SECURITATEA PE AGENDA EDUCAȚIEI: CAZUL UCRAINEI ȘI REPUBLICII MOLDOVA

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Rezumat: *Tematica securității este prioritară pentru Ucraina și Republica Moldova. Ambele state au devenit vulnerabile pentru riscurile și pericolele ce s-au multiplicat după declararea independenței. La moment, Ucraina se luptă împotriva intervenției masive a rușilor. Războiul ruso-ucrainean care se desfășoară deja din anul 2014, amenință existența însăși a statalității ucrainene și a națiunii, de asemenea a ordinii mondiale și perspectivelor păcii. În același timp o parte a teritoriului Moldovei suverane este ocupată și se află sub controlul armatei ruse și politicii, începând cu anii '90 a secolului trecut.*

Autorul analizează pericolele principale din ambele state în contextul politicii și practicii educaționale. În text sunt desemnate problemele principale pe care ambele state trebuie să le recunoască și să lucreze asupra soluționării lor, pentru a depăși vulnerabilitatea și slăbiciunea, pentru a-și consolida stabilitatea și capacitatea de apărare.

Cuvinte-cheie: Ucraina, Moldova, politica de securitate**,** agresiunea retroimperială rusă, politica educațională, învățământul civic.

SECURITY IN EDUCATIONAL AGENDA FOR THE CANDIDATE COUNTRIES: UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA CASES

Abstract: *The security concerns are of absolute priorities for Ukraine and Moldova. Both countries are vulnerable to security threats since their independence. Ukraine fights heroically against full-scale Russian intervention. Russian-Ukrainian war goes on since 2014, threating to a very existence of Ukrainian State and Nation, as well as undermining International order and peace prospect. At the same time a part of the Moldavian territory*

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is occupied and controlled with Russian army since early 1990th. The article considers some major challenges of security for both countries via prism of their educational policy and practice. The texts diagnosed most crucial issues, which governments and civil society of Ukr, aine and Moldova must realize and resolve to diminish and overcome their fragility and weakness, and finally increase both resilience and resistance potential of two states.

Keywords: *Ukraine and Moldova, security policy, Russian retroimperial aggression, educational policy, civic education.*

Introduction:

Ukraine and Moldova are neighboring states with a lot of common features of their history, culture and at the same time to many unresolved problems. Since the begging of their independence, they face with a lot of crucial challenges and risks. Decay of economy, previously integrated into soviet system of centralized planning and prevention of economic sovereignty of any union republic but Russia, was complimented soon with severe social problems, high unemployment rate, and quickly accelerating poverty. Still, it was not enough. Both countries faced with the threats to both their borders security and territorial integrity. Moldova failed victim of Transnistria crisis, which split country into two unequal parts, burdening the state, and society with painful traumas of confrontation, distrust, and foreign intervention[1] (Russia's military presence in rebellious region of Transnistria, de-facto continuing occupation of that part of Republic of Moldova).

Ukraine also faces with too many troubles and challenges, aggravated likewise in case of Moldova with recurrent threats of separatism (mostly in Crimea, later in Transcarpathia, to a much lesser extend in Donbass region). Despite those troubles two countries tried to pave their way to security and democracy, market economy and social advancement, looking for their better position in Europe and world. They were hindered on this way because of domestic weakness, inappropriate public policy, and public administration's functioning. All of those were clouded with a speedy spread of the corruption, authoritarian trends and oligarchizing of those countries.

[1] Ciobanu N. The challenges of the transnistrian conflict for national security and the european development vector of the Republic of Moldova //Relaţii internaţionale. Plus. – 2021. – T. 19. – №. 1. – C. 138-149.

It does not mean, that both Ukrainian and Moldavian society tacitly accepted those trends. They fought for their chance of a brighter future, made a lot of affords to defend and promote democratic perspective, human rights, and a rule of law. Firstly, Ukraine and soon after Moldova in 1990th officially declared their strategic course to European integration, aiming at the EU membership. Later, since 2002 Ukraine decided to go to NATO too. However, because concerted positions of Russia, Germany, and France leaders it was not a successful movement. Moldova being afraid of further complications vis-à-vis growing Russia's pressure and interference, has declared it neutrality (meaning the rejection of NATO membership of the country).

