

The Integration of the Republic of Moldova into the European Cultural Realities

Stela SPÎNU,
doctor în filologie, conferențiar universitar,
Academia de Administrare Publică
de pe lângă Președintele Republicii Moldova

REZUMAT

Prezentul studiu ia în discuție probleme ce țin de evoluția politicii culturale a Republicii Moldova în contextul relațiilor internaționale, cooperarea țării noastre cu UE în domeniul culturii, participarea la programe culturale europene, semnalarea noilor tendințe și perspective în activitatea instituțiilor culturale din țară.

***There are many things in the world that separate us,
 but one approaches us: culture!***
 (Eugen Ionesco)

In the course of the last decades, our country has gone through a number of political events; some have been beneficial for its future, and others have harmed its cultural identity. Radical changes in the society have occurred since 1989, when according to N. Dabija's affirmations "the national revival movement led to the awakening of the national consciousness and the organization of cultural events in the society". Subsequently, on August 1991, the Republic of Moldova declared its independence, a historical event that was preceded by a large number of rallies, protest marches, strikes, the protesters' claims regarding the official recognition of the Romanian linguistic and cultural identity, the return to the Latin alphabet, and the decreeing of the Romanian language as state language.

With the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, in the process of culture democratization, a new phase began. As stated in the Constitution, citizens are granted the right to creation (Art. 33). We quote: "(1) The freedom of artistic and scientific creation is guaranteed. Creation is not subject to censorship. (2) The right of citizens to their intellectual property, their material and moral interests arising in relation to various forms of intellectual creation are protected by law. (3) The State shall contribute to the preservation, development and propagation of the achievements of

the national and world culture and science"[1].

There followed a series of events of major importance for the European future of the country, and namely: the admission of the Republic of Moldova to the Council of Europe (1995), the entry into force of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU (1998), the offering of full membership to the World Trade Organization (2001), the adherence to the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (2001), the signing of dozens of treaties and intergovernmental agreements in the field of politics, economy and culture.

The new cultural policies of the Republic of Moldova, which followed to be developed, were based on international principles and objectives adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development in Stockholm (1998). In this context, the "Law on Culture" was adopted in 1999. This law, consisting of seven chapters, covers to the majority of the areas of the population's cultural activity and regulates the development of the entire cultural process [2].

In order to promote the new cultural policies in the Republic of Moldova, the following programs were developed and implemented: the State Programme on the development of culture and social protection of people of culture for the years 1993-2000 (GD No. 343 of 03/06/1993), the State Programme "Deve-

lopment and Protection of Culture and Art in the Republic of Moldova for the years 1997-1998" (GD No. 672 of 18/07/97), the Sectorial Programme on the development of libraries in the Republic of Moldova (1997-2000)", the National Programme "*Moldovan Village*" (2005-2015), the National Programme on information of the cultural sphere for 2012-2020 (Government Decision No. 478 of 04/04/2012).

Currently, the Ministry of Culture is being focused on the implementation of the priority objectives of the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Moldova "European Integration: Freedom, Democracy, Welfare for 2011-2015", which include:

- to develop contemporary art as a means of promotion and affirmation of national culture, both domestically and internationally;
- to rehabilitate the cultural activity and infrastructure, especially in rural areas;
- to finance the cultural activity in accordance with the established priorities and based on projects;
- to promote culture as a key factor in the preservation and development of the national identity;
- to promote the national cultural values as a component part of the European cultural heritage.

At the end of 2012, the Ministry of Culture launched the public debate on the project „Strategies on the Development of Culture for the period 2013-2020 *"Culture XXI/20"*, whose purpose is to ensure a sustainable cultural environment in the Republic of Moldova through the creation of a modern conservation and enhancement system of the cultural heritage, the promotion of contemporary artistic creativity and cultural industries, of cultural diversity and dialogue, the modernization of cultural institutions and cultural management, the establishment of a transparent and participatory system of management and monitoring of the cultural process. Because the European integration implies a balance between shared values and principles on the one hand, and national and local specificity, on the other hand, Moldova's cultural policy should find ways to remain open to the exchange of values in the context of the European integrated market, and at the same time, to support the wealth,

the vitality and the diversity of its own cultures [3].

Currently, a decisive role in the evolution of the culture and spirituality of the Republic of Moldova is held by the bilateral and multi-lateral cultural cooperation, conducted by the Department on External Relations and European Integration of the Ministry of Culture. In the context of bilateral cultural cooperation between Moldova and EU countries, special attention is given to the established cultural relations with Romania, France, and Italy.

