BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN THE SOFT POWER ASPECT

Iaroslav CEBANU

CZU: 327:061.1UE:327(478) cebanuiaroslav@gmail.com

This theme is of particular scientific and practical interest both for the Republic of Moldova and for the European Union. The interdependence of large global actors such as EU, in the security aspects of creating a ring of friendly countries, protection from hybrid and diffuse threads, informational risks, and etc., is largely associated with the success of the EU foreign policy, face of other European states, such as the Republic of Moldova, in democratization, modernization, inspiration for internal reforms with external encouragement and conditionality.

Soft power as a political phenomenon between states has a long enough experience of application and finds its reflection in the history of socio-political thought and in the practical direction. During the XX century different authors have offered various visions of soft power - from the realist understanding to the liberal and transnational paradigms. [3-5-6-9]. Thus, in understanding the peculiarities of EU soft power we proceed from the theory of the K. Schmitt, who concludes that the instruments of foreign and internal policy *soft* and *hard* power in the terminology of *Potestas directa*, i.e., the direct execution of power. K. Schmitt also distinguished a form of indirect power, *Potestas indirecta*, which was exercised through channels other than the direct international relations vertical of state power. [9, p.32.] In the context of the analysis of soft power in relations between states, we find it important to cite the conceptualization of soft power in a realist paradigm. Thus According to H. Morgenthau [6, p.681], an approach that involves three dimensions: Political - Hard power; Economic and Cultural (i.e. through the transfer of cultural foundations to create conditions for the export of cultural values in other states through the impact on the population of other states). The classic neoliberal theory of interdependence of soft power J. Nye. Who considers that states are only one of the active units along with sectoral (*intrastate*) structures. It follows from such conditions where the use of military force in the international sphere becomes less and less effective. [3, p.6] In that context economy in the global world of branding and public diplomacy G. Zondi considers the category of branding of states in close connection with *soft power* and the concept of *public diplomacy*. [8, p.42], as S. Anholt also identifies fundamental parts in the practical application of public diplomacy as part of soft power: Essence, strategy, symbolic actions, where the practical embodiment of strategy is manifested in tangible actions. [7, p.7]

Regarding the EU's soft power policy, the term *public diplomacy* was first used. Public diplomacy and now the European Union have its own formulations and interpretations of this term, the term *civilian power* or *normative power* is more common in documents, as it was invented back in the 1970s. Its essence was that, without military potential, using mainly trade instruments, the integration association can spread, which had formulated in the Declaration of Political Identity. [2] The most important political feature of the EU soft power, is that the EU relies on soft power, i.e. on attraction and persuasion, and not on hard power, as propaganda, creation of engaged and corrupt groups (counter-elites and anti-elites). According to the famous diplomacy researcher Jan Melissen, public diplomacy is a key tool of soft power. [5, p.5] The sphere of power politics and the sphere of public diplomacy are not, of course, completely separate. They do overlap. [5, p.78].

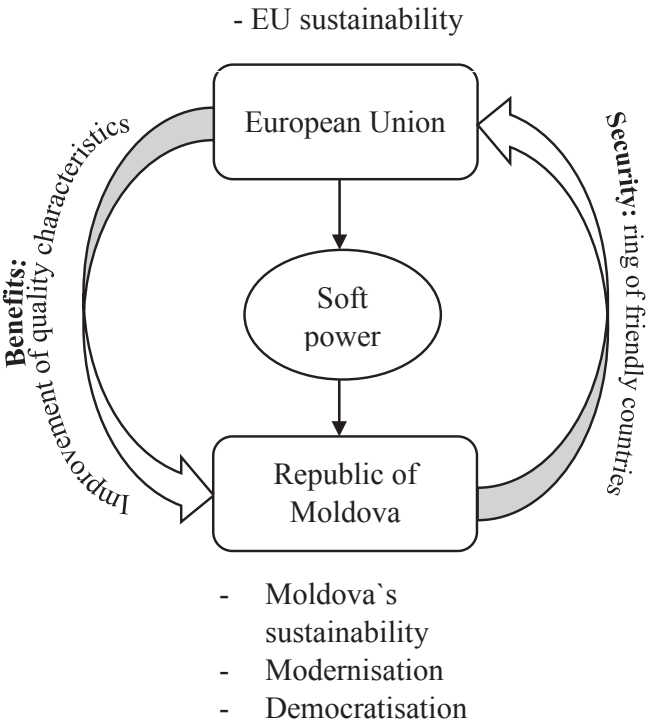


Fig.1. Correlation between EU`s soft power impact and security of the Republic of Moldova.

