

## **The Setting and Progress of the Inter-parliamentary Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Romania, Beginning with the Independence Proclamation till the Signing of the Association Agreement**

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**Abstract:** The article regards the cooperation between the Moldovan and the Romanian Parliaments from the very beginning to the signing of the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union. There may be distinguished three stages of the interparliamentary cooperation between the two states, characterized by the first two stages with no intensity, and a more fruitful third period, with quantitative and qualitative evolution. The first period in the evolution regards the setting of the cooperation between the two state, due to the new-formed inter-parliamentary Commission. The second stage knew very few meetings of the Commission, opposite the third stage, when the relations became very tight. The third stage begins with an Agreement of Bilateral Cooperation, then the organization of the Joint Commission for European Integration, increased the relations between the two states, so that the Vilnius Summit lead to the successful signing of the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union in Bruxelles. It can be said that Moldova made big steps for democracy beginning with 2010.

**Keywords:** interparliamentary cooperation; Moldovan Parliament; Romanian Parliament; bilateral relations; Joint Commission for European Integration

After the dissolution of the USSR, Romania and Republic of Moldova stepped on the path of democratic societies, Romania was the first State to recognize the independence of the Republic of Moldova in just a few hours after the proclamation.

Interparliamentary relations investigation between Moldova and Romania presents a special interest, because throughout the history of the two countries have developed in the same State, establishing between them a string of relationships that have been and will continue to be influenced by a set of factors (historical, cultural, political, linguistic, etc.).

The first Embassy level relations between Moldova and Romania have been drawn up on August 29, 1991, being the first Romanian Embassy diplomatic State opened in the capital of Moldova. In this context, to develop a more harmonious

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cooperation between the two countries, was to be initiated a bilateral cooperation of Legislatures in both countries.

Assigning in trust and close cooperation, the parliaments of the two countries have decided to create an Interparliamentary Commission “Chişinău-Bucharest”. The Protocol on the establishment of the Inter-Parliamentary Commission was signed in Chisinau (November 27, 1992) by Alexandru Moşanu – President of the Moldovan Parliament, and Adrian Năstase – the President of the Chamber of deputies of the Romanian Parliament<sup>1</sup>. The Commission was constituted by an equal number of parliamentarians from the Republic of Moldova and Romania, a total of 50 people, according to activate simultaneously in both capitals of the two countries.

The Commission is a body of work, aimed at accelerating the process of the main legislative concordance in which both countries have signed up with the independence, and to support economic and cultural integration into a common space. Furthermore, the Commission was called upon to ensure and facilitate, within the limits of its competence, cooperation between the two legislative bodies. In order to achieve the proposed goals, was to organise Inter-parliamentary Commission:

- Exchange projects, laws and decisions designed to improve the correlation between legislation of Republic of Moldova and Romania, in order to allow a more fruitful collaboration in all areas;
- Consultations at the level of Permanent Committees under the two Parliaments;
- Other sessions and joint meetings of the two Legislative (Solomon, 2001, pp. 163-166).

In 1993, Petru Lucinschi, President of the Moldovan Parliament, Adrian Nastase, and the President of the Chamber of deputies of the Romanian Parliament, meet at the meeting for the formation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea economic cooperation and discuss a possible meeting of the Inter-parliamentary Commission “Chişinău-Bucharest”. There is a “cooling” in the relations between the two Legislative during 1994-1995, with a strain in the Moldovan-Romanian bilateral relations. The year 1996 was, however, very productive as regards the activity of several visits to Bucharest and Chişinău of the two Presidents. Noted that they held several visits in Romania to Moldovan delegations than in Moldova from Romania.

Since 1997, Moldova's relations with Romania have a quantitatively new development. During this year the heads of the two countries have met several times in the context of various international forums, which normally stimulated a

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<sup>1</sup> Moldova Suverană, 1 decembrie 1992/The Sovereign Moldova, December 1, 1992.

revival of inter-parliamentary relations<sup>1</sup>. The revival has been based on pragmatism and mutual advantage, seeking new ways of boosting cooperation in various fields. This pragmatism was constrained largely by the fact that the basic political Treaty between our States knew a long period of negotiation. The reason of delayed signing were certain terms whose legal substance was not accepted unanimously by the parties. About the need to speed up the drafting of this document were discussions at all meetings of the Moldovan-Romanian sessions, proposing that it should be reflected in the relations existing between our countries, emphasis being transferred from nostalgia to pragmatism, so that the Treaty may not wear a rhetorical character, but a practical one.