Recent years brought about much more instability and insecurity into the global affairs, so far in the post-soviet space most visibly[1]. The obvious turning point is Russian-Georgian war (August 2008). It opened the period of Russian military aggression, added to the previous economic, cultural, and informational tools of de-facto hybrid war against many of Russian neighbors and western world by and large. Russian political class, supported with overwhelming majority of the compatriots have been chosen the retroimperial utopia, leading back to the darkness of the past instead of democratic and civilized way to the brighter and secure future. Now, since 2014 Russian-Ukrainian war goes one, ruining Ukraine and threating all the world[2]. There for our countries, as well as for European democratic states the crucial question is the security agenda and the right way of protecting themselves against aggressor.

It's well-known and proved with historical experience that whatever progress and advancement we are aim at, they depend first and foremost on the quality of education. The security issues do not make exception from that rule. So far in this article the author proposes a brief analysis of the higher education and educational policy pros and cons in Ukraine and Moldova, and then consider to a what extend they react properly and contribute into making two countries more consolidated and adopted to their strategic aims and security concerns.

[1] Roşca L. Securitatea regională în condițiile confruntării //Strategia Securității Uniunii Europene în contextul Metamorfozelor Relațiilor Internaționale. – 2022. – T. 2. – C. 10-17.

[2] Lovakov A., Chankseliani M., Panova A. Universities vs. research institutes? Overcoming the Soviet legacy of higher education and research //Scientometrics. – 2022. – T. 127. – №. 11. – C. 6293-6313.

1. **Making education Europeanized: troubles with breaking down with Soviet heritage**

Not for a night, Moldova and Ukraine come to conclusions, that Soviet model of education and educational policy are no more effective and efficient. Myths of the best educated citizens and glory of the country, which moves ahead of all mankind, paving the way to the brightest future were replaced with bitter understanding that Soviet Union failed for various reasons, but mainly because of intrinsic defects and progressing disability to progress anymore. Soviet system of education became all-comprehensively politicized and put under strict, oppressive ideological control. It serves to the party leadership comfort rather to the prosperity of citizens and society. Formalities prevailed upon creativity, nothing to say about freedom of thoughts and their free expression and circulation. To a very extend Soviet educational system served to suppressing driving force of the individuality and creativity. It has made a lot of attempts to unify soviet citizens to a standards of *Homo sovieticus*, as it had been prescribed by the leadership of the Communist party (CPSU).

Of course, the social sciences and humanities in USSR were under scrutiny of party committees and KGB. So, those educational system has now been compatible with changing realities of new-born independent states and did not correspond with their needs and expectations. It does not comply with neither democratic values, nor modernization needs of the new independent states.

The process of saying goodbye to the soviet heritage happened to be uneasy[1]. European and global samples of the successful educational policies and good practices were unknown for regular teachers, managers, and politicians. Soviet (over)centralized methods and system of values remained much stronger, and systemic inertia prevailed. Conservatism together with a fear of innovation clouded the transformative process of all levels of education. Mass poverty and humiliate work and life conditions of 1990's made a vicious influence on the educators, top and down. Not so few of them accept corruption as a possibility to survive and improve their finan-

[1] Huisman J., Smolentseva A., Froumin I. 25 years of transformations of higher education systems in post-Soviet countries: Reform and continuity. – Springer Nature, 2018.

cial conditions. The whole functioning of educational system preserved slightly decorated with new rhetoric and reformists gestures previous institutional character and style of management[1].

