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“PARADIGMA EUROPEANĂ” DOCTORAL SCHOOL**

**Romania’s contribution to the European Union’s Neighbourhood  
Policy  
PhD Thesis  
LONG ABSTRACT**

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## SUMMARY

<b>List of tables and graphs</b> .....	5
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	6
<b>Introduction</b> .....	8
<b>Chapter I Aspects of the EU enlargement. The concretization of a sui generis process</b> .....	21
1.1 The enlargement process. Concepts and phase.....	21
1.2 The EU enlargement towards East .....	29
1.3 Joining the European Union. Criteria and phases. ....	34
1.4 What is the future of the EU enlargement?.....	39
<b>Chapter II The European Neighbourhood Policy, a bridge towards the EU's neighbours</b> .....	46
2.1 Definition and genesis of the European Neighbourhood Policy .....	46
2.2 The evolution of the European Neighbourhood Policy .....	51
2.3 Mechanisms and instruments for the implementation of the new European Neighbourhood Policy.....	60
2.4 Interest directions in the new Policy .....	65
2.5 New complementary initiatives to the European Neighbourhood Policy.....	71
2.6 What will be the future of the European Neighbourhood Policy? Predictions for the year 2020.....	78
<b>Chapter III A closer cooperation. The European Union`s political relations with its Eastern Neighbours</b> .....	81
3.1. The European Union and its eastern neighbours. ....	81
3.2. The EU`s relationship with Moldova .....	85
3.3. The EU`s relationship with Ukraine.....	94
3.4 From the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to the Association Agreement. A comparative analysis.....	102
3.4.1 Moldova - from the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to the Association Agreement.....	103
3.4.2 Ukraine - from the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to the Association Agreement.....	113
3.5 The political convergence of Moldova and Ukraine. ....	120
3.6 Romania, an EU member state and the European Neighbourhood Policy.....	122

3.6.1 Romania's relationship with Moldova.....	129
3.6.2 Romania's relationship with Ukraine.....	136
<b>Chapter IV Economic issues in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy.....</b>	<b>143</b>
4.1 A comparative analysis of economic developments in Ukraine and Republic of Moldova in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy .....	143
4.2 The economic convergence of Ukraine and Moldova in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy .....	156
4.3 Romania's contributions to the economic developments of Ukraine and Moldova.....	162
4.4 The cross border cooperation of Romania, Ukraine and Moldova.....	173
<b>Chapter V Russia's challenges to the European Neighbourhood in the East.....</b>	<b>185</b>
5.1 Russia and the European Union.....	185
5.2 Eurasian Economic Union .....	189
5.3 Russia and the Eastern Partnership of the European Union.....	191
5.4 Russian intervention in Ukraine .....	195
5.4.1 The Ukrainian crises, from Vilnius to Minsk II.....	195
5.4.2 Russia's actions arouse reactions of the West .....	204
<b>Conclusions, proposals and suggestions.....</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Annexes .....</b>	<b>243</b>

**Key words:** neighbourhood, EU enlargement, cooperation, partnership, political dialogue, economic cooperation, security, influence zone.

## **Introduction**

The European Union's enlargement process created new economic and geopolitical advantages for the above mentioned, in different regions such as the Black Sea, and constantly changed the status of the Union's neighbours. The last ones have become the new members which also brought new neighbours. This kind of situation lead to the creation of a new policy, the European Neighbourhood Policy, which aims to bring the EU's neighbours closer to the former, through a deeper partnership and cooperation.

The European Neighbourhood Policy, launched in 2004, was addressed to 16 countries located in regions such as the Black Sea or the Mediterranean. Twelve of these countries have already initiated a closer partnership with the EU based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements.

The European Neighbourhood Policy represents a collaboration policy, based on common values, a policy that promotes preferential bilateral relationships between EU and each of the partner neighbours. It also facilitates law reforms of the neighbouring states and brings them closer to the European legislation; it ensures stronger political dialogue and economic integration to the European market<sup>1</sup>.