Various aspects of the Moldovan-Romanian relations were considered in the same year and the visits of the President of the Moldovan Parliament Dumitru Motpan and President of the Romanian Senate Petre Roman in Chişinău<sup>2</sup>.

The period 1998-2000 can be characterized as one of strengthening bilateral parliamentary relations. Is increasing the number of visits to the parliaments of both countries. During the visit of the President of the Moldovan Parliament Dumitru Diacov, dated June 23, 1998 in Bucharest was signed the memorandum of reactivation of the Inter-parliamentary Commission "Chişinău-Bucharest". Alternatively stated repeatedly that Romanian lawmakers experience is richer and that is always welcome. Romanian side indicated its willingness to receive visits on the part of the legislature of the Republic of Moldova and that the persons concerned can benefit from the support of information and documentation centres of the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Assembly and the European Union opened in Bucharest, and the support of the Legislative Council of Romania which has an extensive experience in the legal field.

On the initiative of the President of the Moldovan Parliament Dumitru Diacov, on April 16-18, 2000 a Romanian delegation headed by President of the Senate of Romania Mircea Ionescu-Quintus hold an official visit to Chisinau. Romanian delegation had meetings with the leadership of the Republic, with all the parliamentary fractions, with the members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During these visits were discussed a number of issues related to economic cooperation, foreign policy, and in particular the policy of integration in the european economic area.

Shortly after this meeting, on May 19-21, 2000 in Iaşi hosted a meeting of a joint foreign policy Committees of the parliaments of the Republic of Moldova and Romania which took place in the premises of the University "Al. I. Cuza"

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<sup>1</sup> The current archive of the Moldovan Parliament. Commission for foreign policy information regarding Moldovan-Romanian parliamentary relations in 1997, pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> The current archive of the Moldovan Parliament. Informative note regarding bringing foreign policy Committees of the Parliament, the Senate and Chamber of deputies of the Romanian Parliament (19-21 May 2000), p. 3.

University of Iași. In addition to greeting messages that were addressed to the participants by Mircea Ionescu-Quintus, Chairman of the Romanian Senate and the three Presidents of the Commissions for Foreign Affairs, Gheorghe Boștinaru, Prisăcaru and Vasile Nedelciuc, were proposed a string of measures that would lead to reviving the Moldovan-Romanian parliamentary relations such as:

- Development of operational mechanisms of mutual information concerning the activity of the two Parliaments;
- Examining the possibilities for joint editing a newsletter which would encompass the texts of laws adopted by parliaments of the two countries.

The meeting noted that the best bilateral relationship to academic and cultural dimension. It is understood that the foreign policy commissions will organize meetings and consultations on the issues of bilateral relations and multilateral cooperation, presenting mutual interest<sup>1</sup>.

On the 21-23 July, 2000 in the city of Suceava, Romania took place the first meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Commission “Chișinău-Bucharest”. The Moldovan Commission was led by the President of Parliament Dumitru Diacov, the Romanian Delegation – by President of the Senate, Mircea Ionescu-Quintus and Chamber of Deputies, Vice-president, Vasile Lupu.

The Moldovan Commission was formed of 18 members from all parliamentary fractions. In his word, Mircea Ionescu-Quintus said: “respecting the will of the people of the Republic of Moldova, alone in a position to decide the future, Romania supports all ways to reinforce sovereignty”<sup>2</sup>. According to the President of the Romanian Senate, amplification of the bilateral relations should be based on two fundamental principles: respect for the sovereignty and stability of the Republic of Moldova, and taking into account the specifics of this relationship arising from the community of history, race, language and culture. In turn, Dumitru Diacov pleaded for the creation of an favorable atmosphere to encourage relations between Moldova and Romania on multiple plans. Delegations of both States have informed each other of some aspects of the development of internal and external policy pursued by the two countries.

Fixed issues on the agenda of this meeting were based on the process of integration into the European Union, the harmonization of national laws with the community, cooperation in international and regional organizations, etc.

