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NEWSLETTER

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Synthesis and Foreign Policy Debates

The materials are realized by Lina Grau, foreign policy expert and programme coordinator with APE.

TOPICS OF THE EDITION:

- 1.** Alexander Kremer, Head of the World Bank Office in Moldova: Negative trend can be reversed in the space of one government if the will to do so is there
- 2.** Polish expert Grzegorz Gromadzki: I don't have positive expectations from the political elite in power as it is not able to change its way of doing politics.

The last period was marked by several important events for Moldova.



On April 13th, the Parliament established a European Integration Parliamentary Council which will be monitoring the implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU. According to a parliament press release, the Council "will coordinate the issues related to the implementation of the European integration policies, will hold public hearings on the subject, and will exercise parliamentary control over the implementation of the Association Agreement and of the Free Trade Agreement with the EU."



The former Foreign Minister of Moldova, Natalia Gherman, participated on April 13th in the hearings for the selection of the new Secretary General of the United Nations. Natalia Gherman is among the eight candidates running for this position. The second five-year term in office of the UN Secretary General, former Foreign Minister of South Korea Ban Ki-moon, is expiring at the end of the year.



In a special session dedicated to the Republic of Moldova of the Global Forum for Security GLOBSEC 2016 held in Bratislava on 15-17 April, the Moldovan Foreign Minister, Andrei Galbur, reiterated the firm commitment of the Moldovan government to accelerate reforms under the Association Agreement. Talks have been held also on the Transnistrian conflict. The head of the Moldovan delegation underlined the need to resume unconditional negotiations in the "5 + 2" format in order to advance the settlement process, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova.



The Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of the Russian-Moldovan relations. Speaking in Moscow on April 4th, after the meeting with his Moldovan counterpart Andrei Galbur, Lavrov said that he and his guest had agreed that "the current state of bilateral relations cannot be considered as satisfactory." Lavrov appreciated, though, Galbur's promise that Moldova will continue to support promotion of the Russian language in Moldova and reaffirmed Moscow's position that the Transnistrian conflict can only be solved preserving a "unitary, indivisible and neutral" Moldova. Lavrov has reiterated, on the other hand, the criticisms of his country against Moldova for having signed in 2014 the Association Agreement with the EU, saying that had affected "the whole complex of our economic relations": "I heard that Moldova's new government is interested in developing the relations with Russia and we are saluting this attitude", added Lavrov.

Alexander Kremer: „The negative trend can be reversed in the space of one government if the will to do so is there ...”



The World Bank (WB) is forecasting a modest increase of 0.5% percent in Moldovan economy in 2016. Based on the economic forecast for Europe and Central Asia, and the Republic of Moldova, presented on April 7th, the World Bank is anticipating that the

Moldovan economy will remain inert this year, after the 2015 recession largely caused by the fraud in the banking sector. An economic recovery will be possible only in 2017. In an exclusive interview, the World Bank country director, Alexander Kremer,



President of the European People's Party, Joseph Daul, showed "deep concern" with the new Moldovan draft law, which would allow authorities to block websites, and read e-mails or private messages. The European politician wrote about it on his [Twitter](#) account. According to him, "Moldova must ensure that the law will reach a fair balance between the right to information and privacy, and censorship in the name of security." The Agora Portal reminded that on March 30th, the government passed a law that obliges telephone and Internet operators to store user data for a period of up to 12 months, block access to certain sites and allow authorities to check emails, SMSes or messages sent via messaging applications. A similar directive was invalidated by the EU Court of Justice in 2014.

talks about the causes that led to the slowdown of the economic growth in Moldova, the conditions for the relaunch of the economic growth, the amplification of corruption pace in the recent years, and the political will for reforms.

„We have lots of other projects which are going very well in the Republic of Moldova“

■ **Lina Grâu:** Mr Kremer, I'd like to ask you in the beginning to tell us about the World Bank programmes in Moldova and the budgetary support provided to the Moldovan Government.

■ **Alex Kremer:** The World Bank finances around 80 mln USD every year in Moldova. People all know about the budgetary support because we have frozen it since 2014 but what a lot of people don't know is that we have lots of other projects which are going very well. For instance, we have a project which is financing small farmers and farmers' groups to upgrade their operations in order to export to European markets. We are financing the upgrading of Chisinau district heating systems to make them more modern and more efficient. We are financing in partnership with Japan the upgrading of schools to make them accessible for children with disabilities. We are going to start financing some modern hub-schools where children can come from different villages to study in European-standard facilities. So we provide financing for a lot of things as well for budgetary support.