The cultural cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and Romania is marked by the activity in the field of literature, theatre, music, fine arts, architecture, cinema, radio / television, photography, circus, folk art, archives and libraries, books publication, scientific research, cultural tourism. Notable is the fact that on September 29, 2010, the Romanian Cultural Institute "*Mihai Eminescu*" was inaugurated, which aims at the creation of new spiritual bridges between the two banks of the Prut, and also to rediscover and to consolidate the common language, culture and traditions. The most important events in 2012 included: the launching of the first programme of research scholarships ("*Alexandru S. Sturdza*" scholarships), the organization of a novel exhibition of Bessarabian carpets (October 14), the coordination of the International Animation Film Festival in Chisinau (November 1-4), the organization of the conference "*Medieval and Modern Romanian Culture*" (January 15, 2013), the inauguration of the exhibition "*Bessarabia 1812-1947. People, Places, Borders*", etc.

Referring to the Moldovan-French cultural relations, it should be mentioned that they are based on: the creation of the French Alliance in Moldova (1992), the Treaty of Friendship, Understanding and Cooperation (January 29, 1993), the Agreement on Cultural, Scientific and Technical Cooperation (November 24, 1994), the Convention on creating bilingual classes in the Republic of Moldova (September 4, 1998), the French-Moldovan Framework Programme on Cooperation and Cultural Action (July 2000), the creation of the Francophone International Organization (January 2006), the International Francophone Day (March 20). At present, the French Alliance supports seven

resource and information centres on contemporary rural France in Balti, Bobeica, Cahul, Tiraspol, Nisporeni, Calarasi and Ungheni. As a result of bilateral cooperation, some cultural institutions from Moldova introduced the experience of French cities, ensuring the participation of those interested in "*Nuit des Musées*", which encourages young people to visit museums without entrance fee. One Saturday in May, some museums from Chisinau, as well as over 2000 other museums from 39 countries, keep their doors wide open for a night, from sunset until morning. They become scenes for shows, performances, reciting and singing. The link between all the Alliances in the world is the International Journal of the French Alliance Foundation "*Le Fil d'Alliances*", which in October 2012 devoted the front page of its Information Bulletin to the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the French Alliance in Moldova and to the opening of the new *Médias Tech* Centre. Better mutual knowledge of Moldovan and French citizens is possible due to TV5 Monde television and the Radio France International. The year 2012 and the beginning of 2013 have been rich in events, among which the following were organized:

- two major events: the International Conference dedicated to "*Issues of General and Romance Linguistics*" in memoriam of Grigore Cincilei, and the National Symposium dedicated to Professor Anatol Lenta "*Maitre du verbe français et chanteur de la francophonie moldave*" (December 2012);
- the exceptional show with the participation of Nelly Cozaru "*Edith Piaf: the woman who loved*" (January 18, 2013);
- the running of the film "*Europe Europe*" on January 27 (in Odeon cinema);
- the 3rd edition of the photo contest on January 30, initially launched in 2010;
- the EduFly salon on the topic "*Developmental Opportunities for Pupils*" on January 24;
- the 3rd edition of the Online French Festival from January 17 to February 17, 2013;
- a Parisian quarter with many boutiques and restaurants was opened on the premises of MallDova shopping centre on December 12; here free of charge introductory courses of French are being offered [4].

In accordance with the priority directions,

reflected in the Concept of Foreign Policy of the Republic of Moldova, Italy is among the countries with which Moldova desires to develop constructive relations of cooperation, their character being determined by Italy's share in the international community and the Latino community, by the cultural and language affinities, and by the numerous presence of Moldovan citizens in this country. Currently, Moldovan cultural associations, such as Italian-Moldovan Cultural Association, "The Star of Moldova", the Cultural Association Moldova, the Socio-Cultural Association "Mihai Eminescu", the Institute for Development and Cooperation "Italy-Moldova", the cultural promotional Association "Dacia", the Association "Gazeta Basarabiei", the Association for socio-cultural promotion "Doina", the Italian-Moldovan Economic and Cultural Institute, the socio-cultural Association "Speranza-Onlus", the Italian-Moldovan Cultural Association "Plai", the Moldovan Cultural Association "Basarabia", the Moldovan-Italian Association for Cooperation and Integration "A.M.I.C.I.", etc. are registered on the territory of Italy. Referring to the Italian cultural cooperation with Moldova in 2012, we mention the organization of several events, such as: the poetry contest, "In Memoriam of Grigore Viteru and Mihai Eminescu" (Turin, 17/01/12), the celebration "Martisor 2012", the inauguration of the Moldovan Culture Week in Marrucino theatre from Chieti (June 1), the implementation of the project "Art and Culture of Eastern Europe" (June 2), the organization of the national holiday "Our Language" in Rome (September 9), the coordination of the event "Santa Claus ... exists!" for the Moldovan children in Italy (December 23, 2012, in Rome), etc. [5]. In this context, the fact that on May 25, 2010, Mihai Ghimpu was appointed honorary member of the European Academy for Economic and Cultural Relations of Rome is worth attention.