The member states located at the European Union's border have an important role in ensuring a positive dialogue between the EU and its neighbours. Compared with other member states, the EU states located at the borders of the Union have the geographical, historic and cultural advantage in connection with the EU neighbours. So, through the research *Romania's contribution to the European Union's Neighbourhood Policy*, we wanted to elaborate a scientific work which presents the involvement of a member state, Romania, in the European Neighbourhood Policy, by analyzing its political and economic relations with Ukraine and Moldova and by presenting its interventions or reactions towards events that threatens the security and the stability of the region not far beyond the EU's Eastern borders.

The research has a geographic limitation. The analysis was focused on the Eastern region of the EU's borders and it compares the involvement of Romania in bringing two countries (Ukraine and Moldova) closer to the EU's objectives, norms, values, standards and norms.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, *European Neighbourhood Policy: A year of progress Press release*, IP/05/1467, Bruxelles, 2005.

Two countries were selected as part of a case study, Ukraine and Moldova, mainly because of their geographic, and not only, location, between two economic powers European Union and Russia. Moreover, in what concerns the relationship of Romania with Ukraine, it has been observed the existence of latent conflicts and of distrust between the two of them, which altered over time their cooperation.

On the other hand, the relationship between Romania and Moldova, although have known phases of distrust, based on Moldova's fears that Romania might have some territorial interests in Moldova, it was more tightened than the relationship of Romania with Ukraine. The researched showed a pattern in the relationships of Romania with both of the above mentioned neighbour states. Based on that, it was concluded that both of the dialogues (Romania-Ukraine and Romania-Moldova) could represent a best practice example for the other in domains where one failed or encountered difficulties.

The research brought many elements of novelty and originality such as:

- The reinterpretations of the EU's enlargement process methodology and of its Neighbourhood Policy
- The generalization of the objective premises of political dialogue development between EU and Ukraine/Moldova and of political dialogue between Romania and the two analyzed neighbour countries.
- The identification of the European Neighbourhood Policy's degree of evolution from a cooperation policy to a EU accession facilitator, by systematizing and comparing the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the Association Agreement between EU and Ukraine and between EU and Moldova.
- The identification of the economic development level of Moldova and Ukraine, based on a comparative analysis of their economic evolution as presented in the Annual Reports, elaborated in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, in the period 2006-2013.
- The investigation of Romania's role in the economic cooperation with Moldova and Ukraine, based on commercial data comparison for the period 2006-2012, and on cross border cooperation of this three countries
- The research of Russia's actions towards the European Neighbourhood Policy and of West's reactions (EU- Romania included and NATO) to these actions.

The research presents different scientific investigation methods such as: the historic, the qualitative, the quantitative method, the synthesis and the analysis, the graphic and tabular method, the comparison and the observation and it used multiple sources of documentation like books and monographs, official documents, scientific articles, Ph.D. theses, researches, official sites and other type of sites.

## **Chapter I Aspects of the EU enlargement. The concretization of a sui generis process**

The EU's enlargement process brought each time the necessity of addressing new neighbours.

The declaration of the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman<sup>2</sup>, from 1950, facilitated the origins of an European and regional context of peaceful inter-states relations. Later, in 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed. This created the European Economic Community and the European Community of Atomic Energy. The six founding states of the two Communities were Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy and Holland. The initial treaties have foreseen the future enlargement of what would become the European Union and launched to other European states the invitation of joining the values and principles promoted by the European Communities.

From the Treaty of Rome until nowadays six enlargement waves took place, and the number of member states increased from six to twenty eight. The most significant enlargement was the fifth one, when ten Eastern and Central European states joined EU in 2004, followed by two others in 2007.

The enlargement process of the European Community brought the necessity of changes in the decision making process or in the European Union's institutional system, so these respond properly to all member states' requests. So, over the time, new treaties were adopted: the Maastricht Treaty, the Amsterdam Treaty, the Nice Treaty and the Lisbon Treaty.

Along with the evolution and the metamorphosis of the European Community, which in 1992 became the European Union, the EU accession process started to change in a way that ensures financial, economic, political stability in the EU.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Schuman, The Declaration of 9 May 1950 .