We are just waiting to sign a Financing Agreement with Moldova for our biggest Moldovan project ever which is going to rehabilitate 300 local roads. So we hope that everybody in Moldova-from the North to the South, East and the West- will see some of the benefits of this investment.

Let's face it- it's not donor-financing investment like this which are going to improve Moldovans' life in a sustainable way - what Moldovans need are decent

jobs and decent jobs are only going to come from private sector investment and private sector investment is only going to come when businesses again have confidence that they are going to be treated according to the law. And that's what we need to talk about.

■ **Lina Grâu:** You've mentioned about the big project you are going to launch. In the previous years there have been several road rehabilitation projects, including those financed by the US Government. Those projects have not been continued because of lack of transparency and suspicions of corruption. How are you going to protect your projects against corruption?

„Let's say the word- there was corruption. If there is a repetition of what happened before, we will be out again just as we were the first time“

■ **Alex Kremer:** Yes, let's say the word. There was corruption and we asked for our money back and for that reason it has been, I think, five or six years that we've been outside the road sector. And we are coming back in, because we hope that measures have been taken to improve the procedures for procurement in the roads sector, but I have said to all the politicians and officials involved that if there is a repetition of what happened before, we will be out again just as we were the first time. We have made our position very clear at the highest level that if this new government wishes as it says to be judged by its results, one of the things that will give a very clear impression of its intentions is the cleanliness of public procurement. We survey businesses regularly on the share of public contracts that they pay in bribes and that share increased, in over five years- from 2008-2013, from 8% to 11%. When I mentioned this figures to one minister he said: "11%? Oh, it's much more than that." So we have to be very careful on this point, because this negative trend which has established itself in the recent years and we have to

work with the government to reverse it. In fact, we are now financing a very interesting little project called "Open Contracting", which is helping civil society organisations to study the pattern and procedure of public procurement. There is a very nice little software application, which we have financed, which analyses the database of public procurements and when you put all of this data through this analytical process, you can begin to see some very revealing and interesting patterns about where contracts are going.

I'd like to salute the Public Procurement Agency and the Ministry of Health for volunteering to be part of this initiative. You have to give credit where it is due.

„Businesses don't believe any more that they will be treated according to the rules. They believe that they will be treated corruptly. And this isn't just the rhetoric of a protester shouting, this is hard data“

■ **Lina Grâu:** You said things will start changing when investments start coming. But in order for the investments to come, there should be a business friendly environment. WB has conducted analysis and has expertise in this area? What do you think about the business environment in Moldova?

■ **Alex Kremer:** The number one discouragement to economic growth, jobs and poverty reduction in Moldova, and all our analyses show it, is that businesses don't believe any more that they will be treated according to the rules. They believe that they will be treated corruptly. And this isn't just the rhetoric of a protester shouting, this is hard data. We have information that the share of businesses that consider bribery to be an important part of doing business in Moldova increased four times, between 2005-2013. That's enormous, I've never seen anything like that in another country. The percentage of businesses saying they



have to pay a bribe to get a construction permit, between 2008-2013, increased from 23% to 43%, nearly doubled. Over the same period, the percentage of businesses that said they had to pay a bribe to get an operating license multiplied three times.

So, this feeling that corruption has intensified in recent years is not just a political sentiment, it's based upon the real daily experience of private business. And these are the private businesses who should be employing Moldovans, paying their salaries and helping to get this country out of poverty.

Every time I go to visit a business, whether it's a business in an industrial park or whether it is a major foreign investor, I always hear the same thing- that a large part of their anxiety is about what will happen when they are dealing with officials.

Another area of concern is, of course, the banking sector. What we are seeing now is that the whole economy is paying the cost of the enormous, massive fraud that took place in 2013 to 2014, under the

noses of the supervisory authorities. This has led to a massive increase in interest rates and that increase in interest rates is discouraging private investment even further, particularly in agriculture. The banking fraud has also been one of the causes, not the only cause, but one of the causes of the falling of the value of the LEU which took place a year ago and which has destabilized business planning for many private enterprises. But what has been broken can be repaired and I think the most important thing that everybody is looking for is whether a year from now businesses will start reporting that things are improving, that they are being treated more in accordance with the law and that they are beginning to feel safe to invest again.

