

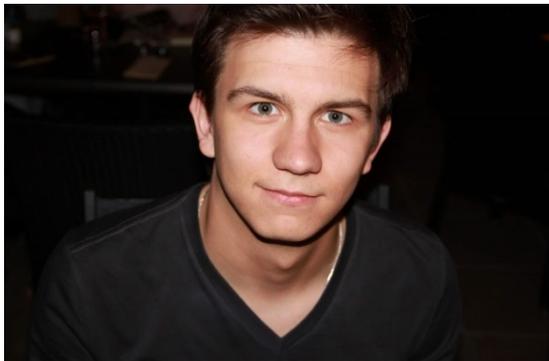


*Understanding the EU's Association Agreements
and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas
with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia*

3DCFTAs Youth Essay Competition – Prize winner

Participation in CSDP: An underused potential for Moldova?

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Dinu Codreanu, aged 27, born in Chisinau, Moldova, writes: I have spent a considerable part of my life abroad, namely in France, Hungary and Belgium. Graduating from the Gustave Eiffel French School of Budapest, I am an alumnus of the University of Burgundy, Pantheon-Sorbonne University and the College of Europe, where I studied public administration and international relations. My main interests are related to

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In the current European context, plagued by the rise of populism and with voices discrediting the European Union (EU) getting louder, the idea of a common defence and security policy has re-emerged, among others, as a means for a European *relance*. However, a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) already exists, but not in the traditional Westphalian sense. Indeed, the CSDP, as the new incarnation of the European Security and Defence Policy, is rather a crisis management and conflict prevention tool than a proper policy as it is understood from a national viewpoint. This instrument has been active since 2009, with 34 military and civilian missions being accomplished or under way.¹

The CSDP aims to deal with a wide array of security-related tasks, namely joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilization.² From this list, it is to be deduced that the EU's CSDP in its current form shares a fair amount of similarities in terms of complexity and depth with the United Nations' fifth generation peacekeeping missions.

This European instrument demonstrates an impressive activity but also houses several issues and problems, one of which is a difficulty in generating forces for its missions. Thus, CSDP's elements of cooperation were included in the Association Agreements signed by Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova in 2014, with the EU looking to enlarge its pool of participatory countries across multiple CSDP missions deployed over three continents.

In the Moldovan context, the 2014 EU-Moldova Association Agreement provides the grounds for this enhanced cooperation in CSDP, including the "possible participation of the Republic of Moldova in EU-led civilian and military crisis management operations".³ Participation in CSDP missions proves to be one of the most visible, tangible but also complex aspects of this agreement. Furthermore, taking part in these missions benefits Moldova in two ways, namely reinforcing its capacity as an international security provider and serving its European integration aspirations.

In this context, this paper will look at to what extent Moldova is involved in CSDP missions?

To provide a holistic and targeted answer to this, this paper will firstly identify Moldova's contribution to international security missions and compare it with its participation in CSDP operations. Secondly, it will analyse the causes influencing its current level of involvement in CSDP. Finally, this essay will look into how to facilitate Moldova's CSDP participation and formulate recommendations in this regard.

¹ *Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union: Missions and Operations Annual Report 2016*, European External Action Service, p. 9.

² Article 43(1) of the Treaty on the European Union.

³ Article 7 of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement.

1. Moldova as an international security provider

1.1 General participation

In order to understand Moldova's current CSDP participation, it is critical to note the extent of their activity as an international security provider. The notion of an international security provider is understood to be the actions aiming at "*enhancing mutual security of more than one country by addressing common security concerns*".⁴ In other words, we will take a closer look at Chisinau's participation in international security missions and compare it to its current CSDP involvement.

In this regard, Moldova has contributed to international security missions since 1997. These contributions took place under the UN, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) banners but also in the Combined Joint Force 7 during the 2003 US-led Iraq invasion. In total, Moldova has deployed in the last 20 years around 400 personnel in international peacekeeping and security missions.⁵ NATO seems to be the preferred organisation under which Moldova is contributing to international security, sending approximately 257 soldiers in Kosovo Force (KFOR) and Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR) missions.⁶

These numbers will offer a baseline for a comparative analysis of Moldova's CSDP contributions, in order to understand how many resources have been utilised and what importance it dedicates to it.

1.2 CSDP participation

Moldova is firstly a security beneficiary from CSDP initiatives. Indeed, since 2005 Moldova has been benefiting from the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) that aims to secure the Ukrainian-Moldovan border in the Transnistrian region. Regarding its role in EU-led missions abroad, Moldova's participation is rather timid even though the successive governments from Chisinau have taken some important steps towards facilitating Moldovan elements in CSDP initiatives.

