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THE STATE BORDER OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

SPECIALTY 562.01: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

Abstract of the Doctoral Thesis in Political Science

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The doctoral thesis and summary can be consulted at the National Library of the Republic of Moldova, the Central Library of Moldova State University, and on the ANACEC website (www.anacec.md).

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

The relevance and importance of the investigated topic are determined by the need to increase the efficiency of the state border policy of the Republic of Moldova, based on the country's foreign policy objective, according to which "European integration represents the main strategic objective of the Republic of Moldova" [15], defining the country's future and requiring the concentrated efforts of all state institutions and society to fulfill this historic mission of the Moldovan people. This aspiration necessitates a revision of national policies, including those concerning the functioning of the state's border structures, by involving them in the development of international relations with European countries and organizing cross-border cooperation with neighboring states Romania and Ukraine at the regional level.

The relevance of the research also lies in the need to change the principles governing the functioning of the state border, which, since the proclamation of independence and despite major changes in the region and the country, has been perceived solely as a dividing line between states, fulfilling only a barrier function. Considering that a favorable context has now emerged in both the country and the region—based on the principles of good neighborliness and the shared European external development vector of the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine—there are grounds to unite the efforts of the border authorities through the organization of cross-border cooperation. This should follow the principle of a contact space for interaction, as a tool for promoting international cooperation in alignment with the country's national interests.

The state border policy of the Republic of Moldova, in this context, requires the establishment of a new theoretical and conceptual paradigm for the functioning of border, as an element of a unified state system dedicated to the development of the international cooperation. It also calls for the formulation of new scientific, theoretical-methodological visions and practical approaches to state policy, directly aimed at fostering international and cross-border cooperation.

Description of the research field and identification of the research problem. The state border has become a key subject in scientific research, playing a decisive role in the processes of European integration and in ensuring national and regional security. The growing importance of the Republic of Moldova's border in international relations requires a new methodological approach, focused on analyzing the evolution of the border concept, as well as the historical, philosophical, and political science influences that shape its functioning.

Moldovan research insufficiently addresses the border as an element of international relations and diplomacy, and cross-border cooperation is limited to relations of local authorities.

The study of the state border as a factor in international relations and cross-border cooperation, with a focus on the specific context of the Republic of Moldova, required an extensive

interdisciplinary approach that encompassed: The theory of international relations within the paradigm of political realism (H. Morgenthau [25], R. Ashley [4], J. Ruggie [35]), emphasizing the primacy of national interests in the formation of international and cross-border cooperation, as well as its role as an instrument of Moldova's state policy in the field of border management (V. Sakovici [54], V. Juc [19], V. Beniuc [5]); The theory of diplomacy, whose main mission is the protection of national interests (H. Kissinger [20], M. Malița [23], A. Burian [7], A. Roman [53], V. Saca [36], V. Teosa, G. Vasilescu, and E. Ciobu [41]); The theory of geopolitics, in the context of theoretical and methodological research (F. Ratzel [34], K. Haushofer [56]) and in support of the importance for the Republic of Moldova of cooperation with neighboring states, based on the principle of the geopolitical matrix (D. Paiu [28; 29], S. Almang [3]); The theory of border studies, which examines and explains the functions of borders, border institutions, and border-related processes (D. Newman [26], J. Prescott [30], V. Kolosov [47; 48], O. Țvetkova [57]).

The research included the study of official documents of the European Union, international organizations, as well as normative and institutional acts from member states. The analysis is based on the legislation of the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine, as well as the directives and communications issued by the EU Commission, the EU Parliament, and the Council of Europe. Attention was given to the analysis of national policies, strategies, and programs of the Republic of Moldova aimed at the development of international relations in general and through the lens of the functioning of the state border, in the context of the European integration policy.

Scientific Novelty and Originality of the Research. For the first time in the Republic of Moldova, this scientific research provides a comprehensive political science analysis of the state border phenomenon as an instrument of international relations and cross-border cooperation. Based on the analysis of a large number of facts, socio-historical, and political processes, the author scientifically argues that the involvement of state border structures in international cooperation with EU countries and in cross-border cooperation with neighboring states—Romania and Ukraine—represents an essential direction, crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of the European integration policy implementation.

For the first time, a new scientific concept regarding the functioning of the state border is proposed, which suggests replacing the traditional "barrier" function of the border with the organization of a cross-border contact zone together with neighboring states Romania and Ukraine. In this zone, states would expand economic, cultural-civilizational, social, and other forms of cooperation within the framework of the European integration policy.

The originality of the research lies in the application of an interdisciplinary theoretical approach, as well as in the use of fundamental theoretical frameworks from the fields of international relations and diplomacy to understand and analyze the object of study.

The purpose of the research is to identify the role and assess the significance of the state border, as well as to analyze new theoretical and conceptual approaches to its functions in the implementation of state policy in the field of international cooperation, by using practical mechanisms of cross-border cooperation in alignment with the European integration strategy.

To achieve the proposed goal, the following **objectives** were set:

- to analyze the historiographical dimension of the evolution of the "border" concept as a factor shaping the realities of international relations;
- to analyze theoretical approaches and define the methodological dimensions concerning the study of international and cross-border cooperation through the lens of state border functioning;
- to examine the EU's border policy and forms of international cooperation with third countries, including the Republic of Moldova;
- to investigate the scientific-conceptual and practical aspects of cross-border cooperation;
- to review the historical retrospect of the influence of the Republic of Moldova's foreign policy and international relations on border policy and international and cross-border cooperation;
- to determine the conceptual and practical particularities of forming the Republic of Moldova's state border policy;
- to analyze the main directions of the Republic of Moldova's state border policy;
- to develop proposals for introducing amendments to the current Moldova's state border policy.

The scientific hypothesis of the thesis argues that: international and cross-border cooperation within the framework of state border functioning directly influences international relations and the dynamics of regional cooperation, represents effective instruments of the Moldova's foreign policy, as well as an efficient means of safeguarding national interests—provided that cross-border cooperation with neighboring states, and international cooperation with the EU in the field of border is organized, covering all areas of bilateral collaboration.

Summary of the research methodology and justification of the chosen methods. The complex nature of the topic and the defined objectives required a methodology grounded in general principles and methods of scientific inquiry, applied to the study of socio-political processes, as well as theoretical approaches specific to the nature of the researched problem. The entire study is based on *the principles of dialectical logic*, which require the researcher to analyze the studied phenomena in their development and in interdependence with other phenomena, and on *the systemic approach*, which assumes that any change or modification in the

defining parameters of relationships between elements of the international system inevitably affects the functionality of borders.

To research the object of study, the following general theoretical methods were applied: *causal method*, used to analyze the evolution of border policy and the cooperation relations between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union; *comparative method*, which allowed the examination of experiences and models of international cooperation through comparison, using the functioning of national borders within European integration processes as a reference point; *historical method*, through which the foundations of cooperative relations between societies and states were analyzed from their origins to the contemporary period; *diachronic method*, which enabled the temporal structuring and periodization of the evolutionary processes of Moldova's international relations and the development of state border policy; *institutional-functional method*, used to analyze state and supranational structures, their competencies, responsibilities, and functions in the adoption and implementation of state policy in the field of border management. Additionally, general logical methods were applied: analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, analogy, and modeling. For the empirical component, sociological methods were applied: interviews with decision-makers from the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine, focused on institutional competencies and the development of cooperation, as well as questionnaires aimed at identifying current areas of collaboration.

The important scientific problem solved consists in the development of a new theoretical concept regarding the functioning of the state border of the Republic of Moldova and in the justification of its practical application, with the aim of strengthening international relations through which the national interests of the state are achieved.

