical context of EU and Republic of Moldova. The region confronted with two trends: (1) the expansion towards Est of European Union and NATO and (2) the trend of Russian Federation to regain its influence from the time of the dominance of USSR, using including its military force in this sense. Several crises hit European continent, European Union and its neighbours such as: the economic and financial crisis, the migration from Near East and Northern Afrika on European territory, the crises generated by the virus Covid-19.

Another aspect signalled by the authors was the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy in the year 2003. In 2009 was launched another initiative called Eastern Partnership, after the build-up in 2008 of the Union of Mediterranean Sea states. The intention of Eastern Partnership was to deepen the European Neighbourhood Policy in the neighbouring

states from ex-Soviet space. But this Eastern Partnership had to face certain limits in the actual given context such as: “the limits of a low engagement of EU in what it concerns the integration of the states of Eastern Partnership”, “the general geopolitical context and the opposition of the Russian Federation towards this project in particular”, “specific national interests of the states from Eastern Partnership”. (transl.) (Brie et al., 2025; Brie, 2017b).

The intention of the authors was to study the evolution of the Republic of Moldova in its way up to European Union. The authors points out that the story of the Republic of Moldova is the most successful story of European integration from the states member in Eastern Partnership. In the same time, among these states, the Republic of Moldova is the greatest recipient of European funds as a states of European policy of vicinity. (Brie et al., 2025: 48; Costea; Putină, & Brie, 2024).

Another fact signalled by the authors is that, during the pandemic of the virus Covid-19, European Commission offered to the Republic of Moldova a substantial help of 100 millions Euro. (Brie et al., 2025: 50).

The authors of the present volume offered the index of Eastern Partnership in order to quantify the progresses achieved by the Republic of Moldova in fields such as: “economy, security, state of law, inter-connectivity, mobility” (transl.) (p. 50-51) A part of these data were published in a Pilot Project in November 2011. (Brie et al., 2025: 51; Brie, 2017a).

Analysing the index of Eastern Partnership countries during 2011-2023, the authors of the volume show that, in the context of the aggression of Russia towards Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova approached, more and more, the European Union. The index of Eastern Partnership, shows the authors, includes three macro dimensions: “**management**”, “**approximation**” and “**linkage**”. The principle of **management** is based on a mechanism of coordination that has as target the legislative harmonization of the laws of Republic of Moldova with the legislative framework of the EU, the involvement of civil society in the public issues and political life in the Republic of Moldova and also the management of EU-Moldovan affairs.

The second dimension of the index of European Partnership is **approximation**. It refers to problems such as “democracy; state of law; the quality of governance; market economy; liberty; security and justice; energy and transport; environment; education and mobilities” (transl.) (Brie et al., 2025: 54) At this chapter, the index was analysed during an interval of 12 years (the minimum for the Republic of Moldova was in 2012 and 2017, namely 0.65 and the maximum was 0.73 for the same country during 2015-2016) (Goreainov, and Brie, 2018; Brie, 2022; Toderaş, 2022a; Toderaş, 2022b).

The third dimension of the index of Eastern Partnership is **linkage**. (Brie et al., 2025: 55). It refers to issues such as: “political dialogue; commerce and European integration; transport and energy; liberty; security and justice; education and mobilities (people to people) and assistance for international security, political dialogue and communication” (transl.) (Brie et al., 2025: 55). The minimum of this index for the Republic of Moldova was 0.68 and the maximum was 0.71.

The authors of the present volume bring into discussion the issue of **association agreement** between the Republic of Moldova and European Union, relations that had developed in the context of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The Republic of Moldova elaborated, in the actual context, an action plan with the target to implement the requests of the European Commission. In August 2022, it was enacted the document Agenda of Association EU-Republic of Moldova with mentioned the priorities emerged in the context of EU- Republic of Moldova association agreement. (Brie et al., 2025: 57). In the process of negotiations between EU-Republic of Moldova emerged new issues such as: “democratization of the Republic of Moldova; energetic security and digitalisation” (transl.) (Brie et al., 2025: 65).