I think everybody knows what needs to be done; we can just move a lot more quickly. For instance, I was discussing yesterday one particular law relating to the investment climate- it's still being discussed, revised and re-revised and this is a law that was in draft before I came to Moldova, a year and a half ago.

„There are many people who are trying to help their country and it is patriotism and professionalism that are driving them to do so, and we should salute them.”

■ **Lina Grâu:** In conditions when it's difficult to produce changes domestically given the quality of the political class, the situation in the society, including in the business sector, do you think the free trade area agreement can determine the authorities to produce the necessary change?

■ **Alex Kremer:** First of all, I want to disagree with this view that Moldova is helpless to improve itself. If there are many people working in government, often young people, who are trying to help their country and when one looks at the motives, one cannot imagine it's anything except patriotism and professionalism that is driving them. I think we have to salute them and recognize what they are trying to do and I think we also have to recognize

that some bold and important reforms are under way in some areas and I'm thinking particularly of the health and education, and social protection sectors and the important thing is that these reforms continue.

I think it is very dangerous to think of the DCFTA as of kind of crutch that will substitute for domestic political will and effort. We have just completed a study on the benefits the DCFTA can bring to the Republic of Moldova on exactly this subject and what this study shows is that "Yes, DCFTA can benefit Moldova", but it will not benefit Moldova much because of trade concessions from Europe. What will benefit Moldova is reforms inside Moldova if, and only if, Moldova does those reforms. In the late 1990s, so this is 20 years ago, I was working inside the European Commission, helping to implement the first generation of free trade areas and association agreements with the countries of Northern Africa and the Middle East. In that region it was very well understood that a free trade agreement was not a gift, but a challenge which required the country to make the necessary reforms and investments to become competitive on the European and domestic markets. And the study which we have just completed indicates that this perspective is very applicable to Moldova.

Lina Grău: What do you think are the causes that the Republic of Moldova has managed in a very short time to turn from the success story of the EU into an area of instability with political and economic crises? What went wrong?

Alex Kremer: Well, I think, one has just to look at those indicators- both quantitative and objective indicators of businesses' experience of corruption, between 2008-2013, to understand what was happening.

Lina Grău: Looking at the state of affairs in the region, the situation is not stable in the East, while the EU is facing big internal problems. What are the biggest challenges for Moldova, in your opinion?

Alex Kremer: The regional economic situation is indeed a big challenge for Moldova and in particular, the economic events in Russia linked to the fall in oil price have had a big effect on Moldova. After Belarus, Moldova is one of the countries in the world that is most dependent upon the Russian economy. At the beginning of 2015, we were seeing a 30% fall in the value of remittances coming from Russia, largely due to the fall in the value of the Ruble and that decline in remittances has slowed down, but it is still continuing.

„The fundamental conditions that allowed the frauds to take place two years ago are still in place”

Other risks that Moldova is facing, of course, are the persisting risks in the banking sector. The diagnostic audits of three large banks – Moldindconbank, Victoriabank and MAIB- I think, leave one with the impression that the fundamental conditions that allowed the frauds to take place two years ago are still in place and that while a fraud might not necessarily be taking place today as we speak, the conditions that allowed it still remain.

„In the past we have been judging things by what's taking place on paper or what's taking place in the sphere of rhetoric.”

Lina Grău: Lately, there have been discussions that Moldova needs reforms, but the Government is rather simulating reforms than really doing them. From this point of view, what are your messages that the Government, political class, the business sector, and the society in general?

Alex Kremer: The Government has said to the international community: "Please judge us by our actions", and I think that is a great beginning, because maybe too much in the past we have been judging

things by what's taking place on paper or what's taking place in the sphere of rhetoric. So that's a good start: "Let's look at actions". So what kind of actions should we be looking for over the next year? I think, the most important thing is, if we did a survey of businesses at the end of 2016, will they tell us that their confidence is being restored, because now they have more sentiment that they are being treated in accordance with the law? And I don't think that passing new laws will solve this problem. No. For example, we saw two years ago that the Government reduced the number of inspecting institutions and at the same time the number of inspections grew enormously. What will change the situation is a clear political indication from the top right down to the bottom of the institutional chain that it's time to work differently.

“Appointments and public procurement should not be done on the basis of political allegiance but on the basis of technical and economic considerations”

Another action which everybody will be looking for will be to see how the authorities will respond to the recommendations of the diagnostic audits of the three banks.

