

**COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA WITH ROMANIA AND
THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY AND DEFENSE –
MECHANISMS TO ENSURE PEACE AND STABILITY OF CITIZENS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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Abstract

This study describes a sequence of the most important data for the cooperation of the Republic of Moldova with Romania and the European Union in the field of security and defence. The security and defence of the state are mutually dependent on the regional and international security situation. Thus, ensuring the existence and development of a state is conditioned by two elements: internal and external security and defence, which can be guaranteed only through close cooperation with neighbouring countries and integration into the great family of the European Union. Currently, state institutions and decision-makers are making efforts and taking strategic actions to convince neighbouring countries and international actors of our country's will and openness, and to demonstrate its capacity to act effectively in crisis situations. Also, state institutions have recently been more open and active in dialogues, debates, cooperation, participation in international operations, and international training in the field of security and defence, which highlights the importance of relations with neighbouring countries.

Keywords: European Union, Romania, security, defence, peace, stability.

Introduction.

In the context of increasing tensions and instabilities in the field of security and defence at the international, regional and national levels, a more serious focus and in some cases even a total reset of the activities of state institutions in these areas is required.

These two areas of security and defence are complex systems, and in order to understand their proper functionality, it is important to identify the formation conditions, levels of approach, and cooperation of the security environment at the current stage. The security environment is characterised by the variation and multiple internal, external and transnational risks and threats. Often, understanding these characteristics contributes to elucidating the main impact factors that influence the internal security and defense environment. The situation of relations with neighboring states, the process of European integration are essential for the analysis of the national security and defense environment.

Thus, the country needs modern and up-to-date laws, efficient institutions, well-defined governance processes and dedicated people. To substantiate the reform processes in

which the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter referred to as the RM) must engage in the coming period, competent analyses and reasoned solutions are necessary (Albu N., Arnaut N., Bozianu S., et. al., 2024, p. 11).

The military aggression at the border of the Russian Federation in Ukraine has only increased the level of military danger, which requires more than ever a consolidation, reform, and adjustment of the security and defence sector to international standards. We must admit that the security bodies and the armed forces have never enjoyed such attention, systemic investments, international training, participation in international missions, etc. All this takes place in the context of the proper orientation of the institutions and the state's foreign policy (accession to the European Union, hereinafter EU).

Materials and methods.

Materials. In developing the study, the content of national and international legal frameworks in the field of security and defence was used and analysed, applying the principles of connection, interdependence, complementarity, and interinfluence within a multidimensional system.

Methods. To obtain an analysis as relevant as possible to the field to which we will refer, we used a range of research methods, including analysis, synthesis, deduction, systemic, historical, and empirical methods.

Results and discussion.

The status of a candidate state for EU accession entails several responsibilities: promoting socio-economic development and social unity, and it also brings several benefits, one of which is ensuring national security.

The Republic of Moldova, being one of the least developed EU candidate states, has never had the capacity to be an active actor in ensuring regional or international security. One of the causes of this situation was that the state institutions responsible for this segment did not attach importance to reforming the security sector. However, we must admit that there was and still is a financial problem, internal financial resources are very limited in the development of this sector, but at the same time there were also external obstacles in the process of democratization and Europeanization of the country.

The Republic of Moldova has participated in very few missions and operations coordinated by the EU to ensure global security. However, we note that in recent times, state security and defence bodies have been actively involved. This involvement is due to the intensification of relations among the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and the EU, and to the setting of European integration as a national priority. It is evident that the interests and security objectives of the Republic of Moldova, in addition to others, can be achieved only through cooperation with neighbouring states, EU states and other international structures that share common interests and values with those promoted by the country's leadership.

Continuing cooperation with the EU at the same pace as at the current stage is essential for the reform of the security and defense sector. Therefore, we will describe below a retrospective of the cooperation events carried out by the Republic of Moldova, Romania and the EU in the field of security and defense.

First of all, we must mention that in the understanding of researcher Augustin Fuerea, the EU is defined by three concepts: "All three concepts (freedom, security and justice) define the European Union as a socio-political, but also legal space, in terms of the objectives

proposed for achievement, and which, through the Treaty of Lisbon, as the primary seat of the matter, find their consecration" (Fuera A., 2016, p. 327).

