

## Editorial

# The more ways, the less Euro-integration

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The East-West controversy in the public discourse of the political elites in Chisinau is finally taking new shape after years of wondering how to handle the geopolitical factor and influences. De facto, the insular policy of the Republic of Moldova which is currently promoted and which bears an authoritarian character, relying on serious democratic slippages, seems to have changed its narrative. Moreover, today we speak less about the European or Eurasian way, invoking instead the “Pro-Moldova” course - the “fourth way”...

Less than a decade has passed since the Republic of Moldova welcomed in Chisinau the exponents of the great Euro-Atlantic powers, showing major interest in taking over the values and the functioning principles of the democratic states with tradition. The visits of Chancellor Angela Merkel and Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden, have not only astonished the society, which was still accustomed to the Russian leaders (who, by the way, still have top positions in Moldovan preferences), but also have offered the hope of a democratic transition that could be completed. But it wasn't to happen, unfortunately, as things started to degrade.

Moreover, the recent visits of the Belarusian leader Aleksandr Lukashenko and of the Turkish President Recep Erdoğan - who somehow substituted the Euro-Atlantic leaders that seem to have refused to come to Chisinau - do change the reality. There can be various reasons for that: from unreformed political elites and society with deep Soviet convictions to the disillusion of colour or “social media” revolutions. That we cannot know exactly. But one thing is certain now: in the course of a few months, the pro-European message has been distorted and excluded from internal and external policy priorities. The consequences are clear - we are progressively moving away from the European dream, we are becoming even more vulnerable and, as a result, we are turning into a



light prey for those who have obscure interests and need a bridge to attack the country's immediate neighbours: Romania and Ukraine.

Romania is the first gateway to Europe for East Europeans, and due to its NATO membership, it is also the main fortress that provides regional and European security. Ukraine, in turn, being neither a member of the EU nor of NATO and having a direct border with the “big bear”, became, on the one hand, its first and easiest victim, and on the other

hand, the original protection shield for us as well as for the European Union. De facto, the recent clashes between the Russian Federation and Ukraine in the Black Sea Basin, the disputes over the Kerch Strait and the Azov Sea are just a few consequences of the less efficient management of the situation in 2014, which has led to the annexation of the Crimea. The East-West controversy, as well as the geopolitical influences, no longer have a theoretical or intellectual interest, but turn into profound existential problems with state survival notes.

Existential is also the state of affairs of the Republic of Moldova, which in times of regional or international crises, chooses to aggravate its situation through the inability to formulate its needs, but also to strategically manage the relations with its partners ready to offer their assistance. Leaving aside the relationship with the EU, we recall that in 2014 there was no common voice of the Chisinau authorities, political elites of our country, condemning the annexation of the Crimea. And there is still no common voice, after four years, to condemn the assaults in the Black Sea basin.

It is difficult to understand where this is the internal politics or foreign policy, or geopolitical calculations, or simple geostrategic assumptions. However, it is rather clear that this is about personal preferences or group interests and even political interests. And it is also clear this has nothing to do with the sense of representativeness of people.