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## **EUPROX State-of-the-Art Reports n. 2** July 2008

### **Literature Review on the relations between the EU and Moldova** Benjamin Kienzle

Visiting Student Researcher  
University of California, Berkeley  
[kienzle@berkeley.edu](mailto:kienzle@berkeley.edu)

This paper is framed within the project [EUPROX](#) -Coordination, Internationalisation and Europeanisation in the proximity of the European Union- being carried out by the Observatory of European Foreign Policy. The objective of this project is to evaluate and explain the varying impact of EU policies on its neighbouring countries as related to the observed patterns of relationship between the EU and said countries. The project covers the cases of Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, Croatia, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia, in the following issue areas: trade, energy, environment, migration, good governance, and foreign and security policies. This paper offers the state of the art of the research in the case of Moldova. It starts presenting an overview of the specificity of the literature about the country. The next section, evaluates the literature on the general relations between the EU and Moldova. The third section reviews the literature on each issue area. The review closes with a bibliography of some of the most relevant sources organised by themes and some websites of relevance for the project.

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## 1. Introduction

"I have to tell even educated people in Brussels the name of the capital of the Republic of Moldova. This is an indication of the lack of knowledge about or interest in this country."<sup>1</sup> This devastating assessment of EU-Moldova relations by the former Chair of the European Parliament delegation for relations with Moldova in the major anthology on the topic ([Lewis, 2004](#)) reflects not only the political but also the academic state of affairs. Moldova has never figured prominently in the literature on the EU's relations with its new neighbouring countries after the 2004 big bang enlargement. It often appears in the context of other issues such as the EU's relations with the new Eastern neighbours – Ukraine and Belarus – or the EU's relationship with Russia. Single case studies of Moldova are rather rare. Nevertheless, a substantial body of literature exists that cannot be easily neglected.

However, as a small country with minor economic and political weight – it is slightly larger than Belgium and has merely 4.2 million inhabitants – the number of issues that have attracted the attention of academics has been limited. Traditionally, the two most important issues have been (a) Moldova's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and the creation of a new Moldovan state with an own identity and (b) the conflict with Transnistria, a break-away region on the left bank of the river Dnjestr. The literature on the first issue focuses to a large extent on the contested identity of Moldova. Ethnically and linguistically Moldovans are closely tied to Romania, its larger neighbour in the South. Historically, however, the area of today's Republic of Moldova has been in a complex position between the Romanian and Russian (and Turkish) spheres of influence, which has brought about Moldova as a complex entity. It comes, therefore, as no surprise that the foundation of the state of Moldova has led to numerous academic works, ranging from diplomatic history to identity formation. In this regard, the work of Charles King, the Ion Ratiu Professor of Romanian Studies at Georgetown University, stands out in particular.<sup>2</sup> As will be seen further on, in recent years the peculiarities of the Moldovan state have also led to research that can be included in the broad field of 'good governance.' The other major issue in the literature has been the (frozen) conflict with the dominantly Russian and Ukrainian Transnistria region, which has raised important questions about Transnistria as an unrecognized Soviet-style statelet, Moldova's relations with an increasingly self-assertive Russia and the role of

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Marinus Wiersma. 2004. "Moldova and the European Union: A Missed Opportunity?" In *The EU and Moldova: On a Fault-line of Europe*, edited by A. Lewis. London: Federal Trust, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Charles King. 1999. *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press; or Charles King. 1994/1995. "Eurasia Letter: Moldova With A Russian Face." *Foreign Policy* 97:106-120. See also Nicholas Dima. 2001. *Moldova and the Transdnestr Republic*. New York, NY: Columbia UP; Donald L. Dyer, ed. 1996. *Studies in Moldovan: The History, Culture, Language and Contemporary Politics of the People of Moldova*. New York, NY: Columbia UP; Pål Kolstø, ed. 2002. *National Integration and Violent Conflict in Post-Soviet Societies: The Cases of Estonia and Moldova*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield; Marcel Mitrasca. 2002. *Moldova: A Romanian Province under Russian Rule: Diplomatic History from the Archives of the Great Powers*. New York, NY: Algora; Andrew Williams. 2004. "States, Borders and the Idea of the 'Common State': The Case of Moldova, 1992–2002." *International Relations* 18 (3):345-359.

