



**HOW WE USED THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY:
A Year After the Revival of the Romanian – Moldavian relations**

Synthesis of the recommendations

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Each chapter within this report ends with several precise recommendations. Thus, the complete arguments for each recommendation can be found in the text, but for the hurried reader, we have compiled a synthesis of the ideas and changes which the authors would like to see transposed in practice so as to improve Romania's standing in the Republic of Moldova (RM).

1. We need a Mr. / Mrs. Moldova

The RM is a priority for Romania, but this priority is handled with the support of an uncoordinated and fragmented bureaucratic apparatus. The Romanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs has a central role, but it lacks the necessary coordinating capacity - the office of the High Representative for the RM has only one employee and a ceremonial role. We recommend the creation of a strong office both at the political and institutional level that can coordinate Romania's politics and policies towards the RM. It can be placed either within the Presidency or the Government's General Secretariat by strengthening the existing institution of High Representative. The new office should have the authority to coordinate the responsible ministries and it should be created through the consensus of all parties, thus continuing at the policy level the existing parliamentary consent on the approach towards the RM. Mr. / Mrs. Moldova should be a former respected official with personal and political authority, with vast knowledge of the Eastern region, an European profile and not belonging to the nationalist wing of any of the Romanian parties (which traditionally tend to seize the Romanian-Moldavian relations agenda, but which have no credibility in Chisinau).

2. Let us overlap Moldova's European agenda

At present, Chisinau is negotiating an Association Agreement with the European Commission. The negotiations for a Romania – RM Action Plan for the application of the European integration partnership (stipulated in the Ghimpu – Băsescu declaration) were relaunched in December 2010. Irrespective of who will come to power in Chisinau, the future agreement with the EU will be extremely influential inside the future governing agenda. Therefore, the Bucharest – Chisinau negotiations should follow the topics and priorities of the Brussels – Chisinau negotiations. The Romanian embassy in the RM started this process and the negotiations teams must internalize the message. We do not wish to compete with the RM's European agenda, but to overlap it.

3. Better communication at the European level on the reacquisition of citizenship

4. We are running late in making use of the 100 million euro aid for development. Since we are late, we should at least spend this money wisely. We recommend a few principles:

- **A permanent and wide consultation process** with the officials, NGOs and other expert stakeholders from Chisinau;

- **Coordination with the other donors.** Instead of engaging in solo adventurous initiatives, it would be wiser to ally ourselves with those who have been working there for 20 years at least until we accumulate enough local experience and get used to the procedures needed for development projects during which time we will be able to build for Romania the image of a serious donor, an image which does not exist at the moment;
- **We have to avoid the impression that we are paying our clients with this money.** Romania must distribute the money where it is needed and not support interest groups;
- **Fewer decisions taken in Bucharest, more in Chisinau.** The money should be spent in the RM, not by buying materials from Bucharest, as it was done following the flooding season. The projects proposed by the Moldavian authorities should be evaluated in Chisinau by independent experts from the RM. Thus, we would gain honorability as donors and we would diminish the polarization accusations which will surely come up;
- **Let us not ignore the society.** The two institutions which will manage the aid money will channel it only through the institutions. The priorities established in Romania make possible only a cooperation with the Moldavian authorities (since it is they who manage the roads and the schools), ignoring thus civil society. It would be necessary to reconsider this position so that at least part of the money to be directed towards civil society and democratization programs, the media, and social services. We have no reasons to work only with the Moldavian state (who is from time to time hostile towards us) and to ignore the Moldavian society (where we have always found friends).
- **We keep our promise irrespective of who forms the government in Chisinau.** A change of policy regarding the 100 million euro would be catastrophic for Romania's image, it would confirm Chisinau's political paranoia and it would denote short term thinking (it is good that President Bănescu firmly rejected such a change of policy). **If the Moldavian state becomes hostile once more, then the solution is not to withdraw the funds, but to give it to the Moldavian society.** In case there will be a PCRM government, the 100 million should be withdrawn from the Ministry of Development and managed:
 - Partially by the ODA department of MAE (which should gradually strengthen its presence in Chisinau) aided by a consultative committee formed around an NGO group which is active in the ODA sphere – The Romanian Platform of Nongovernmental Development Organizations (FOND). This would be an adequate structure for us to address the needs of the Moldavian society in terms of social assistance, democratization and education projects;
 - Partially by TVR and the creation of TVR Moldova, subject detailed in a special chapter on the presence of the Romanian public television network in RM;
 - Other such projects which do not demand the participation and the acceptance of the Moldavian government.

5. TVR should create TVR Moldova. There is a Romanian audience in the RM, who should receive both content from TVR 1 and, additionally, local content. TVR must develop a long term strategy for the RM which now depends on the goodwill of a local magnate in Chisinau.

6. The infrastructure and energy projects which were promised in January 2010 are running late. Romania started the necessary steps to acquire European funds. Some have been blocked because of the Moldavian authorities whose commercial logic conflicts with the political logic (especially concerning the gas pipe). Our report describes in detail the status of each of these projects. **As a general recommendation, political involvement at the highest level is needed in order to get things moving.** Everyday bureaucracy does not move forward at the desired pace.

7. Regarding Transnistria, Romania does not have and must not look for its own interest in the region. The RM faces a major decision if the German – Russian strategic negotiations will include a solution for Transnistria. Not any solution will be acceptable to Chisinau, which fears a Kozak II type of plan, therefore a “Transnistriation” of the whole Moldova. But the society and the political class in Chisinau are not even ready to debate a *de jure* acknowledgement of loss regarding Transnistria. A wise policy for Bucharest would be to show maximum restraint in adopting a position towards Transnistria and in transmitting suggestions to Chisinau. It is not within our responsibility to do one or the other. What we can do, as EU members, is to insist for a greater EU involvement on the ground. This is perfectly acceptable to Chisinau since it is also asking for more resources and EU involvement. It will be solely Chisinau’s decision if Transnistria will remain *de jure* within the RM or not. Probably in 15 – 20 years, if international efforts fail, Moldavian society will accept a *de jure* separation scenario, but asking in return a very large reward. And for making such a step, only the promise of EU membership would represent a large enough reward. But, at the moment, it is too early to even discuss such a possibility. The RM has the duty to try to maintain itself unified and it is not within our concern to express premature scenarios.