The applicative value lies in the conclusions developed by the author, which have concrete relevance for decision-makers involved in shaping border policy, for public authorities responsible for managing the functioning of the state border, as well as for representatives of state structures in charge of foreign policy. The content of the thesis may also serve as a theoretical and empirical foundation for the development of university courses.

Approval of the Research Results. The concepts and general conclusions formulated in this thesis are the result of the scientific investigations carried out by the author over five years of doctoral studies. The research results were discussed and approved within six national and international scientific and practical forums. Additionally, the main chapters, conclusions, and recommendations were published in prestigious scientific journals from the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Belarus, including: *Moldoscopie*, *Relații Internaționale Plus*, *Legea și Viața*, etc.

SYNTHESIS OF THE CHAPTERS

The doctoral thesis was developed based on the proposed research aim and objectives and consists of: an abstract in three languages, a list of abbreviations, an introduction, three chapters with eight subchapters, general conclusions, recommendations, bibliography, and appendices.

The introduction highlights the relevance and importance of the researched topic, the current state of the field, the scientific novelty and originality, as well as the scientific problem addressed by the author. It outlines the purpose and objectives of the thesis, the hypothesis, the methodological and theoretical-scientific framework of the investigation, the practical value of the thesis, the approval of the obtained results, and provides a brief description of the thesis chapters.

Chapter 1, The state border as an object of research in political science, presents the historiographical as well as the theoretical and methodological framework for the study of international and cross-border cooperation relations, viewed through the evolution of the border concept across different stages of the formation and development of nation-states.

1.1. The state border as an essential factor in international relations: historiographical aspects of the concept's evolution highlight the complexity of the state border concept in the context of international relations and its relevance for the Republic of Moldova, emphasizing its role in the evolution of statehood, international and cross-border cooperation.

The analysis of the research stage is carried out in an interdisciplinary and structured manner, with publications divided into four main categories:

The first includes general theoretical works focused on the period prior to the emergence and functioning of nation-states. Authors such as I. J. Hardwick [17], P. Wells [43], V. Buzilă [10], and others demonstrate that the notion of delimited space—originating in tribal relations—laid the foundation for conceptualizing borders as instruments of neighborhood and cooperation among peoples. These publications summarize the meaning of neighborhood boundaries, shaping the concepts of: border, border space, international border and cross-border cooperation, which later became part of international relations theory and state border policy practice, distinguish "spatial, temporal, external and internal, quantitative and qualitative borders" [50].

The second block includes theoretical and cognitive publications concerning the formation of nation-states with their state borders and the establishment of international relations. The topic of interactions between peoples at borders—leading to the creation of rules for crossing territorial boundaries, the establishment of border crossing points, the payment of transit and trade duties, etc.—is addressed in the works of V. Aelenei [1], O. Merisalo [24], V. Temușev [55], and others. The research shows that borders were less lines of separation and more zones of interaction between peoples, especially those located in border areas. [36, pp. 183–184]

The third block reflects scientific research and theoretical publications regarding the role of state borders within the framework of international relations, as well as international and cross-border cooperation. The object of study is analyzed through the lens of political realism [25] [6]. National interest is viewed not only as a key factor in ensuring national security but, more importantly, as a strategy for the Republic of Moldova's integration into the European Union (V. Sakovici [54], V. Juc [19], V. Beniuc [5], V. Saca [36], A. Roman [53]). These works outline the need to adapt Moldova's current border policy, guided by a dual orientation: 1) toward the delimitation of jurisdictions and participation as a structural component of national security; 2) toward transforming the border into a key element of international relations and cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries, by redefining the functions of the state border.

Diplomacy, as an essential form of international activity (G. Maior [22], A. Burian [8]), also touches upon border-related aspects (such as establishment, delimitation, demarcation, cooperation, incident resolution, etc.) (M. Orzeata [27], V. Popov [51]).

The functioning of the state border in the context of international relations, analyzed from a geopolitical perspective, is extensively addressed in the works of authors such as F. Ratzel [34], K. Haushofer [56], and A. Burian [9]. The border is regarded as an essential element of sovereignty, protecting national interests in international relations. It is described as "a product of movement, the periphery of the state, economic, and national territory" [52].

Within the framework of *border studies*, particular scientific interest is given to *the political approach to the border* [26][30][49][57], which defines the concept of political space—one of the main attributes of the modern state—as a "theoretical bridge" that connects multiple geopolitical entities [13].

The fourth block comprises the research of Moldovan scholars, which includes aspects of border functioning in the context of international cooperation, cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries, as well as the analysis of official documents and normative acts of the Republic of Moldova in this field. It is noted that the study of the state border, and the analysis of its role and influence on international and cross-border relations, has not been systematically addressed by Moldovan researchers. Nevertheless, certain aspects related to the functioning of Moldova's borders are reflected to some extent in studies on foreign policy issues, national security, and the Moldova's strategic orientation, by V. Ungureanu [42], S. Cebotari and V. Lungu [12], N. Albu and C. Culicovschi [2], G. Căldare [11], A. Lavric [21], and I. Erhan [16].

1.2. ***Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to the Study of International and Cross-Border Cooperation from the Perspective of State Border Functioning***, analyses various

theories, perspectives, models, and research methods within the interdisciplinary study framework that encompasses international relations, diplomacy, geopolitics, and border studies.

The phrase "*border policy*" is considered a general term and is used to describe the border domain in general or as characteristic of other states or unions of states.

The phrase "*state border policy of the Republic of Moldova*" is specific in nature and is used to directly refer to the full range of activities carried out to ensure the functioning of the state border of the Republic of Moldova.

International cooperation represents the fundamental category of the thesis which, through the lens of the state border, integrates political, socio-economic, and cultural dimensions, reflecting the interdependencies between states and territorial interactions through cross-border cooperation.

The thesis analyzes the concept of the "*geopolitical matrix*" as a mechanism for strengthening and coordinating international and regional cooperation. *The principle of the geopolitical matrix* asserts that the external actions of a state or non-state actor are constrained and guided by a multidimensional "matrix"—that is, a relatively stable set of spatial, historical, demographic, cultural, and institutional factors. Any change to a key element within this configuration triggers adjustments in the other dimensions, leading to the establishment of a new strategic equilibrium. The phrase "*geopolitical matrix*" does not represent a canonical concept in international relations theory, but it is increasingly used as an analytical metaphor in academic works from the Romanian, Russian, Anglo-Saxon, and Francophone spheres to denote the "grid of factors" (geography, history, strategic positioning, identity, etc.) that shape the foreign policy options of a state or group of states. [3] [28; 29]

The research methodology of the topic includes the use of general principles and methods of scientific inquiry, widely applied in the study of socio-political processes, as well as theoretical approaches specific to the nature of the issue under analysis.

The functional approach [45], which involves examining the relationship between the border and adjacent territories as well as its permeability to cross-border flows, allowed for an assessment of the de facto state of affairs, intentions, aspirations, and prospects for the development of the Moldova's international cooperation, based on the functionality of the border.

The geographic and political approach [48] emphasizes the impact of borders and their stability on the state of international relations and is driven by the current regional geopolitical context. The Republic of Moldova's state border, being exposed to various threats and risks, influences regional cooperation relations.

Postmodernist approaches: the *"geopolitical" approach*—the study of the impact of globalization and integration processes on political borders and their role from a security

perspective; the *"politics–perception–practice" approach*—the examination of the relationship between border policy, public perceptions, and everyday practices; and the *"eco-political" approach*—the study of the correlation between political and natural borders, highlight the evolving role and functions of borders in line with modern trends such as: the increase in cross-border flows of people, information, goods, capital, energy, and pollutants; the expansion of international organizations' competencies; and the growing influence of cross-border actors in various fields (ethnic and social movements, non-governmental organizations, etc.) [48].

