

M O L D O V A

Romania as seen from Chişinău

- from declarations to real support -



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Introduction

At the end of last year, the Romanian Center for European Policies (CRPE) published *“How we used the window of opportunity: a year after the revival of Romanian-Moldovan relations”*, a report on the dynamics between the two states during the past year and on how bilateral engagements were implemented.

The following Policy Brief summarizes the results of a **survey of experts**, based on responses from 55 experts from the Republic of Moldova: NGO representatives, journalists, political decisionmakers, public servants and business representatives. We would like to note that although we tried to include representatives of Russian-speaking NGOs and media outlets among respondents, and we partially succeeded in doing so, the final sample might overrepresent Romanian-speaking NGO experts and media.

We considered a survey of experts to be the best instrument for this research, considering the complexity of the subject and the different perspectives that have been expressed lately on the topic. Thus, alongside an analysis of the implementation of institutional cooperation accords between Romania and Moldova and in addition to the interviews taken for the above-mentioned report, we have also chosen to take stock of the opinions of experts, those who have more detailed knowledge in this field and inform themselves from a breadth of sources.

This “field” research was conducted over November-December 2010 at Essex University, using the online survey software Qualtrics, with the methodological assistance of our colleague Mariana Popescu. We thank her for her support with conducting the survey and data collection.

1. Romania as Moldova’s EU advocate

Half of respondents have no doubts about Romania’s credibility as an advocate for Moldova’s European integration (*Figure 1*). The issue, then, is not whether Romania is an appropriate country to promote and support Moldova’s European perspective, but **how exactly Romania should play this role**. Romania’s effectiveness was judged to be insufficient by approximately 55% of respondents (*Figure 2*).

Figure 1. To what extent do you believe that Romania is a **credible advocate** for the Republic of Moldova’s European integration?

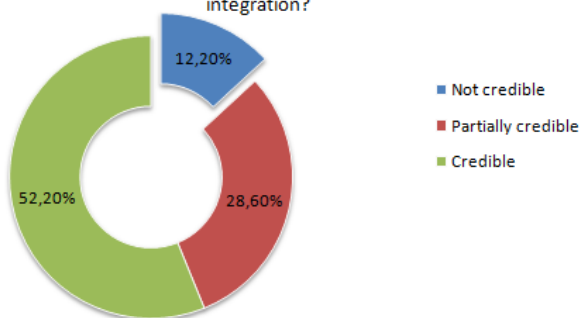
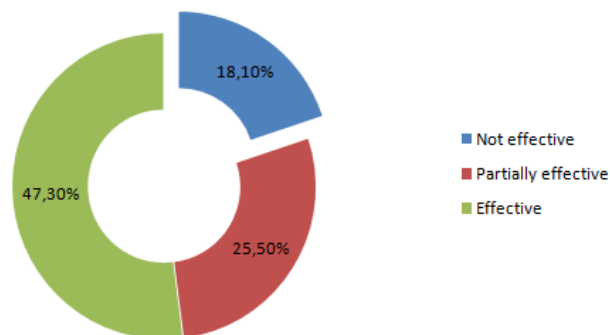
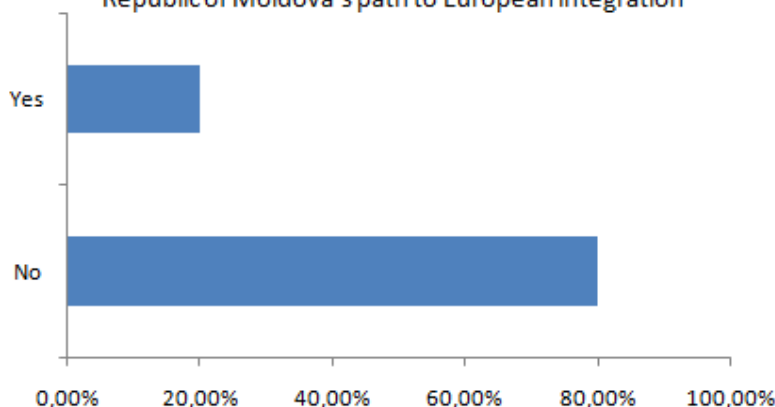


Figure 2. To what extent do you believe that Romania is an **effective advocate** for the Republic of Moldova?



With respect to the **importance of the support Romania offers Moldova at the European level**, most of the experts that responded to our survey (80%) consider Romania’s involvement and support relevant and important to Moldova’s path to European integration (*Figure 3*).