Still, the European choice of two countries contributed a lot into changing general approaches to education and educational policy. Any step towards European integration is preconditioned and require certain changes in educational system and in a content of learning too. It concerns as a narrow field of European studies, which development is critically important for the successful advancements on the way to the EU, as well as the broader aspects of education policy and its implementation. The Partnership and Cooperation agreements with the EU had accelerated that process. It gets more serious results due to so-called Bolognia process[2]. The latter contributed into implementations of some European standards and norms in the higher education, thus supporting more systemic character of educational reforms. Finally, the very positive impact on educational reforms made the Association agreements with the EU. Moldova signed it up in 2013, and Ukraine one year later, after the Revolution of dignity. The ratification and implementation of AA directed reforms in both counties in more regular ways and opened better chances for two countries to cooperate with the EU and member-states.

Gradually, the increasing support from the EU and its member states contributed into changing the landscape of educational system in both countries[3]. Most fundamental changes affect higher education institutes (HEI, mainly universities), while schools and other institutions of education remained less engaged. Universities and other HEI of Ukraine and Moldova have been gradually involved into the designing and developing of the European space of higher education, cooperating closely with their colleagues and partners from the EU in joint research, training, and curricula development, discussing best way towards new management in education

[1] Huisman J. The Bologna process in European and post-Soviet higher education: institutional legacies and policy adoption //Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research. – 2019. – T. 32. – №. 4. – C. 465-480.

[2] Wetzinger J. The geopolitics of higher education: the case of Moldova between the EU and Russia //Policy Reviews in Higher Education. – 2022. – T. 6. – №. 2. – C. 205-229.

[3] ROȘCA L. Impact of European projects on economic development in the Republic of Moldova: good practices for cross-border cooperation //Scientific editors. – C. 35.

etc. Moreover, intensified cooperation in the framework of TEMPUS projects, Jean Monnet activities, different versions of ERASMUS programs, inclusion into Horizon program – all those steps really helped Moldavian and Ukrainian teachers and administrators to permanently acquire new vision and experience on the meaning and prospect of modern education. It granted them also with new resources needed for successful research and didactic activities, equipment renovation and many other valuable incentives[1] . Now, after getting status of the candidate countries[2] , prospect of deepening and widening cooperation with the EU is of ever better conditions.

The brutal intervention of Russia into Ukraine since 24.02.2022 turned attention of the EU institutes from Russia and Belarus to Ukraine and Moldova. They redirected funds reserved for Russian and Belarusian HEI to vulnerable Ukraine's educational institutions, which indeed suffer a lot because the airstrikes, bombing, unbearable condition of temporal occupation or changing frontline. Many of Ukrainian teachers and scholars did not escape temporarily occupied territories and must survive under severe conditions over there. Thousands of them, had to leave their homes and workplace, as well as look for a refugee status abroad. Most part of Ukrainian teachers and educators remained in their country. The whole picture now is messy and not yet comprised in general vision with a due figures and their analysis[3] . It's obviously a tragic time for Ukraine and stressful period for Moldova and all the CEE region[4] . Moldova has been threatened with direct intimidation and ultimatums from Kremlin for the recent period and has no chance of feeling itself secure and protected.

Despite the security challenges, the development of educational reforms continues in both countries. They faced with too many difficul-

[1] Solacolu M. C. ENLARGEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINE, MOLDOVA, AND GEORGIA'S MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS // Challenges of the Knowledge Society. – 2023. – C. 327-336.

[2] Bulatova O., Chentukov Y., Marena T. The impact of military conflicts on the educational component of national economic security //Strategii și politici de management în economia contemporană. – 2022. – C. 10-13.

[3] Нечаєва-Юрійчук Н. Конструювання сучасного «співтовариства безпеки» в контексті викликів російсько-української війни //Медіафорум. – 2022. – Т. 10. – С. 184-195.

[4] Kalimullin A. M., Valeeva R. A. Teacher Education in Post-Soviet States: Transformation Trends //The Palgrave Handbook of Teacher Education Research. – Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022. – C. 1-20.

ties and deficiencies, however[1] .