The entire work is based on the *principles of dialectical logic*, which require the analysis of the studied phenomena in their evolution and in interdependence with other phenomena, as well as on *the systemic approach*, which assumes that any change or modification in the defining parameters of relationships between elements of the international system inevitably affects the functionality of borders. The following general theoretical methods were applied: *the causal method*, for analyzing the evolution of border policy and the cooperation relations between The Republic of Moldova and the EU; *the comparative method*, which enabled the examination of experiences and models of international cooperation through comparison, using the functioning of national borders within European integration processes as a reference point; *the historical method*, used to analyze the foundations of cooperation between societies and states from their origins to the present; *the diachronic method*, which allowed the temporal structuring and periodization of the evolutionary processes of Moldova's international relations and the development of state border policy; *the institutional-functional method*, for analyzing state and supranational structures, their competences, responsibilities, and functions in the implementation of state border policy; and logical methods such as *analysis* and *synthesis*, *induction* and *deduction*, *analogy* and *modeling*.

To complement the empirical part of the thesis, sociological research methods (survey) were applied. Three interviews were conducted with decision-makers from the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine, which allowed for the assessment of the institutional competence level of border authorities in the field of international and cross-border cooperation. The survey instrument (questionnaire) was administered to 100 local residents from settlements located near the state border (in the border area), which enabled the identification of the most current and necessary areas of cross-border cooperation.

1.3. Conclusions to Chapter 1 presents the outcome of the historiographical, theoretical-conceptual, and methodological analysis of the research subject:

1. The study of state borders, particularly in the context of Moldova, represents a complex research field that requires an interdisciplinary approach, integrating international relations, political science, geopolitics, and border studies. The theoretical analysis has shown that the state

border is not merely a line of separation between territorial entities, but a fundamental element in shaping international relations and in fostering international and cross-border cooperation.

2. The historical evolution of the border concept reflects its importance in defining statehood and shaping geopolitical dynamics. The study of borders from a historical and political science perspective demonstrates that territorial delimitations have been—and continue to be—relevant and essential, contributing to the establishment of good neighborly relations and the development of mechanisms for regulating interactions between communities. Since ancient times, borders have played a significant role in social and political organization, influencing relations between tribes, societies, and states.

3. In the context of international cooperation, the state border plays a crucial role in defining relations between states and in developing strategic partnerships. In this regard, the functioning of borders is analyzed through the lens of political realism theory, which explains how borders influence state security and foreign policy by delineating the sovereign space of each international actor and establishing the legal framework for cooperation between them. On the other hand, cross-border cooperation manifests in a distinct manner, focusing on the relationships between border territories and regions, and on fostering economic, social, and cultural interactions between communities located on both sides of the border in pursuit of national interests.

4. The state border of the Republic of Moldova, in the context of European integration, should be perceived both as a legal barrier and as a space for interaction. The EU promotes the concept of open borders among member states to facilitate trade relations and cultural exchanges. Therefore, Moldova's policies in this area must be aligned with European standards, thereby avoiding economic isolation and promoting the sustainable development of its border regions.

5. The effectiveness of border policies depends on their adaptation to international realities, the compatibility of national legislation with EU norms, and the strengthening of cooperation mechanisms with neighboring states. In this regard, it is essential to clarify the status of borders in relation to the Moldova's European integration process, which involves both the full regulation of territorial delimitation and the adjustment of cooperation mechanisms to EU standards.

6. The methodology for border research should include both the analysis of historical and legal documents and the study of social and economic interactions within border territories and regions. By integrating historical, political science, and economic approaches, the study of state borders provides a comprehensive understanding of their role in strengthening statehood and developing international relations. The examination of international regulations and practices concerning border management contributes to improving national security strategies and to the creation of effective mechanisms for international cooperation.

7. Cross-border cooperation, in addition to economic and legal aspects, encompasses an important social dimension. Border communities develop interactions that go beyond state-imposed boundaries, and the cultural and historical ties between populations in border areas contribute to maintaining close connections among them. Thus, cross-border cooperation becomes an essential instrument for strengthening international relations and promoting regional stability.

Chapter 2. The state border in the system of international relations, explores EU concepts and practices of international border relations and the border-related aspects of international cooperation as part of the policy governing the functioning of the state border. It is analyzed the interdependence between the state's border policy and foreign policy, as well as the dialectic between the effectiveness of international cooperation and the regime governing border functionality.

Subchapter 2.1. ***Border Policy and the European Union's International Cooperation in the Context of Border Security***, presents an analysis of the EU's border policy, highlighting security aspects and the principles for managing the EU's internal and external borders, as well as their impact on neighboring states, including the Republic of Moldova.

The border policy and the functioning practices of EU borders have their own specific features in ensuring border security, while strictly upholding the European freedoms of individuals and citizens. This policy is implemented through the division of borders into internal and external ones, each with distinct conditions and methods of operation. [38, p. 66]

The EU's common border control policy does not aim to establish a unified legal system, but rather to promote the exchange of information and best practices, as well as the development of standards that serve as benchmarks for optimizing the national border policies of member states and candidate countries [18]. A distinctive feature of the EU's border policy is the differentiation between types of borders and their respective management approaches: internal borders facilitate favorable conditions for economic cooperation among member states, while external borders ensure the EU's security, primarily through the fight against terrorism and illegal migration [38, p. 68].

"The migration crisis in Europe, beginning in 2015" [46, p. 85], highlighted the need to enhance the EU's capacity to respond to external risks and threats from their early stages and at the point of their manifestation at the actual external borders [38, p. 70]. In this context, the integrated border management policy has become an important component of the EU's border policy, involving interconnected and coordinated measures implemented by EU member states as well as by its institutions in the framework of external border control [46]. Integrated border management aims at applying a common set of standards and practices focused on key areas: border control; investigation of cross-border crimes; the four-tier access control model; inter-institutional and

international cooperation; and coordination and coherence of activities among EU member states, the Schengen area, and other Union authorities [40, p. 4].

The EU's international, organizational, and regulatory legal framework—constantly evolving—demonstrates that the issue of ensuring security at the EU's external borders has, to a large extent, been successfully and uniquely addressed, while also managing to preserve the free movement of Union citizens across internal borders. The security of the EU's external borders is largely maintained by shifting the Union's challenges to the borders of neighboring countries or states aspiring to join the EU (including the Republic of Moldova), a practice that does not always align with their national interests. This issue should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account both the EU's interests and the need to enhance the effectiveness of the border policies of non-EU national states. Such a border policy, focused on maintaining collective security, will contribute to the establishment of a stable world order, which in turn will strengthen the overall security of the European continent. [39, p. 78]

Subchapter 2.2 The Republic of Moldova's cross-border cooperation with Romania and Ukraine: scientific-conceptual, organizational, and practical aspects presents both theoretical and practical dimensions of cross-border cooperation, the challenges and opportunities it offers in the context of state border policy, as well as the possibilities for implementing cross-border cooperation between the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine.

Border policy is shaped by a country's specific characteristics, the policies of neighboring states, the socio-economic and cultural features of the areas adjacent to the border, the intensity of cross-border flows, as well as security threats and challenges. The current particularity of the Republic of Moldova lies in the presence of favorable conditions for cooperation with neighboring states, as well as with friendly EU countries. This creates the opportunity to adapt the state's border policy, which should aim not only at strengthening and improving protection and security measures, but also at implementing actions focused on various aspects of enhancing national development efficiency through cross-border cooperation.

