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PUBLIC POLICIES TO COUNTER DISINFORMATION IN GREECE AND MOLDOVA: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

POLITICI PUBLICE DE COMBATERE A DEZINFORMĂRII ÎN GRECIA ȘI REPUBLICA MOLDOVA: ANALIZĂ COMPARATIVĂ

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Rezumat

În articolul de mai jos este cercetat fenomenul dezinformării, care în ultimii ani, odată cu dezvoltarea Tehnologiilor Informației și Comunicațiilor (TIC), se creează și se răspândește mai ușor și mai rapid decât în trecut. Efectele nocive ale dezinformării sunt deosebit de pronunțate atunci când aceasta afectează societatea, împiedicând accesul la informații corecte și subminând valorile democratice. Din acest motiv, este tratată ca o problemă publică, iar diverse state depun eforturi pentru a o restricționa sau elimina chiar. Grecia, de exemplu, depune eforturi semnificative în direcția transformării digitale în întregul sector public, ceea ce va duce, fără îndoială, la un acces mai mare și mai transparent la informație pe termen lung. Accentul pus de Republica Moldova, având în vedere că este supusă unei avalanșe de dezinformări din partea Federației Ruse, a fost pe consolidarea reformelor legislative pentru a-și moderniza politicile și a crea un mediu mai stabil, care să o apropie de standardele europene. În acest articol, ne concentrăm pe politicile publice împotriva dezinformării, încercând să evidențiem, comparativ, realizările Greciei, pe de o parte, și ale Moldovei, pe de altă parte, fiecare cu propriile specificități. Fiecare stat aplică o abordare proprie pentru a combaterea fenomenului.

Cuvinte cheie: *politici publice, dezinformare, manipulare, propagandă, Internet, etică, acte de reglementare.*

Disinformation creates various problems on a massive scale, for various groups of citizens in society, preventing proper information and fomenting democracy. According to the literature review, when a problem receives massive dimensions in society or affects the common good, then it is considered as a public problem. Erik Neveu [36] states that a public problem is nothing more than the conversion of any social event to public confrontation and / or state intervention. Sebastiaan Princen [40] attributes to the concept of conflict, thus describing its conflict character. This, therefore, the conflict nature of the public problem is the feature that makes it News, as supporters and opponents of opinions are opposed to a common public arena, which in modern societies make up Mass Media as said by James Dearing & Richard Rogers [10]. False information is largely the result of the strategic service of strong business, political and geopolitical interests. They make use of natural persons (professional politicians, opinion leaders, journalists,

etc.), media, communications companies and other techniques to make and spread easily crafted news that ensures their hegemony or neutralizing their opponents. So at the same time, the democratic function of the public sphere is undermined. The Public Policies recruited against disinformation act as a systemic tool to counter and limit the problem, thus further studying, development and deployment of such official practices should be prompted. We search exclusively State responses against disinformation (including the various forms of information falseness), under the scope that the state is the official and lawful protector of the safety and the rights of its citizens.

Greek policies

In Greece, as an extension of the European Union, the problem of misinformation is existent and citizens' trust in the reliability of the media seems shaken. According to a survey of Eurobarometer [44] at winter of 2020-21, 94% of Greek respondents agree that the existence of news or information that misrepresent reality or is even false is a problem for the country and 90% believe that they often come across such information. At another survey of Statista [48] in 2022 about the percentage of people who trust news media most of the time in their country, Greece placed among the lowest positions with 27%, while United States and Slovakia had the lowest percentage with 26%. The Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy [1] organized two citizen's forums in Greece, discussing their views on false narratives. Among the findings of researchers through the dialogue with the participants was that exist "high degree of mistrust towards the more conventional channels of information (TV, radio and newspapers)" which are often described as manipulative or misinformative, in contrast with internet sources which are considered more independent and pluralistic, especially the non-Greek internet sources. Greece seems quite vulnerable to fake news, as it ranked 30th in Media Literacy Index 2022 [31], at a total of 41 countries examined around the European region, which took under consideration the aspects of education, media freedom, interpersonal trust and e-participation. In Greece, media literacy is incorporated into primary and secondary education curricula, both as a cross-curricular subject and within the ad hoc school projects. Since 2006, media literacy education has been available in primary and lower secondary education as an optional subject under the Flexible Zone of Inter-Curricular and Creative Activities Programme. In September 2022 the Skills Labs module was introduced to the primary and lower secondary education curriculum, featuring digital literacy elements within specific subjects for schools and teachers to select. Additionally, the Educational RadioTelevision and Digital Media Department, overseen by the Ministry of Education, offers students opportunities and tools to engage in multimedia content production (such as the Fotodentro i-create project) [24].

