

The Relations between Ukraine and Romania: Old and New Perceptions. Cooperation Outlooks

Analysis Paper

1. Background and Purpose of this Analysis Paper

Strengthening cooperation between Ukraine and Romania is a key issue of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Policy, as well as of the international cooperation in the Black Sea Region and the Wider Eastern European region. The recent years have seen positive developments in the relations between these two countries, despite the relapses of prejudices. Overall, the current relations can be assessed as constructive, aiming at finding solutions to sensitive problems, overcoming a certain state of idleness, and further building cooperation. Still, the potential of such bilateral cooperation is far from being exhausted, and the historical viewpoint of good neighborly relations remains high on the agenda.

This Analysis Paper aims to foster cooperation between Romanian and Ukraine by putting first on the table the issues of a sensitive nature. First and foremost, this Paper provides a set of useful information for all stakeholders of the relations between Romanian and Ukraine. It was collected in qualitative interviews conducted by an Ukrainian analyst with Romanian experts, and by a Romanian analysts with experts in Ukraine, both applying the same set of tools. Our hope is that we will be able to add to the pool of information about relevant and important matters, and thus help strengthening the cooperation between experts, NGOs and governmental representatives concerned with this field, having one single ultimate goal in mind: enhancing cooperation in the Black Sea Region.

The poor cooperation between these two countries must be construed in the light of the traditional lack of a common international cooperation agenda between the Black Sea states and, the consequent tendency of these states to ignore the pursuit of common goals. This

study is all the more necessary as it brings to light apparently sensitive issues that have featured the historical bilateral relations, as seen from both the Romanian and Ukrainian experts. We tried to assess to what extent certain topics, having been perceived by the parties as sensitive at one point in time, are the reasons for the potential divisive positions taken today. In our opinion, having consulted the communities of experts in both Romania and Ukraine, there are no subjects of disputes that could impair a rational and pragmatic approach towards the broader context of security in the Black Sea Region. Dialog is the key to addressing any potential issues, particularly if we are to consider that joint actions have proven more effective than separate actions, and the common interests shared by the two countries.

Unfortunately, the communities of experts reportedly are more aware of the common problems on agenda of the bilateral relations. Furthermore, for a couple of years now, the communities of experts and organizations in Bucharest have used stronger voices to express readiness, but their moderate enthusiasm can be explained by the particular situation Ukraine is in for the time being, moves any other topics down on the list of priorities.

The key cooperation obstacles are not to be found on the table of the high-ranking negotiators, but are rather rooted in the lack of a mutual awareness of each country's key priorities, the similar priorities they share, and the opportunities available to define common strategies to achieve the respective priorities. Things get even worse if we are to consider also the lack of media visibility of Ukraine in Romanian and the other way around, and the poor interest displayed by the communities of experts of both countries in each other. As a result, the media and, most often, even experts and decision-makers tend to circumgyrate in a vicious cycle of stereotypes and misleading impressions about the relations between Ukraine and Romania.

This study has been conducted with a threefold objective:

1. To develop an expert dialog focused on the democratic paths of Ukraine and Romania, and to provide the general public with recommendations of potential future joint activities targeting the exchange of practices in the area of civil society;

2. To submit to public debate the old prejudice vs. the chart of friendship in the traditional relations between Ukraine and Romania, as factors that have affected the joint interests that could have been pursued and the joint benefits that could have been driven under an approach building on joint commitment and the spirit political trust and closeness;

3. To define opportunities to achieve a stronger and more cohesive partnership between the civil society actors.

The specific activities pertaining to this Analysis Paper were the following: arranging study visits for 2 experts for the purpose of drawing up an analysis paper on old mindsets vs. the chart of friendship in the relations between Ukraine and Romania; drawing up an analysis paper on old mindsets vs. the chart of friendship in the traditional relations between Ukraine and Romania, including an action plan with recommendations for enhanced relations between Romanian and Ukraine; presentation of the analysis paper in a round-table discussions to be held in Bucharest with the following panels: 1) old mindsets vs. the chart of friendship in the traditional relations between Ukraine and Romania - this panel is intended for presentation of the analysis paper; 2) proposals of joint activities targeting the exchange of practices in the civil society area - this panel is intended for presentation of the action plan.