The European Council in Copenhagen, from 1993 proposed many accession criteria: political, economic and with respect of the European *acquis* criteria. In 1994, the European Council in Essen presented a strategy before the accession which assumed:

- signing European Agreements (or Association Agreements with EU)
- developing an institutional structured dialogue
- support for candidate states to integrate to the European market
- promoting the PHARE Program.

As for the future of the EU enlargement, the Eurobarometer<sup>3</sup> reveal the fact that before the fifth enlargement in 2004, 53% of the respondents - EU citizens were pro enlargement, while in 2014 only 37% considered that this process is a benefic one.

The above mentioned data were used later on in the research to observe to what extent does the European Neighbourhood Policy facilitated the fulfillment of the pre-accession criteria and the integration of the Eastern neighbour states to the EU.

## **Chapter II The European Neighbourhood Policy, a bridge towards the EU's neighbours**

The chapter presents a historic analysis of the European Neighbourhood Policy and presents its evolution from the begging until nowadays, based on the official documents of the European Union. Moreover, the chapter brings information on the complementary actions to the European Neighbourhood Policy and forecasts about its future.

Once the increase of the EU's member states for 15 to 27 become a certainty, were launched discussions regarding the necessity of EU approaching deeper relations with the new neighbours<sup>4</sup>. In this context, the wider Europe and the European Neighbourhood Policy came as an alternative to the integration and of tightening the EU's relations with its neighbours. Some authors like Karen Smith considered that one cannot talk about the European Neighbourhood Policy before the year of 2002<sup>5</sup>, while others agree that this policy was a subject of discussions even before this date.

The European Neighbourhood Policy aims 16 countries that are neighbouring the EU (Alger, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Israel, Jordanian, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Tunis and Ukraine), from which only 12 have deepened their relations with the EU.

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<sup>3</sup> Eurobarometer No. 79, *Public opinion in the European Union*, june 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Constantin Balaban, *Politica de vecinătate*, Editura Universitară București, București, 2009, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Karen Smith, *The outsiders: the European neighbourhood policy*, în "International Affairs" - Oxford Vol. 81 No. 4 p.757, 2005.

In 2003 was launched the document *Wider Europe — Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, which promoted the cooperation for achieving a good neighbourhood area<sup>6</sup>.

In 2004 was launched a new document, *The strategy paper*, which presented the objectives, the models of implementation and the instruments of the new policy<sup>7</sup>.

From the beginning of the European Neighbourhood Policy, each year the European Commission has published Communications which presented the strengths of the new Policy during the year and proposals for improvement.

The European Neighbourhood Policy is based on multiple mechanisms and instruments such as: Strategic documents, Country Reports, Action plans, Monitoring Reports, European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument.

Because the European Neighbourhood Policy is based on bilateral relations between the EU and the neighbour countries and because there was a need for a multilateral dimension among the neighbour states, many complementary actions to the ENP were launched (the Black Sea Synergy, The Union for the Mediterranean, the Eastern Partnership). The Eastern Partnership is representative for our research as well because it introduced initiatives that strengthened EU's relations with its neighbours, like the Association Agreements or the Action Plans for visa liberalization.

By addressing the data presented in the previous chapter, it is notably that the European Neighbourhood Policy takes an important part of the enlargement process' expertise and facilitates the fulfillment of the pre-accession criteria introduced by the Council in Copenhagen or in Essen.

### **Chapter 3. A closer cooperation. The European Union's political relations with its Eastern Neighbours**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of the research deals with the political relations of the European Union and two of its Eastern neighbours: Ukraine and The Republic of Moldova. Following, it analyse comparatively their Partnership and Cooperation Agreements and Association Agreements and the political relations established by a member state positioned at the EU borders, Romania, with the two neighbour states, mentioned above.

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<sup>6</sup>European Commission, *Wider Europe — Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, online [[http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/com03\\_104\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf)], January 2015.

<sup>7</sup>European Commission, *European Neighbourhood Policy-Strategic Document*, online [<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52004DC0373>], January 2015.