In addition, it is in the 89st place of the World Press Freedom Index 2025 [47], according to Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF), who define press freedom as „the the ability of journalists as individuals and collectives to select, produce, and disseminate news in the public interest independent of political, economic, legal, and social interference and in the absence of threats to their physical and mental safety" [33]. One could say that this indicates there is a level of interference in media from powerful actors in the greek public sphere, thus cases of information disorder or agenda setting or biased information filtering inside the Greek media ecosystem. Having those in mind, Greek authori-

ties are making efforts to create conditions in society for digital maturity and to drive it in the 4th Industrial Revolution. The Ministry of Digital Governance posted the Digital Transformation Bible 2020-2025 [12] which is a national strategic plan with actions and guidelines towards modernization of Public Administration, governance and citizen service. Among others, it includes measures that support the process of countering the negative impact of information falseness, particularly around the field of cybersecurity and media literacy. Quite helpful provision of the plan is the element of interoperability between public services and the function of Interoperability Center [23] which is an information system for the use of web services through the exchange of operational data among Public Sector authorities. The Center strengthens information security and transparency through the Public Sector, as it contributes to „valid, immediate and up-to-date provision of information between public bodies" and to "achieving economies of scale through the honest processing of information by the Agency that has the responsibility of managing it". Part of the plan for achieving a level of digital literacy meaning also media literacy is the creation of National Academy of Digital Skills, an initiative for free online educational content for all levels of digital competencies, according to the European framework DigiComp. The Academy [11] includes the program "Digital Citizen" for developing digital skills of everyday life, a series of five courses in areas: navigation and information searching in worldwide web, digital content management, personal data protection-privacy, creation of digital identity, acting as a digital citizen. The program Digital Citizen corresponds to term of digital citizenship. The Digital Transformation Bible (p. 115) defines digital citizenship as "the citizen's ability to use information and communications technology (ICT) with the purpose of his active and without exclusions participation in the social, economic and political sphere". Interesting note is that we also met the reference of digital citizenship in United States enactments, so we could say that the term starts to become more universal, as countries use it in their public dialogue and incorporate it in their legislation. We could also say that it shows the importance and impact of digital sphere in modern life, thus policies provisions target it often. Another action of the national plan is fostering practices of open governance, with propelling citizens to be well-informed on public affairs and their active, regular participation on decision making. On this basis, Greece has entered the global initiative Open Government Partnership (OGP) [34], a coalition of people from civil society, non-profit organizations, government, researchers and others, who join forces and work together to improve citizen's engagement in shaping and overseeing governmental policies. The OGP counts more than 70 member countries and 100 local governments worldwide and they co-create commitments, in order to accomplish them and make steps forward. Greece's commitments were published through the 5th National Action Plan 2023-2025 [15] and its main focus is making achievements on:" transparency and accountability, combating corruption, access to information – Open Data, public participation, services to citizens and businesses". One example of these commitments is the actions to activate citizens' participation in the decision-making of the Municipality of Moschato-Tavros in the capital of the country. The case is that the Municipality was equipped with a Public Participation Platform, but has held only few consultations and the citizens' participation wasn't satisfactory. In order to overcome the issue, the Municipality would cooperate

