CHAPTER 1.

CONSOLIDAREA REZILIENȚEI DEMOCRAȚIEI – ETAPĂ IMPORTANTĂ ÎN DEZVOLTREA DURABILĂ A SOCIETĂȚII CONTEMPORANE[1]

Ludmila ROȘCA[2]
orcid.org/0000-0003-0339-7157
https://doi.org/10.59295/sdcri2025.01

Rezumat: *În acest studiu sunt corelate fenomenele: reziliența democrației și dezvoltarea durabilă a societății moldovenești. Fiind definite ca scopuri ale guvernării, ale activității social-utile a cetățenilor, acestea vor contribui la integrarea Republicii Moldova în Uniunea Europeană. Obstacole serioase în traseul integrării europene produce războiului din regiune, războiul hibrid care își multiplică permanent formele și amenințările. Capacitatea instituțiilor statului și a actorului principal al vieții sociale – cetățeanul, să răspundă la timp și adecvat la numeroasele provocări, demonstrează reziliența democrației și a statului de drept. Analiza conceptelor fundamentale pentru înțelegerea fenomenelor și proceselor în plină desfășurare în Republica Moldova: supraviețuirea, coeziunea socială și economică, unitatea națională, dezvoltarea participativă, democrația participativă, responsabilitatea, ne-a permis să conchidem: societatea moldovenească și-a demonstrat capacitatea de a consolida reziliența instituțiilor democratice, de a susține dezvoltarea durabilă a economiei la alegerile parlamentare din 28 septembrie 2025.*
Cuvinte-cheie: supraviețuire, dezvoltarea durabilă, reziliența democrației, asociere la Uniunea Europeană.

STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF DEMOCRACY – A KEY STAGE IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Abstract: *This study examines the correlation between two major phenomena: the resilience of democracy and the sustainable develop-*

[1] Study conducted within the framework of the project "Strengthening the Socio-Economic and Legal Mechanisms for Ensuring Citizens' Well-Being and Security" (CONSEJ), code 01.05.02.

[2] Doctor Habilitated in Philosophy, Moldova State University. *ludmilarosca.com@gmail.com*.

ment of Moldovan society. Defined as objectives of governance and of socially beneficial civic engagement, these phenomena are expected to contribute to the integration of the Republic of Moldova into the European Union. Serious obstacles along the European integration path arise from the ongoing regional war and the hybrid warfare that continuously multiplies its forms and threats. The capacity of state institutions and of the main actor in social life, the citizens – to respond promptly and appropriately to numerous challenges demonstrates both the resilience of democracy and the rule of law. The analysis of fundamental concepts necessary for understanding the phenomena and ongoing processes in the Republic of Moldova – survival, social and economic cohesion, national unity, participatory development, participatory democracy, and accountability – has allowed us to conclude that Moldovan society has demonstrated its ability to strengthen the resilience of democratic institutions and to support the sustainable development of the economy during the parliamentary elections of 28 September 2025.

Keyword: survival, sustainable development, resilience of democracy, association with the European Union.

Introduction

Sustainable development and the resilience of democracy are phenomena that, through their interaction, mutually reinforce their constructive potential. "An inscription from the time of King Ashoka states: *all people are my children. Just as I desire the best for my own children, so too do I wish for them all that is good and all happiness in this world and in the next*" [20, p. 90]. This illustrates that even the ancients had already articulated and pursued the ultimate purpose of governance: maintaining peace and preventing wars, and resolving all conflicts through peaceful, political, and diplomatic means

At present, the Republic of Moldova is in an active process of consolidating its democratic institutions. The concept of state resilience, introduced by the European Council in the "European Union Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy", and applied within the European Neighbourhood Policy to the states included in the Eastern Partnership Program, offers new opportunities for scholars in the Republic of Moldova to assess the manner and pace at which socio-political processes unfold across all spheres of social life. The transition to democ-

racy in the Republic of Moldova has been lengthy and defective, largely due to the low level of political culture among citizens and even among members of the political elite. Over the 34 years of independence, the political culture of citizens has remained fragmented, and society has remained divided according to the geopolitical development vector of Moldovan society. Two development directions dominate this division: European integration and orientation toward the Eurasian Customs Union—regarding which the supporters of the Russian Federation's imperial policy disseminate numerous false statements. By outlining these options, the author highlights the importance of civic education among the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, whose vote on 28 September 2025 was decisive for the course of European integration.

The war initiated by the Russian Federation in Ukraine has had significant repercussions on the lives of citizens of the Republic of Moldova. On the one hand, state institutions implemented the necessary measures to shelter refugees; on the other hand, Moldovans became actively involved – opening their homes and, from the little they had, offering food, clothing, and other essential items. As a result of these actions, our country received strong appreciation from Europeans as a "small country with a big heart". In other words, we were rediscovered as diligent, wise, and engaged people who are aware of the effects of regional crises. Throughout the three years of war, we observed the maturation of governing authorities, of some leaders of extra-parliamentary political parties, and of certain civil society organizations, which expanded their activities to support the government in advancing the process of European integration. Thus, we completed the path from submitting the application for accession to the European Union (on 3 March 2022, when the Republic of Moldova signed its request to join the EU) to obtaining the status of EU candidate country.

These substantive changes formed the basis for the decision to hold the national constitutional referendum of 20 October 2024, conducted on the same day as the regular presidential election. The majority of participating citizens answered "YES" to the question: "Do you support amending the Constitution in view of the Republic of Moldova's accession to the European Union?" – 749 719 votes (50,35%), out of the – 1 531 392 voters present (50,72%). On 31 October 2024, the Constitutional Court issued a ruling confirming the results of the

referendum. The text of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova was amended by:

- introducing two new paragraphs reaffirming the European identity of the people of the Republic of Moldova and declaring EU integration as a strategic objective of the country;
- introducing a new Title VI, entitled "Integration into the European Union", which stipulates that the Republic of Moldova's accession to the constitutive treaties of the European Union, as well as to their revision acts, shall be regulated by an organic law adopted by Parliament.

This title also specifies that the provisions of EU treaties and other legally binding acts of the European Union shall take precedence over conflicting provisions of domestic legislation, in accordance with the provisions of the accession act.

Purpose of the investigation: Given the major importance of understanding the phenomenon and concept of democratic resilience, we aim to analyze several interpretations found in the decisions of European institutions and the definitions provided by scholars, with the purpose of increasing awareness of socio-political life among the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, regardless of the place or country in which they live and work. Achieving the objectives of this research will enable us to promote European values, contribute to "bringing Europe home", and demonstrate the practical significance of the phenomenon of "belonging to European culture".

An important dimension of the investigation consists in deciphering the relationship among the phenomena of "sustainable development", "resilience of democratic institutions", "resilience of the rule of law", and "resilience of the market economy". A correct understanding of the content of these phenomena will allow us to design and implement action plans through which we will contribute to achieving the strategic objective of the Republic of Moldova for the period 2025–2030: integration into the European Union.

The methodology applied is specific to the analysis of complex social phenomena. Given that the investigated phenomena place the human being at the center of their processes, we begin our analysis with Aristotle's reflection in Politics: "Nature, to make man a political animal, endowed him alone, among all animals, with the gift of rea-

soned speech… The true difference between man and other animals is that only humans possess the perception of good and evil, of right and wrong, of justice and injustice. And the sharing of these perceptions is what creates the family or the polis" [3, p. 265].

Methodological pluralism and the principles of interdisciplinarity and complementarity enabled us to capitalize on the cognitive potential of universal methods – dialectics and synergetics – alongside theoretical methods such as content analysis, capacity analysis, comparative analysis, as well as empirical methods. All the phenomena examined were analyzed in their dynamics, which allowed us to identify the specific features of each stage of the association and integration process into the European Union, and to assess the impact of technical assistance, cooperation, and the implementation of European projects on the development of the national economy and on the social infrastructure of both the urban and rural environments of our country.