Cross-border cooperation involves direct and coordinated actions by adjacent regions located in the immediate vicinity of a common border (border territories) under the jurisdiction of different states, with the aim of strengthening international relations between them. It provides an opportunity to leverage the specific characteristics of border regions to enhance the effectiveness of international cooperation in socio-economic, environmental, cultural, and other areas.

In our view, cross-border cooperation should include three main directions: first, the fulfillment of local functions—ensuring socio-economic and cultural ties among the populations of border regions, developing cross-border trade, addressing environmental issues, and providing

medical, educational, and cultural services; second, cooperation is driven by the interaction of border regions in carrying out national functions such as transportation, border protection, safeguarding the national economic space, and preventing or responding to natural disasters; third, it encompasses the external economic activities of border regions.

The effectiveness of cross-border cooperation will be determined by a number of factors and conditions: 1) the existence of internationally recognized and formalized borders; 2) the state of border infrastructure, including border crossing points; 3) the level of development of political relations and cooperation between neighboring countries; 4) the level of social and economic development in border regions and the potential that can be leveraged for cooperation; 5) the required level of security in border areas; 6) the existence of legislation regulating the relationships among all actors involved in implementing international activities in border territories; 7) the ethno-cultural particularities of border regions and the historical ties developed between local communities; 8) the development potential of border territories.

For the development of cross-border cooperation between the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania, it is important to organize joint actions aimed at advancing all aspects of cooperation based on the principle of *the geopolitical matrix*—defined as cooperation among states that share a common geographical location, establish similar strategic objectives, and possess aligned political outlooks grounded in historical foundations and cultural similarities [29]. The Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine exhibit all the characteristics of a geopolitical matrix: good neighborly relations and mutual assistance; a common foreign policy on strategic issues related to cooperation and accession to the European Union and NATO; and cooperation across all areas—economic, cultural, social, and security-related.

Given the Republic of Moldova's development trajectory focused on European integration, effective cross-border cooperation needs measures to appropriately adapt the border to meet the requirements for ensuring interaction at all levels: local, national, and interstate.

Subchapter 2.3. The influence of the Republic of Moldova's foreign policy and international relations on border policy, international and cross-border cooperation: a historical retrospective includes a periodization and analysis of the impact of foreign policy and international relations on Moldova's border policy, highlighting major changes in the border regime in accordance with the country's political development orientation.

From the perspective of the state border regime, its effectiveness is defined by a dialectical relationship: on the one hand, it requires the facilitation of the movement of people and goods, the promotion of economic cooperation and mutual assistance in various fields, and the support of

positive interaction between states; on the other hand, it must ensure sovereignty and national security through the effective management of risks and potential threats at the border.

The regime governing the functioning of the state border, as a result of the international and cross-border relations established and promoted by the Republic of Moldova, reflects several stages of the country's development, corresponding to its foreign policy orientations. In the context of border management, Moldova's development can be conventionally divided into four periods: 1991–2001, 2001–2009, 2009–2022, and 2022 to present. Each period has left distinct marks on the structures of border authorities, as well as on the collective consciousness—shaping concepts and visions, subdivisions and practices—which largely explain the logic behind the reforms undertaken to enhance border functionality. [31, p. 47]

The first period (1991–2001) was marked by the Republic of Moldova's efforts to develop international cooperation with neighboring states and other international bodies in order to strengthen its independence, achieve political stabilization, foster economic development, and improve partnership relations. During this period, the state border regime reflected Moldova's transition from a component of the Soviet Union to an independent country with national borders. The intended outcome of the border regime was to adapt to new international security requirements and standards, while also addressing specific challenges such as the Transnistrian conflict and cross-border crime.

The second period (2001–2009) marked the next step in strengthening the Moldova's international cooperation with the EU and neighboring states, during which the country reinforced its European aspirations and its commitment to European values and standards. The interest in European integration had a significant impact on the functioning regime of the state border, which became the subject of initial adjustments and improvements aimed at ensuring efficient, secure, and internationally compliant border management. The deepening of cooperation between national border authorities and their counterparts in neighboring and European countries led to the gradual adoption of uniform principles and methods—drawn from EU external border management practices—along both the eastern border with Ukraine and the western border with Romania.

The third period (2009–2022) served as a test for the Republic of Moldova in its relationship with the EU, particularly regarding the maintenance and development of international and cross-border relations, taking into account the need to align the functioning of state borders with the proposed European standards. By shifting its border management approach toward enhanced security, the Republic of Moldova moved closer to EU institutions and member states, thereby contributing to the partial fulfillment of its national interests—specifically, the attainment

of a visa-free regime for its citizens traveling to EU countries and the adoption of key documents supporting the country's continued association with the EU.

The fourth period (2022–present), during which the Republic of Moldova obtained candidate status for EU accession, marks the stage in which border management should fully comply with European standards. At the same time, it is important to highlight the major geopolitical changes resulting from the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on Ukrainian territory, as well as Moldova's position and involvement in addressing the conflict—particularly through the lens of state border functioning.

Subchapter 2.4 Conclusions to Chapter 2 presents the following results:

1. The dialectical interdependence between the state border policy and the foreign policy of the Republic of Moldova has evolved—from cooperation with the CIS during the initial phase of state border formation to the current active transition toward EU standards on integrated border management. One aspect, however, remains unchanged: the primary task of Moldova's border authority is to ensure border security, and the main function of the border has been, and continues to be, that of a barrier. Under current conditions, this no longer fully aligns with national interests and acts as a disincentive to the development of international and cross-border cooperation.
2. The EU's experience in integrated management of external borders is important in the context of the Moldova's aspirations for EU accession, as it contributes to strengthening both national and regional security. However, the EU's requirement that Moldova's border authority focus exclusively on border security does not fully align with the country's national interests.
3. Cross-border cooperation is considered one of the key directions of state policy on border management for the development of interstate collaboration. It enables the effective use of the specific features and opportunities offered by border territories to enhance interaction in socio-economic, environmental, cultural, and other areas.

Border territories are areas located in the immediate vicinity of the state border, which are most affected by the influence of the border itself as well as that of the neighboring country, and possess a special potential for development and international cooperation, influenced by the following factors: 1) geographical location – proximity to the state border; 2) the specific infrastructure of the border region; 3) the possibility of utilizing the resources and potential of the neighboring country's border region; 4) the opportunity to develop various forms of international cooperation [44, pp. 19–20].

4. Under current conditions, a key factor for the development of cross-border cooperation is the alignment of the foreign policy aspirations of the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine with regard to strengthening their relations with the European Union, as well as the shared goal of

EU accession pursued by both Moldova and Ukraine. Cross-border cooperation can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the Republic of Moldova's state border with Romania and Ukraine by promoting an inevitable shift in border functionality—from a strict dividing line with a barrier function to a more permeable space of interaction. It is noteworthy that none of the existing strategies for the development and functioning of the Republic of Moldova's state border have analyzed or addressed the issue of developing cross-border cooperation.

5. For the development of cross-border cooperation, the governments of the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania must make coordinated decisions regarding joint actions to promote all aspects of cross-border cooperation, based on the principle of the geopolitical matrix. The Republic of Moldova and its neighboring countries meet all the characteristics of such a geopolitical matrix, possessing: a policy of good neighborliness and mutual support; a unified foreign policy on strategic issues of cooperation and accession to the EU and NATO; and collaboration across all sectors—economic, cultural, social, and security-related [33]. In this context, the state border between the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine ceases to act as a barrier, transforming the border area into a contact zone where peoples, cultures, and economies are encouraged to engage in active interaction.