with a company of the private sector, a) to be provided with technical and operational support to improve the know-how of its executives on how to use the Platform and b) to disseminate information on public about upcoming consultations, increase citizens awareness about the existence of such participatory governance tool and cultivate public participatory decision-making culture. One could say that achieving those, is an important step at local level for citizens to get first-hand information and avoid rumors or fake news concerning their city (through the public communication with other co-citizens and officials), increase transparency in issues of public interest and enhance democratic values through dialogue and open governance engagement. It could also be deduced that we see the importance of small-scale countering of information falseness, meaning the role of local government in preventing from its further potential expansion to public sphere. Furthermore, we see consistent efforts in the field of digital security, as in 2018 the Greek Parliament with the law 4577 [26] incorporated into the Greek legislation the Directive 2016/1148 [13] of European Union regarding measures for a high common level of security of network and information systems across the Union. According to the enactment, the National Cybersecurity Authority is the country's competent authority to monitor and preserve digital information security in the national region by cooperating with other European or national authorities on the issue (article 7), as also cooperating with the Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT), which belongs to the National Defense General Staff (article 8). In addition, the National Cybersecurity Authority published in 2021 a handbook [9] of cybersecurity excellence management framework, to inform public sector organizations, private enterprises and individuals about best practices in technical and organizational risk management measures against cyber threats. Moreover, the Information Society, a public company of public utility which conducts informatics and telecommunications works, has introduced the Government Cloud (G-Cloud) [43], a quite innovative initiative for the European standards. G-Cloud is a cloud computing and virtualization infrastructure that would be used by Agencies across the public sector, providing them with several digital powers (computing, network, storage). Thus, it brings Public Administration on a new level of functionality and productiveness, because a) it lowers the costs "of acquisition, maintenance and operation for the infrastructures that require a data center", b) it gives "flexibility and speed in downloading and using computing resources", c) it increases the security of digital services for citizens. G-Cloud is now under the management of General Secretariat of Information Systems for Public Administration in the context of "data consolidation policy" and some other services it provides are the protection from DDoS attacks and the data Backup of Agencies' information system [43]. Other than that, one could say it's not only a matter of digital security-information security, but upgrading the infrastructure and improving the quality and speed of digital services provided is an important move to cultivate public trust among citizens – Public Authorities and build State integrity regarding possible malicious external actors.

The legislation against fake news that raised debate. In the context of limiting misinformation, legislative moves were made in the country on the subject, with provisions at the criminal level. To replace article 191 of law 4619 [26] of the Criminal Code of 2019, the Greek Parliament after the start of the pandemic and the first lockdowns voted

at the end of 2021 the law 4855 [25], which, through article 36, modified the older one. This new legislation contained certain provisions and amendments to the Criminal Code. So, as we told, among these amendments we find Article 36, which concerns the dispersion of fake news and notes that:

"Whoever publicly or via the internet spreads or disperses in any way false news that is capable of causing concerns or fear to citizens or shaking the public's confidence in the national economy, the country's defense capacity or in public health is punishable by imprisonment of three (3) months and a fine. If the act was repeatedly committed through the press or through internet, the perpetrator shall be punished by imprisonment of at least six (6) months and a fine. The same penalty applies to the actual owner or publisher of the medium by which the acts of the previous subparagraphs were committed."