Figure 3. Is Romania’s support unimportant to the Republic of Moldova’s path to European integration



Thus, Romania’s support is important and necessary for Moldova. Romania can be a credible advocate for Moldova at the European level, but Romania has to learn how to do this in an effective way that truly contributes to the acceleration of Moldova’s European perspective.

2. Romania’s financial assistance to Moldova

Experts are skeptical about the usefulness of the financial assistance offered by Romania in satisfying the real needs of Moldovan society – only around **13% of respondents are convinced that financial assistance is directed to the areas that truly need most support** (Figure 4).

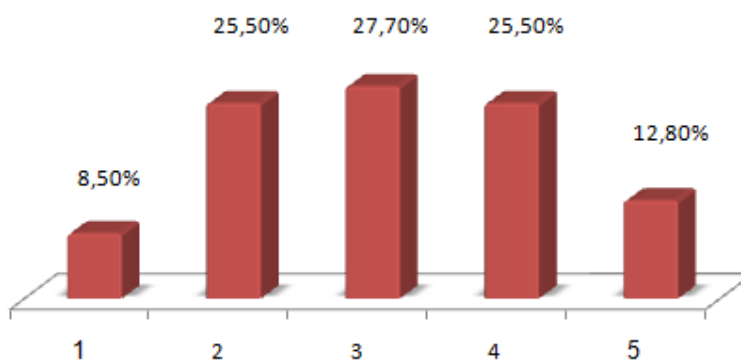
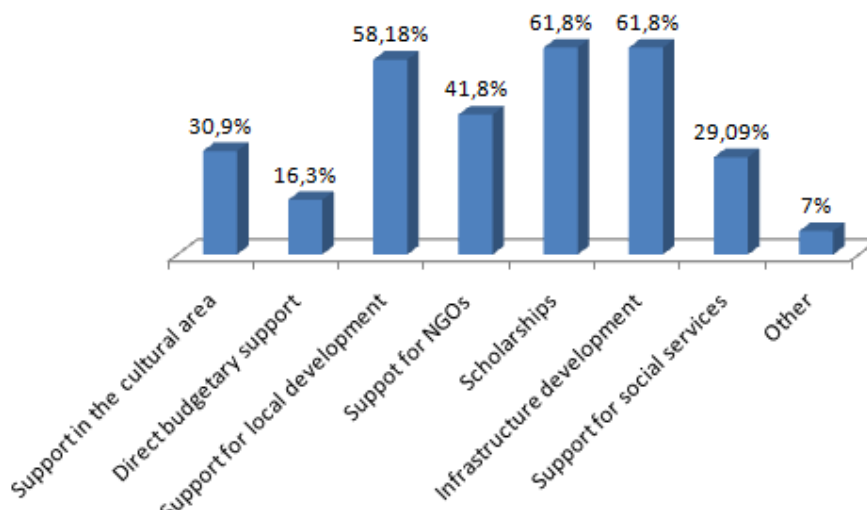


Figure 4. To what extent do you believe that Romania’s financial support is geared toward the real needs of Moldovan society? (1=to a small extent;5= to a large extent)

When it comes to specific areas, according to the opinions of the interviewed experts, Romania should channel its financial assistance toward **infrastructure development, scholarships**, support for **local development** and support for the **NGO sector** (Figure 5).

Figure 5. In which areas do respondents recommend that Romania prioritize its financial assistance for the Republic of Moldova?



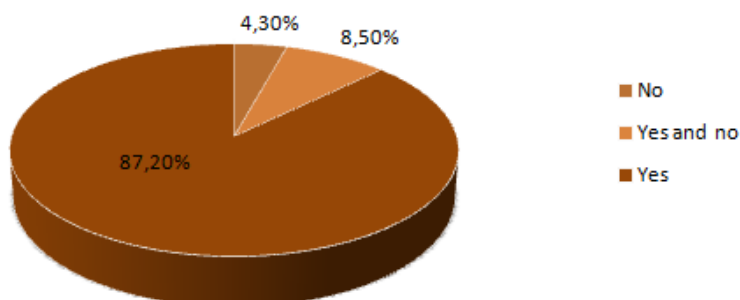
As we recommended in the CRPE report “How we used window of opportunity: a year after the revival of Romanian-Moldovan relations”, Romanian authorities should ensure a permanent and

as broad as possible consultation with interested actors from Chişinău. Moreover, until it develops its financial assistance management capabilities, it is advisable that Romania act in concert with more experienced donors.

3. Romanian citizenship and visas

We see in *Figure 6* that the legitimacy of the policy on the recovery of Romanian citizenship is supported by most Moldavan experts questioned by the authors of this report, with over 87% **considering the policy to be legitimate and justified**.