The normative-prescriptive method guides the scholar, political analyst, or decision-maker to create formally optimal normative models. In this process, the sphere of political decision-making is interpreted as a phenomenon subject to reconstruction through the ideal model, regarded as a universal benchmark. Within this paradigm, political actions are optimized using formal rules, norms, and procedures. The central object of investigation is the "problem of choice", correlated with the creation of a formal algorithm and the optimization of decision-making. From this perspective, the mode of adopting political decisions is interpreted within the boundaries set by a non-contradictory model formalized at the logico-mathematical level, which enables the decision-maker to adopt decisions concerning the realization of operations in accordance with fixed criteria. The very procedure of decision-making appears as the legitimate, rational, and regulated processing of information and documents, carried out by impartial administrators. The advantage of this method derives from the conditions of rationalization and optimization of the decision-making process. It allows a clear specification of leadership criteria and rules and makes it possible to quantify gains and losses in situations involving alternative decisions.

The descriptive-explanatory method is more frequently used by psychologists, political scientists, administrators, and sociologists.

Here, the emphasis is placed not primarily on "imagined" or formalized norms and procedures, but on the hidden mechanisms and informal rules of the game. The quantitative processing of data is complemented by their qualitative analysis, with emphasis placed on the study of the "accidental" or the "precedent". In analyzing the process of political decision-making, multiple factors are taken into consideration: from individual networks and personal motivation to macroeconomic conditions, hierarchical structures, cultural stereotypes, and others. The results of such investigations are often generalized into theoretical models that can be tested in social practice. The strengths of this method stem from its orientation toward the analysis of empirical material.

By utilizing the potential of both methods, scholars in collaboration with public officials responded to changes in the socio-political reality and developed various programs for reorganizing state institutions, which significantly increased the influence of social organizations on decision-making processes. The principle of humanization and democratization of the civil service became the foundation of personnel policy. These transformations in the governance system correspond to the methodological principles of the following conceptual frameworks: public political management, political networks, and "governance". The methodological principle of the conception of public political management is the separation of governance from politics. By capitalizing on this principle, leaders of several states and public officials across various social institutions succeeded in improving the quality of services delivered to the population. However, in times of crisis, the "economization" of administrative activity faced opposition from those who viewed management in the public sector differently from management in the private sector. Misunderstanding these differences led to distortions in the results obtained.

The conception of political management was implemented by several states and resulted in the rejection of traditional postulates in this field, as well as the incorporation of market mechanisms into the organization of state institutions. The crisis of social administration – reflected in the stagnation of governance mechanisms, inefficient use of tax revenues, declining quality of public services, increasing manifestations of bureaucracy and corruption, and the rapid erosion of public

trust in state institutions – led to a reconsideration of the concept of the state. The role of the state as an administrator was replaced by that of the state as a manager, efficient from an economic standpoint. The shift in conceptual principles regarding the functions and priorities of the state intensified interest in financial management and increased the value attributed to public funds. Whereas previously each bureaucratic organization sought to obtain as many resources as possible from the state budget, in the new system it is motivated to save resources by increasing efficiency and optimizing its own activity. A new principle for remunerating civil servants was adopted—namely, payment based on work performance.

The Strategy of Survival: Essential Instruments for the Development of Democratic Societies

Regrettably, Europe—which for seven decades provided a viable model of cooperation in the name of stability, democracy, and the prosperity of its citizens—has, since 2022, been drawn by the Russian Federation into a war that has generated and continues to generate threats to the European way of life, thought, and values. By supporting Ukraine through various means, European states have reevaluated their survival strategies and redefined their national and community-level priorities. Being during the pre-accession process to the European Union, the institutions of the Moldovan state are obliged to meet the Copenhagen criteria and to prepare society and the country for EU integration. In this regard, it is essential that every individual, every social group, society, and all institutions become fully aware of their position in relation to the processes unfolding within their social environment.

The strategy of survival is a document—a conceptual framework—through which the individual and the community understand what must be done to eliminate dangers that lead to the premature death of a person, to prevent the disappearance of a people, or the extinction of human culture and civilization [11]. "The study of survival is a priority objective of scientific knowledge and philosophical reflection, and it requires the elaboration of theories in which the following dimensions are clearly highlighted: methodological, conceptual, ontological, epistemological, instructive-educational, economic-pragmatic,

and political-social" [21, p.4-5]. The analysis of survival under current conditions directs our attention to the importance of correlating the phenomena of survival, security, and sustainable development.

Under conditions of instability and war, life itself loses its status as a supreme value. Central, regional, and even local authorities in Ukraine have succeeded in convincing citizens that the central objective is the defense of the country. Ukrainians endure and survive under the harsh conditions of uncertainty. While some members of the academic community in European states express concern regarding environmental pollution caused by bombings or the climate changes which generate natural disasters across various regions of the world, scholars in Ukraine focus on the possibility of preserving their identity and their country. They seek the means and instruments necessary to satisfy the primary needs of the population: food, clothing, and housing. In practical fields – from public servants to division managers and employees – we observe how annual or semi-annual plans are continually adjusted depending on the situation on the front.

Only within the academic community do certain traditions persist: the organization of scientific conferences, thematic seminars, and public lectures. This conclusion is drawn from our collaboration with professors at Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University and the Chernivtsi Regional Center for Advanced Training of Public Servants in Ukraine. On 24–25 September 2025, the XIIth edition of the International Scientific Conference "Anton Kokhanovskyi Municipal Readings" was organized by the Chernivtsi Regional Centre for Advanced Training and the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, in cooperation with the Chernivtsi Regional Council and the Chernivtsi City Council. A characteristic feature of the scientific events organized by our colleagues in Chernivtsi is their rigorous attitude toward the analysis and processing of empirical data, and toward substantiating conclusions and recommendations in relation to the phenomena and processes under study. The conference emphasized the scholarly and administrative activity of Anton Kokhanovskyi, whom I recommend as a model for public officials and mayors in Moldova, especially for the current mayor of Chișinău.

Our strategic partner – Romania – is also currently facing difficulties that affect the capacity of its state institutions to remain resilient. For many years, Romanian state authorities failed to fulfill their functions adequately, governing the country "from one day to the next", without understanding the laws or the requirements of the market economy. Only after the 2024 and 2025 elections did the governing coalition, led by Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan, present to the public the real situation of the national economy and propose radical adjustments to state expenditures. As noted by Dan Motreanu, liberal Member of the European Parliament: "Through the measures adopted, the Bolojan Government has chosen the difficult but correct path: balance instead of derailment, stability instead of crisis". Correcting the deficit is not a popular short-term decision, but it is the only path that can guarantee a stable economy and a state capable of investing in development rather than merely surviving from month to month". This conclusion is of major importance for the authorities of the Republic of Moldova.

In the Republic of Moldova, the concept of survival is equally relevant, because under the conditions of hybrid warfare we are witnessing misunderstandings, provocations, contradictions, and conflicts which, in turn, generate uncertainty, insecurity, and even hostility. Such phenomena were observed and analyzed during the pre-electoral period of 2025. Those who shouted the loudest were often individuals with a fragmented, subordinated political culture—one that does not allow them to understand the authenticity and significance of the processes taking place around them, nor the profound transformations that have occurred in our lives in recent years. For scholar's familiar with political system theory and political processes, it is difficult to comprehend the behavior of former state leaders who did not contribute to the country's development, to the strengthening of state institutions, or to the promotion of national interests. Synthesizing information accumulated during the pre-electoral period and conducting content analysis of the statements made by candidates and party leaders, we have found that:

- the political class in our country does not distinguish between what is important/priority and what is secondary, nor between the national interest and party or personal interests;

- there is a growing gap between substantive statements and falsehoods;
- candidates for the office of Member of Parliament in the Republic of Moldova exhibited, in expressive form, cynicism, dishonesty, intolerance, and an inability to provide an accurate description of the situation.