In the same context, we must specify that the EU, at the beginning of the 21st century, materialized its vision on international crisis management. Therefore, it was concluded that no state is capable of solving global security problems alone, and even superpowers such as the USA, China, and the Russian Federation cannot abrogate their right to solve global problems in private (Roșca L., 2017, p. 143).

The first strategic act in the security segment that also referred to the Republic of Moldova was the European Security Strategy approved in December 2003 (European Security Strategy), which became a landmark in the development of the EU's foreign and security policy. It is the only strategic document that mentions the importance of building security in the countries in the EU's neighbourhood, and through which the European community proposed to provide assistance in reforming the security sector of the states and regions in the European neighbourhood, in order to strengthen their security assurance capacities. This concept also included two former Soviet states, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Through this important international document, the EU proposed that the Republic of Moldova integrate the security sector reform into its strategic documents; supervise the coordination of reform planning; develop planning and implementation tools; organize training actions specific to the reform and strengthen cooperation with international partners. The EU aimed to contribute to the preparation of the Republic of Moldova and the states in the region so that they could participate in the development and implementation of European mechanisms for ensuring continental and global security, based on conflict prevention, increasing the role of diplomatic modalities and civilian crisis management capacities at the subregional level (Pintea I., Helly D., Panainte P., 2011, p. 43).

Also in 2003, the EU-RM Action Plan was launched, outlining the principles of cooperation in the field of security and defense, but this document did not provide for the procedure for signing specific agreements. Accordingly, on June 27, 2014, the Association Agreement between the RM and the EU was signed, and was ratified by the national legislature on July 2, 2014. Thus, a new legal framework was established for advancing relations between our country and European structures to a qualitatively higher level, that of political association and economic integration with the EU. It was not until July 1, 2016, with the entry into force of the EU-RM Association Agreement, an agreement that was provisionally applied starting September 1, 2014, that mutual relations regarding security management were materialized: "art. 3 of the Association Agreement, aims to deepen political association, respect and promote the principles of sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders, the rule of law and good governance, strengthen cooperation in the field of security and defense, crisis management and addressing challenges at global and regional level on the basis of "effective multilateralism", a principle enunciated in 2003 in the European Union Security Strategy" (Juc V., Beniuc L., 2019, p. 238-239).

In the context of the successful implementation of this Agreement, an Association Agenda was adopted between the Republic of Moldova and the EU, which provided a list of priorities for joint work planned for the period 2014-2016 and presents a good example of the interdependence of the external and internal dimensions in the European integration process of the Republic of Moldova. According to the document, the EU supports the Republic of Moldova in achieving the objectives and priorities set out in the Association Agenda. The EU achieves this by using all available sources of support, as well as through

experience, advice, exchange of information, support for capacity development and institutional strengthening.

If we analyze the association agenda, we notice that it brings together political elements, such as political dialogue, the rule of law, reform to strengthen democratic institutions, independence of the judiciary, respect for human rights, cooperation in the field of foreign and security policy, as well as the peaceful resolution of conflicts, cooperation in the field of justice, freedom and security. In this support, the author Morari C. made a very good point, where he mentioned that the EU encourages and will try to coordinate support from other partners of the Republic of Moldova (Morari C., p.185). Therefore, we must recognize and are very grateful that the EU encourages, supports, and coordinates the support provided by Romania, especially in the security and defense segment.

After the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, more than ever before, instruments were developed to strengthen the Common Security and Defense Policy of Romania and the EU, which allowed for increased investments in the development of the security and defense sector of the Republic of Moldova, which led to the strengthening of cooperation between Romania, the EU and the Republic of Moldova in matters of security, but also defense.

With the launch of the Moldovan accession process to the EU, decided by the European Council in December 2023, and the initiation of annual country assessments by the European Commission (The European Commission's first Comprehensive Report), a comprehensive and independent assessment of security sector governance, concentrated in a report prepared by civil society experts, makes several important contributions.

First, the Report provides an independent and national expert view on the performance of institutions and reforms in the security sector. This ensures greater inclusion of views, complements official EU assessments and contributes to a consolidated information of the general public, the Government, but also the European institutions. The publication of alternative sources of information can increase transparency and government accountability.