The Analysis Paper titled *The Relations between Ukraine and Romania: Old and New Perceptions. Cooperation Outlooks* follows the pilot initiative of launching the Ukraine-Romania International Experts' Consortium. This platform has been used for more than 5 years to further develop a fruitful cooperation between Ukraine and Romania. In certain cases, the Experts' Consortium has proven an useful platform for the decision-makers to voice their concerns and uncertainties, and for this reason this Paper shall be presented both to the Consortium, as well as in two events due to be held in both Bucharest and Kyiv, and can be further developed and detailed so as to accommodate the interests of the representatives of the executive, diplomats etc.

2. Historical and Cultural Issues

In the opinion of the Romanian historians, the shared history of membership of the same communist bloc did not help putting in place the necessary preconditions for a better understanding between the two countries. This happened despite the former Soviet Union being perceived as a whole, with no difference whatsoever being made between the nations that composed it. Additionally, the invasion of Czechoslovakia rendered the relations between Bucharest and Moscow rather cautious, and prevented putting in place the preconditions for a better understanding between Romanians and Ukrainians (as, back then, Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union). Therefore, despite the ideological resemblance, there were many other things that differentiated Romanians from Soviets.

Generally, the Romanian experts share the following thinking: There are not too many disagreements between Ukraine and Romania, but an improvement in the mutual perceptions is desperately needed. However, it should be kept in mind that in both Romania and Ukraine, there are the groups that advance the idea of “the others” and a certain image of an “enemy”.

About Ukraine, at first glance: around 80% do not care much about Ukraine. No Eastern country is of a genuine interest. Romania shows much more interest in the relations with the EU, the US, Turkey and the Arab world. Significantly more information is available about what is going on in Berlin and Paris than in Kyiv. To some extent, there is potential to put aside the existing disagreements, but the general perception is that there is still a big gap between the two societies. Another 10% of the interviewees reportedly seek trust-based and friendly relations, while up to 10% of them continue to speculate over the issues of the historical past and "Greater Romania".

The Romanian media features but very few stories and news about Ukraine, and when published, they are mostly about the events in the Eastern part of the country. In the past, the perception was prevalently shaped by the reports on violations of the human rights of the Romanian minority there, but this is not the case anymore. The image is getting rather neutral. Moreover, watching how the neighboring country is terrorized on daily basis puts, anyway, some feeling in the relations.

In both the public space and the society at large, the relation between Romania and Ukraine was depicted by recourse more to perceptions, than historical facts. Formally, the relation between the two states was established back in 1997 with the signing of the Treaty for Good Neighborly and Cooperation Relations between Romania and Ukraine, after a 50-year intermission after the Second World War. At that time, the countries were fighting for different sides. Romania sided with the Nazi Germany in the war, while Ukraine was a Soviet republic.

The Siege of Odessa (1941) is still recollected today by many historians and inhabitants of Odessa as one of the most dramatic military operations ever directed towards Ukraine during the Second World War. This operation was launched by the Romanian Government, under the pressure of the Nazi Germany, and it took the Romanian army three months to take the strongly-walled city. The period between 6 August and 16 October 1941 saw widespread loss of life. In certain local publications, Romanians are still perceived as Nazis - this being also the outcome of an intensive local campaign supported by the pro-Russian regime of the former Ukrainian president Victor Yanukovych, as confirmed by the interviews held in Kyiv with the Ukrainian experts in the rights of minorities.

3. Political Attitudes

Disputes on Historical Territories and Delineation of the Continental Shelf of the Black Sea

In February 2009, the International Court of Justice in Hague settled the most important problem standing in the way of the bilateral cooperation between the two states: the status of Snake Island, that is the territorial limits of the continental shelf of the countries around the island were delineated.

"The Treaty of Amity, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the People's Republic of Romania" was signed on 4 February 1948

and remains in effect for 20 years; under this Treaty, Snake Island located in the Black Sea, to the east of the mouths of Danube, became part of the Soviet Union.

The Romanian party made the first endeavors to be recognized the rights on the continental shelf between 1967 and 1987. After 1991, Ukraine inherited control over Snake Island and also on the former Soviet territories south of Chilia Channel-branch. Since 1996, Romania claimed back the island relaying on the provisions of the Paris Peace Treaties of 1947; still, in 1997, Romania signed the "Treaty for Good Neighborly and Cooperation Relations" (effective as of 22 October 1997) and thereunder recognized the sovereignty of Ukraine over five of the six disputed islands. Only Maican Island and the territorial waters around Snake Island in the Black Sea remained at dispute. The talks were resumed in 1998. On 13 September 2014, Romania referred the dispute to the International Court of Justice. Once the case was opened, the bilateral relation virtually vanished.