The European Union has developed cooperation with Ukraine and Moldova under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements signed in 1994. Once with the inclusion of these two states in the Neighbourhood Policy and along with signing the Action Plans in this regard in 2005, the relations between EU and these states have been amplified. Moreover, the Eastern Partnership included initiatives which aimed to bring increasingly closer Ukraine and Moldova to European Union. Thus, Ukraine had started in 2007 the negotiations regarding the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU, meanwhile Moldova had initiated this action only in 2010. Both states have signed the Association Agreement with the EU in 2014, which include creating a free trade zone. Additionally, based on the Action Plan on visa liberalization, starting with 2014, Moldova has been included by the European Commission on the list of states without a visa requirement on the territory of EU.

If from an official point of view the European Union`s relations with the two analysed states have been improved, the research has allowed us to observe the opinion of the Ukraine and Moldova`s citizens, by interpreting the Eurobarometer data<sup>8</sup>. Thus, in 2014, 56% from the Ukrainian and Moldavian participants to the study considered EU as being more important by comparison with NATO and UN, with 11% more than in 2013, meanwhile 50% of the Moldavian respondents thought the same thing. Moreover, if the Ukrainians consider EU as an important partner in keeping the peace and security in the region, this is the area where the EU should be more involved, the Moldavian respondents consider that EU should bring more its contribution to poverty reduction.

The comparative analysis of the bilateral relations between Ukraine and Moldova with EU, under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements and Association Agreements, and also the comparative analysis between the agreements has brought in the limelight the fact that the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement presents certain shortcomings and little attention paid to the security sector or the fact that this represents a type of cooperation a lower level compared to the Association Agreement, because it did not involve creating a free trade zone.

These shortcomings have been fulfilled through the Association Agreement. On one hand, the Agreements signed by EU with Ukraine are similar both in structure and content with the ones signed with Moldova. The differences consist in the presence of different fields of cooperation, and also in the differentiated implementation based on the level of

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<sup>8</sup> European Barometer regarding the opinion of the citizens from neighbour states, accessed online at [[http://euneighbourhood.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/6009ENPI\\_Report-Wave-6\\_East\\_EN\\_final\\_print.pdf](http://euneighbourhood.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/6009ENPI_Report-Wave-6_East_EN_final_print.pdf)], November 2014.

development of each state regarding the reforms. This aspect indicate that EU desires that the partner neighbour states to achieve a similar level of development. Also, based on these aspects, one can state that the two neighbour states could represent best practice for each other.

Romania supported the Neighbourhood Policy both before and after its adhesion to EU. This state has developed relations with Ukraine and Moldova since obtaining their independence, in the `90s. The connections established have followed a similar trend, which is considered to be due to their common history and culture, influenced by their geographic proximity. Compared with Ukraine, it was found a stronger involvement of Romania in supporting Moldova to become closer to EU.

#### **Chapter 4. Economic issues in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy**

The chapter starts with a comparative analysis of the economic evolution of Moldova and Ukraine in the context of Neighbourhood Policy, elaborated from the annual Country Reports for the 2006-2013 period. Those data allowed to relate to the economic convergence criteria established through the Maastricht Treaty, so as we can observe the economic convergence degree of Ukraine and Moldova to European Union. The study presented 2013 as reference year, and in that moment both states accomplished 2 out the 4 criteria they were eligible to.

Furthermore, there were analysed the economic relations established by Romania with those two states. At this point, our research presented the data of commercial trade for 2006-2013, where we can observe that European Union represent their main commercial partner both for Ukraine and Moldova. Romania, on one hand, represent a small percentage out of the total imports and exports made by Ukraine with EU (1,9%, and 4,9% in 2006, and 2,8%, and 2,9% in 2013)<sup>9</sup>, compared with the percentage out of the commercial trades between EU and Moldova (28%, and 28% in 2006, and 29%, and 35% in 2013)<sup>10</sup>. If in the case of Ukraine, Russia plays a role as important as European Union, in the case of Moldova, Russia is at a lower level not only to European Union, but to Romania as well.