Another thing which will become very conspicuous if it is improved is whether appointments and public procurement are being done on the basis of political allegiance or on the basis of technical and economic considerations. The WB is in a privileged position here, because unlike other donors we implement our projects through the machinery of Government. So every day, my colleagues and I get quite a clear impression of what is going on below the surface.

And then we hope that Moldova will agree a financing programme with the IMF. If this goes ahead and other

conditions are met, we will be ready to finance our programme of budget support with great pleasure. At that stage, when we are talking about the next budget support operation, we will say to the authorities: "Ok, let's talk together about some measures which will get private interests out of public economic institutions". And if we reach an agreement on some real actions on making public institutions public again, then we can say we are really making progress.

And finally, I'd like to point out one really important thing that is happening right now that not everybody knows about. There is a law in parliament requiring MPs, politicians and officials to declare their assets. Our experts think this is a very good law, so let's hope that it comes out of parliament in a good form and will be implemented without delay. We saw in another country recently that what came out of parliament was rather different from what went in, but let's hope that what comes out of the Moldovan parliament will be a strong law, because that will make a huge difference.

„When we are talking about long-term issues there is one issue which is like a long-term time bomb, and it's the question of pensions.”

■ **Lina Grâu:** What you are saying about, including the need for an agreement with the IMF and measures that the development partners are waiting from the Moldovan Government, don't seem to be of priority compare to the urgent needs of Moldova when it comes to the immediate needs, current consumption. How can Moldova get out of this difficult situation?

■ **Alex Kremer:** If there is an agreement with the IMF and if our economic models are correct, we are now at the worst and things are going to be improving economically from now on.

So, my hope is that we can now lift up our eyes from these urgent crisis measures and start to deal with the long-term structural issues that will restore economic growth and budgetary security in Moldova. And we can start to answer questions like: "How can we restore private investment?", "Why does Moldova need to have three times more hospitals for its citizens than the Netherlands?", "Why is it necessary to have tax concessions for farmers that mostly benefit the richer ones?" There are lots of opportunities for improved growth and improved efficiency in the public budget which will take several years to realize and the best time to start them is now.

And when we are talking about long-term issues there is one issue which is like a long-term time bomb, and it's the question of pensions, because the gap between what people are contributing into the pension system and what they will get out is becoming bigger and bigger. Not so long ago a Moldovan could expect to retire onto a pension that was just a little less than a half of their final income. But now a Moldovan can expect to retire onto a pension that is only 28% of the final income, on average. One can look at all of the numbers, all of the spreadsheets, one can look at them from this side or the other side, and the only solution though it is not that everybody will welcome is to raise the pension age, particularly of women. And if you look at the number of years that a Moldovan will spend living on their pension, given the increase in the life expectancy, it's longer than practically any other European country.

And then there is an even more negative twist to this problem, which is that when pension gets low, people will say: "Why should I contribute?" and the system can get out of balance very, very quickly, so this is a very urgent need for reform. The government that addresses this will not see the benefits from reform and neither will the Government after that, but it's a very long term and slow crisis that it's building up.

„We've seen many countries turn themselves around in the space of one government if the will to do so is there”

I would lie to finish by some more optimistic remarks. I went to visit a lot of universities at the end of last year, to make presentations and after every presentation a student would stand up and say: "Mr Kremer, you don't understand, we are incapable of solving our problems". And this is just not true. All these issues that we have been discussing are issues that have been created by people and can be solved very quickly by people. We've seen many countries turn themselves around in the space of one government and you have working still in the public sector many dedicated and patriotic professionals and I don't see any reason why this country should not come out very successful and very quickly if the will to do so is there.

„Corruption is not ingrained in the human psychology, but people can change their behaviour very quickly when circumstances change”

■ **Lina Grâu:** You said corruption is the biggest problem of the Republic of Moldova which reversed the growth trend. Is corruption a problem related to the mentality or is it a problem of group interests of the political class?

■ **Alex Kremer:** I'm firmly convinced, from the evidence of my eyes, that corruption is not ingrained in the human psychology, but people can change their behavior very quickly when circumstances change. A Moldovan student said to me in Balti: "You don't understand, Mr Kremer, corruption is in our blood". This isn't true and the truth is that Moldovans travel all around the world and the moment they get off the plane they adopt the customs and practices of the country where they arrive. I think that that's the clearest possible evidence that this problem can be solved very quickly when the leadership sets the tone.