Chapter 3, The state border policy of the Republic of Moldova from the perspective of the practical implementation of international and cross-border cooperation, explores the concept and practice of developing and implementing the Moldova's state border policy. It also proposes a new policy model in this field, aligned with the country's national interests.

3.1. The state border of the Republic of Moldova: conceptual and practical approaches to the policy of border formation and functioning defines the state border and its functions, the fundamental concepts of political space, state border policy, and border functioning policy. It emphasizes their importance in the state's development, both in terms of building good neighborly relations with bordering countries and ensuring national security.

At present, the state border is theoretically defined as "a fixed and rigid limit of a country's sovereignty, as well as a socio-geographical zone (along the border with neighboring countries) where border-related processes and phenomena can be observed" [48]. This new scientific understanding and conclusion regarding the border is highly important for studying the functioning of the Republic of Moldova's state border with its neighboring countries, Romania and Ukraine—particularly in terms of organizing cross-border cooperation.

The legal status and *functions of the border* are products of state policy. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, three main functions of the border are characteristic: the barrier (protective) function, the contact (socio-economic) function, and the filtering (law enforcement) function.

In recent years, the concept of *political space* has been introduced in academic discourse, characterized by the convergence of the political systems of neighboring countries. This development is attributed to significant changes on the political map of the world. For the Republic of Moldova, notable shifts can be observed in its political relations with Romania and Ukraine.

The Republic of Moldova shares a state border with Romania, which has not been demarcated and is not currently undergoing a demarcation process. Moreover, there is no border treaty between them, and as a result, the legal regime governing the functioning of their shared border has not been finalized. Furthermore, since 2007, the Moldovan-Romanian border has served as an external border of the European Union.

A defining feature of the Moldovan-Ukrainian state border is the ongoing, yet unfinished, demarcation process, the existence of a 453.4 km segment that is not under the control of the constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova, as well as the particular situation of sharing a border with a country engaged in a full-scale war on its territory since February 2022 and continuing to the present day.

The analysis conducted shows that over more than thirty years of independence and border functioning, the Republic of Moldova has gradually shifted its foreign policy, the geopolitical and regional situation has evolved, and relations with the EU and neighboring countries have become favorable for promoting various forms of cooperation in the field of border management. However, during this period, the policy governing the functioning of the state border has remained unchanged—its functions have been and continue to be rigid, and there is no provision for expanding the political, economic, and cultural space of the country through enhanced international and cross-border cooperation with neighboring states. The national border policy does not sufficiently take into account the following:

– The state border, as an important element of the state, must function within the framework of national policy aimed at developing international cooperation to safeguard national interests. At present, no legal act provides for ways to improve the effectiveness of the national border policy from the perspective of ensuring the national interests of the Republic of Moldova;

– The state border has a bipolar international nature—it is not established by a single state but is determined by the alignment of the adjacent territories of neighboring states;

– The dynamics of significant changes in the international relations pursued by Moldova make it possible to adapt the national border policy to support international and cross-border cooperation, contributing to greater efficiency in the functioning of the state border under modern conditions.

3.2. Analysis of the main directions of the Republic of Moldova's state border policy explores the origins of the formation of Moldova's state border policy up to the integration of

modern IBM concepts, highlighting the changes brought about by the country's closer alignment with the EU and the impact of cooperation with Romania and Ukraine.

Border policy is a category within political science that represents the type and direction of a contemporary state's internal and external policy. Its content consists of the activities carried out by the competent state authorities, public officials, civil society and citizens to safeguard national interests within the border space. This is achieved through the balanced implementation of the functions of the state border, depending on the real and potential threats to national security.

A distinctive feature of border policy is that, while holding the status of state policy, its implementation takes place at various levels—from the highest state authorities and administrative bodies to local public administration.

The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, the Foreign Policy Concept, the Concept for State Border Guarding, the National Security Concept and Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova, IBM strategies, the laws on the state border, and various regulatory acts form the legal foundation for regulating the state border, organizing its functioning, and shaping the structural components of the border authority.

It is noteworthy that European standards for border management, adopted from the practices of EU external border management and implemented through the national IBM Strategies (for the periods 2011–2013, 2015–2017, 2018–2023) and the IBM Program 2022–2025, have substantially improved the national capacities for managing migration and combating cross-border crime.

On the other hand, the Republic of Moldova's state border policy has diverged from key provisions aligned with the country's national interests as outlined in the Concept for State Border Guarding of the Republic of Moldova (2003):

– the completion of the establishing the state border in accordance with international law (issues related to the demarcation of the state border with Romania and Ukraine remain unaddressed);

– the creation of conditions for conducting economic and other types of activities in the border area, aimed at contributing to the country's socio-economic development, and the conservation and rational use of natural resources (the issue of using the border area for national socio-economic development, in relations with neighboring countries, and the joint use of natural resources—particularly water—as well as major environmental concerns, remains unresolved);

– and finally, the organization of cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries as a key direction in the development of international relations in the fields of economic, social, cultural, and other forms of good-neighborly cooperation [14], has remained merely an intention.

Thus, the Republic of Moldova must develop its state border policy and manage its borders based on its national interests in order to ensure the country's sustainable and secure strategic

development, in which the state border will play an important role, functioning according to new principles of international and cross-border cooperation. [38, p. 78]

Subchapter 3.3 The state border policy of the Republic of Moldova in the context of international and cross-border cooperation: adapting conceptual and practical aspects addresses the foundational aspects of the Republic of Moldova's state border policy, with a direct impact on international relations, as well as international and regional cooperation.

An active foreign policy, along with the presence of possibility and necessity to develop cross-border cooperation as an essential factor for advancing international cooperation, aligns with the Moldova's national interests. It represents not only a condition for maintaining good neighborly relations but also a prerequisite for the state's survival amid the region's unstable situation.

The state border policy of the Republic of Moldova must be developed and implemented based on the country's internal and external priorities. In line with the national policy, the external priorities include European integration as an unquestionable objective, as well as the restoration of the state's territorial integrity. The internal priorities focus on strengthening a secure, prosperous, and democratic state in which all citizens can freely realize their full individual potential [39].

The state border policy must aim to expand the political, economic, and cultural space of the Republic of Moldova by facilitating contacts, creating favorable conditions for trade development, and enabling access for domestic goods and products to the international market.

In this context, the state border policy of the Republic of Moldova should be shaped based on four conceptual paradigms:

1. The participation of border authorities in the national policy for ensuring national, regional, and international security, taking into account the complex regional situation, as well as the existing risks and threats to the state and the region as a whole;
2. The involvement of border authorities in the state policy for developing international trade, economic, and cultural cooperation, by leveraging the opportunities offered by the favorable status of a candidate country for accession to the European Union;
3. The development of policy and the participation of border authorities in advancing international cooperation with neighboring countries, based on the principle of the geopolitical matrix;
4. The development of cross-border cooperation with Romania and Ukraine, as a key direction of the national policy for enhancing international cooperation.

Given the geopolitical situation in the region, the following priorities are emerging:

Firstly, at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, in accordance with the current state of border security caused by the ongoing war on Ukrainian territory, the approach to the functioning of the state border must fully comply with the requirements of national and regional security policy. In

this regard, the following priority action areas are relevant: - combating cross-border crime, which is increasing as a consequence of the war in Ukraine; - managing the state border in support of the peaceful resolution of the Transnistrian conflict.

The political and military situation in Ukraine requires the Moldovan border authority to focus its efforts on strengthening the border's barrier function.