All these and many other flaws already revealed by the political class indicate to us – scholars, university staff, and educators – that we have substantial work ahead in the field of education, including civic and moral education for all social groups. Only through such efforts do we see the possibility of reducing corruption, including attempts to "buy" citizens' votes or falsify electoral results—practices incompatible with participatory democracy, the model we aim to implement in our country.

Regarding the behavior of public officials, members of parliament, and ministers, we note that responsibility presupposes a distinction between the conscious and the unconscious, the voluntary and the imposed. Conscious choice refers not to the objective itself, but to the means employed to achieve it. In the works "The Principle of Responsibility" (Jonas) and "The Ethics of Responsibility: The Theory of the Morality of the Future" by V. A. Kanke, the concept of responsibility is developed and integrated, arguing the thesis that human beings require new skills to assess the usefulness of their own knowledge, to act with regard to the consequences of their activity, and to understand their influence on the future of universal and national culture and civilization [20, p. 245-257].

To be responsible in all forms of socially useful activity, it is important to understand the nature of the action–consequence relationship. In political activity, every actor involved in the political and decision-making process is obliged to provide behavioral models in which the dominant values are dignity, honor, honesty, integrity, and correctness. For this reason, we suggest that leaders of political parties and non-governmental organizations rise to the level required by public office and by the social groups with which they interact. The essential conclusion is that national interest must take priority in public activity. At present, it is incorporated into the strategic objective of both the domestic and foreign policy of the Republic of Moldova:

European integration. All other desires, intentions, and individual or interests cannot be pursued once a person assumes a public office. We consider the concepts of social cohesion and national unity to be essential for civic education planning. Economic, social, and territorial cohesion represents an expression of solidarity among EU member states, as it directs the largest share of available funds toward the less developed regions of the Union and is implemented through the EU's cohesion policy [5, pp. 46–50]. The Maastricht Treaty defined the goal of cohesion policy as achieving balanced socio-economic development throughout the EU by reducing economic, social, and territorial disparities.

The concept of national unity, developed by modern states in the process of forming nations as relatively homogeneous political and cultural entities, constitutes today "a fundamental pillar of any state, defined by territorial cohesion, sovereignty, and shared identity. Its value lies in being a principle that ensures cohesion and solidarity within the political body composed of individuals with potentially diverse identities, and therefore lacking homogeneity" [12, pp. 5–31]. In the Constitution of Romania, Article 1 stipulates the national, sovereign, independent, unitary, and indivisible character of the state. Professor Gabriela GOUDENHOOFT emphasizes that the principle of national unity "influences public policies, inter-institutional relations, and political discourse, playing an essential role in maintaining social stability and cohesion" [12, p. 5].

Moldovans find it difficult to define their ethno-cultural identity, and political identity can be discussed only with reference to a group of intellectuals who possess and recognize authentic knowledge and information about the stages of development of the modern state – the Republic of Moldova – and who can explain the origins of certain social phenomena that have often hindered the development of Moldovan society. Throughout the past three decades, as witnesses to public debates on the spoken language and historical events of the Moldovan state, several ambassadors have drawn our attention to the necessity of knowing our identity, a process that would allow us to correctly define the directions for Moldovan societal development. In the chapter "Civic Education in the Republic of Moldova in the Context of European Integration", the authors note: "In the context of the Republic of Mol-

dova, a priority objective of personal development is the awareness of national belonging, the appropriate interpretation and assessment of the national–regional–global correlation, and the dialectic between tradition and innovation in the development of a people's culture and civilization. The formation of legal consciousness among the citizens of the Republic of Moldova is an indispensable condition for the healing of Moldovan society, and for eliminating absenteeism and indifference from social life. By rehabilitating the perennial values of national culture – patriotism and humanism – we will succeed in meeting the conditions imposed by the strategies of survival and sustainable development in the contemporary world...". [22, p. 297–298].

The importance of consciously defining the political identity of Moldovans is also emphasized by the Polish scholar Valenty BALUK in his article "Nation State Consolidation: The Cases of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova" [4, pp. 57–72]. In this study, we find answers to questions concerning the political confrontations between the governors and the governed in our country. The author notes that Ukraine and Moldova have acknowledged the significance of nation-building as an ethno-cultural community and as a political entity, but they failed in fulfilling this objective at the same pace as the states that joined the European Union during the period of the Great Enlargement. A stable structure of state institutions constitutes a fundamental premise for the consolidation of democracy. The formation of the nation-state under conditions of coexistence among multiple ethno-cultural groups is a complex task, the resolution of which requires the conscious involvement of citizens in the decision-making process. According to the view of scholars Linz X. and Stepan A., presented in their work "Statehood, Nationalism, and Democratization", consolidation entails radical transformations at three levels: behavioral, axiological, and structural [25]. Such transformations support the model of participatory democracy, to which we shall return. We share the opinion of the Polish scholar, and in several of our studies we have observed that Moldovan society shows significant shortcomings in this area, though we also acknowledge the presence of objective difficulties that explain the numerous challenges faced by pro-European parties. The low level of political culture among the leaders of pro-Russian parties, their inability to understand the mission of parliamentary opposition

parties, and their service to the geopolitical interests of the Russian Federation negatively affect the state's capacity for resilience. For this reason, educational institutions and the academic community must assume the mission of providing civic education to all social groups. Civic education programs emphasize "the citizen's attitude toward the socio-political reality in which they operate. Awareness of belonging to the cultural heritage with which one identifies sustains the creative imagination of each citizen in the quest for knowledge of their own identity".

At the foundation of civic education programs, we place the theses advanced by Ilie Prigogine in his work "*Address to the Generations of the Future*" These include:

- Human decisions are determined by the memory of the past and expectations for the future;
- The transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace, cooperation,and communication must be valued;
- Future generations are obliged to take a stance against policies oriented toward supporting military strategies.

These theses are exceptionally relevant today, as war manifests itself aggressively in the neighboring country, and regional actors – traditionally adherents of peace, dialogue, and cooperation – are increasingly concerned with developing military strategies that would allow them to defend their region/country, values, and way of life from an advancing aggressor. On 27 January 2022, during a seminar in Chernivtsi, I attended for the first time an academic session in which a professor from Belarus described the image of the "enemy", recounting strange yet massive movements of national army units. At that time, the narrative promoted by the authorities was that Western states were preparing to attack Russia and Belarus. Throughout these four years of war, we have heard numerous falsifications, and regrettably, not all citizens are able to distinguish between truths and falsehoods. This is precisely why civic education targets the individual's responsibility, which encompasses the entirety of values internalized, respected, and promoted by the person.

In the context of the objectives undertaken by state institutions and civil society in the Republic of Moldova during the opening of accession negotiations with the European Union, the relevance of Fou-

cault's assertion regarding the responsibility and historical mission of intellectuals becomes even more pronounced. According to Foucault, intellectual activity has meaning "only if it is oriented toward transforming one's own thinking and that of others". The scholar argues that the intellectual must assume responsibility for upholding moral tradition. Foucault warns us that not every ethical–political choice is equal to another. In this context, the scholar insists on "the elaboration of the self through a diligent, gradual transformation that requires continuous effort for change, manifested through a permanent care for oneself" [26, p. 321].