The Court Judgment of 2009 is seen in Bucharest as a success of the diplomatic endeavors Romania has made in time before the International Court of Justice. The experts interviewed in Kyiv assessed the case close, as both countries accepted the settlement of the Court. The case of Snake Island is an example of good practice in peaceful settlement of a long and complicated dispute - reclaiming of the continental shelf of 12,000 square kilometers. The discussions held in Kyiv with experts in political and diplomatic matters showed that the outcome is accepted as such and taken for granted, and this could be a starting point for future discussions on the potential points of common interest.

The interviews in Kyiv show, beyond any doubt, that the case of the Black Sea shelf is no longer a cause of tension between the two states, as the dispute was settled under an international law instrument. The stake in having the continental shelf and the exclusive economic areas in the Black Sea delineated was the access to the hydrocarbons available in the Black Sea. Considering that the dispute was settled peacefully, and the Court judgment was accepted by both parties, there is no reason that the relations suspended before 2009 are not resumed now. Still, this could not remove completely the reservations and hesitations displayed in the resumed Romanian-Ukrainian relations and, consequently, *ipso facto*, the difficult political relation left its mark on the economic cooperation opportunities.

While Romania is entitled to exploit, within an indefinite time horizon, the hydrocarbons in the Black Sea, this competitive edge still needs to be looked into in a broader regional picture: increased accessibility of energy and, consequently, realistic outlooks for gaining energy independence from Russia, supported also by the diversity of the green energy sources adopted and the strengthening infrastructure.

However, according to experts, Kyiv still has some sensitive points to dwell on.

The actions taken by Bucharest in respect of the Romanian and Moldovan minorities in Ukraine are sometimes decoded as a threat by Kyiv. For Bucharest, a matter of concern could be the feelings still experienced about the lost historical territories that are now part of Ukraine, but despite these, there is a general understanding that the past is the past. Certainly, the issue might be brought up in the context of the 100th anniversary of Romania's unification in 2018, but these days, those voices are rather marginal. Moreover, most of the discussions stirred by this issue concern rather Republic of Moldova than the territories that are now part of Ukraine. However, it is difficult to predict how loud these would eventually be. Paradoxically, while Romania is the biggest supporter of the independence of Republic of Moldova, an emotional narrative of reunification still lingers.

The issue of minorities

The collapse of communism gave the shape of a new liberal-democratic order between the two states, and since early 90s, has faced them with new challenges and difficult choices: the upswing of nationalism and common historical identities vs. the need for State stability and safeguards for the fundamental rights. Thus, the crafters of the new democratic establishments were challenged with the following dilemma: which would be the most suitable reaction to the twofold influence of liberalism and nationalism? How can individual freedoms be safeguarded in front of collective ethnically-driven claims? A liberal democratic regime is able to meet the demand for enhanced individual rights, regardless the ethnic or racial background of individuals. Meanwhile, nationalism articulates the collective

rights as support for the collective identity. The challenge for decision-makers is even greater as the states they are called to make decisions for are undergoing a post-communist transition to democracy, and are subject to several concurring influences: the Western liberal ideas advanced by the Western European countries and the US, and the international organizations that afforded financial supports to projects that promoted these ideas, and the prevailing ideas during the communist times, that weakened the group identity and mitigated differences. Therefore, all post-socialist states at the Black Sea, except for Turkey, characterized by redefinition of the institutional system, have gone through difficult transition and democratization processes and fundamental and comprehensive changes in the formal regulations and institutions, that had an influence on the every-day life of the society.

Ukrainian perspective on the issue of minorities

After the collapse of the USSR, new influencers appeared at the Black Sea: NATO (2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, and the support afforded to Georgia by the US), and the European Union (at first, the interest of the European Union was displayed in the Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the Security Strategy issued in 2003, and later on by launching the Eastern Partnership). Russia came back into the picture as soon as they realized that their traditional areas of influence were threatened. This led to frozen conflicts in strategic areas, aimed at creating stability and security problems to the countries where Russia was losing ground, and culminating with the illegal annexing of Crimea by Russia and institution of the so-called “people's republics of Donetsk and Lugansk” in respect of which Russia, without explicitly recognizing the referendum for separation from Ukraine, declared that they respected the will of the population in Donetsk and Lugansk, who voted in an overwhelming proportion for self-determination. This shows the genuine sensitiveness of the issue of minorities in several former soviet countries, such as Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine: how can governments be domestically challenged, through the so-called frozen conflicts, to safeguard the individual freedoms when faces with collective claims, in the context of State security? This caused limitation of the rights of minorities in Ukraine (previously granted by Yanukovici - still, this policy should be decoded in the light of the Russian interests in Ukraine) after 2014 and the systematical refusal to afford minorities extended civil rights, such as the right to political representation or double citizenship.