In the year 2024, it was elaborated a report reflecting the relationship between Republic of Moldova and EU revealing that: “The Republic of Moldova demonstrated a significant resilience in the process of its adherence to EU, mastering efficiently the challenges of the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the tryings of Russian Federation of internal destabilization of Republic of Moldova by means of hybrid actions” (transl.) (Brie et al., 2025: 65). There were achieved substantial progress in various domains such as “judicial system”, “fight against corruption”, “the combat of organized crime”, “concurrence”, “monetary and economic policy”, and “reforms in public administration”.

Another important event was the fact that, in October 20, 2024, in the Republic of Moldova it took place a referendum concerning the introduction in the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova of the objective of integration of this state in European Union as full member, referendum who reached a number of 50,35% of affirmative votes. It is imperious, consider the authors of the present volume, an **economic transformation** to occur in the Republic of Moldova in order that this country to be accepted in the European Union. (Brie et al., 2025: 67). In consequence, the Republic of Moldova will have to revise its policies concerning the economic development, the industrial development as well and, also, the innovation and research framework.

Another fact remarked by the authors is that, although the GDP of the Republic of Moldova increased in the last years, it is still small. The economic

growth in the last years in the Republic of Moldova was of 4,6%, point out the authors.

Chapter III is entitled *The relationship between the Republic of Moldova and Romania, as the main element of Romania's foreign policy*. The relations between the two countries since 1991 has as target the European integration of the Republic of Moldova and the intensification of cooperation between the two states (Brie et al., 2025: 73; Brie, 2021a; Brie, 2023). The purpose of this collaboration was the rapprochement of the Republic of Moldova towards European Union' culture and values (Brie, 2018). In 2010, it was signed the Declaration for a strategic partnership between the two countries focusing on the European integration of the Moldovan state. Romanian state offered support for the implementation of the Association Agreement of the Republic of Moldova with EU and, also, militated for the liberalization of visas for the Republic of Moldova' citizens. Romania offered to the Republic of Moldova an "unconditioned support" with the view of its European integration (Brie et al., 2025: 74).

In 2020, it was signed an agreement for technological and financial assistance of the Republic of Moldova by Romania; Romania granting to Moldovan state 100 millions Euro, supporting thus specific projects. In 2022, it was granted to the Republic of Moldova by Romanian state another 100 millions of Euro for 7 years.

It was created a platform of support of the Republic of Moldova in the view of its adherence to EU in 2022 with the support of Romania, France, Germany, USA. (Brie et al., 2025: 75) The purpose was to offer to the Republic of Moldova political financial and logistic assistance with the view of its future adherence to EU and also support to implement necessary internal reforms. Also, Romania was the main bilateral creditor of the Republic of Moldova. (Brie et al., 2025: 76). It offered to the Republic of Moldova a loan of 150 millions Euro in 2014.

Also, Romania was an important economic partner of the Republic of Moldova, especially in the field of commerce and investments. Many Romanian state or private companies made investments in the Republic of Moldova in the last years. With the help of Romanian capital, the banking system of the Republic of Moldova bypassed the robberies of 2012-2014. Romanian Society for Natural Gas ("TRANSGAZ" S.A.) made investments in Romania and Republic of Moldova in the value of 430 millions Euro. In the energetic domain, there were also common projects Romania- Republic of Moldova (Brie et al., 2025: 77). Thus Republic of Moldova separated by energetic initiatives of Russian Federation (Brie et al., 2025: 78), becoming more and more autonomous in the domain of energetic potential.

Also, Romania and the Republic of Moldova cooperated in the military field (Brie et al., 2025: 78), being signed an agreement for military cooperation in 2012. Moldovan state will integrate solidly in European defence and security policy (Brie et al., 2025: 79).