The scholar's message remains highly relevant today, exerting a significant impact on the lives of individuals who are aware of their social status and role. Equally illuminating is Foucault's characterization of the moral world, structured into three layers of reality: the discursive formation, which encompasses both all and each individual; the small group in which the subject feels almost at home; and the subject themselves—the center of moral activity—who is not identical with themselves, since through the process of problematization they become someone different. The influence of an actor in social life who has undergone problematization is reflected in the small group and, to a lesser extent, in the broader discursive sphere. Foucault concludes that the responsible individual is the one who problematizes themselves and, in doing so, moves toward danger. This is not an entirely original thesis; on numerous occasions, within ethical discourse, we have emphasized the importance of problematization for the success and self-sufficiency of the person—understood as a priority objective of human existence. The value of Foucault's theses lies in their capacity to compel the individual to step out of their comfort zone and assume their social roles with responsibility.

The Resilience of Democracy

The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021–2027) addresses the five long-term objectives of the post-2020 Eastern Partnership policy, placing emphasis on recovery, resilience, and reform as essential components of the future agenda. The long-term objectives include: the development of resilient, sustainable, and integrated economies; the strengthening of accountable institutions,

the rule of law, and security; the enhancement of environmental and climate resilience; the advancement of a resilient digital transformation; and the creation of resilient societies based on gender equality, fairness, and inclusiveness. These objectives are accompanied by an ambitious regional Economic and Investment Plan valued at EUR 2.3 billion to support socioeconomic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic and to reinforce long-term resilience by accelerating the green and digital transitions.

European leaders have committed to strengthening resilience by focusing on fortifying rule-of-law institutions; establishing an efficient, transparent, and accountable public administration at all levels of governance; combating fraud, corruption, and economic crime; countering organized crime; and enhancing security and cyber-resilience, including against hybrid threats. The leaders have called for reinforced joint ownership of responsibilities and reaffirmed the importance of inclusive engagement of all community members. They emphasized the need for deeper cooperation with civil society, particularly with youth, and for the promotion of gender equality, tolerance, and intercultural dialogue. Cooperation with civil society – through the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, broad information outreach, and dedicated support for local civil society organizations and social partners – remains an integral component of the Eastern Partnership.

The resilience of democracy is reinforced by political and socio-cultural institutions. Social institutions assist individuals in addressing fundamental problems arising from the need for fair exchange, collective decision-making, collaboration, and the pooling of resources and means to achieve common goals. Confronted with numerous challenges, institutions provide solutions that reduce uncertainty or promote stability in interpersonal relations. A current issue highlighted by economists and political scientists is the problem of rational choice. Scholars emphasize the role of institutions in resolving the problem of rational choice faced by actors in economic, political, and social relations. The principal actor in social life – the everyday individual – is compelled to choose from among multiple options. A correct choice is influenced by numerous factors; at the same time, it represents a responsible and conscious act, marking the social status of the person. Socio-cultural institutions, particularly those responsible for the

education and training of younger generations, hold this mission in contemporary society.

The world we live in is dynamic and overloaded with numerous tensions and crises, characterized by multiple influences and confrontations. This complexity led scholars to develop the concept of resilience, which we define as the capacity of a system to respond to existing challenges and risks while simultaneously fulfilling its functions and preserving its core structure. The concept of resilience is applicable at all levels of social organization. At the individual level, it denotes a person's capacity to manage life rationally, establishing and fulfilling various objectives and priorities. By demonstrating our ability to survive even under difficult conditions, we succeed in giving meaning to our own existence. It is more complex to define the resilience of political, social, or economic institutions, as their capacity for preservation and reproduction depends on multiple factors. Regarding political and administrative institutions, whose functioning determines the resilience of social groups and citizens of the Republic of Moldova, the following is noted: public administration reform must be implemented; examples of institutional resilience should be consolidated and multiplied; and the experience of developed European states should be leveraged in this regard. "In a societal context, resilience transcends mere stability, becoming a measure of the capacity to respond and adapt to complex and unpredictable changes. We observe how resilience thinking, developed as a response to the need to understand how systems can manage resources and risks in an increasingly interdependent world, has become a performance test for democratic institutions" [13, p. 8-33].

This thesis deserves the attention of politicians and public officials who have assumed the responsibility of preparing the Republic of Moldova and Moldovan society for integration into the European Union. The notion of "resilience thinking" is particularly valuable. It is not merely a logical construct; it represents a necessity which, when addressed, can lead to crucial decisions and actions for the functioning of institutions and for the sustainable development of Moldovan society. Empirical material collected during the pre-electoral period provides evidence supporting the conclusion that, in the months leading up to the parliamentary elections of September 28, 2025, state institu-

tions fulfilled their obligations responsibly. Those who believed they would evade punishment for their misdeeds were brought to justice, while the electorate demonstrated support for the country's European trajectory.

The Association of the Republic of Moldova with the European Union

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the federal state – the USSR – the European Union signed association agreements with the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, an act that marked a significant leap in the quality of relations between the parties, moving practically from cooperation to association. Whereas cooperation agreements previously covered the commercial aspects of relations between the parties, association agreements concern the alignment of candidate states with European policies. The political basis of the Association Agreement is established by Article 310 TEC (238 EEC), which provides the European Community with the right to conclude agreements with third states establishing an association, joint actions, and special procedures for cooperation. The specialized literature identifies three types of association agreements:

1. Association as a special form of development assistance. This category includes 69 agreements signed by the EU with states from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Mediterranean Basin.
2. Association as a preliminary stage to accession.
3. Association as an alternative to EU membership. This was initially the model for the European Economic Area, established through agreements between EU member states and EFTA countries on 1 January 1984. Some EFTA states – Austria, Finland, and Sweden – later joined the EU.

Deep and sustainable democracy includes free and fair elections, efforts to combat corruption, the independence of the judiciary, democratic control over the armed forces, and the freedoms of expression, assembly, and association. The EU has also emphasized the role played by civil society in the democratic process and has introduced the principle of "more for more", whereby the EU develops closer partnerships with those neighboring countries that make greater progress toward democratic reform. The principal objective of the Eastern Partnership

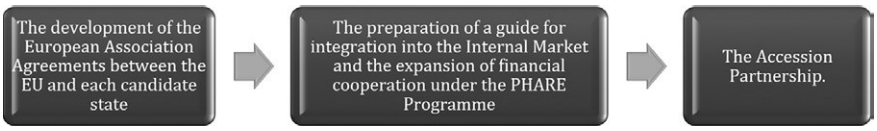
is "to accelerate political association and deepen economic integration" between the EU and its eastern neighbors. The level of integration and cooperation reflects each partner country's commitment to European values, standards, and structures, as well as the progress made in relation to them. The Eastern Partnership, of which the Republic of Moldova is a part, aims to promote democracy and good governance, to strengthen energy security, to support sectoral reforms (including in the field of environmental protection), to encourage interpersonal contacts, to support economic and social development, and to provide additional funding for projects aimed at reducing socioeconomic disparities and enhancing stability. In the governing programme of Prime Minister Alexandru Munteanu, the flagship initiatives are also reflected. These include: an integrated border management programme; an instrument dedicated to small and medium-sized enterprises; regional electricity markets; efforts to improve energy efficiency; increased use of renewable energy sources; the promotion of good environmental governance; and measures for prevention, preparedness, and response in cases of natural or man-made disasters. A priority position in the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Moldova is occupied by the five objectives guiding cooperation between European institutions and the states of Central and Eastern Europe:

- A partnership that creates: The EU and partner states will cooperate to build resilient, sustainable, and integrated economies.
- A partnership that protects: The EU and partner states will renew their commitment to the fundamental principles of the partnership, in particular to responsible institutions, the rule of law, and security.
- A green partnership: The EU and partner states will cooperate to ensure a sustainable and resilient future.
- A partnership that connects: The EU will continue to invest in the digital transformation of partner countries and will seek to extend the benefits of the digital single market.