Figure 6. The policy on the recovery of Romanian citizenship is legitimate and justified



On the other hand, the management of this process by Romanian authorities is considered to be problematic, as only about 20% of experts consider the process of recovering Romanian citizenship to be well managed (*Figure 7*). Over the last year, through a series of public statements and engagements, **Romania generated big expectations** about the process of issuing Romanian citizenship, expectations that **were not satisfied in practice**.

Figure 7. The process of recovering Romanian citizenship is well managed

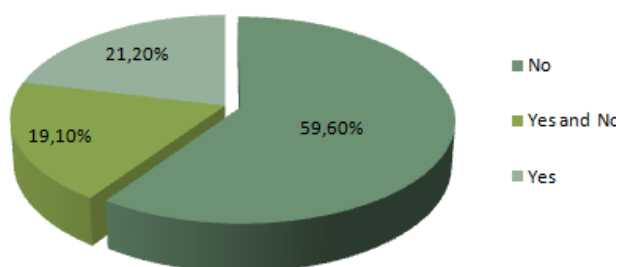
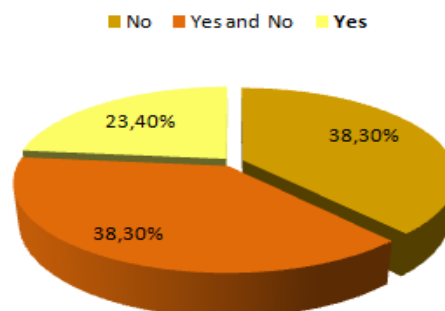


Figure 8. The process if recovering Romanian citizenship is fairly implemented

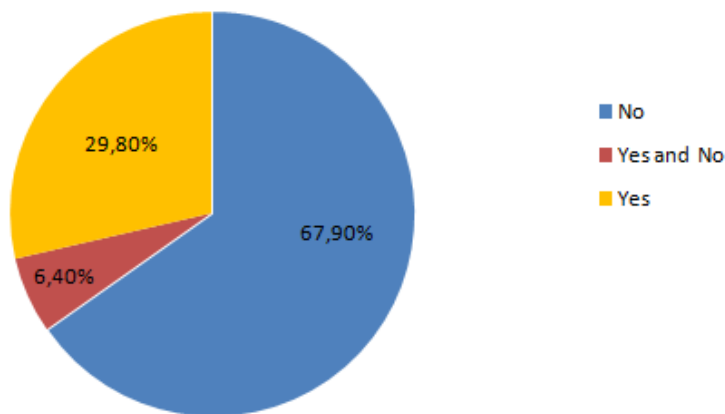


Moreover, about **40%** of those questioned consider that **the process of recovering Romanian citizenship to be inequitably implemented and managed** (*Figure 8*).

Thus, despite **an improvement in the process of recovering Romanian citizenship last year** – around 60% of respondents recognized this – and a lack of problems with the legitimacy of the policy of recovering Romanian citizenship, **Romanian authorities continue to be ineffective in managing and implementing the policy.**

Romania must **continue the policy** but implement **the policy of recovering Romanian citizenship in a way that is coherent and fair.**

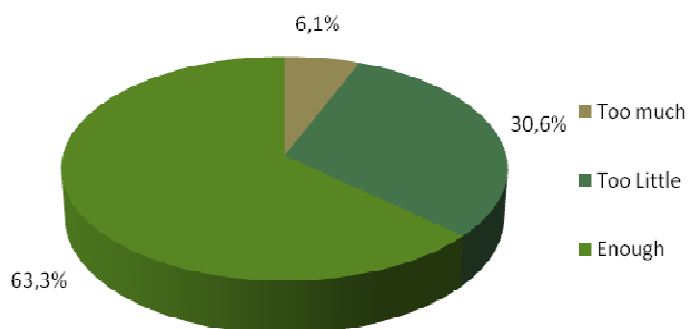
Figure 9. The management of the process of granting Romanian visas to Moldovan citizens has improved significantly in the last year



When it comes to **the process of acquiring Romanian visas** for Moldovan citizens, despite procedural changes and the opening of new Romanian consulates, the general opinion of Moldavian experts – **around 70% of our respondents** – is that **the management of the process of acquiring Romanian visas has not significantly improved in the past year** (Figure 9).