However, the enactment caused various reactions and raised discussion about its possible potential on violating fundamental freedoms, due to the penalization element on the basis of "causing concerns or fear". Speaking about this Greek legislation, the Human Rights Watch noted that "the criminal sanctions risk making journalists and virtually anyone else afraid to report on or to debate important issues such as the handling of Covid-19 or migration or government economic policy", thus there is a possibility of producing "a chilling effect on free speech and media freedom" [19]. The Reporters Sans Frontieres wrote that "while it is legitimate to combat false information, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, prison sentences have no role to play in the quest for the truth" and called "for this offence to be decriminalized and for the fight against disinformation to focus instead on systematic support for reliable news and information in the media and on social networks" [37]. The Media Freedom Rapid Response, which is a European-wide mechanism and is also supported by the European Commission, noted that "heavy-handed legislation by governments which grants regulators or prosecutors the power to decide true from false and levy punitive fines on the press is not the correct response" and added that "subjective interpretation of such vaguely worded laws can open the door to censorship of legitimate reporting" [20]. The Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers published a press release calling for the withdrawal of the enactment and noting that "in this specific provision it is clearly stated that the risk of causing concern or fear is punished, and indeed preventively, without the need for the result to occur" [38]. They explain that the causation of fear to citizens is enough for the law to be activated, but it is not clearly specified what we consider as information that is capable of bringing fear or concern, so they characterize the bill as vague. What is defined here as false news "capable" of causing fear or capable of undermining the trust to the national economy and who would tell if this news is indeed fake news and with what criteria of judgment? In other words, we are talking about penalization of possible risk/danger (due to fake news)? Does it mean that we penalize the possibility? One could say that some clarifications should be made because there is penalization of something indefinite. However, after this debate, the officials rewrote the law. Almost one year later, at the end of 2022 the Greek Parliament voted the law 5005 [28]. The article 41 of this legislation is a new amendment that replaces the old one and notes that:

"Anyone who publicly or via the internet disseminates or disperses in any way false news with the result of causing fear in an indefinite number of people or in a certain

circle or category of persons who are thus forced to carry out unplanned acts or to cancel them, with the risk of causing damage to the economy, the country's defense capability or public health is punished by imprisonment of up to three (3) years or by a fine. The actual owner or publisher of the medium by which the acts hereof were committed shall be punished with the same penalty."

Among others, there is a main change here. The new amendment in order to make a false news punishable, demands that it has "the result of causing fear" that forces people to "carry out unplanned acts" combined with having a "risk of causing damage to the economy" etc. Thus, it demands a result of actions due to fear causation, not only a capability of fear causation. That is to say, inducing fear must produce a result, so that it can be established as a crime. One could conclude that the new amendment is more lenient. Yet, it still includes the element of criminalizing disinformation. We cannot judge the intentions of this legislation. However, we should not forget the Article 11 of Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union [46]:

"1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. 2. The freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected."

Policies in the Republic of Moldova

Moldova makes its own effort in facing disinformation and especially in the latest years is creating bonds with the European Union, on both technical and financial level. As we already saw, the country has the Union's attention in external actions policies regarding strategic communications in Eastern Europe. The East Stratcom task force is busy in this area and works for a European-friendly environment. In 2022, EU decided to provide a macro-financial assistance of up to 150 € millions through the Memorandum of Understanding [32], in order to support Moldova on economic stability, due to the difficulties of energy crisis and pandemic crisis. To satisfy the agreement, the country has to make structural reforms in public, financial and energy sector, especially in fighting and prevention of corruption and money laundering. Among others, it has to align national legislation with European legislation in financial governance matters, increase international cooperation and exchange of information with relevant authorities, adopt a new Public Procurement Program, establish a strategic gas reserve and a mechanism of freezing and capitalization of criminal assets (a policy similar with Article 5 of the Council Decision against cyber-attacks that we saw earlier). On January 2023, the EU revised the assistance package and adopted a new decision [41] of sourcing Moldova with up to 295 € millions, providing increased legislative guidance for macroeconomic management, strengthening transparency and improving conditions for sustainable growth, following the Commission's multiannual strategic objective "an economy that works for people". As we also saw earlier, one motive of spreading disinformation is for economic gains. Nevertheless, according to a research of Holdis [21] for the Center for Media, Data and Society, Moldova due to its relatively small population of almost three million, has a limited audience and market space, thus misinformation is not a very profitable business in the country. So, someone could assume that information falseness in the country mainly serves other purposes, such as political or social. Holdis notes that misinformation is spread in the