Secondly, *the policy governing the functioning of the Republic of Moldova's state border with Romania* should be directed toward ensuring Moldova's EU integration in the following areas: - integration into the EU's political, economic, and social space, which involves the gradual elimination of external borders between the Republic of Moldova and Romania, in order to align the functioning of Moldova's border with the policy governing the EU's internal borders; - development of economic relations, considering that the EU's economic potential is essential for Moldova's economic development; - development of cultural cooperation with Romania, where ethnic communities closely related to the Moldovan people reside; - development of cross-border cooperation with Romania and regional development with other European states.

Thirdly, in the context of the European integration policy, the process of changing the state border functioning policy with the EU should begin with the establishment of a favorable regime for cross-border cooperation with Romania. This would aim to replace the border's barrier function with a contact function, allowing for the expansion of economic, social, and cultural ties.

The proposed conceptual approaches for developing a new state border policy of the Republic of Moldova require the improvement of forms and methods of international and cross-border cooperation within the framework of national policy, specifically:

– Establishing a unified state policy system involving border authorities to enhance the effectiveness of international relations, primarily by advancing cooperation on various levels with the EU, Romania, and Ukraine. One key tool to achieve this is the IBM policy mechanism, which addresses the control of cross-border processes;

– Defining common border policy directions with Ukraine to strengthen the European and regional security belt—an imperative in which both EU candidate countries are engaged. These shared border-related visions and actions will lead to intensified international cooperation in the Eastern European region for regional security and will contribute significantly to the implementation of agreements and action plans with the European Union in the accession process;

– Establishing effective border relations with Romania, with the prospect of adopting and promoting a joint border policy based on the principles of the EU's internal border functioning, regulated at the international level. Achieving this objective will reduce pressure on national sovereignty and enhance the country's potential on the international stage;

– Promoting an EU-oriented policy to ensure the Republic of Moldova receives consistent and effective support in strengthening the security capacity of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border and increasing the transparency of the Moldovan-Romanian border—an effort that will accelerate Moldova's accession to the European Union.

3.4. Conclusions to Chapter 3 presents findings that demonstrate the need for a new approach to the development of the Republic of Moldova's state border policy.

1. State borders play a special role in international relations and diplomacy. They are no longer viewed solely in a linear, classical sense—as a fixed boundary of state sovereignty—but also from a spatial perspective, as a socio-geographical zone within which, on both sides of the border, a border area with corresponding infrastructure is formed. This allows, within the framework of border policy, for the projection and development of international relations.

2. The state border policy of the Republic of Moldova has not undergone significant changes throughout the years of independence, and the state border continues to function primarily as an element of the national security system, with a predominant barrier function—serving as a line of separation from neighboring countries—without considering the potential for enhancing international cooperation. The lack of demarcation, as well as the absence of a state border treaty with Romania and the unfinished demarcation process with Ukraine, hinders the establishment of a clear legal regime for international and cross-border cooperation. [32]

3. Given the converging foreign and domestic policy objectives of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine, it is proposed that a new approach to the international political space be integrated into the Moldova's state border policy—one that envisions a shared space with neighboring countries. This space would operate on the principle of a *geopolitical matrix*—a joint policy of good neighborliness and mutual assistance, as well as a unified foreign policy on strategic matters related to international relations and cooperation. Expanding the political space and fostering cooperation based on the principle of a geopolitical matrix would enable a shift in border policy, so that borders are no longer perceived solely as lines of separation, but also as opportunities for creating a shared international space—primarily for the development of cross-border cooperation.

4. Cross-border cooperation involves direct collaboration between the neighboring territories of the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine, which are geographically situated along their shared borders. The sociocultural and spiritual closeness between the Republic of Moldova and Romania, as well as the existence of common interests in foreign policy, economy, environmental issues, and social matters in relation to Ukraine, are favorable factors for the development of cross-border cooperation—regarded as an essential component of international cooperation.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this doctoral thesis, in accordance with the established aim and objectives, the author has addressed—for the first time in political science in the Republic of Moldova—a significant and timely scientific-practical issue for the country: the functioning of the state border of the Republic of Moldova in the context of developing international and cross-border cooperation, from the perspective of safeguarding national interests and enhancing the efficiency of border functioning. This has enabled the author to formulate the following general conclusions and recommendations.

General conclusions:

1. Currently, there is no universally accepted methodology in the scientific community for studying the state border, and the methodological toolkit is only beginning to take shape. Research on state border policy is characterized by a lack of systematization, and the concepts related to the state border are generally descriptive in nature, varying significantly depending on each researcher's perspective. This results in an ambiguous understanding and interpretation of the functions of the state border, particularly from the standpoint of international and cross-border cooperation.

To date, the Republic of Moldova lacks a scientifically grounded concept of state border policy and a theory of state border management from the perspective of the effectiveness of international and cross-border cooperation and the safeguarding of national interests.

2. The insufficient theoretical exploration by Moldovan and foreign scholars of issues related to the functioning of the state border from the perspective of international and cross-border cooperation has led the author to focus on the theory and methodology of border establishment and functioning, methods of analysis, as well as the tools and mechanisms for researching the process of developing and implementing the Republic of Moldova's state border policy as a whole—and specifically in relation to the development of international and cross-border cooperation.

3. The theoretical and analytical foundation of the research topic is based on the studied sources: the work of geopolitical theorists on the role of borders in the spatial functioning of states, the founders of border theory—border studies, as well as researchers who explore various aspects of the theoretical understanding of the role and functions of borders in international relations.

4. As a practical foundation, the author formulated concrete solutions to the researched problem in the form of a theoretical concept regarding the functioning of the state border of the Republic of Moldova and justified its practical application with the aim of strengthening international relations through which the national interests of the state are achieved.

5. The results of the scientific research demonstrated the need to formulate new theoretical ideas for the political sciences in the Republic of Moldova, as well as political concepts concerning the functioning of Moldova's borders, namely: political space, border space, the border as a socio-

geographical contact zone, the geopolitical matrix of cooperation with Romania and Ukraine from the perspective of enhancing border efficiency, and cross-border cooperation—all of which were examined within the framework of socio-political and geopolitical sciences and practices.

6. It is observed that, as the importance of the state border's role in international relations becomes increasingly evident, the Republic of Moldova is, within this process, being increasingly pushed into the background of the EU's external border management policy framework. This trend is, in a certain sense, advantageous for the European Union, which to a large extent transfers the responsibility for securing its external borders to Moldova's borders. However, this shift does not fully align with the national interests of the Republic of Moldova.

7. At present, both in science and practice, it is generally considered that the primary function of the state border is to separate states, and the expression of state border policy focuses on the following areas of development: the border as a regulator of cross-border flows and the border as a component in developing international cooperation to ensure national and regional security. However, such a conceptual approach to the functioning of the state border does not allow for the advancement of international and cross-border cooperation, which requires a transition to a combined border management model—one based on the principle of a contact space with neighboring states, while unconditionally maintaining the barrier and filtering functions in relation to other cross-border flows.

8. The state border of the Republic of Moldova represents an important element in the formation and development of the state, serving as one of the indicators of its effectiveness. The policy of the border authority has been and continues to be oriented toward the functioning of the state border as a line of territorial delimitation and a fixed boundary marking national sovereignty.

9. The primary objective fulfilled by the state border is ensuring security, which defines its role as an integral part of the national security system. The barrier function is identified as the main function of the border, which—under current conditions—acts as a dissuasive factor for the Republic of Moldova in developing international and cross-border cooperation. The state border of the Republic of Moldova operates in accordance with the IBM Concept, implemented at the insistence of the EU, and aligned with European interests in securing the EU's external borders. In this format, however, the IBM Concept does not fully reflect the national interests of the Republic of Moldova.

The author considers it necessary to formulate several **recommendations** for the development of state border policy, as well as for the practical functioning of the state border.