the major international organization involved originally in conflict resolution processes there, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

In overall, however, this review of the literature on Moldova will show that Moldova is partly an underresearched field, in particular in areas such as immigration or the environment. Also in the field of governance and foreign and security policies, important gaps still remain such as the promotion of good governance by the EU or the Transnistria conflict from a Russian perspective. As explained below, the specific issue of EU-Moldova relations has gained more weight in recent years, reflecting thus the intensification of the relationship between the Union and its new neighbour. But it still remains largely an experts' area. For the broader audience, Moldova is rather a minor part of the EU's overall relations with its neighbouring countries in Eastern Europe.

**Table 1. Literature on the analysed issue areas**

Policy	Literature on Moldova			Literature on EU-Moldovan relations		
	Under-researched	Some degree of research	Highly researched	Under-researched	Some degree of research	Highly researched
Trade		X		X	(ENP)	
Energy	X*			X*		
Environment	X			X		
Migrations		X		X	(ENP)	
Good Governance			X		X	
Foreign and Security Policies			X			X

\* Energy is one of the least researched but not necessarily an underresearched topic, because energy does not play an important role in Moldova. Source: Author's own elaboration

## 2. The literature on the EU's relations with Moldova

EU-Moldova relations have only emerged as an important issue in the academic literature after 2001/2002. In fact, virtually no specific literature exists for the time before 2000. Thus, academic research followed political realities, since originally the EU maintained merely low-profile relations with Moldova based on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which was signed in 1994 and entered into force in 1998. Two factors changed this situation from 2001/2002 on: first, the development of the new

European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the development of military capabilities in the EU in the form of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The ENP is basically the EU's answer to the question of how to deal with the new neighbouring countries after the 2004 and 2007 rounds of enlargement. In this context, Moldova, which became a direct EU neighbour after the accession of Romania in 2007, has turned into an increasingly important country for the EU. In the wake of intensifying EU-Moldova relations in the framework of the ENP, researchers have become more interested in the topic ([Yakemtchouk, 2004](#); [Zagorski, 2002](#)). Consequently, a large part of the general literature on EU-Moldova relations is directly related to the ENP ([Commission of the European Communities, 2004](#); [Gabanyi, 2005](#); [Kempe, 2002](#); [Neukirch, 2003](#)) and similar aspects such as the process of Europeanization in Moldova, integration, and relations between Moldova and Romania (Löwenhardt et al., 2001; [Munteanu, 2006](#); [Schmidtke et al., 2008](#); [Tomescu-Hatto et al., 2005](#)). The other important aspect that has played an increasingly prominent role in the general literature on EU-Moldova relations is security, in particular the Transnistria conflict ([Barbé et al., 2007](#); [Lynch, 2005](#); [Peters et al., 2006](#); [Popescu, 2005](#)). After the end of the major wars in the former Yugoslavia the EU began to turn its attention to other conflicts that were looming in the neighbourhood of the EU, e.g. the Transnistria conflict. At the same time, the EU was eager to find suitable conflicts to employ its newly developed military capacities in the framework of ESDP. In 2003, the EU discussed seriously the possibility of an ESDP mission to Moldova. Even though the project was finally dismissed in favour of a European Commission dominated Border Assistance Mission, security relations between Moldova and the EU have, therefore, gained some attention from pundits.