For the implementation of the objectives and actions agreed upon at the meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Commission “Chișinău-Bucharest” and carry them out as

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<sup>1</sup> The current archive of the Moldovan Parliament. Informative note regarding bringing foreign policy Committees of the Parliament, the Senate and Chamber of deputies of the Romanian Parliament (19-21 May 2000), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Moldova Suverană, 25 iulie 2000/The Sovereign Moldova, July 25, 2000.

efficiently as possible, the following mechanisms have been envisaged and the forms of cooperation: annual meeting of the Commission, regular consultations between the Permanent Offices of the parliaments of the Republic of Moldova and of the Senate and Chamber of deputies of the Romanian Parliament, exchanges of delegations, organisation of joint events (forums, roundtables, symposia) with inviting members of Parliament from other countries, devoted to some topics of mutual interest, the establishment of a Secretariat of the Inter-parliamentary Commission, at the level of experts, to monitor the achievement of the objectives and actions decided on in the framework of the Commission.

Since 2001, the Moldovan side has not paid too much attention to this Moldovan-Romanian bilateral cooperation. Following early elections for a new Legislature (February 25), which led to the formation of a new parliamentary majority, Inter-parliamentary Commission "Chisinau-Bucharest" and its work which hold until 2001, were no longer recognized. During this period it carried out a meeting between the President of the Senate, Nicolae Văcăroiu of the Romanian Parliament, and Vladimir Voronin, President of Moldova, Vasile Tarlev, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, and Eugenia Ostapciuc, President of the Moldovan Parliament, within the framework of the Summit of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, held in Chişinău from 10-12 June 2003<sup>1</sup>. After this Parliamentary Assembly on the collaboration between Moldova and Romania was not resumed.

On March 6, 2005 in the Republic of Moldova were conducted parliamentary elections in which the Party of Communists get 56 seats, compared to 71 in 2001, mandates require a cooperative effort with other parliamentary parties for the election of the President of the Republic of Moldova. Neither during the period 2005-2009 the Inter-Parliamentary Commission activity of Moldovan-Romanian has not resumed. In that period, however, are held a couple of meetings: meeting of the President of the Moldovan Parliament, Marian Lupu, Teodor Meleşcanu, Vice-president of the Romanian Senate, at the second World Conference of Presidents of Legislatures in New York (7-9 September 2005); in the same year (11-12 December) takes place on a visit to Bucharest to a group of parliamentarians from the Republic of Moldova; in September 2006, Nicolae Văcăroiu, President of the Romanian Senate, carried out an official visit to the Republic of Moldova, and in December they held mutual documentation of visits of officials from the Moldovan Parliament and the Senate of the Parliament, with it ending parliamentary contacts between the two States until 2009<sup>2</sup>.

We consider it necessary to note that from January 1, 2007, Romania joined the European Union, which has created more opportunities for the Republic of Moldova, the latter becoming a direct neighbour of the European Union. And in

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<sup>1</sup> Ziarul de Gardă, May 26, 2005. <http://www.zdg.md/41/investigatii/> (accessed on May 3, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.romania.mfa.md/political-diplomatic-relations-rom-ro/> (accessed on May 5, 2016).

2008, Romania becomes the main economic partner of Moldova, however, the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Commission “Chişinău-Bucharest” has not been reinforced.

The Moldovan-Romanian bilateral relations did not know any change during 2009, although the political life of the Republic of Moldova, the Government knows changes coming right through the forces of the Alliance for European Integration. This year visits on parliamentary dimension were not carried out. The only event at which Moldovan Parliament attended by representative of the Moldovan Embassy in Bucharest, was the meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the International Electrotechnical Commission in Bucharest from 27-28 October 2009.

The year 2010 is more productive, having held several Moldovan-Romanian parliamentary contacts. On 10 February 2010, a visit of the official delegation from Bucharest Commission for Foreign Policy and European Integration of Moldova's Parliament was led by Chairman Igor Corman. During the visit it was stressed the need to develop more effective cooperation and creating a partnership between Moldovan Parliament and the Parliament of Romania. In April of the same year, Moldova hosts an official delegation of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber of deputies from Romania, led by Attila Korodi, Chairman of the Commission.

The improvement of relations between the two countries, as well as the achievement of multiple contacts between different specialized Parliamentary Committees follows the signing on April 27, 2010, in Bucharest, the Protocol of Collaboration and Partnership between Moldovan Parliament and the Parliament of Romania. Showing common willingness to contribute to strengthening special relations between Romania and Republic of Moldova, on a partnership basis, with a view to the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union, the two Parliaments have undertaken by signing this protocol, support the amplification and strengthening relations of political, economic, scientific and culture between the two countries. In order to strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation, according to the document, the annual meeting will be held at Bucharest and Chişinău, at the level of the specialized commissions, as well as at the level of the technical and administrative structures, and periodically meetings at the level of senior managers of the two chambers of the Romanian Parliament and the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. The Protocol also stipulates: “offering assistance to Chişinău by the Legislature of the Parliament of Romania in legislative drafting and adoption of normative acts in accordance with the *acquis communautaire*, the transmission of normative acts in force, which are harmonised with EU legislation, the support, the assistance projects of the European Union, which shall ensure strengthening the institutional capacity of the Moldovan Parliament, in the perspective of accession to the European Union”. For the purposes of coordination and implementation of the Protocol will be established a Commission for European