1. The following recommendations are proposed for state authorities with responsibilities at the border:

– to approach the state border with consideration for the importance of border areas and border regions as specific territories possessing essential political, economic, cultural, and other characteristics necessary for the development of political, socio-economic, and cultural cooperation;

– to develop cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries that are part of the same geopolitical cooperation matrix on foreign policy issues and internal processes of economic, social, and cultural development;

– to redefine the role of the state border as a result of, and in connection with, the formation of integrative units within the Moldova–Romania–Ukraine framework.

2. It is recommended to introduce into the political sciences of the Republic of Moldova the innovative theoretical-conceptual concepts formulated and substantiated in this research, which expand the theory of political science in the field of international and cross-border cooperation development, namely: political space, border space, the border as a socio-geographical zone, the geopolitical matrix for cross-border cooperation, and cross-border cooperation.

3. It is recommended that the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova amend Law No. 28/2024 *"On the State Border of the Republic of Moldova"* to include the following provisions:

– Integrated state border management system of the Republic of Moldova – a coordinated and targeted activity of the public authorities of the Republic of Moldova aimed at ensuring border security and developing international and cross-border cooperation;

– Cross-border cooperation – a form of cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and neighboring states, within the territories geographically located along the state border, with the goal of jointly utilizing the specific features, resources, and potential of border territories to enhance the efficiency of socio-economic, environmental, cultural, and other types of cooperation;

– Border space – includes the state border, the border zone, the Moldovan sector of border waters and the corresponding airspace, border crossing points, and adjacent infrastructure within the country, as established by bilateral international treaties concluded with neighboring states, in accordance with the principles and norms of international law;

– Border territory – a part of a state's territory located along the state border and extending inward over a distance defined by the applicable regulatory framework, within which cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries is carried out.

4. We recommend that the Government of the Republic of Moldova:

– promote interstate cooperation between the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine based on the principle of the geopolitical matrix—a common policy of good neighborliness and a unified

foreign policy on strategic matters aimed at achieving geopolitical objectives and advancing cross-border cooperation as a form of socio-economic and cultural collaboration in border regions;

– organize the Republic of Moldova's cross-border cooperation with Romania and Ukraine by shifting border functioning policy from the principle of separation lines to the creation of a shared contact space for cooperation;

– initiate dialogue with Romania and Ukraine to develop cooperation between border territories in areas such as economy, environment, water resource management, culture, and the preservation of historical and cultural heritage;

– align the national border policy within the broader process of international cooperation development toward the creation of the necessary infrastructure, technical equipping for effective border management, achievement of a high level of border security, and creation of favorable conditions for cooperation between border territories;

– sign a state border treaty with Romania and conclude bilateral agreements with neighboring countries regarding the regime of border functioning within the framework of cross-border cooperation;

– carry out the demarcation of the Republic of Moldova's border with Romania and finalize the demarcation process with Ukraine;

– assign the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova with responsibilities for implementing state policy in the field of borders aimed at developing cross-border and international cooperation in economic, social, and cultural areas; and empower it to coordinate all activity sectors of the state border system structures related to ensuring border security and fostering cross-border and international cooperation, assuming the relevant responsibilities. To enhance the level of border management, a periodic joint risk and threat assessment should be conducted in collaboration with the competent authorities of Romania and Ukraine to identify factors that may impact international and cross-border cooperation.

Given the increasing complexity of the process of legitimizing state power (the difficulty of ensuring sovereignty) and the turbulence of global developments associated with the emergence of a new world order, national states—where territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders are essential attributes—will increasingly seek to secure their actual sovereignty. Therefore, it is considered necessary to rethink the interpretation of the state in political theory and practice, which inevitably requires a new theoretical approach to the role of the state border in both internal processes and international relations. Thus, the prospects for researching this scientific issue lie in a thorough analysis of the changing role of state borders in shaping the state's foreign policy strategy.

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ANNOTATION

RADU Corneliu, „The state border of the Republic of Moldova in the context of the development of international and cross-border cooperation", PhD thesis in political science. Chisinau, 2025.

The thesis structure: Introduction; three chapters; conclusions and recommendations; abstract in Romanian, English, and Russian; list of abbreviations; 7 appendices; and a bibliography comprising 273 titles.

Keywords: border, policy, cooperation, international, cross-border, integration, Republic of Moldova, European Union.

The aim of the work: is to identify the role and assess the significance of the state border, as well as to analyze new theoretical and conceptual approaches to its function in the implementation of state policy in the field of international cooperation, by capitalizing on the practical mechanisms of cross-border cooperation, in accordance with the European integration strategy.

The research objectives: to analyze the research historiography of the evolution of the concept of "border" as an essential factor in international relations; to identify the theoretical approaches and to establish the research methodology for international and cross-border cooperation through the lens of state border functioning; to analyze the EU's border policy and international cooperation in the context of border security assurance; to research the scientific-conceptual and organizational-practical aspects of the Republic of Moldova's cross-border cooperation with Romania and Ukraine; to determine the dialectical relationship between the functionality and effectiveness of the state border in the framework of the Republic of Moldova's international cooperation with the EU and neighboring countries; to analyze the conceptual and practical approaches regarding the policy of establishment and functioning of the Republic of Moldova's state border; to analyze the main directions of the Republic of Moldova's state border policy; to justify the need and ways of adapting the conceptual and practical aspects of the Republic of Moldova's state border policy in the context of international and cross-border cooperation; to develop conclusions and recommendations on the research topic.

The scientific novelty and originality: In the present scientific research, for the first time in the Republic of Moldova, the phenomenon of the state border is comprehensively analyzed from a political science perspective, as an instrument of international relations and cross-border cooperation. Based on the analysis of a large number of facts, socio-historical and political processes, the author scientifically argues that the involvement of state border structures in international cooperation with European Union countries and in cross-border cooperation with neighboring states – Romania and Ukraine – represents a strategic direction of essential importance for increasing the effectiveness of implementing the European integration policy.

The originality of the research lies in the application of an interdisciplinary theoretical approach, as well as in the use of fundamental theoretical frameworks from the field of international relations and diplomacy to understand and analyze the object of study.

The results that contribute to the solution of the important scientific problem: consists in the development of a new theoretical concept regarding the functioning of the state border of the Republic of Moldova and in the substantiation of its practical application, with the aim of strengthening international relations through which the national interests of the state are achieved.

The theoretical significance: resides in the development of a theoretical and methodological foundation for the research topic, which, in our view, can serve as a reference point for investigating the various forms of manifestation of the state border policy.

The applicative value of the research: lies in the conclusions developed by the author, which have concrete relevance for decision-makers involved in shaping border policy, for public authorities responsible for managing the functioning of the state border, as well as for representatives of state structures responsible for foreign policy.

The implementation of the scientific results: is reflected in the theses presented at national and international conferences, in articles published in specialized journals both in the country and abroad; in the author's teaching activity, as well as in their role as a member of the governmental working group "Justice, Freedom and Security" (GD No. 38 of 03.02.2023) for the implementation of the "Coordination Mechanism of the European Integration Process of the Republic of Moldova," established by GD No. 868 of 14.12.2022, as well as a member of the interinstitutional working group for the development of the IBM Program for the period 2026–2030.