2. Secure education under the pressure of insecurity. Visible and hidden battles to win for Ukraine and Moldova

To survive and develop as the independent states, became respect members of European nations and globally recognized states, Moldova and Ukraine must look for the betterment of their security, defense potential and geopolitical position[2] . Since the beginning of their sovereign statehood, they made some strategic mistakes, which should be acknowledged and corrected. I mean naivety of Chisinau self-acclaimed neutrality[3] , which lead to the situation that Moldova neither got any international guarantees of its protection against aggression, nor granted the state with a capacity to protect the country by military forces. Ukraine also for a long time neglected its military-industrial complex, which has been diminished and lost major part of its initial potential. Prior to 2014 Russia intervention in Crimea and Donbass due to short seeing and traitors' actions of some Ukraine's leaders, most and foremost of V. Yanukovych administration, Ukrainian army and navy were not able to properly defend country and its citizens from the Russian enemies. Here one must recognize the negative contribution of many western leaders also, who confessed and exercised vicious and mistaken principal of their foreign and security policy "Russia first", that opened up pandora box of Russian revisionism and retroimperial claims to be realized in a larger scale[1] . The national and international consequences of those and some other mistakes are huge and dreadful. Here we will concentrate in brief our attenti-

[1] Kruglashov A. Securing insecure: Ukraine on the margins of European Integration process, in: The European Union and the Eastern Partership: Security challenges: April 26 – 27, 2018, Chesinau, Moldova / Edited by Vasile Cucerescu, Carlos E. Pachecos Amaral, Gaga Gabrichidze, Ioan Horga, Anatoliy Kruglashov, Ewa Latoczek, Marta Pachocka, Chisinau: ECSA Moldova, Cernauti: S.n., Tbilisi: S.n., 2018, p. 511 – 523.

[2] Jović-Lazić A., Kuvekalović-Stamatović J. Permanent Neutrality of the Republic of Moldova-Strategy for Survival Between Russia and NATO? //The Review of International Affairs. – 2020. – T. 71. – C. 21-23.

[3] KRUGLASHOV A. EASTERN PARTERSHIP IN THE SYSTEM OF EUROPEAN (IN) SECURITY //Materialele Conferinței științifico-practice internaționale „Spaţiul european de securitate: provocări, oportunităţi, perspective de integrare". – C. 98 - 99.

[1] Miarka A. A. Para-states as an instrument for strengthening Russia's position-the case of Transnistria //Journal of Strategic Security. – 2020. – T. 13. – №. 2. – C. 1-18.

on only on educational dimension of that complex of problems, to stimulate a search for timely solution of them.

The education shortages have played a significant role in the weakness of both countries. First, being disillusioned with self-imagined but not really attained safety, political class in Kyiv and Chisinau did not pay much attention to the education in general, and their security and military aspects in particular. It led to the final closure of many military and security high education institutions as they were inherited from the Soviet time. While interior sector of those institutions mainly survived and partly have been developed, the military ones sank into the deep crisis and decay. The political elite had not been concerned with those trends and concentrated not on the strengthening up defensive potential of the state, still rather on an ability of the police forces and secret services to secure their vested interests and prolong the very existence of the semi-democratic and sometimes openly authoritarian regimes in post-soviet states.

Therefore, training and qualification of military forces staff steadily degraded and reached pitiful level in Moldova and Ukraine. Cutting of budgetary support to army and navy (where they exist) means unilateral disarmament of both countries, which proved to be of a catastrophic consequence for Ukraine in 2014 and remains desperate for Moldova till now[2]. Ukraine had begun to reconsider those policy since 2014[3] , yet with not so impressive results till 2022. Since the full-fledged intervention of Russia, the government of Ukraine together with the western allies make more affords to keep up the defensive sector of higher and professional education. The results are not so opened for a deeper analysis, but dynamics seems to be a positive there. Concerning the case of Moldova those trends are not visible at all up do date.

