

until the end of 2015 and allows the Moldavian exporters to choose the customs preference regime for their goods.²⁰

5. After the Vilnius Summit: the case of Georgia

Being at the crossroads between Russia and Europe, Georgia took a European direction after the war with Russia in 2008. Georgia has a similar story as Moldova regarding the relations with Russia and its strive to control the Georgian political situation in the past as well as its trade relations with Russia. Georgia, due to its Rose revolution in 2003 and later on a war with Russia in 2008, has also a similar profile to Ukraine in terms of political relations with Russia. The Georgian opposition came out as a defender of rights for democracy and urged Georgia to sign the AA with the EU in 2013.

After the Russo - Georgian war in Georgia in 2008, Russia recognized the independence of Georgian separatists' regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but at the same time increased its military presence in those two regions, which discouraged the members of NATO to invite Georgia to join the alliance despite the previous negotiations. Even though Georgia has lost its opportunity to join NATO, the country sent troops to Afghanistan. In support of the NATO mission, Georgia became one of the countries with a high number of troops deployed in the area, which contributed to the International Security Assistance Force. Also Georgian membership in NATO is still an open issue.

In fact, if one compares to Moldova (Transnistria), where the ceasefire agreement was signed in 1992 in order to regulate mass disturbances in Transnistria, there are still tensions on Georgian territory. It can be explained by the fact that the agreement's main points were constantly violated and were followed only formally on paper. Abkhazia and South Ossetia after a war between Georgia and Russia in 2008 remained on the crossroads between

Russia and Georgia, keeping an aborted conflict in a condition of a "sleeping bear".

Having experienced numerous Russian bans on Georgian wine, certain fruits, vegetables and mineral water, followed by a trade embargo, Georgia successfully showed a good example on changing orientation towards the EU despite of big losses in trade with Russia due to Georgia's European orientation. After Georgia had signed the DCFTA, Russia showed its concern about a possible threat to its market, as after the DCFTA the EU goods could be exported to Russia via Georgia.²¹

The negotiations on the facilitation of visa-free Schengen entry for Georgian citizens began in June 2012, followed by Visa Liberalisation Action Plan in 2013 and continuous work on completing the Plan is still ongoing. It implies that visa facilitation goal for Georgian citizens is still not achievable at the moment in comparison to Moldova.

By signing the AA and the DCFTA Georgia started to receive gradual support from the EU. First of all it is reflected in the Framework Agreement on common security and defence policy operations (CSDP), which came into effect in March 2014. As it was mentioned before, despite not being a NATO member, Georgia contributes to international Security Assistance Force by providing troops for training. Besides, within the Framework Agreement in 2014, Georgia contributed with 150 light infantry troops in the Central African Republic and sent two experts to Mali within the European Union Trading Mission (EUTM).²²

The EU provided assistance in promoting reforms for Georgia in areas such as public sector, justice, democracy, human rights, rural development and agriculture. This assistance is supported by coordination of laws in Georgia with the EU legislation within all areas, facilitation and empowerment of the civil society movement and the implementation of the AA and the DCFTA itself.

6. After the Vilnius Summit: the case of Ukraine

The Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 brought changes in direction of the country's democracy vectors. The Orange Revolution contributed to rising an awareness within the Ukrainian society about European values and democracy. When the Eastern Partnership was initiated during the first Summit in Prague in 2009, Ukraine became its member along with Armenia, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Later on in 2013 during the EaP Summit in Vilnius, Ukraine together with Armenia changed its agenda, choosing not to follow the EU Eastern Partnership direction and not to sign the AA. Nevertheless, the AA in 2014 replaced the EU-Ukraine Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, signed in 1998.

The AA plays an important role for Ukraine and its legal foundation for the future development of the bilateral relationships between Ukraine and the EU. Signing the AA implies changing direction for Ukraine towards common values of the EU countries, respecting human rights and freedoms, the rule of law and building good governance. Signing the DCFTA implies for Ukraine changes in its trade and economic systems, the conduction of necessary reforms, opening new markets and opportunities for export and import without customs tariffs between borders of the EU, equalizing main economy sectors in Ukraine and bring them closer to the EU standards. The first step of the AA implied for Ukraine the signing of political chapters at the EU Summit, which took place on the 21st of March 2014. Later, on the 27th of June 2014 the remaining parts of the Agreement were signed between Ukraine and the EU. As soon as all the EU member states and Ukraine have ratified the AA, it will enter into force.²³

Ukraine, as well as Moldova and Georgia, has experienced Russian punitive measures in the trade sector since summer 2013,



when debates about the AA took place during the presidency of former Ukrainian President Yanukovich. The Russian reaction contributed to changing vectors of Yanukovich politics and provoked him not to sign the AA and DCFTA in frames of the Vilnius Summit as it was promised. The Russian measures strengthened after Yanukovich's subversion and establishment of a temporary pro-European government in Ukraine. Taking into consideration the Ukrainian orientation towards agro-cultural production, the imports of goods from this sector were stopped from Ukraine to Russia due to the emerged mismatch between Russian and Ukrainian norms and standards. Apart from agri-food export restrictions, an import of railcars from Ukraine to Russia was stopped as well as an export of Russian gas to Ukraine in summer 2014. Apart from the abovementioned goods, further bans were introduced on Ukrainian poultry, milk and dairy, certain Ukrainian alcohol products and cheeses, confectionary products as well as general intensification of border controls between Russia and Ukraine.²⁴

Besides bans on products and geographical contentions with Russia over the territories within Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, there is another factor in common which shows similarity between these three countries – military conflicts that include Russian interests. The most recent war is taking place in Donetsk and Lugansk close to the Russian boarder. Despite an official decision on ceasefire, which was agreed upon in Minsk and was launched in Ukraine on the 15th of February 2015, the war has practically not ceased and there are still casualties on both sides.

On the 27th of April 2015, the first EU-Ukraine Summit took place in Kiev in frames of the AA. The summit gave an opportunity for Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko and leading figures of the EU to discuss financial aid from the EU, which today is largely provided for Ukraine, the necessary political and financial reforms within the AA, the compliance with the Minsk agreement and the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga on the 21th-22th of May 2015.²⁵

7. Conclusion

The Association Agreement, signed by Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia has so far brought one-sided results due to the unstable political situation, corruption, economic decay, internal contentions between ethnic minorities and complicated relations with Russia, which destabilised the countries' strive for democratic freedoms and a vector towards European integration. The Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga in 2015 was an expected event in terms of new perspectives on reforms in the EaP countries, further positive improvements and changes. However in spite of a big number of the EU's expectations from the launch of EaP, the discrepancy between what is written on paper and implemented in practice is still divergent.

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