

THE «REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA» BETWEEN TRANSITION, GLOBALISATION AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

1. Introduction

The Republic of Moldova is situated in south-eastern Europe, between Romania (in the west) and Ukraine (in the north, east and south). Moldova's population consisted of 4,4 million inhabitants¹, on 33,7 thousand square kilometres and the distances between the most northern and the southern points is 350 kilometres and 150 kilometres from west to east. The combination of climate and soil conditions create high yields of cereals, grapes, tobacco, fruit and vegetables.

It includes only a small proportion of historical territories of Moldova (Moldavia is an anglicized version of the Slavic name of the region²) most of which are now in Romania, while others (southern Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina) are in Ukraine.

Moldova is a fertile plain, including three physical geographic zones: forest, forest-steppe and steppe, the maximal altitude is of 429 meters and the main rivers are the Dnestr (Nistru in Moldovan language and Dniester in Russian), which flow through the eastern regions into the Black Sea, and the Prut that it joins the Danube at the southern tip of Moldova.

The majority of population are Moldovans exactly the 64%, (ethnic Romanians), Ukrainians and Russian are 26%, Gagauz (Turkish adherents of Orthodox Christianity) are 3,5%, after Bulgarians, Jews and others. The ethnic problem does not exist because the separatists became less an ethnic conflict and more a purely political struggle. The separatists did not represent compact ethnic population. Today, after the creation of Gagauzia UTA, the problem exists only in Transdniestria (see 3.).

The capital is Chisinau, which is situated in the central region of the Republic and it had a population of 700 thousand inhabitants³. The state language is Moldovan (equivalent to Romanian) using the Latin alphabet. Other spoken language is Russian.

2. Directory

The Republic of Moldova proclaimed independence from the USSR on 27 August 1991 and on the 29 July 1994 the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova was adopted.

The Republic of Moldova is a sovereign, independent and indivisible State. The Parliament is the supreme legislative body and sole legislative authority, it consists of 101 members, directly for a four-year term. Following the most recent balloting of 22 March 1998, the 101 seats were distributed as follows: the Party of Moldovan Communists, 40 (leader Vladimir Voronin); the Democratic Convention of Moldova, 26 (leader the first President of Moldova Mircea Snegur, elected 8 December 1991); the Bloc for a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova, 24 (leader Dumitru Diacov); and the Party of Democratic Forces, 11 (leader Valeriu Matei)⁴.

The President of the Republic of Moldova is Petru Lucinschi (directly elected in December 1996). He is the Head of the State and is elected directly by the voters for a four-year term. The President has main responsibilities included the promulgation of laws, the issue of decrees, the scheduling of referendums, the conclusion of international treaties and the dissolution of the Parliament.

The President is allowed to participate in parliamentary proceedings and, after consultation with the parliamentary majority, is responsible for nominating a Prime Minister designate and the government. The President can preside over government meetings and consult the Government on matters of special importance and urgency. On proposals submitted by the Prime Minister, the President may revoke or nominate members of the Government in cases of vacancies or the reallocation of portfolios⁵.

¹ According to the 1991 census.

² KING Charles, *Moldova in Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States*, Europa Publications Limited. London. 1996, page 516.

³ DITTER Jean Guillaume and SMESSOV Serge, *Moldavie*, CFCE. Paris. 1996, page 9.

⁴ BANKS Arthur and MULLER Thomas (ed. by), *Political Handbook of the world 1998*, CSA Publications, Binghamton University. New York. 1998, page 616.

⁵ KING Charles, *Moldova in Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States*, Europa Publications Limited. London. 1996, page 527.

The principal organ of executive is the Council of Ministers. Following the legislative election in March 1998, the President Lucinschi nominated Prime Minister Ion Ciubuc, leader of Movement for Democratic and Prosperous Moldova. After Ciubuc Lucinschi nominated Ion Sturza, but now the Head of Government is Dumitru Braghis, nominated the 21 December 1999.

For administrative purposes Moldova is divided into districts, towns and villages, in which local self-government is practised⁶.

3. The case of the Transdnestria: it is a globalization problem?

The most important problem for Moldova was and is the conflict over the secessionist republic of Dnestr. The region of Dnestr broke away from Moldova in 1990, has remained firmly in the hand of pro-Russian, old guard communists. It also hosts a significant Russian troop contingent whose future is a major point of contention between Chisinau and Moscow. The Dnestr region which still has the 14th Russian Army of General Lebed, located on its territory, has become a litmus test for Russian's policy toward what it calls the «near abroad».

Attempts by Chisinau to bring it back into the fold either by force (the war in March-June 1992) or by negotiations⁷.

The peace accord signed between Moldova and Russia on 21 July 1992 brought an end to the fighting and established a security zone along the Dnestr river and in the city of Bender.

On October 1994, often assistance of the OSCE, Moldova and Russia signed a agreement that it provided for the withdrawal of the 14th Russian Army from Transdnestria within three years, but after the referendum in Transdnestria in late March 1995 some 91% of those participated voted against the withdrawal of Russian forces⁸.

Negotiations between Moldovan and Transdnestria administrations continue. In 1996 the two parts signed on a memorandum the principles for a peace settlement.

Today the situation is still complicate.

This year President Petru Lucinschi and Transdnestria separatist leader Igor Smirnov, meeting in Tiraspol on 17 February 1998, failed to bridge their main political difference but reached agreement on how to resolve outstanding economic questions. Lucinschi said Moldova et Tiraspol's demand that it be treated as an independent state, while Smirnov pointed to the Transdnestrian constitution, which, he noted, defines the region as such. Smirnov added that Tiraspol is «ready to take into consideration international practice» but only if the two sides conduct negotiations as «fully equal partners». He said the term «unified state», included in the 8 May memorandum, is interpreted in Tiraspol as meaning «two states that have decided to build one unified country».

The Transdnestria problem is still a big problem for Moldova; this problem is always open. Moldova is located some 500 kilometres from Russia, but in our time 500 kilometres are nothing, for Moldova the globalization with Russia is really full.

Bibliography

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3. GRIBINCEA Mihai, The case of Moldova, in Transition. London. 20.10.1995, pages 3-4
4. KING Charles, Moldova in Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, Europa Publications Limited. London. 1996, pages 513-533.

⁶ KING Charles, Moldova in Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, Europa Publications Limited. London. 1996, page 516.

⁷ GRIBINCEA Mihai, The case of Moldova, in Transition., London 20.10.1995, pages 3-4.

⁸ KING Charles, Moldova in Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, Europa Publications Limited. London. 1996, page 519.