Another domain for joint cooperation between Romania and Republic of Moldova is the one of education. (Brie et al., 2025: 79), including by offering from the Romanian state of a few thousands of scholarships to Moldovan students. The Educational system of the Republic of Moldova will integrate, slowly in the European system of Education.

Most projects between Romania and the Republic of Moldova focused on issues such as “modernization of schools and kindergartens”, “reduction of energetic vulnerabilities”, “support of civil society” (transl.) in the Republic of Moldova. (Brie et al., 2025: 80; Costea and Brie, 2025; Brie, & Putină, 2023; Brie, and Solcan, 2025; Putină, & Brie, 2023).

Chapter four is entitled *Romania's European path: good practice lessons and their transfer towards the Republic of Moldova*. Romania can transmit to the Republic of Moldova, lessons that can be structured on three layers: 1. The insurance of the internal stability and strategical planning, 2. The modality of fundamentation of the strategy of negotiations for adherence and 3. the definitivation and continuous strengthening of institutional system and internal governance (transl.) (Brie et al., 2025: 81).

Concerning the first desiderata, the **Declaration of Snagov** from June 21, 1995, paved the way for the creation of a political consensus regarding the adherence to EU and NATO. Republic of Moldova started its way to European and Euroatlantic integration following the pattern of Romania and consensus for its integration in NATO and EU was visible since 2005.

The authors notice that after it was reached the objective of Romania's adherence to EU, the path of European integration was slowed down. (Brie et al., 2025: 82) Objectives such as the adherence to Schengen space and European monetary and economic integration were put on a far-away plan. Concerning the public communication, the authors notice that on the way of the completion of negotiations for adherence of Romania to EU, it came up a campaign of false myths about EU (Brie et al., 2025: 84). It was elaborated a strategy of public communication in order to put an end to this phenomenon.

The authors focus later on the strategy of negotiation. In the first year of negotiation, shows the authors, Romania opened 9 chapters. By the end of 2002, all the chapters of negotiation were opened. (Brie et al., 2025: 89). The current negotiation framework of EU- Republic of Moldova involved 35 chapters that will be negotiated between 2025-2028. (Brie et al., 2025: 90).

In the opinion of the authors (Brie et al., 2025: 97), Republic of Moldova has a lot to learn from Romania's integration process, concerning, especially, the coordination of European Affairs. It is necessary to establish an "appropriate governance framework" which to set up the competences and institutions involved in the process of European integration, including in the post-accession time. Republic of Moldova must maintain "stability" of the coordination of integration system and to implement the necessary legislative framework for the achievement of European integration process (Brie et al., 2025: 98).

An important lesson which Republic of Moldova must learn from Romania's lesson of integration is that "The management and control system is difficult to build and is a parallel process to the negotiation process" (Brie et al., 2025: 100).

Romania in its pre-accession process created several positions in public administration. A body of European integration was subordinated to the Ministry of European integration (Brie et al., 2025: 100). Republic of Moldova, suggests the authors, can learn from the lessons of Romania that it is important to train "specialized personal" and provide them mobilities, forming thus a team of experts in European Union issues.

The similarities of the process of European integration in Romania and Republic of Moldova make the authors believe that the Romanian "experiment" of European integration can provide lessons for Moldova's case.

Chapter V is entitled *Future scenarios on the Republic of Moldova's EU integration process and Romania's view in regarding them*.

Building the potential scenarios of development of Republic of Moldova, the authors take into consideration the geopolitics of states such as Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, the EU, the Russian Federation, Romania and NATO/USA, the building of these scenarios taking into consideration the certainties of present times and, also, uncertainties, of the future times. (Brie et al., 2025: 103). In what it concerns the EU-Moldovan relation, the most probable scenario is to change voting method from "unanimity" to "qualified majority" (Brie et al., 2025: 104).

In what it concerns EU-Russian Federation relationship, it is probable that sanctions are maintained and a more normal relation between these two will follow and the authors wonder how these changes will influence the situation of Moldovan state. (Brie et al., 2025: 105).