4. Romania and Moldova’s internal affairs, the Transnistrian problem

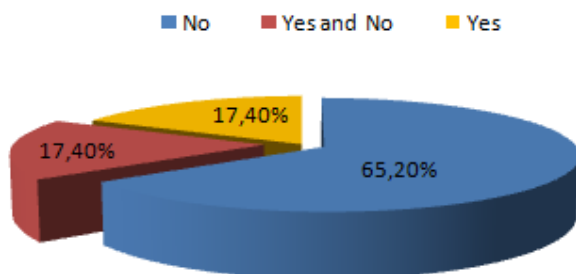
Figure 10. Do you believe the Romanian authorities are giving too much, enough or too little attention to the situation in the Republic of Moldova?



The Republic of Moldova has recently been ever more present on the Romanian public agenda, with the two parties signing many agreements for institutional collaboration – the above-mentioned CRPE report presents the agreements of the past year in detail. This fact was noticed by our respondents, over **60% considering the attention paid by Bucharest to this issue to be sufficient** (Figure 10).

We can therefore deduce again that **the problem** is neither with intentions nor discussions, but mostly with the **effective materialization and implementation of the agreements and other shared initiatives**.

Figure 11. Romania interferes too much in the internal politics of the Republic of Moldova

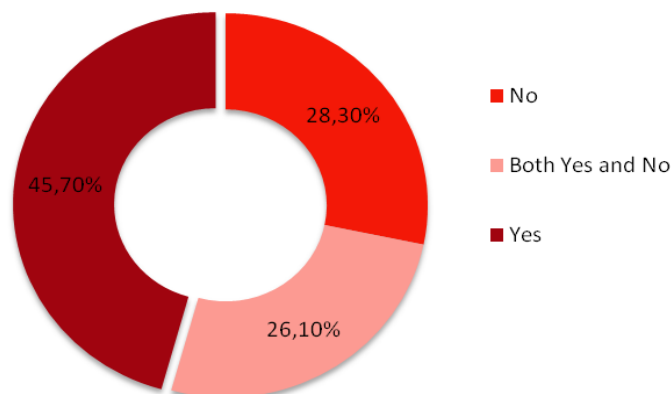


With respect to Romania’s support of Moldova’s European integration efforts, the positions taken by Romanian authorities towards Chişinău and Romania’s much-debated (especially by the representatives of CPRM) *involvement in the internal affairs of the Republic of Moldova*, the situation was seen differently. Romania’s “activism” towards Moldova is considered to be interfering with Moldova’s internal affairs by approximately 17% of the experts who answered our

questions, with over 65% considering Romania’s involvement to be normal and useful (*Figure 11*).

With respect to the **solution of the Transnistrian conflict** and how Romania can contribute to this process, **less than half** of respondents **recommend more active involvement by Romania**. Approximately **60%** consider **Romanian policy towards Moldova not to be an obstacle** to the resolution of the conflict (*Figure 12*).

Figure 12. Romania should be more active when it comes to solving the Transnistrian conflict



We restate our recommendation, made in the above mentioned report, that **Romania should adopt a single position on this issue – to support the cause of Chisinau**.

To conclude, we present several comments that the experts who answered our survey considered important and that reflect the way in which Romania, through its actions (and non-actions), positions itself with respect to Moldovan citizens and Moldova’s aspirations for European integration.

As a conclusion – the experts' opinions

“Romania, as several experts from Chisinau as well as from Bucharest have noted, has never had a clear strategy regarding the Republic of Moldova. For this reason, Romania is still regarded, not without the help of the propaganda of several pro-Stalinist parties, as an “enemy” of Moldavan citizens.”

„Moldova has had a big brother, and, in order for it not just to be replaced by another one, Moldova needs a gentle, competent tutor, with qualities worth envying and emulating.”

„It’s not that the attention Romania accords the Republic of Moldova is insufficient, but rather that it’s not consistent and seemingly does not take into consideration the interests of the different social and political segments of this country.”

„...Romania cannot be a credible advocate for the Republic of Moldova at the EU level as long as it doesn’t solve its own issues of institutional adaptation/convergence and of policies and issues specified in its Treaty of Accession to the EU.”

„Romanian authorities give enough attention to the situation of the Republic of Moldova, but unfortunately there is no clear and multidimensional strategic partnership with our country. Considerable energy is wasted in fruitless and ineffective declarations, which sometimes do damage to both sides. There need to be working groups of experts and technocrats who can conduct a joint study with concrete proposals for the governments of Romania and the Republic of Moldova concerning the strategic partnership. There need to be joint projects for integration which link the infrastructure of the Republic of Moldova with those of Romania and the European Union.”

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Dragoș Dinu is a professional with a vast experience in public management and strategic planning. He has worked in the department of public policies coordination for the Romanian Government. At present, he offers consultancy in this field at a regional level (Romania, Moldova, Kosovo) and he coordinates projects related to public administration at CRPE.

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