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## **'The European Neighbourhood Policy/Eastern Partnership and Moldova: Progress, Difficulties and Expectations'**

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Based on results of:  
National survey, November 2008;  
Experts' interviews November-December 2008;  
School essays (50 essays), April 2009;  
Focus-groups (5 FGD) May 2009.

# Moldova's foreign policy

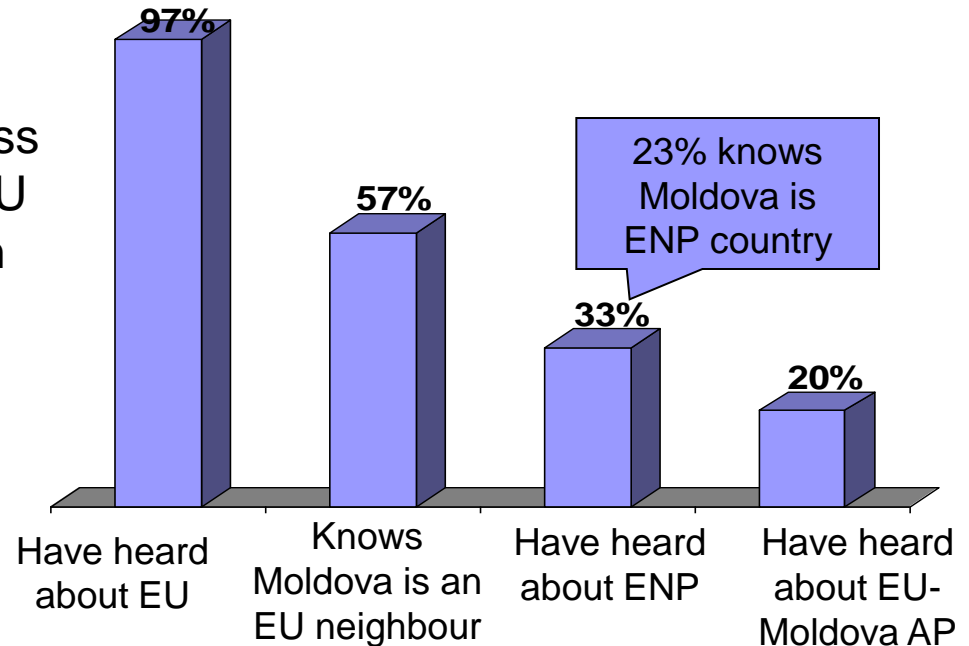
- Moldova's foreign policy was described as undefined, inconsistent and dual, with its external vectors changing in response to political conjuncture and authorities' interests.
- Population was especially critical regarding Moldovan policy towards the EU and skeptical about the outcomes of Moldova's European integration process – officially declared as the **Top Priority of Foreign and Domestic Policy of Moldova**.
- Population perceives Moldova's foreign policy as being oriented, first of all, towards Russia (*fieldwork conducted in November 2008*).

# Moldova – EU relations

- Evolution of Moldova - EU relations were described as the politics of missed opportunities and sporadic actions from both sides.
- The Moldova – EU relations were seen as less beneficial compared to other ex-communist states. This does not necessarily mean the lack of interest from the EU. More critically, it is based on the perception of Moldova being in Russia's sphere of influence and also failing fulfil its obligations under PCA and AP.
- Many citizens believe that there are more talks than concrete actions between the EU and Moldova, and the relations are not changing. Nevertheless, absolute majority supports the development of closer relations with the EU.

# EU policy towards Moldova

- Both quantitative and qualitative studies revealed a low awareness level among population about EU policy toward Moldova, although population declared they are interested in such subjects.



Despite the low awareness about EU policies towards its neighbors, citizens of Moldova are quite optimistic in their thinking about this policy.

84% think that the EU policy on neighboring countries is based on mutual trust.

61% consider that one of the main goals of the ENP is to prepare the neighbors for joining the EU, more than half of them think that the aim of the ENP is to assist the neighbors in achieving stability and welfare and to develop/unify European culture.

At the same time, more than half of citizens consider that the ENP most of all corresponds to the interests of governments of the EU countries and their citizens.

# EU policy towards Moldova

**Moldovan experts were more skeptical on EU policy toward Moldova.**

## ■ **Positive views:**

- correct, pragmatic, consistent and standard “bloc approach” policy towards Moldova
- mere existence of such an EU policy is an advantage to neighbouring countries, including the Republic of Moldova.
- wants to have a direct neighbour with a predictable policy, developed country in economic and social terms and that would support the EU in spreading its values and norms and in maintaining stability and security along its external borders.

## □ **Negative views:**

- EU has an ambiguous and “moderate” policy, focussing primarily on solving its vital issues such as ensuring its security;
- did not consider a European perspective for Moldova;
- is a “bloc approach” policy without taking into consideration the cultural and geopolitical peculiarities of each countries;
- is too broad and without nuances and specific tools for its implementation;
- did not point out what will follow afterwards;
- Moldova was included in the same group with countries without a European vocation.

Experts were, critical, as well, about the Moldavian authorities that could not or do not want to formulate Moldova’s priorities within ENP/EaP, even at least officially between these parties there is equal partnership and Moldova can do this, but in fact accepts what is offered or take EU offers for granted.

# Image of the EU in Moldova

- EU is assessed by the citizens of Moldova within positive categories: economic prosperity, freedom to travel, freedom to study, work, democracy and stability.
- Republic of Moldova, in their view, is perceived by EU as a weak, backward and poor country, which is facing acute problems in almost all fields. Especially critical about Moldova's image in EU countries were pupils in their essays (*conducted after April events*), indicating on violation of human rights, no freedom of speech, corruption etc.

# Moldova's accession to EU

- Moldovan citizens want Moldova to join EU - 79% would consider this as a positive event. They see both personal and country's advantages.
- Most of them believe Moldova has prospect to become an EU member, but only in the long run.
- Currently Moldova meets only one of the Copenhagen criteria – it is an European country. Moldova is facing acute problems in all areas and one of the main issues is the “frozen” Transnistrian conflict.
- Prospects of Moldova joining the EU depend both by evolution of internal political situation and external factors - situation in the EU, its policies towards neighbouring countries.

# What Moldova wants from EU?

- To develop closer relations with EU;
- To get an Association Agreement between the EU and Moldova;
- To gain access to the EU freedoms;
- Larger EU involvement in settlement of the Transnistrian conflict;
- Financial and technical support for implementing reforms in the Republic of Moldova.