Another question raised by the authors is how Russian attack on Ukraine will influence the accession to EU of the Moldovan state. (Brie et al., 2025: 105).

And last but not least, is how the internal evolution of the Republic of Moldova like “societal fragmentation” and “economic development” will influence the view of decision-makers in this country and the path of European integration (Brie et al., 2025: 105).

The authors allocate a space regarding “*Best case scenario: the Republic of Moldova in the EU by 2030*”. This is the target established by the authorities from Chişinău (Brie et al., 2025: 105) according to this scenario the events from Ukraine (Russian invasion) will not slow down Moldovan state’s accession. NATO would be a factor of stability in the policy of Republic of Moldova while Romania is the most important Eastern supporter of the Republic of Moldova (Brie et al., 2025: 106) during its integrative process, including by adaptation of this country of the *acquis communautaire*. Republic of Moldova can have a separative path of integration from Ukraine or another scenario is to be coupled together (Moldova and Ukraine) in the process of integration finishing this process in the same time (Brie et al., 2025: 108). The third scenario identified by the authors of the present volume is “Maintaining the Status Quo” (the two countries will start together the accession negotiation and Republic of Moldova will be delayed in this process because of the events from Ukraine) (Brie et al., 2025: 111). In this scenario, NATO is not a valid option for the two countries.

The forth-scenario identified by the authors of collective volume is “The Republic of Moldova – buffer zone between East and West”. (Brie et al., 2025: 113). According to this scenario the conflict EU-Russian Federation will continue and the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine will be included in a “buffer zone” and this scenario has no prospects for medium and short-term integration in institutions such as EU and NATO.

The fifth scenario identified by the authors is “Worst case scenario: the Republic of Moldova-Indefinitely Non-EU”. In this case EU will “freeze” negotiation processes with the two countries: the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine and will cease material aid towards Ukraine. The states will remain in “Eastern Partnership” without perspectives for European integration (Brie et al., 2025: 116), the two countries will be members in Eurasian economic union, not in EU, while NATO will cease to be an “option” for Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

Chapter 6 is entitled *Dynamics of the European integration process of the Republic of Moldova*. The authors allocate a space to “feasibility of the Republic of Moldova’s Accession to the EU by 2030” (Brie et al., 2025: 119). This process will be achieved if, the Republic of Moldova, continues its way of reforms in the context of internal political stability. EU members states and, especially, Romania will support and assist the Republic of Moldova to the full membership of the European Union. The author points out, that, in

the context of Romanian-Ukrainian war, the Republic of Moldova seems to be a “strategic partner for stability and security in the region”. Stakeholders were interviewed about potential adherence of the Republic of Moldova to EU, by 2030, saying a yes to this question and considering that the socio-economic development of the country will make a difference then. Most decision-makers think that by 2030, the Republic of Moldova will join EU. Some respondents underlined that for future adherence of the Republic of Moldova is important “the geopolitical context” in which this country is placed. A quarter of the respondents consider that the Republic of Moldova will join EU after 2030. Only one voter consider that Scenario 3 is valid, namely that the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine will begin together the accession negotiations, and “will continue indefinitely but without clear timeframes or deadlines” (Brie et al., 2025: 121).

Chapter 7 is entitled *Recommendation for supporting the Republic of Moldova in the context of European integration*. These are three kinds of recommendations: “strategic”, “tactical” and “operational” (Brie et al., 2025: 135).

At the strategic level, we have the next recommendation: “Ensuring support that is unitary, structured and complete, coherent, convincing, and performance-oriented” (Brie et al, 2025: 135). EU provides support to Republic of Moldova in the view of integration in order to reach “institutional convergence” between the two entities. It is necessary a transfer from EU to Republic of Moldova of “successful and high-quality practices”. From Russians pattern of integration and failures, Republic of Moldova will have to learn.

At tactical level we have the next recommendation: “Establish an integrative approach at the level of the national strategic framework”. Republic of Moldova will be supported “in the conduct of negotiations on chapters and preparations for EU accession”. Also “the institutional strategic plans” will include “objectives and measures” in order to help Republic of Moldova to conduct negotiations with the view of accession”.