country by media who tend to be politically partisan and also cites a survey in which the majority of Moldovans „believed that the news they read are politically influenced and published in order to manipulate the public". From those, we understand that this is a political matter and that's why political actions are needed in order to counter it. The country is making progress in legislation reforms, in order to modernize its public policies and possibly to reach the potential ambition of its foreign policy to become a Member State of European Union. Beregoi [2] writes that "the evolution of community media policy within integrationist processes reflects their adaptable nature. Member states, as well as candidate states, have the capacity to influence this policy". Moraru [35] mentions that "the democratization of society goes through the democratization and pluralization of communication, the media constituting a fundamental source of public opinion". Tacu [45] states that the long term context against information falseness phenomenon in the country should be a) "to improve the Information Technology (IT) infrastructure, starting with the implementation and maintenance of information monitoring and analysis systems to identify and counteract disinformation" and b) "to promote a legal framework that ensures free access to information and the protection of journalistic sources".

An important framework regarding the fight against disinformation is the Code of Audiovisual Media Services [3] of the Republic of Moldova, which was introduced by the country's parliament in 2018 and had some modifications reaching the 2023 version. The Code includes provisions about the protection of journalism and particularly the protection of journalists from external pressures, threats or intimidation (article 10). In fact, if there is a serious case, then there is the provision of criminal charges. We are talking about a protective measure that tries to support the service of journalism to society and respects the right to freedom of speech. There is a ban on audiovisual programs that are likely to propagate or incite forms of hatred or discrimination based on sex, race, religion (article 11). Efforts are also made to ensure correct information (article 13), since it is a serious condition that the programs make a clear distinction between facts - opinions, verify a fact and if it is information on matters of public interest (political, social, economic) then it should be done with impartiality and the main opposing views should be presented. In addition, there is a ban on broadcasting audiovisual programs that contain speech that incites hatred, disinformation, propaganda for military aggression, extremism, terrorism or threatens national security (article 17). In the same Article it is stated that radio and television programs of informative-analytical, political, military or political content produced in other states shall not be broadcast or rebroadcast, with the exception of the member states of the European Union, the United States of America, Canada and states that have sign the European Convention on Transfrontier Television. This means that information content originating from other countries is prohibited. One could say that this provision also indicates Moldova's intentions regarding the direction it wants to take in its foreign policy. Furthermore, measures are taken for the independence of public media services, which is why the intervention of public authorities, parties or organizations and interest groups is prohibited in them (article 34). The legislation also includes sanctions for the actors who don't comply and notes that Media service providers who broadcast content classified as disinformation are fined between 40,000 lei and 70,000 lei (article 84).

A few years earlier, the Moldovan Parliament introduced the Law 64/2010 [30] about the freedom of expression, which also had some modifications over the years. First of all, it is a good first step for granting its citizens with a universal fundamental right, secondly it includes provisions about media freedom of expression and also admits a certain degree of exaggeration and even provocation, provided that the essence of the facts is not distorted (article 4). There is a ban on media censorship, interference in the editorial activity of the mass media is prohibited, as also the creation of public authorities to control information that is going to be published in media (article 5).

In the context of upgrading systems, infrastructure and citizen services, the country's government published the „Digital Transformation Strategy 2023-2030" [42] in the fall of 2023, similar to the European Union Association Agreement and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in order to "align the national strategic measures with European and global trends and implement new policies based on the latest cross-cutting priorities". This published strategy is more objective-oriented as it refers to strategic goals of the country and not so much to the exact policies that are going to be implemented. Its core mission is to "achieve effective public governance, competitiveness in all spheres of life and the well-being of people, enabling Moldova to become a European Union Member State". To accomplish that, it focuses on six objective guidelines: "a) Develop a digital society, b) Grow a robust and competitive ICT environment, c) create an innovative and resilient digital economy, d) establish an efficient, smart, and transparent digital state, e) Create a secure digital accessible and inclusive environment, f) Make Moldova a trusted and reliable digital nation". The three main principles that the strategy intents to emphasize are:

1) "*Human development over technology*" with properly trained and educated citizens in relation with the ICT's.
2) "*Shared implementation responsibility* between central and local government, private sector, development partners and the entire society".
3) "*Compliance with European Union standards and regulations*" in order to harmonize the country policies with the European Union standards and accelerate its European integration.