The report also enables more detailed monitoring of progress in implementing reforms and achieving the objectives set by the EU and the Government of the Republic of Moldova. It highlights strengths, successful reforms, and good practices, and also identifies areas for improvement, providing substantiated, action-oriented recommendations for the Moldovan authorities, thus contributing to the reform process.

Changes in the security environment must be monitored, recorded and adjusted to current needs. Periodic, objective, and reasoned evaluation of security sector reforms and governance will enable analysis of the quality of societal changes. It will contribute to specifying the direction of advancement (Albu N., Arnaut N., Bozianu S., et. al., 2024, p. 18).

On 21.05.2024, in Brussels, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Dorin Recean, and the Vice-President of the European Commission, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, signed a Partnership in the field of security and defence between the Republic of Moldova and the EU. In fact, the Republic of Moldova is the first country to sign a Partnership for Peace and Security with the EU. European officials and those from Chisinau declare that this document, signed in Brussels, will help the Republic of Moldova to strengthen its defence sector, increase its cybersecurity and counter Russia's attempts to intervene in the democratic processes of the Republic of Moldova. At the same time, Prime Minister Dorin Recean reiterated that accession to the European Union represents "the best mechanism to ensure peace and

stability for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova" (The partnership in the field of security and defence between the Republic of Moldova and the EU).

One of the pillars that underpinned the founding of the EU was the aim of ensuring peace in Europe, based on cooperation, solidarity and shared economic prosperity. This initial promise still guides and serves as the foundation of the member states' priorities for a strong and sovereign Europe. The unprecedented challenges facing the world in recent years (climate change, increasing instability, undermining the international order, the return of war to the continent, etc.) have led the EU to explore new possibilities for cooperation and integration. The European Union is making every effort to promote peace, justice and stability worldwide, as well as democracy, universal human rights and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in all international fora.

We emphasise that on June 23, 2022, the European Council granted Moldova the status of a candidate for EU membership. On December 14, 2023, the European Council approved the opening of negotiations on Moldova's accession to the EU, which is one of the nine current candidate countries.

In this context, the EU has foreseen, in the Strategic Agenda for the period 2024-2029, adopted at the European Council meeting of 27 June 2024, the preparation for a larger and stronger Union. The Strategy states that "The new geopolitical reality highlights the importance of enlargement as a geostrategic investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity. The enlargement process has acquired a new dynamism; both the EU and the countries aspiring to accession now have a responsibility to make the most of this opportunity and to communicate this clearly. It will also encourage reform efforts, in particular regarding the rule of law, regional integration, good neighbourly relations, reconciliation, and the settlement of bilateral disputes (Council of Europe Strategic Agenda 2024-2029).

On the other hand, cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and Romania has experienced steady growth, having gone through several stages and achieved multiple positive results. In this sense, things have developed as follows:

The signing on 19 May 2006 of the first Individual Partnership Action Plan (hereinafter referred to as IPAP) by the North Atlantic Council of NATO (Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova nr. 774 of 06.07.2006 on the approval of the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) Republic of Moldova – NATO) was a smart strategic move on the part of Moldova, because with Romania's accession to NATO in 2004, the Alliance became a direct neighbor of our country. A form of collaboration was necessary, and the Partnership for Peace Program was insufficient in a direct neighbourhood context. Advancing collaboration with NATO at that time required a legal document, but its implementation was more formal because the Moldovan side did not demonstrate interest in implementing the IPAP provisions. The erroneous interpretation of the principle of neutrality caused the Republic of Moldova not to take the implementation of the IPAP seriously, finding itself exposed from a security point of view in the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia (Legislation of the Republic of Moldova on the National Security and Defense Sector. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), p. 57). The authorities have constantly updated the IPAP, taking into account their practical measures, to intensify the bilateral cooperation agreed between the Republic of Moldova and allies, the last update was carried out by GD no. 26/2022 (Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova nr. 26 of 19.01.2022 on the approval of the Individual Action Plan of the Republic of Moldova-NATO Partnership for the years 2022-2024).

The next important act was the signing of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of Romania on cooperation in the military field, signed in Chisinau, on April 20, 2012 (Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of Romania on cooperation in the military field).