The cross border cooperation between Romania, Ukraine and Moldova represented a different method of economic development of the two states neighbour to EU, through

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<sup>9</sup> The Statistical Service of Ukraine, accessed online at [[http://ukrstat.org/en/operativ/menu/menu\\_e/zed.htm](http://ukrstat.org/en/operativ/menu/menu_e/zed.htm)], November 2014.

<sup>10</sup> The National Bureau of Statistics of Republic of Moldova, accessed online at [<http://www.statistica.md/category.php?l=ro&idc=336&>], March 2014.

attracting new sources of financing, which generated new activities, new companies or new jobs. The study presented three such cross border cooperation which have been active in 2007-2013: The Joint Operational Programme Romania – Romania – Ukraine – Moldova 2007-2013, The Cross Border Cooperation Programme Hungary – Slovakia – Romania – Ukraine 2007-2013, The Joint Operational Programme Black Sea Basin 2007-2013.

## **Chapter 5. Russia`s challenges to the European Neighbourhood Policy in the East**

At the time of elaborating the Neighbourhood Policy, there were inclusion policies of Russia among the states covered by it. Despite this, some member states continued to consider this state as being instead an associate with European Union, while Russia itself considered to be on a level playing field with European Union, rather than with Moldova or Georgia. For this reason, in 2003 the European Union and Russia started to develop relations based on four common fields<sup>11</sup>.

Russia unlike European Union has chosen hard power methods to exercise its influence in the Eastern region, area included within the objectives of its actions such as Eurasian economic Union and to limit the influence of EU in this area. From the start of the Neighbourhood Policy and to the present date, there were observe many reactions of Russia both to the Neighbourhood Policy and its complementary actions, which supported the strengthening of relations with the states concerned with EU. Thus, due to its openness to EU, Georgia had to face multiple pressures launched by Russia, among the civil war in august 2008. Thereby, we remember that the Georgian exports have been blocked many times by Russia, the gas supplies to Georgia were often stopped, and the Georgian workers had interdiction to work on Russian territory or Russia had acknowledged the independence of separatist enclaves Abkhazia and Ossetia in 2008, after the war with Georgia. Nevertheless, Georgia remained firm to its European aspirations<sup>12</sup>.

The same type of pressures could be observed among other partner states as well. For instance, in 2003 Moldova had to face an embargo by Russia to Moldovan wines, which depend on the latter.

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<sup>11</sup>The Common Declaration - Déclaration commune, sommet de Saint-Petersbourg, 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2003, accessed online at [<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0191:FIN:FR:PDF>], January 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Armand Goșu, Ileana Racheru, Daniel Gheorghe, Roxana Negoii, Raluca Niță, Mircea Stan, *Parteneriatul estic: bilanț de etapă*, Policy Paper, No.6, Institutul Diplomatic Român, Bucharest, 2013, p.15.

The most recent pressure applied by Russia is on Ukraine. That has been intensified along with the Vilnius Summit in November 2013, when Ukraine delayed the signing of the Association Agreement with EU. This event initiated a series of riots in Ukraine, which favoured the involvement of Russia in this area, the annexation by the latter of the Crimean Peninsula which belonged to Ukraine and armed support of pro-Russian from the Ukrainian conflict areas. Although, to this moment, there have been signed two Peace Agreements in Minsk and Belarus, Russia continues to support the separatists protesters from the Eastern region of Ukraine.

The actions of Russia gave birth to reactions from the West. NATO initiated more actions in the Black Sea Region and sent army in this area, with the support of the NATO member states, such as Romania, Poland and Turkey. On the other hand, European Union imposed more political, economic, financial restrictive policies addressing Russia.

The study presents two possible scenarios concerning the end of the Ukrainian conflicts:

a) A new Peace Protocol will be signed by Russia, agreement that this time will be respected by this state. Thus, either the whole conflict will end, either it will continue as a civil war.

b) Russia will not withdraw its army from Ukrainian territory, and the current conflicts will transform into frozen conflicts, such the one from Transnistria. In this situation, there could be created humanitarian social format of type 5+2, the same as in the case of Transnistria.