A partnership that empowers: The EU and partner states will cooperate to build resilient, equitable, and inclusive societies.

In 1994, at the European Council in Essen, the Pre-Accession Strategy was presented, defining the mechanism and the Community support provided to candidate states as they progressed through the

pre-accession process. During the pre-accession phase, EU–CEEC (PECOS) relations unfolded along three axes:



PHARE was established in 1998 as a financial support instrument for Hungary and Poland, later extended by the Essen Council to the remaining candidate states. Through Agenda 2000, PHARE was oriented toward institutional reform in the CEECs, industrial and infrastructure adaptation, and related priorities. The annual value of the Programme amounted to 1.56 billion euros.

The Pre-Accession Strategy was complemented by the Accession Partnership, which brought together into a single document all forms of assistance offered by the European Community to the Central and Eastern European states, with the aim of adapting the national preparation programmes of the candidate states. The Accession Partnership establishes:

• The concrete commitments of each candidate state regarding democratization, macroeconomic stabilization, nuclear safety, and the development of a National Programme for the Adoption of the Community Acquis (NPAA), according to a timetable based on a list of country-specific priorities, aligned with the Commission's Opinion for each state.

• The EU's decision to mobilize all available Community resources to ensure better preparation of the candidate states for accession.

Each year, comprehensive analyses of the association agreements are conducted, leading to the identification of the measures necessary for achieving the final objective: accession to the EU. All documents—the Pre-Accession Strategy, the Accession Partnership, and the Consolidated Pre-Accession Strategy—are of great importance in the context of political integration, but the principal legal document remains the Association Agreement. Cooperation between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova focuses on the development of resilient, sustainable, and integrated economies; accountable rule-of-law institutions and security; resilient digital transformation; resilient, equitable,

and inclusive societies; the strengthening of democratic institutions; and the guaranteeing of human rights: freedom, security, and justice.

The Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union promotes political association and dialogue, economic integration—including through expanding Moldova's participation in EU policies, programmes, and agencies—and contributes to strengthening peace and stability in the region and globally. It also supports cooperation in the fields of freedom, security, and justice, with the aim of reinforcing the rule of law and ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, it seeks to consolidate democracy, the rule of law, and political, economic, and institutional stability in the Republic of Moldova; to support Moldova's efforts to develop its economic potential through international cooperation, including by aligning its legislation with that of the EU; and to achieve progressive economic integration into the EU internal market, particularly through the establishment of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA)

Compliance with the commitments undertaken by Moldova's political institutions is monitored by: the Association Council, at ministerial level, responsible for supervising and monitoring the implementation of the Agreement; the Association Committee, composed of senior officials assisting the Council of the European Union; the Parliamentary Association Committee, comprising members of the European Parliament and members of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova; the Civil Society Platform, which facilitates meetings and exchanges of views.

The Association Agenda is based on shared principles: it promotes political association and economic integration, in full accordance with the AA/DCFTA; it emphasizes the responsibility of both the European Union and the Republic of Moldova to fully implement the provisions of the Association Agreement; it ensures full respect for the principles of accountability, transparency, responsibility, and inclusiveness; it entails Moldova's involvement in ongoing dialogue regarding reforms related to the association process; and it highlights the need for concrete and sustainable results that contribute to societal development, including within Moldova. Both parties will ensure that all legislative acts and strategic documents prepared under the Association Agenda

are drafted and implemented accurately, through an inclusive, transparent, and evidence-based process involving civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

Implementation of the Association Agenda is subject to monitoring, annual reporting – including on overall progress – and evaluation, using recognized indicators and data generated by EU-funded projects. Thus, in the EU Enlargement Report of 4 November 2025, it is noted that the pace of reforms, particularly in areas such as democracy, the rule of law, and fundamental rights, has a direct impact on the speed of the accession process. These advancements benefit both candidate states and EU member states, strengthening prosperity, democracy, security, and stability while opening new opportunities for citizens and businesses, such as strategic investments and access to the Single Market.

In the context of ongoing hybrid threats and attempts to destabilize the country, Moldova has advanced significantly on its accession path, successfully completing the screening process. The first EU – Moldova Summit, held in July 2025, marked a new stage of cooperation and integration. Moldova adopted roadmaps on the rule of law, public administration, and the functioning of democratic institutions, all positively assessed by the European Commission. The Commission considers that Moldova has fulfilled the necessary conditions to open the following clusters: Cluster 1 (Fundamentals), Cluster 6 (External Relations), and Cluster 2 (Internal Market). The Commission expects Moldova to meet the conditions for opening the remaining three clusters and is working to ensure that the Council can advance the opening of all clusters before the end of the year. The Government of the Republic of Moldova has announced its objective to provisionally conclude accession negotiations by early 2028. The Commission is determined to support this objective, which is ambitious yet achievable, if Moldova accelerates the current pace of reforms. Maintaining the reform momentum is essential, reinforced by strong parliamentary support for the country's European path following the September elections [18].

Statements from European institutional leaders emphasize that the European Union will support the Republic of Moldova in achieving the objectives and priorities established in the Association Agenda. To this end, the Union will make all available EU-level support instru-

ments accessible, provide expertise and advice, facilitate the exchange of best practices, know-how, and information, and support capacity-building and institutional strengthening. The European Union will also encourage and monitor the coordination of support from Moldova's other partners and will reinforce the coordinated Team Europe approach, which combines resources from the EU, its Member States, and financial institutions. The Union will use the relevant financial instruments at its disposal to help implement the Association Agenda. However, this support will continue to be strictly conditional and will depend on concrete progress in the reform programme agreed with the EU, particularly in the areas of democracy, justice, and the fight against corruption. The priorities defined in the Association Agenda are fully aligned with the long-term policy objectives set out in the Joint Communication entitled "The Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all", which, together with the contributions of Member States and partner countries, forms the basis of the Joint Staff Working Document on the Eastern Partnership.

Interconnections between the strategies of survival, security, and sustainable development

The survival of humankind calls for a new interpretation of security, viewing it as a rational deviation from the path of natural development and as a transition toward sustainable development. Sustainable development requires meeting the vital needs of current and future generations while preserving the environment. The preservation of the biosphere and its dynamic stability constitute the foundation of ecological security and the sustainable development of society. European institutions have contributed to achieving sustainable development objectives through the development and implementation of various instruments, including: the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, the Clean Air Policy Package, continued implementation of the corporate social responsibility strategy, the European Health Insurance Card, regulations on the sustainable use of pesticides, and EU rules on tobacco products, among others. A revision of Europe's sustainable development concept was undertaken by the Juncker Commission, which integrated sustainable

development into the main agendas covering multiple policy areas, as well as into sectoral policies and initiatives, using better-regulation tools. Every impact assessment carried out by the Commission before presenting a legislative proposal includes an analysis of the social, economic, and environmental impacts, with the purpose of ensuring proper consideration of sustainable development aspects. Moreover, all recently concluded EU trade agreements include a chapter on sustainable development, aiming to promote sustainable growth and development, as well as decent working conditions for all. The Juncker Commission defined the core values of European policies of major importance for Europe's sustainable future, such as the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Consensus on Development, and the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy [6].

The Commission has also proposed strengthening the link between EU funding and the rule of law, assessing the social and environmental impact of all EU-co-funded research and innovation activities, and setting a more ambitious climate-spending target under the future EU budget. Recently, the Commission presented a long-term strategic European vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive, and climate-neutral economy by 2050 – a vision that lays the groundwork for a structural transformation of the European economy.

For central and local authorities in the Republic of Moldova, the European Pillar of Social Rights – adopted in November 2017 holds major significance. Based on its 20 principles, it directly supports upward convergence aimed at improving working and living conditions across Europe. It contributes to combating poverty in all its dimensions and to ensuring equitable, adequate, and sustainable social protection systems. The Pillar promotes equal opportunities and access to the labour market, including gender equality and fair working conditions, and fosters social inclusion and protection. The Pillar is accompanied by a Social Scoreboard, which, together with other instruments, contributes to its monitoring.