This agreement pursued the common interest in regional stability and security, aiming to establish the legal framework for military cooperation among countries. Military cooperation includes: defense policy; exchange of knowledge on the concept of security and defense, as well as on the doctrine of force engagement and the principles of personnel training; arms control; personnel training, as well as operational training on units and headquarters; legislation, internal and international regulations on national defense and categories of army forces; management of budgetary resources, planning and execution of the defense budget; human resources management, etc. It is worth noting that the agreement provides for the mutual study and analysis of the feasibility of jointly carrying out peacekeeping or humanitarian activities under the auspices of the UN, OSCE, and EU.

This agreement is necessary for the following reasons: Romania is a direct neighbour, which is part of both the EU and NATO. By implementing this Agreement, the Republic of Moldova can modernise its National Army, bringing it closer to EU standards. It is the simplest form of communication in collaboration between the Republic of Moldova and another state. It is necessary to develop military cooperation with Romania continuously and, at the same time, synchronise it with the Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria. The transfer of experience in the accession of these states to Euro-Atlantic structures will help Moldova increase the pace of modernisation of the National Army (Legislation of the Republic of Moldova on the National Security and Defence Sector. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), p. 54).

The first instrument for implementing the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of Romania on cooperation in the military field was the ratification by the Moldovan legislature through Law no. 47/2017 (Law of the Republic of Moldova). 47 of 09.06.2017 on the ratification of the Protocol amending the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of Romania on cooperation in the military field) of the Protocol amending this agreement, signed in Bucharest on December 1, 2016.

On 30.04.2024, the Government of Romania approved another critical act, a memorandum amending the Agreement with the Republic of Moldova on cooperation in the military field. This memorandum amends the Agreement between the Government of Romania and the Government of the Republic of Moldova on cooperation in the military field, in the sense of introducing a provision whereby the two parties will support each other, on a reciprocal basis and on an opportunity basis, in all aspects related to the preparation and participation in missions and operations within multinational coalitions under the aegis of the UN, OSCE, NATO or EU, including in terms of logistical support, transport, telephone and internet services, financial, medical support and evacuation in emergencies (The Government approved the amendment to the Agreement with the Republic of Moldova on cooperation in the military field).

Another important event that comes to strengthen the cooperation of the Republic of Moldova with Romania in the field of security and defense took place in Bucharest on 10.09.2024, hosted by the Ministry of National Defense of Romania, a new edition of the Romania-United States Working Group for bilateral staff discussions and the second edition

of the roundtable with the Republic of Moldova on Security Assistance (M-SAR), aimed at cooperation in the field of security and support for Allies and partners. The United States and Romania are strategic partners and long-standing allies. The United States deeply appreciates and praises Romania's exceptional leadership in the region. We share a common commitment to addressing common threats and challenges, strengthening security in the Black Sea region, and supporting Euro-Atlantic integration. Continuing this format, the second discussion session within M-SAR provides mentoring in essential areas such as defense policy, defense planning, capability development and training activities (Romania-US Working Group for Bilateral Staff Discussions and Roundtable with the Republic of Moldova on Security Assistance).

Wishing to further develop the cooperation relations between the armed forces of the Republic of Moldova and the armed forces of Romania, the Parliament of Romania approved by Law no. 276 of 06.11.2024 the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 102/2024 for the ratification of the second Protocol of amendment, signed in Bucharest on May 24, 2024, of the Agreement between the Government of Romania and the Government of the Republic of Moldova on cooperation in the military field, signed in Chisinau on April 20, 2012 (Romanian Law nr. 276 of 06.11.2024 on the approval of Government Emergency Ordinance No. 102/2024 for the ratification of the second Protocol of Amendment). As a consequence of the signing of this act, Moldova and Romania are expanding their military cooperation. Chisinau wants to join EUFOR ALTHEA, in the context in which Moldova is preparing to send, in October, a contingent of 32 soldiers to participate in the EU military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, EUFOR ALTHEA. Moldovan soldiers are expected to participate in the Romanian contingent.