Grzegorz Gromadzki: I don't have positive expectations from the political elite in power

... it is not capable of changing its way of doing politics...

Polish expert Grzegorz Gromadzki, senior researcher at the Stephen Báthory Foundation in Warsaw, says that despite the extremely complicated domestic political situation in the Eastern Partnership countries, characterized by the corruption of the political class, the political situation and banking crisis in Moldova, the government crisis in Ukraine, the far from being stable political situation in Georgia, there are still reasons for optimism.

Even if the groups supporting the old style of doing politics are still dominating the situation in these countries, there are positive signs that the societies in these countries are awoken, especially in Ukraine, but also in Moldova and Georgia", said Grzegorz Gromadzki at a conference organized by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Chisinau. "This is not to be underestimated, underlined the expert, as we are witnessing new relationships between the society and the political class which is an evidence of overcoming the legacy of the USSR. The civil society activists have become real actors that cannot be ignored by politicians, those who declare themselves pro-European, but actually, embrace the old style of doing politics. Unfortunately, there is no yet critical mass at the level of political elites in order to make genuine reforms", said the expert.

■ **Lina Grău:** What are the prospects of the Eastern Partnership under the current conditions? EU has very big internal problems, while the Eastern



Partnership countries - Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia – face problems with the leadership and corruption. In addition, there is Russia's interest to restore its influence in the former USSR countries. What kind of prospects for the Eastern Partnership countries can we talk about?

■ **Grzegorz Gromadzki:** For me, Eastern Partnership is primarily the bilateral relationship between the EU and countries of the Eastern Europe. So in this sense, sure, perspectives do exist.

It is obvious that the atmosphere now in the EU is very bad - there are

many internal problems in the EU, particularly the problem of refugees and the so-called Grexit, problems with the euro zone.

On the other hand, the situation in the Eastern Partnership countries is not good at all - there are problems with the liberal democracy; the political elites are deeply corrupt, there is a political and banking crisis in Moldova and a government crisis in Ukraine; the political situation in Georgia is far from being stable...

Against this background, the EU's interest in Eastern Europe is not as high as you would like it to be. I think the implementation of the Association Agreements signed with the EU is very important, in particular when it comes to trade. And here there is an unresolved problem - on the one hand, including in Moldova, there are people who are very professional, for example in the Foreign Office, and who are interested that the process goes smoothly, but on the other hand, you have a very corrupt political elite that is not going to become part of the European area. The problem of these elites is that they cannot change the way of doing politics - they work by old rules. This is the biggest problem now not only for Moldova, but also for Ukraine and Georgia.

Lina Grău: How can this way of doing politics be changed? Is there a solution for this collision between the young and professional society and the political class that is working by old methods?

Grzegorz Gromadzki: From my point of view, only the society and namely the active part of society can change this picture. It is the pressure from society that is the most important. I know the problem here in Moldova - that it is very difficult to move from rebellion to political activity. But I do not see another way out. You simply need a new political elite. The question is how to do this, avoiding a serious political crisis, which is very dangerous for the country and even for the existence of the state itself. I don't have an answer to this question. I know, though, that without this fundamental change in the political elite, the relations with the EU will simply not even reach the level where they were when Moldova signed the Association Agreement.

Lina Grău: I understand that the EU membership perspective for Moldova or any other Eastern Partnership country

is not on the table. On the other hand, we can observe a very high interest of Russia to destabilize the region and restore its influence. The Transnistrian conflict is the only one that is still frozen in the post-Soviet space after the recent outbreak of the armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Do you think there exist direct security risks in Moldova?

Grzegorz Gromadzki: Such risks do exist. I do not think they are very high now, but risks do exist and it is obvious that we should have in mind the worst scenarios. I have the impression there are no good solutions in this case. EU cannot be a very important player in this respect, because the EU is not a strong security structure. It is, first of all, a political club and economic organization. On the other hand, the relations between NATO and Eastern Europe are such as for NATO the most important issue now is the security of NATO members, primarily of the Baltic States - Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The question is how to protect these countries. What is beyond the borders of NATO is another matter. And if we add to this the fact that Moldova is a neutral state and has a completely different relationship with NATO than Ukraine, for example, this adds an additional problem to identifying a solution. So I will say it honestly - I do not have a good answer to your question

Lina Grău: Poland was one of the advocates of Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia in the Eastern Partnership. Are these countries still supported in the EU, given the internal problems of the EU and the fact that Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, to a certain extent, have not met the expectations? Are there still serious advocates in the EU to keep these countries on the European path and give them a chance for change?