The first important step was the signing of the EU-Moldova Framework Participation Agreement (FPA) in 2012. The FPAs are special agreements with non-EU third countries, to allow these states to contribute in CSDP missions, and aims to fill the previously mentioned void in force generation. These agreements proved to be useful instruments in enhancing CSDP's force generating capacity, with 29 third-

⁴ Mukherjee Anit, *India as a net security provider: concept and impediments*, Policy Brief, Nanyang Technological University, August 2014, p.1.

⁵ Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Moldova, Peacekeeping Missions webpage, consulted on 10 of March 2017.

⁶ *Ibid.*

countries contributing with troops and civilian personnel.⁷ Therefore, through the signing and ratification of this crucial document, it has forged the path of an international bilateral framework that enable Moldovan contributions in CSDP.

The second key element came with the inclusion of the National Plan for the Implementation of the Association Agreement for 2014-2016 of several concrete actions in order to create the appropriate internal legal and procedural framework to enable participation of Moldovan personnel for international missions, including CSDP ones. Notably, one action involved the drafting and adoption of new legislation on participation in international missions. In December 2015, the Law regarding the participation of the Republic of Moldova in international missions and operations was adopted.⁸ It created the necessary internal mechanism to properly implement the 2012 FPA provisions and offered additional clarity on participation in international security efforts.

Within the diplomatic spectrum, Chisinau aligned its position on 63% of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy declarations, thus showing a certain degree of coordination and commitment with EU priorities in this regard.⁹

However, these activities discussed thus far are merely declarative and, at best, normative in nature rather than operational. Indeed, Chisinau shows a certain degree of reluctance in operations participation, having in the past only sent three persons in CSDP missions since the signing of the FPA 2012, namely the EU Military Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) in EU Military Training Mission in Central African Republic (EUTM RCA).¹⁰ In contrast with Georgia, another Eastern Partnership (EaP) country of a similar size and population, the difference in participation is blatant, with Tbilisi devoting 241 troops to the EUTM RCA mission.¹¹

Therefore, Moldova seems to have the national and international legal tools and agreements necessary to ensure its participation in CSDP, however, its actual participation is still very limited, even when compared to other EaP countries. Understanding the causes of this reluctance is a necessary step in order to derive targeted recommendations to overcome this situation.

⁷ Tardy Thierry, *CSDP: getting third states on board*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, March 2014, p. 3.

⁸ Law nr.219 from 03/12/2015 regarding the participation of the Republic of Moldova in international missions and operations.

⁹ Emerson Michael and Cenușă Denis, *Deepening EU-Moldovan Relations – What, why and how?*, Center for European Policy Studies and Expert-Grup, 2016 p. 26.

¹⁰ *Progress report regarding the level of implementation of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the Association Agreement 2014-2016*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, p. 6.

¹¹ Emerson Michael and Tamara Kovziridze, *Deepening EU-Georgian Relations – What, why and how?*, Center for European Policy Studies and Reformatics, 2016, p. 28.

2. The causes for Moldova's CSDP participation reluctance

After comparing Moldova's CSDP participation in the general context of its security providing activity, it is evident that there is a sense of reluctance in this regard. This is attributed to three main causes relating to financial, capacity-related and political constraints.

2.1 Absence of financial planning

The first possible cause for timid CSDP participation can be identified in relation to the financial resources needed to be invested for this objective. Indeed, the expenses for these types of missions are often high, despite the fact that Moldova is exempted from providing any financial contributions to the mission's budget.¹²

In terms of financing, the 2015 Law regarding the participation of the Republic of Moldova in international missions and operations states that the financial burden is divided amongst the institution delegating the staff, the Government and external partners.¹³ By *de facto*, the sources of funding for CSDP missions in Moldova are the Government – through the Government Reserve Fund (GRF), and the external partners – through the Eastern Partnership Trust Fund for CSPD participation (Trust Fund).

In practice, the Government allocates the financial resources from the GRF to the institution providing the participants, which has amounted to approximately 69,000 euros since 2013.¹⁴ It is worth mentioning that the general purpose of the GRF is to finance unplanned or unexpected budgetary expenses.¹⁵ Regarding the Trust Fund, it is financed by several EU member states¹⁶ and covers the full cost of transportation, accommodation, medical insurance and consultations, medicines and vaccines.¹⁷

The key issue is therefore the allocation of funds from the GRF on an *ad-hoc* basis, with CSDP participation being considered, at least from a budgetary point of view, as an unexpected expense. The lack of any medium/long-term budgetary planning implies a lack of a comprehensive policy in CSDP participation.