The concept of *sustainable development* is elaborated in the Sustainable Development Strategy and in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which identifies human development as a priority objective and was signed by 147 states. The Millennium Declaration reaffirms the international community's commitment to the fundamental values of humanity: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect

for nature, and shared responsibility. It highlights the importance of addressing challenges related to peacebuilding, human rights, sustainable development, and environmental protection. The interconnections between development and security are particularly relevant for the sustainable development of Moldovan society. Researcher Natalia ALBU, in her article "*External Assistance in the Security Sector: Background and Areas of Cooperation*", underscores that efficient social security systems are powerful levers for ensuring income security, preventing and reducing poverty and inequality, and promoting social inclusion and dignity. As an essential investment in the well-being of workers and of the population, social protection increases productivity and employment rates and supports sustainable economic development, thereby contributing to a more equitable globalization with decent living standards for all [2, p. 232-255].

Security is understood as a condition in which no individual is threatened by manifestations of danger, including the threat of extinction. The object of security includes the individual; human rights and freedoms; society; its material and spiritual values; the state; constitutional order; sovereignty and territorial integrity; the political system; and other fundamental components. The main challenge of the transition toward sustainable development concerns the creation of conditions in which the market economy can be "aligned" with the biosphere and develop in accordance with the goals of the new civilizational strategy. Prior to the formulation of a sustainable development strategy, security was interpreted as a means of protection against danger, deviation, or anomaly in relation to sustainable development [21, p. 31].

An analysis of the first years of existence of the sovereign Republic of Moldova provides concrete data on the active manifestations of risk factors affecting economic security. In order to improve living conditions for Moldovan citizens, the Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction (SCERS) and the Millennium Development Goals were adopted. SCERS includes three objectives: sustainable and socially oriented development; reintegration of the country; and European integration. Sustainable and socially oriented development is understood as "continuous and stable" development aimed at "increasing the quality of life and well-being of the population, especially of the

poor, and eliminating social inequality". The practical implementation of sustainable development objectives is based on several principles: improving governance in political and economic terms; developing the private sector through ensuring a favorable business environment; and redefining the role of government so that all its actions serve the benefit of society. The social orientation of development implies eradication of extreme poverty; ensuring access to primary education; promoting gender equality; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS; and ensuring environmental sustainability [21, p. 32].

For comparison, the updated objectives for Sustainable and Socially Oriented Development for 2005–2007 include: economic growth, reduction of poverty and inequality, and development of human resources. To achieve these objectives, the Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted programmes encouraging investment in small and medium-sized enterprises, in the manufacturing sector, and in infrastructure. In 2025, the European Commission adopted a Growth Plan for the Republic of Moldova worth EUR 1.8 billion, supported by a Reform and Growth Facility for the period 2025-2027. The Growth Plan will stimulate the economy, bring the country closer to EU membership by accelerating reforms, and provide substantial financial assistance. The Moldova Growth Plan is structured around three pillars aimed at:

1. Increasing financial assistance over the next three years through a Reform and Growth Mechanism for Moldova. The mechanism could support, for example: new roads, bridges, and railway infrastructure, such as the Chișinău bypass road; advancement of the Odesa – Chișinău – Iași connection; bridges over the Prut River; energy security through the completion of a new power line and initiation of construction on two more, connecting the Republic of Moldova to the EU electricity grid; energy subsidies; healthcare assistance through the construction of two new, well-equipped hospitals in Cahul and Bălți; integration of the Republic of Moldova into the EU "roam like at home" area and the expansion of broadband Internet to remote regions of the country; improved access to financing and support for 25,000 enterprises, including small family businesses.

2. Improving access to the European Union's Single Market. The Growth Plan for the Republic of Moldova proposes immediate measures that our country can take to benefit from the advantages of the Single Market in five key areas, once the necessary standards are met: free movement of goods and integration into supply chains; trade facilitation and improved transport connections; integration into the EU energy market and decarbonization; integration into the Digital Single Market; and access to the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA).
3. Supporting the Republic of Moldova's socio-economic and fundamental reforms. Moldova is undertaking reforms aimed at socio-economic development, building upon the key drivers of economic growth: economic competitiveness; economic resilience, including infrastructure and energy; economic governance; social capital; and the green transition. These reforms will attract foreign investment, improve the business environment, support small and medium-sized enterprises, enhance skills and qualifications, strengthen trade and exports, thereby stimulating economic growth and increasing economic convergence with the EU. Payments will support the implementation of pre-agreed reforms [8].

The National Development Plan for 2024–2026 is the main document that sets the Government's public policy priorities and contains the priority directions and measures for implementing the country's strategic objectives. This document ensures the operationalization of the provisions contained in the National Development Strategy (NDS), the Government's Programme "Prosperous, Secure, European Moldova", and the country's international commitments, including those deriving from the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova, on the one hand, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, on the other hand; the RM–EU Association Agenda 2021–2027; commitments arising from Moldova's status as an EU candidate country; and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda [19, p.4].

A comparative analysis of sustainable development objectives and the strengthening of the economies and rule of law's resilience in the Republic of Moldova allows us to conclude that, over its 34 years

of existence, Moldova has developed and implemented government programmes focused on survival strategies, such as SCERS, and on the Sustainable Development Strategy. Despite the efforts made by some governing teams – while others became entangled in senseless "debates and discussions" of little relevance to the country's development, such as the definition of the spoken language – we observe that only in recent years, with the political and financial support of European states and institutions, the Republic of Moldova has achieved noticeable results in poverty reduction, improvement of living conditions, education, and personal development.

For central and local authorities in the Republic of Moldova, the European Pillar of Social Rights – adopted in November 2017 – holds major significance. Based on its 20 principles, it directly aims at promoting upward convergence to improve working and living conditions across Europe. It contributes to combating poverty in all its dimensions and to ensuring equitable, adequate, and sustainable social protection systems. The Pillar supports equal opportunities and access to the labour market, including gender equality and fair working conditions, and it promotes social inclusion and protection. The Pillar is accompanied by a Social Scoreboard which, together with other instruments, contributes to its monitoring.

Activities focused on promoting social values have enabled the authorities of our country to achieve visible results in preparing society for accession. At a meeting with Marta COS, the European Commissioner for Enlargement, Prime Minister Alexandru MUNTEANU stated: "The progress we have made on our European path motivates us to continue working at an even higher pace. Our home is Europe, and we are bringing Europe home. Our objective is to finalize the negotiations and sign the Accession Treaty in 2028" [9].

At the conference "The 2025 Enlargement Report: Progress and Future Priorities of the Republic of Moldova", Marta COS highlighted that Moldova had made the greatest leap in its level of preparedness for EU accession. Significant progress has been recorded in several areas, including justice, energy, education, digitalization, and regional development. Marta COS expressed admiration for the way Moldovans have resisted attempts by the Russian Federation to take control of the country. "You have won the fight against Russia. The Kremlin has

spent between three and four hundred million euros to pull you away from the EU. But Moldovan citizens have shown that they are stronger than the pressures coming from the East. And we, the EU Member States, have stood by you" [7].