The author finds it important to note that during the entire manifestation, from the moment of independence of the Republic of Moldova, the European Union provided support and thus, through the mechanisms of implementation of the soft power, contributed to the gradual and consistent process of democratization and modernization of the political system of Moldova. Moldovan professor Mamaliga I., in his

work classifies the progress in relations between Moldova and the EU into 4 stages: 1) 1989-1994 period; 2) 1994-2014 - signing and implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement; 3) signing of the Association Agreement; 4) EU accession process. [4] In analyzing the Union foreign policy activity of the Carp R. in his paper does make an account on the current stage of relevant geopolitical actors and how they view the EU. In order to address this issue, EU have to focus more on its soft power instruments, like multilateralism and the promotion of democracy, rule of law and human rights, and also climate change, apart from hard power instruments like trade, security and defense, cyber security and data privacy. [1, p.107]

In conclusion the Republic of Moldova at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries, in the conditions of building a new world order, faces and remains extremely acute the necessity of adequate response to new challenges - ensuring security and its own sovereignty, geopolitical and geo-economic challenges - in connection with the escalation of the international situation, the conflict in the adjacent state Ukraine, fluctuations of the international system. Where the choice of foreign policy vector oriented towards geopolitical *Atlanticizm* on the way of joining, accession and integration into the European Union, is marked by the influence of the Union through soft power, which has positive impact: modernization and liberalization of the political system, providing funding to vital sectors of the economy, increasing the transparency of decision-making. That in the period from 2014 to 2024 led to a shift towards a independent foreign policy decision-making mechanisms and ways of their implementation. This year, 2024th is marked by the upcoming elections both in the USA (which will determine the state of transatlantic relations) and in Moldova. The essential and crucial feature of the EU influence, realized through the soft power, implemented in various mechanisms (ENP, EaP IPA III, etc.), by increasing stability and sustainable development in the Eastern European region.

References:

1. Carp R. Combining soft power with the geopolitical approach - how difficult is for the EU to change its attitude? În: Revista Română de Studii Baltice şi Nordice. The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies, Vol. 12, Issue 2. 2020. p.107.
2. Declaration on European Identity. The Copenhagen Summit Conference. 14-15 December 1973. EU Bulletin. 1973. №12. [Accesat 14.12.2023]. Disponibil: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/02798dc9-9c69-4b7d-b2c9-f03a8db7da32/publishable_en.pdf
3. Keohane R., J. Nye. Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977. p.273 ISBN 9780316489355
4. Mămăligă I. The Evolution of the Integration Process as Effect of the Treaties Signed between Republic of Moldova and European Union. În: Acta Universitatis Danubius. Administratio, 2014, Vol 6, nr. 2, p.20-29. [Accesat 12.12.2023]. Disponibil: http://journals.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/administratio/article/view/2541/2592#sdfootnote1sym
5. Melissen J. The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations. Hound mills: Palgrave, 2005. p.78.

6. Morgenthau H.J. Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace. 5th ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976. 618 p.
7. S. Anholt. Beyond the Nation Brand: The Role of Image and Identity in International Relations. Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article 1. 2011. p.7. [Accesat 10.12.2023]. Disponibil: https://surface.syr.edu/exchange/vol2/iss1/1/
8. Szondi G. Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: Conceptual Similarities and Differences. Clingendael Discussion Paper in Diplomacy, No. 112. 2008. 42 p.
9. Шмитт К. Понятие политического. Санкт-Петербург: Наука, 2016. 568 с. ISBN 978-5-02-038400-2

Recommended
***Nicolae ȚÂU**, dr. hab., prof. univ.*