Like in the cases of Romania, France and Italy, the Moldovan-German cultural relations are characterized by steady growth. The Cultural Society of Moldova operates in Germany aiming at promoting our cultural and spiritual values. The Association of Moldovans from Germany was founded in September 2004. It brings together the members of the Moldovan diaspora in the Federal Republic of Germany.

An active role is also played by the *Union of Bessarabian Germans*, whose representatives are ethnic Germans of Bessarabian origin, who returned to Germany in the years 1939-1940. They frequently visit our country and offer significant support especially for the localities of their origin. Bilateral contacts in science and education are promoted in accordance with the Protocol of 1998, which favours direct collaboration between the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova, as well as the Rectors' Conference of Higher Educational Institutions (HRK) and the Rectors' Council from the Republic of Moldova. Germany also offers substantial support by providing scholarships for studies and scientific research to students, scientists and Moldovan officials. An important achievement in this field is the opening of the Cultural Institute Moldova, based in Leipzig on March 1, 2006. The purpose of this Institute, unique in the German and European space, is to promote dialogue and contacts with the institutions from Moldova, to support scientific research, scientific conferences and the implementation of various projects in the fields of science and culture [6].

At European level, the bilateral cultural cooperation is promoted through ethno-cultural organizations, which include the Moldovans' Community in Austria, the Association "*Euro-Moldova*" (the Czech Republic), the Cultural Association of Moldovans in Estonia "*Luceafărul*" (the Republic of Estonia), the Moldovans' Association in France, the Association of Moldovans "*Assomoldave*" (Italy), the Association Moldova di Trento (Italy), the Association of Moldovans' United Community ACUM (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), the charity organization "*Moldova Vision*", the Community of Bessarabians from Ireland, the Moldovan Cultural Centre (the Portuguese Republic), the Association of the Bessarabian Initiative Group from Cluj-Napoca (Romania), the League of Bessarabian Students in Romania.

Besides the fact that the Republic of Moldova collaborates closely with many member states of the EU, it also participates in several European cultural programmes. Thus, on June 12, 2012, within the Programme on Eastern Partnership and Culture, 15 regional projects

worth 8.2 million euros, financed by the EU were launched. These are implemented in the Eastern Partnership countries, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in order to strengthen the role of culture as a driving force for sustainable economic, social and human development. The projects cover a wide range of topics, from fields related to film and photography to cultural education, crafts and publishing activities. The Programme on Eastern Partnership and Culture aims to help partner countries in reforming their cultural policy at government level, as well as to improve the professional capacities of the cultural operators in the region. It aims to strengthen the regional cultural links and dialogue within the Eastern Partnership region and between the EU and ENP cultural networks from Eastern countries and actors.

Obviously, the Republic of Moldova is part of third countries which participate in the Culture Programme (2007-2013), funded by the European Union and managed by the Executive Agency on Education, Audio-visual and Culture and by the European Commission - Directorate General for Education and Culture. The duration of this program is seven years (2007-2013) and is a continuation of the Programme "Culture 2000" completed in 2006. Our country is part of this program by participating in the Programme "Traditions and customs of peoples alike" in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Italy.

What concerns education, the Republic of Moldova belongs to the *Tempus* Programme (whose overall objective is to facilitate the cooperation in higher education between the EU Member States and partner countries in the neighbourhood) and to the *Erasmus Mundus* Programme (which aims to promote European higher education and global intercultural communication).

Under the aegis of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, the Republic of Moldova implements the Pilot Project "The rehabilitation of cultural heritage in historic towns" (PP2). This involves assisting national, regional and local authorities in implementing a Strategic Intervention Plan to support the social and economic revitalization and development of small and medium-sized historic

towns, as well as of the environment through the rehabilitation and refurbishment of monuments and settlements. The project on cultural heritage rehabilitation "Historic Chisinau 2030" is aimed at all those interested in the protection of the historic city and urban planning (architects, designers, artists, writers, journalists, sociologists and futurologists, students of different profiles, etc.).

The project "The Black Book of Chisinau Municipality Cultural Heritage", financed by the European Union is focused on cases of demolition, unlawful degrading interferences on heritage objects and monuments that are getting ruined day by day. The volume "The Black Book of Chisinau Municipality Cultural Heritage" coordinated by Ion Stefanita, direc-

tor of the Agency for inspection and restoration of monuments of the Ministry of Culture, was published with the financial support of UNESCO Office and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperazione Italiana. [7]

Thus, culture is the one that renders "European bond and can preserve a sustainable unity in such a vast diversity". In this context, the role that culture has in the spiritual development of each nation, and of the Moldovan citizens in particular, is obvious. On a diachronic dimension, our country's cultural cooperation with the EU has known both stagnation periods and periods of progress. We believe that the future will be eventful and productive for society because spiritually we are much closer to this area.

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E-mail: stela_s73@mail.ru