Therefore, the problem would not be a general lack of funds allocated for international CSDP efforts but rather the absence of a planned and budgeted policy in this regard.

¹² Article 8(4) of the EU-Moldova FPA.

¹³ Article 22 of the Law nr.219 from 03/12/2015 regarding the participation of the Republic of Moldova in international missions and operations.

¹⁴ Calculated based on the Government Decisions delegating the Moldovan personnel in CSDP missions.

¹⁵ Hristev Eugen and Iovița Vitalie, *Management of the Government Reserve Fund : Evaluation study*, Adept and Soros Moldova, July 2013, p. 6.

¹⁶ Funded by Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the United Kingdom and Slovakia.

¹⁷ Productive Eastern Partnership Panel on CSDP convened for the 7th time in Brussels, EEAS Press Release 20th of October 2019.

2.2 Shortage of civilian capacity

The shortage of qualified professionals to participate in CSDP missions could be another obstacle in this process. In this regard, a division between military and civilian CSDP interventions has to be made, as the human resources required differ depending on the type of mission.

The CSDP military missions consist mainly of short-term military interventions and training for military personnel. As such, through the past participations in several international missions under NATO and UN flags, Moldova has amassed a certain amount of expertise in this regard. Moreover, Moldova has a special unit dedicated for this type of operation, the 22nd Battalion of the Moldovan Terrestrial Forces, thus possessing capable human resources for participating in CSDP military missions.

In relation to partaking in civilian missions, the tasks are more varied than military-related missions. Indeed, in this context, the EU focuses its agenda on border management, promoting the rule of law, monitoring, and police and security sector reform. Thus, civilian experts are required from a wide range of institutions that have the necessary experience in capacity-building activities, whilst having additional knowledge of the local context.

In this regard, Moldova is still lagging behind, as it is still a recipient of this type of aid, building its own institutional capacity. Therefore, Moldova does not have the necessary civilian capacity to participate fully in these types of missions. Taking into account that over 60% of the current CSPD missions are civilian ones, this eliminates an important number of instances when Moldova could involve itself.¹⁸

Thus, the shortage of qualified professionals able to participate in CSDP missions is rather felt in civilian CSDP operations than military ones.

2.3 Political considerations

CSDP participation is not immune to geopolitical and internal political changes. As an instrument associated with the EU, and taking into consideration the traditional bipolarisation of Moldovan politics between pro-EU and pro-Russian parties, internal political evolutions can affect its participation in these operations. Furthermore, it is safe to say that CSDP is not a priority for the current pro-EU government.

Moreover, with parliamentary elections coming up in 2018, the spectre of a majority and government change is looming. Pro-Russian parties, especially the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), are credited with good chances of forming the next government. Taking into account the aggressive stance of the current President Igor Dodon (PSRM) towards the EU, and especially towards the EU-Moldova

¹⁸ *Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union: Missions and Operations Annual Report 2016*, European External Action Service, p. 9.

Association Agreement, Chisinau's CSDP participation could be reduced or completely stopped.

3. Recommendations for enhancing participation in CSDP

In summary, three main issues have been identified as affecting Moldova's CSDP participation:

- Moldova lacks experience in civilian missions, thus reducing the potential to participate in the majority of EU-led missions.
- There is no planned budget dedicated solely for CSDP missions.
- CSDP participation is subject to political changes.

The following formulated recommendations are intended to tackle these issues, in order to enhance Moldova's participation in CSDP missions.

1 - Create a pool of capable civilian professionals able to participate in civilian CSDP missions.

Considering the trend of establishing an increasing number of civilian or civilian-military mixed missions, disposing a sizable pool of proficient civilian candidates would increase Chisinau's CSDP participation by widening the spectrum of missions it could participate in.

2 - Identify areas of specialisation for CSDP participation.

Given Moldova's limited capacity, a number of areas of expertise should be identified in military and civilian affairs. This focused approach would enable Moldova to provide quality expertise and have a more predictable and stable contribution for future missions.

3 - Forge an efficient and sound framework for CSDP participation.

This would entail the creation of a Governmental participation strategy in CSDP missions and programme funds in the National Budget, thus ensuring stable and clear allocations of funds in this regard. This would further allocate a central role to the Coordination Council for participation in EU operations, making it the decision-making body regarding CSDP missions.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, Moldovan participation in CSDP is still very limited. This is caused by the absence of any planned policy, coupled with the lack of experienced civilian personnel. Moreover, CSDP participation is directly related to geopolitical consideration of the governing party. In order to enhance participation, a proper planning process

is needed, which will define the priorities in terms of specialization, create a pool of experienced staff and allocate a budget on a constant basis.

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