Grzegorz Gromadzki: The EU has always been so - only a minority of

countries has been supportive of the Eastern Europe and we have to say it frankly. These countries are the Baltic States, Poland, and to a certain extent Romania. Even countries like Hungary and Slovakia had a more distant attitude towards the Eastern Europe than Poland or the Baltic states - they had closer ties with Russia than with Ukraine or Moldova.

So it is hard to find a large group of states to support one hundred percent the Eastern Europe. Germany has an important role to play and now the situation is such as Berlin has a particular interest in the Eastern Europe - and not only in Russia, but also in EP countries - and has a clear understanding of what is happening. I refer, first of all, to the Russian aggression in Ukraine, earlier - in Georgia, and even earlier - in Moldova. Without Germany and without Ms Merkel's personal influence, the EU would not have been able to apply sanctions against Russia. And this, in my view, is a miracle that 28 EU member states agreed to sanction Russia. It is for the first time that something like this is happening.

So I would say that, on the one hand, yes, there are no so many advocates when it comes to supporting Eastern Europe, but on the other hand, there is always some interest in what is happening on this part of continent. And this is a good thing.

Lina Grău: What would be your advice to the Moldovan political class and the society in general - I'm putting the question this way as the two seem to be separate from one another - to keep the country afloat and not completely compromise its European future?

Grzegorz Gromadzki: I don't have big expectations from the current political elite. And here, I think, it will be a real battle that will last not only one year.



It will be a battle between the current government and that part of the society that wants to live according to the rules that are closer to those of the European Union. The younger generation knows how life is in other countries as they can travel. And there is an additional factor in Moldova - the fact that nearly half a million people have Romanian citizenship. All together speak for the fact that the relations with the EU will play a very important role in the political life of Moldova and will contribute to the change of the political class.

If we talk about the political situation here, we know that for many years there have been basically two major players, two oligarchs – Plahotniuc and Filat. It was some sort of balance between these two very strong players. Now, one of them is destroyed by the second, Plahotniuc. From my point of view, and this can be an optimistic version of what is happening here, this could be the beginning of a change. Everyone knows that now there is only one man who is actually controlling the state, the country, the economy, and I do not think it can continue for long. It may take a year, two, three, maybe more, but this is not a situation that can last forever. And this is, to some degree, an optimistic

approach, but I cannot see how political changes can happen here in a few months or a year.

■ **Lina Grău:** Why do you think the current situation cannot last very long? One of the pessimistic views on the developments is that Vladimir Plahotniuc will continue to gain increased control on the law enforcement institutions, the decision makers, and the judiciary and so on. What can prevent these development from happening?

■ **Grzegorz Gromadzki:** Only one element -the protests of the society. And here already there is a certain tradition of protests, and not just in the last year, because protests happened before. So there is a tradition in Moldova that people disagree with what happens in politics. To keep the people quiet will be impossible even for such strong player as Plahotniuc. I think that after some time, he will have serious problems with the society, and namely with the active part of the society.

■ **Lina Grău:** Can the external partners influence this situation somehow?

■ **Grzegorz Gromadzki:** The situation is very complicated and in the European

Union there is a very clear understanding of what is happening in Moldova. I am telling you bluntly, there are no illusions. But the question is posed like this: what is more important –stability or qualitative changes in the country? And now many politicians in the EU and the European Commission are aware of the fact that it is very difficult to make a change in the political elite and that a mere attempt to do so may end up with coming to power of pro-Russian political forces. So some politicians and decision makers believe that now stability is more important for the country than such changes - to put it directly- revolutionary - which, in my view, are necessary, but I agree with the others, are very dangerous now.

■ **Lina Grău:** But this view may change in the EU at a certain point in time?

■ **Grzegorz Gromadzki:** From my point of view, if new strong political movements appear that can assume the responsibility for the country, the EU can change its position on this matter very quickly. But now the game is very risky, in my view.

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Foreign Policy Association (APE) is a non-governmental organization committed to supporting the integration of the Republic of Moldova into the European Union and facilitating the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict in the context of the country Europeanization. APE was established in fall 2003 by a group of well-known experts, public personalities and former senior officials and diplomats, all of them reunited by their commitment to contribute with their expertise and experience to formulating and promoting by the Republic of Moldova of a coherent, credible and efficient foreign policy.



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