integration, on a permanent basis, consisting of members of the commissions of the European Affairs Committee and other relevant committees of the Romanian Parliament and the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova<sup>1</sup>. Also in 2010, July 1 is signed bilateral cooperation agreement between the General Secretariat of the Chamber of deputies of the Romanian Parliament and the Moldovan Parliament apparatus.

The importance of continuing and strengthening the Moldovan-Romanian dialogue in 2011 on the inter-parliamentary cooperation was the main subject discussed by the President of the Moldovan Parliament, Marian Lupu, Moldova's interim President during a meeting with Romanian Ambassador to Moldova, Marius Lazurcă.

During the meeting, the parties have agreed on a comprehensive joint action agenda to boost interparliamentary relations within the context of the completion of the Protocol on Cooperation and Partnership between Moldovan Parliament and the Parliament of Romania, and the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement between the General Secretariat of the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament and the Parliament of Moldova Apparatus, with emphasis on the exchange of visits at the interparliamentary level standing committees and organizing trainings for officials within the Parliament<sup>2</sup>.

The year 2012 is significant as it conducts, on 20 March, the first meeting of the Joint Committee for European Integration of the Republic of Moldova and Romanian Parliaments. Romanian delegation was led by Chairman Titus Corlăţean, foreign policy Chief of the Romanian Senate, co-Chairman of the Joint Committee for European Integration.

The meeting was favorable for an exchange of views on the current state of development of relations between Moldova and Romania, socio-political situation and the process of European integration of our country. It was pointed out the high level of development of Moldovan-Romanian relations on the Government by the Prime Minister of Moldova, Vlad Filat, expressing gratitude for the support given to our country by Romania, both at bilateral level and internationally.

In turn, Titus Corlăţean appreciated the Moldovan-Romanian relations as to be good, stating that, through the intensification of Joint Committee for European Integration of Moldova's Parliament and the Romanian Parliament is desired a synchronized and positive activity between the two States on the parliamentary dimension. At the same time, Titus Corlăţean reiterated Romania's full support in achieving the objective of European integration of the Republic of Moldova, through the transfer of experience in the harmonization of Moldovan legislation

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<sup>1</sup> <http://old.parlament.md/news/pressrelease/archive/04.2010/27.04.2010/> (accessed on May 3, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.interlic.md/2011-02-03/o-delegatie-a-comisiei-pentru-politica-externa-a-senatului-romaniei-va-intreprinde-o-vizita-la-chis-19795.html> (accessed on May 6, 2016).

with community standards. In this context, the Romanian official pointed out that the resolution was signed by the Joint Committee for European Integration of the Republic of Moldova and the Romanian Parliament's political support for accession to the European Union. The parties agreed to maintain a constant dialogue in order to promote common objectives concerning the development of multi-dimensional bilateral relations<sup>1</sup>.

The second meeting of the Joint Committee for European integration of Moldova's Parliament and the Parliament of Romania took place from 18-20 June 2013. The Moldovan parliamentary delegation was led by Ana Guțu, President of the Joint Commission, the President of the Commission for Foreign Policy and European Integration. On behalf of the Romanian Parliament, Chairman of the Joint Committee is Florin Constantinescu, Vice-President of the Romanian Senate.

During the meeting, the participants discussed the current state of relations between Moldova and the European Union, the prospect of signing the Association Agreement between Moldova and the European Union, the Free Trade Agreement, as well as liberalized visa regime for Moldova's citizens. During his visit to Bucharest, Moldovan deputies had scheduled more meetings with senior officials from Romania. During these meetings and discussed a number of issues relating to education, education, energy, etc.

Crin Antonescu, the Romanian Senate Chairman, said he is confident in the success of the Act of the majority of pro-European political from the Republic of Moldova in achieving the goal of accession to the European Union.