Respectively, in the context of Government Emergency Ordinance No. 102/2024 (Government Emergency Ordinance nr. 102 of 28.08.2024), given the need to ensure the stability and security of Romania's eastern border, underlining the importance of increasing Romania's position as a regional pole of stability, through its contribution to strengthening regional cooperation and the security environment in its immediate vicinity, taking into account the special nature of the bilateral relationship between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, reconfirming the firm support of the Romanian Government for advancing the European path of the Republic of Moldova, reaffirming the objectives of the Declaration on the establishment of a strategic partnership between Romania and the Republic of Moldova for the European integration of the Republic of Moldova, signed in Bucharest on April 27, 2010, reiterating the principles of the Resolution of the Romanian Parliament no. 1/2023 on the European perspective of the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and the Western Balkans, supporting the European vocation of the Republic of Moldova and intending to facilitate its integration, including through the development of the armed forces, highlighting the excellent dynamics of bilateral military cooperation, based on a community of values and interests, considering that the mutual support of the armed forces of Romania and the Republic of Moldova within multinational missions and operations subscribes to the objective of deepening the privileged relations between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, as well as the firm commitment that Romania has assumed regarding the undertaking of efforts for the Republic of Moldova to strengthen its armed forces, develop resilience and remain a priority on the European Union agenda, as part of a sustainable, durable and irreversible accession process, anticipating concrete operational benefits, by increasing interoperability and cooperation between the armed forces of Romania, the Republic of Moldova and other armed forces, since, by participating jointly in missions and

multinational operations under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the European Union (EU), the armed forces of Romania and the Republic of Moldova will become beneficiaries of improved international visibility and will increase their common expertise in various military fields.

As we can see from the content of Romanian normative acts, the stability and security of the Republic of Moldova are of strategic importance for Romania, they continuously support the European vocation of the Republic of Moldova and facilitate, through various activities and concrete actions, integration into the EU, including through the development of the armed forces and national security.

At the same time, it would be fair to mention that there are a series of normative acts and legal documents that allow us to outline a positive overall picture regarding national security and defense policy, including national interests, threats, risks, objectives, implementation mechanisms, institutions in the given areas.

The fundamental act that establishes the development and implementation of the security policy is the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, adopted on July 29, 1994, is the basic normative act for the development and implementation of the national security policy. The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova contains specific provisions that determine the distinct character of the state's security and defense policy. In art. 1 paragraph (1) it is mentioned that the Republic of Moldova proclaims its permanent neutrality, respectively in paragraph (2) of the same article it is specified that the Republic of Moldova does not admit the deployment of military troops of other states on its territory (Constitution of the Republic of Moldova of 29.07.1994).

The new National Security Strategy, adopted on December 15, 2023 by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (Decision of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova nr. 391 of 15.12.2023 on the approval of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova), reflects the will and underlines the national commitment for a democratic and prosperous European country, in which people live in security and peace. One of the results sought from the realization and implementation of the strategy (vision) is:

- developing a professional and modern security and defense system, adequately funded, capable of thoroughly ensuring national security;
- strengthening civilian control over the entire security system.

These changes in the security and defense environment actually incorporate all these new dimensions of the concept of security. Security must be recognized as a necessary investment that brings benefits to all; in its absence, one cannot plan, build, invest and reap the results of the reforms necessary for the EU accession process.

According to the Concept of National Security of the Republic of Moldova, approved by Law no. 112/2008 (Law of the Republic of Moldova nr. 112 of 22.05.2008 on the approval of the National Security Concept of the Republic of Moldova), we could deduce that this normative act addresses the principles, general values, objectives, basic guidelines of national security, threats, risks and vulnerabilities with an impact on the national security of the Republic of Moldova, as well as international cooperation, an instrument for ensuring and consolidating the national security of the Republic of Moldova, with the aim of influencing the international security environment in a manner that corresponds to the national interests of the country. At the end of the content of the Concept we find the definition of the national security system of the Republic of Moldova and the reform process.

Another important national normative act in this segment is the Law on State Security No. 618/1995 (Law of the Republic of Moldova nr. 618 of 31.10.1995 on state security). Starting from the preamble of this law, from the national priorities, from the presence of factors whose action could endanger the security of the Republic of Moldova, as well as from the need to establish the basis for ensuring state security, the competence of the supreme public authorities in this area, the system of state security bodies, the rights and obligations of citizens, of economic units regarding ensuring state security. The law defines and specifies state security, ensuring state security, threats to state security, establishes the main directions of the activity of ensuring state security and the principles of ensuring this purpose.