Despite the increase of literature in the field of EU-Moldova relations, the topic has never become a key issue of EU studies. Even more, Moldova as such has hardly turned into a major topic in the field of international affairs in general. The large majority of literature can be found in specific publications for experts. For instance, many articles can be found in specialized journals such as *Osteuropa*, the *South East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs* or *East European Politics and Societies*. Only very rarely does Moldova-related research lead to publications in generalized, high-impact journals such as *International Security*, *International Relations* or the *Journal of Common Market Studies*. Many publications are also in Russian, Ukrainian or Romanian/Moldovan. However, as only a few experts dominate these languages, these publications are not taken into consideration in this review. The main focus is on the three major Western languages that provide substantial literature on Moldova, namely English, French and German. Even though English is the *lingua franca* of the academic world, there is substantial literature in both French and German, reflecting thus the general German interest in Eastern Europe and France's special relation with Romania, Moldova's ethnic brother. Finally, it should be pointed out that publications by official organizations such as the EU, the OSCE or the World Bank and working papers by think tanks or NGOs play an extraordinarily large role in the literature on Moldova. They provide often crucial information, especially in less researched areas. To varying degrees this general assessment is also reflected in more specific fields, in particular

trade, energy, the environment, migration, good governance and foreign and security policies. However, each field has its own specific characteristics.

### 3. Literature addressing specific issue areas

#### 3.1. Trade

Trade has not been a priority for economists, who study the economy of the Republic of Moldova. As Moldova's economy has been in an extremely bad shape since the transition to a market economy – Moldovan GDP growth was largely negative in the 1990s, reaching in 1996 almost minus eight per cent – most attention has been rather paid to the country's volatile economic situation and its potential for development ([Hensel et al., 2004](#); [Orlova et al., 1999](#); [Pyshkina et al., 2004](#); [Spanu, 2004](#); [World Bank, 2005](#)). But still, there are several trade-related publications, e.g. about foreign investments ([Rosca, 2003](#); [Sturza et al., 2004](#)) or economic relations with Russia, Moldova's major trading partner ([Fokina, 2005](#); [Timush, 2005](#)). In 2004, the World Bank published a *Trade Diagnostic Study*, which can be considered to be a key publication on Moldova's trade relations ([World Bank, 2004](#)). The document focuses on the limitations of Moldova's trade relations, but provides also a specific chapter on trade with the EU and numerous useful statistics. In the case of trade, there exists also a significant overlap with the field of immigration, as the remittances of Moldovan emigrants play a crucial role in Moldova's economy.

#### 3.2. Energy

Energy is one of the least researched topics in the case of Moldova, though it is not necessarily an underresearched topic, because energy does not play an important role in Moldova. In contrast to other neighbouring countries such as Ukraine or Azerbaijan, Moldova is neither an important producer of energy nor is it a vital transit country for oil or gas. The few energy-related studies focus, therefore, mainly on Moldova's own problems with energy such as rising energy prices ([Baclajanschi et al., 2007](#)), energy trade relations ([Bruce, 2007](#); [Dodsworth et al., 2002](#)) or oil smuggling ([Roscovan et al., 2004](#)). In this regard, Russia plays a crucial role: It provides 98 per cent of Moldova's energy and has, thus, substantial leverage in Moldova, as has been shown for example by the 2007 gas crisis.

#### 3.3. Environment

The environment is another issue that has attracted little attention by researchers. In contrast to the issue of energy, this topic is a clearly underresearched topic. Only minor academic publications deal with the environment ([Fiodorov, 2004](#); [Stec, 1997](#)), whereas other publications, most notably in the field of land use and agricultural reform ([Gorton et al., 2003](#); [Gorton, 2001](#)), are only very loosely related to environmental questions. The main research findings in this area are provided by publications of international organizations: first, by two reports of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Europe ([1998](#); [2005](#)) and by another report of the United

Nations Development Programme (2004). These reports provide substantial information on environmental issues in Moldova, including national legislation, international cooperation and key statistics.