In turn, Ana Guțu, co-Chairman of the Joint Committee on behalf of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova stated that the meeting had held a number of discussions and meetings, during which it was noted that the unconditionally support of Romania is an important one for the Republic of Moldova on the path to accession to the European Union. At the level of both Parliaments was set a common agenda to provide for the exchange of experience, and over the course of the year to be conducted several joint meetings of parliamentary committees<sup>2</sup>.

In early November of 2013 in Chișinău, the third meeting of the Joint Committee for European Integration of Moldova's Parliament and the Romanian Parliament, which adopted a Declaration which pints out the importance of the Eastern Partnership Summit of the Vilnius<sup>3</sup>.

2014 is quite fruitful in the development of the Moldovan-Romanian relations, having held several official and working visits between the representatives of the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.md/libview.php?l=ro&id=4847&idc=436> (accessed on May 3, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> <http://infoeuropa.md/cooperarea-europeana/cea-de-a-ii-a-reuniune-a-comisiei-comune-pentru-integrare-europeana-intre-parlamentul-rm-si-parlamentul-romaniei/> (accessed on May 3, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/1280/Page/0/Default.aspx> (accessed on May 2, 2016).



two. 17-18 June 2014 is held the fourth meeting of the Joint Committee for European integration of Moldova's Parliament and the Parliament of Romania, dedicated to the signing of the Association Agreement between Moldova and the European Union. The meeting was attended on behalf of the Parliament of Moldova: Ana Guțu, co-Chairman of the Joint Committee for European Integration between the Romanian Parliament and the Parliament of Moldova Mihail Solcan, Tudor Deliu, Maria Ciobanu, Gheorghe Mocanu and Oleg Țulea deputies in the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. On behalf of the European Parliament were present: senator Florin Constantinescu, co-Chairman of the Joint Committee for European Integration between the Romanian Parliament and the Parliament of Moldova, Constantin Adăscăliței, Vice-President of the Commission, Ionel Agrigoroaiei, Secretary of the Commission, Sorin Ovidiu Bota, Ovidiu Cristian Iane, Eugen Tomac and Corneliu Mugurel Cozmanciuc. The parties signed a joint declaration in which they defined interparliamentary cooperation priorities, and underlined the importance of the signing of the Association Agreement between Moldova and the European Union in Brussels, on June 27, 2014<sup>1</sup>.

In conclusion, we would like to mention that in the bilateral relations of the two Legislative from Moldova and Romania have outlined several steps of collaboration:

**The first phase** (1991-2000) – is taking shape through the establishment of contacts between the two Legislative and Interparliamentary Commission Chișinău-Bucharest, which had as its objective the boosting interparliamentary cooperation, speeding up the process of legislative harmonization in both countries as well as cooperation between the two legislative bodies in the context of world and European parliamentary bodies. During this period occurred approximately twenty contacts at various levels between the two.

**The second phase** (2001-2009) – during which time the bilateral collaboration between the two Parliaments has entered a phase of “cold” and Interparliamentary Commission Chișinău-Bucharest as well as its activity until 2000 have not been recognized by the parliamentary majority. In the period of time took place only seven deputies parliamentary contacts between the two laws, most of them were in the framework of regular meetings of the various European and international forums.

**The third stage** (starting 2010) – is a very productive in terms of bilateral activity of the Moldovan-Romanian Parliamentary Committee. It signed a Bilateral Cooperation Agreement between the General Secretary of the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament and the President of the Republic of Moldova

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.infoeuropa.md/cooperarea-europeana/cea-de-a-patra-reuniune-a-comisiei-pentru-integrare-europeana-intre-parlamentul-romaniei-si-parlamentul-republicii-moldova/> (accessed on May 5, 2016).

Apparatus from July 1, 2010. In March 2012 is made up the European Integration Commission of the Municipality of the Moldovan Parliament and the Parliament of Romania, which aims to adjust the main legislation with that of the European Union. The improvement of Moldovan-Romanian bilateral relations as well as the exchange of experiences between the two laws, helped in the liberalization of visa regime for citizens of the Republic of Moldova, obtaining positive results from the Summit of the Eastern partnership at Vilnius (28-29 November 2013), and the signing of the Association Agreement between Moldova and the European Union in Brussels on June 27, 2014. During this period occurred over thirty interparliamentary contacts between the two.

Although bilateral relations have been established between the two countries, participating in the activity of the Republic of Moldova and Romania has not always been fruitful, having some disagreement. However, starting in 2010, a boosting of the collaboration between the two laws, the Republic of Moldova has made big steps on the path to accession and European integration.

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