The following normative act refers to the Law on State Security Bodies No. 619/1995 (Law of the Republic of Moldova nr. 619 of 31.10.1995 on state security bodies), which actually comes in the development of Law No. 618/1995, concretizes the legal framework, the attributions, the principles of activity, the actual activity, the statute, the system of the state security bodies.

Following the study of the fundamental normative documents that define and regulate the country's security and defence policy and the attributions of the relevant institutions, through the lens of the new geopolitical security environment, we have established that national security is interdependent with the regional and international security situation. In this sense, the finding of the insufficiency of administrative capacities for the prevention and adequate management of crises, and the lack of political will to implement the normative framework and policy documents to ensure national security, have only fueled our country's vulnerability to possible external aggression.

Currently, however, decision-makers in state institutions are making efforts and taking strategic actions to convince international actors of the Republic of Moldova's will and openness to demonstrate in crisis situations and the effective role it could play in managing them. Proof of this is the openness of state institutions to the refugee crisis in Ukraine and their cooperation with the EU and Romania.

Conclusion.

As we have observed, the Republic of Moldova is experiencing a period of ascension by opening up more opportunities for collaboration with similar structures in Romania and Europe in the field of security and defence, which makes us more convinced that the cooperation of the Republic of Moldova with these states, structures is a form of strengthening the protection of the state. Therefore, we believe that the intensification of the Republic of Moldova's cooperation with the EU must be examined as a priority from the perspective of the geopolitical matrix – Romania and the Republic of Moldova- and must continue to remain a priority of domestic and foreign policy.

Ensuring the security of the Republic of Moldova, both domestically and internationally, becomes a direct function for the EU, since the territory of this state is practically part of Europe, and it aspires to be integrated into the EU. (Cernomoret Ș., Nastas A. 2023, p.56).

Collaboration between authorities. Thus, the security of the EU directly depends on the internal and external situation of the Republic of Moldova.

Strengthening cooperation with the Republic of Moldova in matters of security and defence. The EU actively contributes to enhancing the Republic of Moldova's security and defence sector and cooperates with the Republic of Moldova in these areas through its

external financing instruments. Collective defense, crisis management and strengthening the security of Europe through cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and Romania and the European Union in the field of security and defense must be the main tasks from now on to ensure peace and stability for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova and the EU. The evolution of Europe towards greater political unity can strengthen the European component of the effort for common security and enhance its effectiveness. At the moment, Romania and the EU have for our country, in the current geopolitical and geostrategic reality, an increased importance and security purpose, at regional, continental and even global levels. The construction with Romania's help of a more secure and efficient Europe in the face of future challenges to which the Republic of Moldova is subject will be done by attracting all the states of the European space to its activities, in a democratic, participatory manner, fully highlighting the virtues of the EU institution. (Nastas A. Cernomoreț S. 2024, p. 291). The EU borders in Romania require coordinated action for security and the construction of an effective political and strategic response to the multiple threats in the continental and global environment. These two parties can, by combining efforts, achieve a more efficient joint preventive action and a multilateral, professional approach to the dangers to which the Republic of Moldova is increasingly subject, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine.

Consequently, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and the EU face the same security challenges in the eastern area. Increased, effective cooperation in these areas would likely lead to better results for all parties. There are opportunities to build on the foundation established by previous collaborations, and new areas of cooperation should be identified and developed. In order to achieve a stronger and smarter partnership, the Republic of Moldova (Nastas A., 2020, p. 111), through Romania and the EU, must act to increase practical cooperation and continue to harmonise the agenda in the field of security and defence. The strategic partnership between these parties is necessary to address security challenges, given regional instability in the eastern and southern neighbourhoods. In recent years, a strong relationship has been observed among the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and the EU, with an emphasis on strengthening cooperation, participation in international training, involvement in international missions, and coordinated planning and information exchange across several strategic areas. However, we must acknowledge that there are still numerous political obstacles, such as those arising from national interests, especially economic ones, public opinion on the allocation of defence budgets, and differences among member states in how they perceive regional threats.

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