The results achieved in the area of EU accession reflect the support of our strategic partners, particularly Romania. The governments of both Romanian states have moved toward "a pragmatic partnership with regional stakes, at a time marked by security tensions and by Chișinău's growing proximity to Europe's decision-making centres". At a meeting with Prime Minister Alexandru MUNTEANU, Romanian Prime Minister Ilie BOLOJAN discussed accelerating interconnection projects, such as the Suceava–Bălți power line, the rehabilitation and electrification of the Iași–Ungheni railway, the new road bridge at Ungheni, and reducing border waiting times. He emphasized that Romania has been, is, and will remain the strategic partner and closest supporter of the Republic of Moldova. Thus, by 2027 the authorities plan to modernize the Sculeni – Sculeni, Cahul – Oancea, and Leușeni – Albița bridges, while work on the Ungheni–Ungheni bridge is underway and preparations for the construction of four additional bridges over the Prut-Costești-Stânca, Leova–Bumbăta, Leca–Fălciu, and Bărboieni–Răducăneni – are being accelerated to strengthen the connection between the two states. Ilie BOLOJAN assured that the two cabinets will maintain "an extremely dynamic dialogue" and will continue joint projects related to energy interconnection, road infrastructure development, increased bilateral trade, as well as intensified cooperation at local level, in security, education, and culture.

President Nicușor DAN, at his meeting with our country's Prime Minister, stated that Romania remains the most sincere and strongest supporter of the Republic of Moldova, at all levels, especially regarding state modernization, reforms, and European integration [17].

Youth Policy – a Premise for Strengthening Participatory Democracy in the Republic of Moldova

The EU Youth Strategy, adopted in May 2018, is of particular significance, with its central objective being "engaging, connecting, and empowering young people". The Youth Strategy provides a framework for objectives, principles, priorities, as well as key areas and meas-

ures for cooperation in the field of youth policy, considering Member States' competences and the principle of subsidiarity. Cooperation at the EU level stimulates young people's participation in democratic life, in accordance with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It also supports social engagement and civic participation. Youth policy is grounded in the principles of equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, and participation [10].

Within the context of the new cooperation framework for youth (2019–2027), the strategy aims to bring the EU closer to young people and to identify solutions to their major concerns. The new EU Youth Strategy seeks to encourage young people to participate in civic and democratic life (engage), to build connections among youth within and beyond the Union in order to foster volunteer engagement, study mobility, solidarity, and intercultural understanding (connect), and to empower young people by fostering innovation and by improving the quality and recognition of youth work (empower) [23]. The instruments proposed for achieving the objectives of the Youth Strategy include a renewed dialogue with young people, the use of planning tools for national activities, as well as a Council Work Plan on Youth for the period 2019–2020.

Inclusion: Recognizing that young people do not represent a homogeneous group and therefore have different needs, living situations, interests, and backgrounds, the EU Youth Strategy supports and promotes activities that are attractive and accessible to all young people. It aims to ensure meaningful participation of youth in civic, economic, social, cultural, and political life.

Participation: Based on the premise that young people constitute an important resource for the functioning and development of society, youth policies and activities guarantee the right of young people to participate in the development and implementation of policies that affect them, through mechanisms ensuring meaningful involvement of youth and youth organizations.

Connection: To ensure a lasting impact on young people, it is important that EU youth policy be implemented with attention to its connections to actions undertaken at local and regional levels. Policymakers in the field must take into account young people's ideas and proposals. It is essential that the approach to youth-related issues in-

tegrates initiatives from different policy areas, complemented by specific youth-sector initiatives. Opportunities for young people regarding exchanges, cooperation, and cultural and civic engagement within a European context must be accessible to all youth. Such opportunities enable them to develop and strengthen personal, social, and civic competences, to cultivate critical and creative thinking, to increase their employability, and to become active European citizens. Youth exchanges and projects under Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, and their successor programmes serve as key sources of intercultural learning and empowerment, particularly for young people with fewer opportunities.

The components of the EU Youth Strategy aim at empowering young people and encouraging them to take their own destinies into their hands. Today, young people across Europe face various challenges: among others, they experience difficulties in accessing their social rights, confront social exclusion and discrimination, and are exposed to threats generated by fake news and propaganda. The European Commission has called on EU Member States and EU candidate countries to:

- Develop and implement a programme for youth activities focused on quality, innovation, and the recognition of youth work. To harness the full potential of such initiatives, it is necessary to integrate the expertise of youth representatives, youth organizations, youth workers, and researchers. New synergies with activities carried out by the Council of Europe in this field should be encouraged.
- Support the development of activities at local, regional, national, and community levels, including policy development, training for youth workers, establishing legal frameworks, and allocating sufficient resources.
- Support and recognize youth organizations as drivers of competence development and social inclusion through youth work and non-formal educational activities.

Young people in the Republic of Moldova participate in the implementation of several European projects—activities through which they assimilate European values and learn to distinguish between different models of socio-political organization: representative democ-

racy and participatory democracy. As noted by I. Grădinaru, "theorists of the political sphere have supported and promoted conceptions of politics as a rational participatory activity of the citizen, characterized by rules, public opinion, the media, and other social sciences" [14].

A concept that encompasses citizens' participation in public life is that of participatory democracy, according to which individuals, communities, or social groups engage in decision-making and resource management processes [24, pp. 50–58]. Participatory democracy is a continuous and dynamic process that involves risks and requires organization, collaboration, and the identification of common goals within a group. It is viewed as a balance between citizens' rights to be responsible for societal life and the necessary support that certain representative citizens can offer to ensure the rapid and effective implementation of specific measures. A balance must be found between the leadership and management of state institutions, on the one hand, and citizens and their elected representatives, on the other. Power belongs to the citizens, while the authority of representatives should not be interpreted exhaustively but rather declaratively. The effectiveness of participatory democracy requires the simultaneous and obligatory observance of the principles of information, consultation, and transparency in the decision-making process [16].

Participatory democracy is exercised through participation, which presupposes that all involved parties exchange views honestly and sincerely, ensuring that the positions of civil society are effectively considered by public authorities endowed with decision-making power. Thus, the conditions for the effective participation of citizens include:

a) Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, adherence to fundamental democratic principles, political commitment, clear procedures, shared spaces for dialogue, and favourable general conditions for a vital, pluralistic, and sustainable civil society.

b) The creation and maintenance by Member States of an enabling environment – comprising political, legal, and practical frameworks – that guarantees individuals, NGOs, and civil society the rights to free association, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and freedom of information.

c) Recognition, protection, and support of the role of civil society in a pluralistic democracy, including its functions related to advocacy,

monitoring public affairs, and contributing to the development of a dynamic society.

Through all activities carried out within the Jean Monnet Project "Centre of Excellence: Strengthening Democratic Sustainability through Civic Education", Project 101085234 — SDSCE, we have sought to fulfil the priority objectives of European policies so that young people in the Republic of Moldova can progress in their processes of socialization and Europeanization, assimilating and promoting European values. We consider that, in this way, the academic community and intellectuals in our country contribute to the sustainable development of Moldovan society and to strengthening the resilience of its political and sociocultural institutions.

Conclusions

A systemic approach to the phenomena of survival, sustainable development, and the resilience of democracy has allowed us to reassess theoretical theses on these issues and to observe that they are interdependent, representing different stages in the development of contemporary democratic states. The concepts of security and regional insecurity have enabled an adequate understanding of the post-February 24, 2022, regional reality, a date that has significantly impacted and continues to influence the lives and activities of citizens across all European states. Thus, it can be observed that Ukraine, at present, is updating and, through diverse means, following the logic of theses concerning the survival of the nation, social groups, and individual citizens. The Republic of Moldova combines the implementation of the Survival Strategy, which focuses on poverty reduction and ensuring minimum living conditions for all citizens, with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Strategy. We have analyzed both the positive and negative factors influencing the operational plans of policymakers and presented results that have been recognized by leaders of developed European states. Additionally, the importance of implementing the participatory democracy model, which creates favorable conditions for the development of young people, has been highlighted.