It is not a coincidence that we saw a very similar national strategy in the case of Greece with the Digital Transformation Bible and the digitization of the public sector. The European member States and Candidate member States are methodically following the EU requirements to modernize their policies and to upgrade their arsenal as to be more capable in facing issues regarding information security, digital literacy, financial exchanges and social inequities. Thus, we observe different countries sharing common strategies because there is a common purpose. Of course the implementation progress is not synchronized and not in the same completion status, but the work is ongoing.

Furthermore, concerning the adaptation to digital space, the country's parliament published the Law 124/2022 [29] regarding electronic identification and trust services, which is broadly aligned with the European legislation. The aim of the enactment is "to ensure the functioning of the national market at an adequate level in the field of security of electronic identification means and trust services" and also to settle the legal "framework for the use of electronic signatures, electronic seals, electronic time stamps, documents electronic

services, registered electronic distribution services and certification services for authentication of web pages". The authentication and validity of these digital tools and the monitoring of the process by the Intelligence and Security Service of the Republic of Moldova bestow integrity and correctness on the data transferred. Thus, are created conditions that can promote the use of electronic services. Also, it facilitates upgraded and more secure information exchange between public institutions, businesses and individuals.

Another quite impressive tool in countering false narratives is the creation of "First Source" [39] (Prima Sursa) channel in Telegram. First Source is the official channel of the Government of the Republic of Moldova in the online platform and provides information from official high level authority about public actions and policies. Through this, are presented government bills or government news, statements by officials, program plans, etc. In other words, it is a first-hand information to citizens, provided straight from the source (public policies authorities), which aims to skip other actor's secondary information filtering/reshaping/framing or priming and to support people in a more independent opinion-making. The parliament also voted the framework for the Information Security Strategy [22] for the period 2019-2024 and among others, it concerns legislation about security in the digital space. It includes the provision for the review of the existing legal framework regarding the definition and prevention of the dissemination of disinformation through media platforms, the definition of the responsibilities of state bodies to deal with manipulative behaviors online, as well as the exclusion of information that threatens national security (paragraph n.96). Nevertheless, the planned actions in the legislation are not revealed in detail and there is a more general reference. We cannot know if this is done legitimately for security reasons, however, even at the level of internal cooperation of the competent state bodies, perhaps someone could say that there should be a more thorough analysis of the proposed policies, so as to increase efficiency. Also, another question arises. One could ask: will the indicated supervisory authority be responsible for judging the quality of the information and whether the information is harmful to national security? If it judges that national security is threatened, then it will be able to uncontrollably exclude information and news from the public debate? In other words, there are technical issues that should be clarified, in order to strengthen citizens' access to information and to increase transparency even more.

In the same framework of security strategy, the Moldovan cabinet in 2022 approved a decision [8] concerning the establishment of a Coordinating Council to ensure information security. As referred in paragraph 1, the Council will not have a legal personality but will have consultative and operational attributes. "The basic function of the Council is to promote and coordinate measures of implementing information and cyber security policies in a democratic society depending on the development of technology, legal and other relations in the information sector, both at national and international level" (paragraph 2). The Council's activity will be focused on four levels (paragraphs 11-15):

1) Cybernetic – to present and examine risk factors who have generated or may generate cybernetic dangers, as also to submit proposals for solution and recovery for those incidents.
2) Operational – to identify subversive news that could affect the country's information security

3) Media – to evaluate various types of factors who could harm the institutional, functional, structural integrity of media in the country, for example to investigate situations of corruption, propaganda, misinformation, manipulation of national information space.
4) Civic-private – with different responsibilities such as to stimulate technological innovations in the field of information society development, to promote public authorities cooperation protocols regarding information security and compliance with legislation, to cooperate with research institutions or higher education and experts from within the public entities in the field of defense and public order etc.