Still, not only military and security sectors of educations' needs and demands are of key importance for vulnerable states' prospect. Their good governance and governability highly depend on the outcome of professional education for public policy and administration. Both states aimed at esta-

[2] Seheda S., Shevchuk V., Pokotylo O. The creation of the armed forces of independent Ukraine: military and political background //Eastern Journal of European Studies. – 2021. – T. 12. – №. 2.

[3] Iovcheva A. Implementation of EU Values in Transitional Democracies: Experience of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova //Acta de Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI. – 2023. – №. 06. – С. 96-107.

blishing national system of professional education and training for public servants. That goal was not reached completely successful and recently the previous institutional system of cadres' education was reorganized. So, both Academy of public administration lost their privileged status and merged with the traditional universities (in Chisinau, Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Odessa and Lviv). The system of professional education undergoes further changes as well as professional training with a mixed results obtained. However, the level of education and further professional carrier of public servants are not intertwined strictly, if just by some formal prerequisites. So, quality of education and qualification of the top management, regional and local authorities is questionable and only partly compatible with the whole scope of issues they should resolve. It's a loophole that needed to be liquidated.

Another problem worthy of consideration is the lack of due preparation of military and non-military specialists for defensive sector of countries concerned. While in USSR military-industrial complex prevailed in all speres and in the educational too, post-soviet period brought about certain neglect to those needs and preparation of specialists respectively. The potential of producing modern weapons and equipment for own defensive forces dropped dramatically soon after the USSR breakdown. It is most obvious with Ukraine's case, which possessed initially a very impressive military industry, high technology including. The results are obviously tragic. Therefore, for both countries it's important to work carefully upon development as the material basis for military industry and technologies as well as educating professionals, needed for those production.

However, social, and political aspects of security should not be omitted in the educational policy either[1] . Ukraine and Moldova governments did not pay much attention to educating their citizens to be active and patriotic. Civic education in both states have been for a long-time concern of enthusiasts and civil society institutes rather than Ministries of education and other governmental bodies. Still, the importance of the developing civic education could be hardly overestimated. Last years some moderate optimism could be grounded in a more concerned afford of the civil society,

[1] KRUGLAȘOV A. În căutarea unui model național de educație civică: experiența Ucrainei. In: Interconexiunile integrării sociale și consolidarea sistemului național de securitate. Chișinău: 2022, pp. 244-270.

devoted educators, and some politicians[1]. Despite those trends, it's too early to state that demands of the developing civic education, disseminating democratic values, respect to rule of law, intolerance to corruption etc. are duly met and satisfied. They are of vital importance for two states prospect, their resistance to Russian aggression and resilience in general. There should be directed investments of money and energy of policymakers and educators in Moldova and Ukraine.

Conclusions:

Finally, the whole system of education in two countries are halfway to the successful democratic innovation and completed Europeanization[2]. It remains overcentralized, run by old guards from the previous epoch, burden with ineffective management, and deeply sunk into formalism and practices of imitating reforms instead of their wholehearted careful planning and implementation. The realities of Russian-Ukrainian war and security threats in Moldova distract governments and public attention from the educational reforms' agenda to more evident challenges and urgent tasks. That makes a situation in the education even more dramatic. The paradox of long standing neglection of educational reforms making those countries the poorest ones in Europe, causing their considerable delays with both modernization and Europeanization. The wide spectrum of problems should be resolved by the joint consolidated affords of the authorities, educators, and civil society activists. The vicious circle of interdependency, reflected in rephrased local proverb: "Why we are so poor? Because we are not well-educated (stupid)" should be dismissed by prioritizing education as a key mechanism and leverage for Ukraine and Moldova to successfully secure their statehood, sovereignty, democratic consolidation, European and Transatlantic perspectives.

[1] Foltýnek T. et al. Academic integrity in Eastern Europe: Beyond corruption and plagiarism //A research agenda for academic integrity. – 2020. – C. 40-55.

[2] Foltýnek T. et al. Academic integrity in Eastern Europe: Beyond corruption and plagiarism //A research agenda for academic integrity. – 2020. – C. 40-55.