The significance and weight of participatory democracy for community life are substantial. Institutions regulate access to scarce and

valued resources, establish standards for their legitimate use, define interests, and determine how these interests should be pursued. By definition, the limitation of resources generates contestation and conflict. Institutions regulate the interaction of interests, defining the rules and the potential gains that can be achieved in the "game" of governance. However, to practically apply the constructive, formative, and managerial potential of institutions, it is necessary to assimilate scientific research results. Before drafting proposals, submitting initiatives, or delivering speeches to European authorities or citizens, state leaders must integrate the experiences accumulated by other countries in the European integration process and recalibrate the outcomes of actions aimed at Europeanizing their own citizens. With each action—however modest—focused on strengthening the rule of law, the Republic of Moldova will gradually achieve its primary objective: integration into the European Union.

Bibliography:

1. Association Agreement RM–EU. Accessed 05 September 2025. Available at: *https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/acordul-de-asociere-rm-ue.pdf*
2. ALBU, N. "External Assistance in the Security Sector: Premises and Areas of Cooperation". In: *Legal Studies and Research*, Part 3. Chișinău, 2021, pp. 232–255.
3. Aristotle. *Politics* (cited in Kratochwil, 1989, p. 265).
4. BALUK, V. "Strengthening Nation-States: Examples from Ukraine and Moldova". In: *Jean Monnet International Conference: Cooperation of State Institutions in Ensuring National Unity*, 28–29 March 2025. Coordinator: Ludmila Roșca. Chișinău: Print Caro, 2025, pp. 57–72. ISBN 978-5-85748-163-9. *https://doi.org/10.59295/csienu2025*
5. BRIHAN, Alina-Carmen. "Social Cohesion". In: Goudenhooft, Gabriela; Brihan, Alina-Carmen; Horga, Ioan (eds.). *Social Europe in 100 Terms. An Incursion into the Social and Institutional Culture of the European Space.* Bucharest: Tritonic Books, 2018, pp. 46–50. ISBN 978-606-749-340-5.
6. *Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030*, Annex 1. Brussels, 30 January 2019.
7. CĂLUGĂREANU, V. "2026, the Year When Moldova Must Convince the EU". *Deutsche Welle*. Accessed 15 November 2025. *https://www.dw.com/ro/2026-anul-...*
8. European Commission. Communication on the Growth Plan for the Republic of Moldova; Proposal for a Regulation on the Reform and Growth Facility for the Republic of Moldova; Speech by President von der Leyen

in Chișinău announcing the Moldova Growth Plan; *Growth Plan for Moldova – Factsheet.*
9. Government of the Republic of Moldova. Press Release. Accessed 15 November 2025. *https://gov.md/ro/comunicate-de-presa/...*
10. COLȚA, A.; ROȘCA, L. "The Role of Youth in Implementing the Policy of Cohesion in a Democratic Society". *EUROLIMES*, 38/2025. EBSCOhost database. *http://www.ebscohost.com/titleLists/a9h-journals.htm*
11. ȚÎRDEA, Teodor N. *Dictionary of Philosophy and Bioethics.* Chișinău: CEP Medicina, 2004.
12. GOUDENHOOFT, G. "The Legal and Political Perspective of National Unity: Constitutional Norms and Current Challenges". In: *Jean Monnet International Conference: Cooperation of State Institutions in Ensuring National Unity*, 28–29 March 2025. Coordinator: Ludmila Roșcă. Chișinău: Print Caro, 2025, pp. 5–31. ISBN 978-5-85748-163-9. *https://doi.org/10.59295/csienu2025*
13. GOUDENHOOFT, G. "The Resilience Test in the Face of Political and Social Change". In: *Democratic Resilience in EU Candidate States*. Scientific-Practical Seminar of Mayors and Public Officials from Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. Coordinator: Ludmila Roșcă. Chișinău, 2025, pp. 8–33. ISBN 978-5-85748-099-1.
14. GRĂDINARU, I. "Practices of Participatory Democracy between Experimentation and the Will to Redefine". In: *Argumentum – Journal of the Seminar of Discursive Logic, Argumentation Theory and Rhetoric*, 2010.
15. KUKLINSKI, J. H.; LUSKIN, R.; BOLLAND, J. "Where Is the Schema? Going Beyond the 'S' Word in Political Psychology". In: Goodin, R. E.; Klingemann, H. D. (eds.), *Political Science Handbook*. Bucharest: Polirom, 2005. ISBN 9736818020.
16. IVAN, A. "Security Studies at the Beginning of the 21st Century". *Cluj Today*, 2014. Accessed 15 March 2023. *http://www.clujtoday.ro/...*
17. ISAC, M. "The Prime Minister's Visit to Bucharest Marks the Transition from Fraternal Rhetoric to a Pragmatic Partnership". *Moldpres*. Accessed 15 November 2025. *https://www.moldpres.md/...*
18. *EU Enlargement Package 2025 Highlights the Progress Achieved by Key Partners in the EU Accession Process*. *https://www.eeas.europa.eu/...*
19. *National Development Plan 2024–2026*, p. 4. Available at: *https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/pnd-ro.pdf*
20. ROȘCA, L. *Survival, Morality, and the Potential of Human Personality: A Theoretical-Methodological Analysis.* Monograph. Chișinău: UASM, 2007. 329 pp. ISBN 978-9975-64-072-5.
21. ROȘCA, L. *Reshaping Moral and Technogenic Problems Through the Lens of Contemporary Survival Strategies.* Abstract of the Habilitation Thesis in Philosophy. Chișinău, 2007, pp. 4–5. Manuscript. UDC: 13.

22. ROȘCA, L.; URSU, V. "Civic Education in the Republic of Moldova in the Context of European Integration". In: *Interconnections of Social Integration and Strengthening the National Security System.* Collective Monograph. Coordinator: Ludmila Roșcă. Chișinău, 2022: Print-Caro, pp. 291–306. ISBN 978-9975-165-06-8.
23. *EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027*. Official Journal of the European Union, 18 December 2018.
24. ȚÎCU, D. "Public Policies – Between Rationality, Motivation and Practice". *Scientific Annals of "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University*, Political Science Series, Vol. VI, Iași: UAIC Press, 2011, pp. 50–58. ISSN 1842-3221.
25. LINZ, J.; STEPAN, A. "Statehood, Nationalism and Democratization". *http://www.civisbook.ru/files/File/1997-5-2-Linz*
26. FOUCAULT, M. *Will to Power: Beyond Knowledge, Power, Sexuality.* Moscow: Political Literature Publishing, 1996, p. 321. (In Russian)

ROȘCA Ludmila, born on 15 October 1960, is a *Doctor Habilitatus in Philosophy* and a *Principal Scientific Researcher* within the sub-programme *Strengthening the Socio-Economic and Legal Mechanisms for Ensuring Citizens' Well-Being and Security (CONSEJ), code 01.05.02*, at Moldova State University. She is the coordinator of two Jean Monnet "Centre of Excellence" projects: *"Strengthening Democratic Sustainability through Civic Education"* (Project 101085234 — SDSCE, 2022–2025) and *"Civic Education for a Resilient Democracy"* (Project 101239922 — CERD, 2026–2028).

Her **scientific interests** include political philosophy, social philosophy, the political process, democratic resilience, and the sustainable development of contemporary societies, including that of the Republic of Moldova. Various aspects of these phenomena and processes are reflected in her *over 250 scientific publications*. She is deeply concerned with the capacity of rule-of-law institutions to support the integration of the Republic of Moldova into the European Union. She is convinced that intellectuals in Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania have an important mission: to contribute to the development of active, aware, and responsible individuals capable of assuming the consequences of their actions.

Since 2014, she has been accredited with the right to supervise doctoral dissertations in the specialty 561.01 – Theory, Methodology and History of Political Science; Political Institutions and Processes. E-mail: *ludmilarosca.com@gmail.com*