Another recommendation at “tactical” level is: “Establish a national focal point for providing support for the European integration of the Republic of Moldova” that should act as an interface between public administration requirements of the Republic of Moldova and the expertise in this field coming from Romania. The last recommendation at tactical level is: “Accelerate the maturation processes of strategic connectivity projects with the Republic of Moldova”. At this chapter it is necessary to identify strategic projects to be started and developed in the post 2027 financial period.

At the dimension Operational level, we have the next recommendation “Revitalizing the activity of the Romania- Republic of Moldova Joint

Intergovernmental Commission for European Integration". The EU Commission must supervise the evaluation of cooperation and the new initiatives in the domain of European integration of the Moldovan state.

The second recommendation at operational level is "Providing financial incentives to civil servants participating in expertise transfer missions in the Republic of Moldova". The Romanian expertise in Republic of Moldova in the domain of public administration must provide civil servants having their expenses and transport covered. The next recommendation at this chapter is: "Establish an institutional mechanism for the medium-term (1-3 months) and long-term (more than 3 months) secondment of civil servants from Romania's central public administration to the Republic of Moldova". The authors remarks the similarity between this mechanism and EU-funded twinning missions based on a "financial incentive component" like the one described in the anterior recommendation. Other two recommendations at operational level are: "Supporting the economic and industrial transformation of the Republic of Moldova by involving experts from the Republic of Moldova in the specific processes of implementing the National Strategy for Research, Innovation and Smart Specialization 2022-2027 at the national level, as well as the regional the North East and South East development regions". And the last recommendation at operational level is "Intensify the transfer of expertise from Romania t the Republic of Moldova in the field of education at all levels, with a view of enabling Moldova's participation in the European Education Area starting from the pre-accession stage" (Brie et al., 2025: 139).

Chapter 8 is entitled *Conclusions*. The integration in the European Union of the Republic of Moldova was influenced by "geopolitical context" and by "internal political changes" (Brie et al., 2025: 142). Concerning the geopolitical context, NATO and EU became important actors in the region, integrating in their ranks states from former USSR, while Russian Federation by the coming to power of Vladimir Putin in the year 2000 showed a policy of "hostility" in the region of Ukraine and Republic of Moldova. The population of the Republic of Moldova was the subject of "hybrid warfare" with the Russians, think the authors (Brie et al., 2025: 142). Some governments that took the power in the Republic of Moldova in the last decades were favourable to European Integration while others not. The last woman president, Maia Sandu regarded with benevolence the desiderata of European integration of the Republic of Moldova. On the ground of Russian annexation of Crimeea, citizens of Republic of Moldova (after 2014) received the right to have free and visa-free access for EU-space.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine brought insecurity in the region of the Republic of Moldova (Brie at al., 2025: 143). The security of the entire European continent will be strengthened by the access of Republic of

Moldova as a full member of the European Union. The “hybrid” war started by Russian Federation with the Moldovan state “contributes to a process of eroding democracy and threatens the consolidation of the rule of law and political balance”. Other factor of instability in the region is the conflict from Transnistria last but not least, the authors of the present volume pointed out the determinant role of Romania “in the democratization and Europeanization of Republic of Moldova” (Brie et al., 2025: 144) Romania’s future and present support for the Republic of Moldova to start and develop the negotiation process and the help in implementation of reforms in view of integration is a constant phenomenon. Facilitating exchanges of specialists and students from Republic of Moldova in Romania will enrich the Moldovan process of integration with expertise from Romanian experiment of integration in EU (Brie et al., 2025: 146).

The present book presents various points of view and scenarios concerning the integration of the Republic of Moldova in the European Union. The authors underline Romania’s support in this process. For the interesting details considering the condition of the Republic of Moldova and its neighbours, for its interdisciplinary character, the book is an outstanding publication of the approached domain.

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