АННОТАЦИЯ

РАДУ Корнелиу, «Государственная граница Республики Молдова в контексте развития международного и приграничного сотрудничества», диссертация на соискание ученой степени доктора политических наук, Кишинёв, 2025

Структура диссертации: введение; три главы; выводы и рекомендации; аннотации на румынском, русском, английском языках, список аббревиатур, 7 приложений и библиография из 273 работ.
Ключевые слова: граница, политика, сотрудничество, международное, приграничное, интеграция, Республика Молдова, Европейский Союз.
Цель работы: выявить роль государственной границы, ее новые теоретико-концептуальные подходы к реализации государственной политики международного сотрудничества с использованием практических механизмов приграничного сотрудничества в соответствии со стратегией европейской интеграции.
Задачи исследования: анализ историографии исследования развития концепта «граница» как существенного фактора международных отношений; определение теоретических подходов и методологии исследования международного и приграничного сотрудничества через призму функционирования государственной границы; анализ пограничной политики и международного сотрудничества ЕС в контексте обеспечения пограничной безопасности; изучение научно-концептуальных и организационно-практических аспектов приграничного сотрудничества РМ с Румынией и Украиной; определение диалектической связи между функциональностью и эффективностью государственной границы в рамках международного сотрудничества РМ с ЕС и соседними странами; анализ концептуальных и практических подходов к политике формирования и функционирования государственной границы РМ; анализ основных направлений государственной политики РМ в области границы; обоснование необходимости и путей адаптации концептуальных и практических аспектов государственной политики РМ в области границы в контексте международного и приграничного сотрудничества; выработка выводов и рекомендаций по теме.
Новизна и научная оригинальность работы: в данном научном исследовании впервые, в РМ, комплексно, с политологической точки зрения анализируется феномен государственной границы в качестве инструмента международных отношений и приграничного сотрудничества. На основе анализа множества фактов, социально-исторических и политических процессов, автор обосновывает, что участие структур государственной границы в международном сотрудничестве со странами ЕС, приграничном сотрудничестве со странами-соседями, является крайне важным государственным направлением повышения эффективности реализации политики Европейской интеграции.
Оригинальность исследования заключается в применение теории междисциплинарного характера, а также в использование базовых теоретических подходах науки о международных отношениях и дипломатии, к пониманию и анализу предмета исследования.
Решённая научная проблема: заключается в разработке нового теоретического концепта функционирования государственной границы РМ и обоснования его практической реализации, для укрепления международных отношений, посредством которых реализуются национальные интересы.
Теоретическая значимость диссертации: состоит в разработке теоретико-методологической основы темы исследования, которую, на наш взгляд, можно использовать в качестве ориентира в исследование различных проявлений государственной пограничной политики.
Прикладная ценность работы: состоит в разработанных автором выводах, имеющих определенное значение для политиков, формирующим пограничную политику и государственным органам, занимающимися управлением процессом функционирования государственной границы, а также для представителей структур занимающимися внешней политикой. Содержание работы может быть использовано при разработке университетских курсов.
Применение научных результатов: отражены в тезисах национальных и международных конференций, в статьях, опубликованных в профильных изданиях в стране и за рубежом; в преподавательской деятельности, в участие автора в качестве члена рабочей группы «Правосудие, Свобода и Безопасность» (ПП № 38 от 03.02.2023) по внедрению Механизма координации процесса европейской интеграции РМ, учреждённого ПП № 868 от 14.12.2022, и меж институциональной рабочей группы по разработке Программы ИМГ на 2026-2030 год.

ADNOTARE

RADU Corneliu, „Frontiera de stat a Republicii Moldova în contextul dezvoltării cooperării internaționale și frontaliere”, teză de doctor în științe politice, Chișinău, 2025.

Structura tezei de doctor: introducere; trei capitole; concluzii și recomandări; adnotare în limba română, engleză și rusă; listă de abrevieri; 7 anexe și bibliografie din 273 de titluri.

Cuvinte-cheie: frontieră, politică, cooperare, internațională, frontalieră, integrare, Republica Moldova, Uniunea Europeană.

Scopul lucrării constă în identificarea rolului și evaluarea semnificației frontierei de stat, precum și în analiza noilor abordări teoretico-conceptuale privind funcțiile acesteia în implementarea politicii de stat în domeniul cooperării internaționale, prin valorificarea mecanismelor practice ale cooperării frontaliere, în corespundere cu strategia de integrare europeană.

Obiectivele cercetării: analiza istoriografiei cercetării evoluției conceptului de „frontieră”, ca factor esențial al relațiilor internaționale; identificarea abordărilor teoretice și determinarea metodologiei de cercetare a cooperării internaționale și frontaliere prin prisma funcționării frontierei de stat; analiza politicii de frontieră și cooperării internaționale a UE în contextul asigurării securității frontaliere; studiul aspectelor științifico-conceptuale și organizatorico-practice ale cooperării frontaliere a Republicii Moldova cu România și Ucraina; determinarea relației dialectice dintre funcționalitatea și eficacitatea frontierei de stat în cadrul cooperării internaționale a Republicii Moldova cu UE și țările vecine; analiza abordărilor conceptuale și practice privind politica de formare și funcționare a frontierei de stat a Republicii Moldova; analiza principalelor direcții ale politicii de stat a Republicii Moldova în domeniul frontierei; argumentarea necesității și căilor de adaptare a aspectelor conceptuale și practice ale politicii de stat a Republicii Moldova în domeniul frontierei în contextul cooperării internaționale și frontaliere; elaborarea concluziilor și recomandărilor la tema cercetată.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică a lucrării: în cadrul prezentei cercetări științifice, pentru prima dată în Republica Moldova, este analizat în mod complex, din perspectivă politologică, fenomenul frontierei de stat în calitate de instrument al relațiilor internaționale și al cooperării frontaliere. Pe baza analizei unui număr mare de fapte, procese social-istorice și politice, autorul argumentează științific că implicarea structurilor frontierei de stat în cooperarea internațională cu țările Uniunii Europene și în cooperarea frontalieră cu statele vecine – România și Ucraina – constituie o direcție strategică esențială pentru sporirea eficienței implementării politicii de integrare europeană.

Originalitatea cercetării constă în aplicarea teoriei de natură interdisciplinară, precum și în utilizarea abordărilor teoretice de bază ale științei relațiilor internaționale și diplomației pentru înțelegerea și analiza obiectului de studiu.

Problema științifică soluționată constă în elaborarea unui nou concept teoretic privind funcționarea frontierei de stat a Republicii Moldova și în fundamentarea aplicării sale practice, în vederea consolidării relațiilor internaționale prin care sunt realizate interesele naționale ale statului.

Semnificația teoretică a tezei rezidă în elaborarea unui fundament teoretico-metodologic privind tema cercetării, care, în opinia noastră, poate servi drept reper pentru investigarea diverselor forme de manifestare ale politicii de frontieră a statului.

Valoarea aplicativă a cercetării constă în concluziile elaborate de autor, cu relevanță concretă pentru factorii de decizie implicați în formarea politicii de frontieră, pentru autoritățile publice competente în gestionarea proceselor de funcționare a frontierei de stat, precum și pentru reprezentanții structurilor statului responsabile de politica externă.

Conținutul lucrării poate fi folosit ca suport teoretic și empiric în elaborarea cursurilor universitare.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice: este reflectată în tezele conferințelor naționale și internaționale, în articole publicate în reviste de specialitate din țară și de peste hotare; în activitatea didactică a autorului, dar și cea de membru în cadrul grupului de lucru guvernamental „Justiție, Libertate și Securitate” (HG nr. 38 din 03.02.2023) pentru implementarea „Mecanismului de coordonare a Procesului de Integrare Europeană a Republicii Moldova”, instituit prin HG nr. 868 din 14.12.2022, precum și de membru al grupului de lucru interinstituțional pentru elaborarea Programului de MIFS pentru perioada 2026-2030.

RADU CORNELIU

THE STATE BORDER OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

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