### 3.4. Migration

The case of immigration is a better researched issue than the previous two. The major issues that have been addressed are the EU visa regime and its effects on Moldovan citizens (Culic, 2008; Gheorghiu 2004; Pop et al., 2005; Szymborska, 2007), the trafficking of human beings (Kartusch et al., 2003), in particular of women (Cosa et al., 2007), and the impact of remittances by Moldovan emigrants (Cuc et al., 2005; Lücke et al., 2007; Munteanu, 2005). However, given the importance of the issue for Moldova – up to 37 per cent of Moldovans capable of gainful employment work outside of Moldova and their remittances correspond to almost 25 per cent of Moldova's GDP – the issue is still underresearched. Moreover, key documents are also in this case published by relevant international organizations, in particular the EU (EUBAM, 2007), the OSCE (Kartusch et al., 2003) and the International Organization for Migration (Lücke et al. 2007). Especially the latter publication, which addresses the patterns and trends of remittances in Moldova, offers a thorough overview of the problem. But it also shows that certain key issues have not been addressed adequately in the literature, for example the massive emigration of Moldovans to Russia.

### 3.5. Good Governance

If good governance is defined broadly, this area is one of the most well researched fields in the case of Moldova. Since Moldova is a country with weak state structures, many governance aspects have been addressed: the political system (Roper, 2008; Way, 2003; Way, 2005), including the role of the parliament (Crowther, 2007) and political parties (Kulik et al., 2005), the issue of regionalism and federalism (Protsyk, 2005; Roper, 2001), civil society (Badescu et al., 2004) or the problem of corruption (Munteanu, 2001). Large parts of the literature consist of peer-reviewed journal articles or books. Furthermore, the main publication on EU-Moldova relations, Ann Lewis' *The EU and Moldova: on a Fault-line of Europe*, contains several relevant chapters, e.g. on human rights, minority rights or the media.<sup>3</sup> Recently, the journal *Democratization* has also published a specific article on democracy promotion by European institutions in Moldova (McDonagh 2008). The study focuses on the effectiveness in the area of civil and political rights and argues that incentive-based approaches have been more successful than socialization-based strategies. However,

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<sup>3</sup> See Peter Maggs. 2004. "Struggling towards Law? Human Rights and Legislative Reform in Moldova." In *The EU and Moldova: On a Fault-line of Europe*, edited by A. Lewis. London: Federal Trust, pp. 49-54; Petru Clej and Alexandru Canțir. 2004. "The Media: Struggling to Break Free from Old Soviet Habits." In *The EU and Moldova: On a Fault-line of Europe*, edited by A. Lewis. London: Federal Trust, pp. 55-62; Angelina Zaporozjan-Pirgari. 2004. "Minority Rights in Moldova: Consolidating a Multiethnic Society." In *The EU and Moldova: On a Fault-line of Europe*, edited by A. Lewis. London: Federal Trust, pp. 63-72; ala Mîndîcanu. 2004. "Not a Happy One: Woman's Lot in Moldova." In *The EU and Moldova: On a Fault-line of Europe*, edited by A. Lewis. London: Federal Trust, pp. 73-78.

more similar studies are necessary to analyze comprehensively the numerous good governance policies the EU has implemented specifically in Moldova, above all regarding their effectiveness.

### 3.6. Foreign Policy

As has been already pointed out in previous sections, foreign and security policies form a key part of the literature on Moldova. The available amount of literature is abundant, though not exhaustive. In general, the dominating issue is the Transnistria conflict. The best overviews, especially from a European perspective, are the reports issued by the International Crisis Group (2003; 2004). Other publications deal with issues as different as the European dimension, Russian peacekeeping strategies and, more generally, conflict resolution possibilities (Kaufman, 1996; Lynch, 2000; Lynch, 2005; Protsyk, 2006; Vahl et al., 2004; Williams, 1999). However, given its importance for the Transnistria conflict, (Western language) studies of Russia and its perspectives, strategies and policies should be more extensive and profound. Concerning Moldova's foreign policy in a strict sense, publications focus on Moldova's relations with its neighbourhood, in particular Russia, Ukraine, Romania and the EU. Once more, Ann Lewis' *The EU and Moldova: on a Fault-line of Europe* offers several chapters in this field.<sup>4</sup>

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