Interesting fact is the provision that each level, especially the media and civic-private levels, will create a network of information security experts with the objective to identify information threats and vulnerabilities or to manage with information security problems (paragraph 25). One could say this is a provision resembling the European HLEG which utilizes experts from various domains in order to analyze a public problem and propose solutions, working under a consultative character.

Concerning the accession negotiations between European Union and Moldova about the progress of reforms, in the framework of EU enlargement policy, the European Commission published a report [4] on the country's alignment with the EU acquis. In the field of digital transformation and media, the Commission recognizes the honest efforts of the country and reports that "some level of preparation" was achieved and "good progress was made". However, it suggests that extra steps have to be taken and that "Moldova should in particular:

1. align with and implement the EU Roaming Regulation and other relevant EU acquis in the field of telecoms;
2. adopt the Digital Transformation Strategy 2023–2030 and ensure the institutional capacity to implement it;
3. adopt and implement market instruments to ensure anti-cartel measures and the deoligarchisation of the media market".

As we observe, there is room for improvement and enrichment of the legislative framework to deal with information falseness, especially in the digital space of the internet or media literacy and this could perhaps be done according to the standards of the European DSA or the Code of Practice. However, there is a vivid activity in terms of legislation and a clear change of dynamics in positive direction in the country the last years. One can ascertain it by looking at three different indicators: the Press Freedom Index, the Global Peace Index and the Corruption Perceptions Index. In 2020, Moldova was ranked 91st in the Press Freedom Index, while in 2023 it was ranked 28th [49; 50; 51]. In 2020, the country ranked 71 in Global Peace Index and moved to 57 in 2023 [16; 17; 18]. In Corruption Perceptions Index, from ranking 115 in 2020, Moldova moved to 76 in 2023 [5; 6; 7]. The indicators for 2024-2025 show, basically, the same favorable trends. Here follows a graph that aggregates the above.

Table 1. Moldova's Indexes rankings

Moldova rankings	2020	2023	2024	2025
Press Freedom Index	91/180	28/180	31/180	35/180
Global Peace Index	71/163	57/163	62/163	66/163
Corruption Perceptions Index	115/180	76/180	76/180	

We observe a significant improvement in all three Indexes that can be translated as a result of improvements in public reforms and application of legislation. Especially in account of Press Freedom ranking, there is an advance of 63 positions (2023 in relation with 2020), which can be expressed as part of general progress due to the implementation of the respective policies. Moldova's dialogue with the European Union has not stopped and discussions are taking place, among others, on issues of know-how in dealing with disinformation and improving public policies. In March 2023, there was another meeting between EU and Moldovan high-level officials, in which they discussed security issues, Moldova's upgrade to candidate Member State status and the willing to increasing international cooperation to counter hybrid threats, disinformation and crisis management [14]. What decisions will be made exactly and what actions will be taken is something that will probably be seen in the future.

Ultimately, Greece faces significant challenges regarding misinformation and media trust, as evidenced by low public confidence in traditional news sources and a high prevalence of perceived false information. While the government is taking steps to enhance digital literacy and transparency through initiatives like the Digital Transformation Bible and the Open Government Partnership, the recent legislation aimed at combating fake news raises concerns about potential infringements on free speech, highlighting the delicate balance between protecting public interest and preserving democratic freedoms. Moldova is actively addressing disinformation through legislative reforms and strengthened ties with the European Union, aiming to enhance its political and economic stability, digital transformation, information security, while fostering a media environment that prioritizes transparency and accountability. These efforts not only reflect the country's commitment to democratic values but also underscore its strategic ambition to align more closely with European standards and practices. As the country continues to improve its legislative framework and public governance, the positive trends in key indices underscore the potential for further progress in its journey toward European integration and the establishment of a more transparent and resilient society.

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