While the communist society relied on a consistent means of collective existence, with the support of the repressive institutions, the new liberal "velvet" order demanded for a democratic approach to the issue of minorities, with respect for the human rights.

In the end of the Second World War, Romania, as a defeated country, lost the Northern Bucovina and the Southern Basarabia to the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine. This left the two countries with minority populations of each other. The human rights experts interviewed in Kyiv pointed to an old and still current perception that the political steps taken by Romania for reacquisition of the Romanian citizenship by Moldovan and Ukrainian nationals lack transparency, and an agreement to regulate the double citizens would be mutually beneficial. This could render the actions more transparent, and remove the suspicions of Ukrainians regarding issuance of the Romanian passport. The status of the Romanian minority in Ukraine is of concern for several institutions and organizations of the civil society in Romania, while in Kyiv this concern is mostly voiced by the civil society that are worried that the Ukrainians have been assimilated to the Romanian majority population. During certain periods, the policy applied for reacquisition of the Romanian citizenship was perceived by Kyiv as a security threat. On the other hand, as early as 1991, Romania has assumed as state policy, under the citizenship law, reacquisition and granting of the citizenship to the former Romanian nationals in the historical regions that use to be part of Romania. No similar policy has followed in Kyiv.

The Ukrainian minority in Romania is mostly located in the northern part of the country, close to the border with Ukraine. More than half of the Ukrainians in Romania live in the county of Maramureș (accounting for approximately 6.67% of the total population of the county). Ukrainians also live in county of Suceava (8,506 persons), county of Timiș (7,261 persons), and county of Tulcea (1,279 Ukrainians). There are 12 communes in Romania with majority Ukrainian population. After 2014, most of the resources available to the Ukrainian state have been channeled towards the conflict with Russia, thus being left without the resources required to provide cultural support to the Ukrainian communities in Romania. Additionally, the experts in Kyiv explain that Russia is the reason for which Ukraine does not allow double citizenship and limited some rights of the minorities. However, discontent was voiced in Bucharest, even by very high officials, regarding the division of Romanians into

Moldova and Romania, This issue has always been a roadblock for development of the Ukrainian-Romanian relation, even in the context of Romania publicly declaring support for Ukraine in strengthening their relations with the North-Atlantic structures. In addition, most of the Romanian and Ukrainian experts interviewed think that the two countries perceive each other as competitors.

Romanian perspective on the issue of minorities

For the Romanian side, the issue of minorities remains important for most representatives of the Romanian expert community. They emphasized that, whatever the situation of the Romanian minority in Ukraine on the ground might be, there would always be a perception that this minority is treated badly. Ukraine, however, is not a single case. Romanian experts agree that (in comparison with Serbia and Hungary), the Ukrainian legislation remains more favorable for minorities. The inability to address the issue of minorities is considered by the Romanian experts as the biggest failure of the bilateral relations over the past 20 years.

The issue is only surfaced, for political gambling, in certain moments of political interest. Still, there are no contradictions to be identified, but only a matter of perception and political manipulation. The problems of the minorities are only paid lip service in periods that overlap with election campaigns, otherwise, a flat line of mutual respect tends to be pursued.

At the same time, there is no evidence of any critical conflicts between the representatives of the minorities and the representatives of the kin state and the problems of minorities are rather embedded in the political discourse.

Another sensitive issue sometimes voiced by the Romanian experts and officials is the Moldovan minority in Ukraine. The majority of the Romanian experts agree that Republic of Moldova is a different country, but still populated with the same people – Romanians. Therefore, some of them argue that Ukraine should not differentiate between the Romanian and Moldovan minority on its territory.

However, as the experts highlight, the main issue is not that the minorities are allegedly treated badly. Applying them a fair treatment is more important, regardless of the name used

to call them. This is more in line with the European policies on treatment of minorities, than a nationalistic approach adopted towards them.

Obviously, people should make informed statements of self-identity; but this information duty rests with the government. Otherwise, people tend to base their decisions on political narratives without picking up a book and checking out the historical realities.

However, at the same time, some experts agree to the people's right to self-identification. Throwing them all together in the same pot is not only wrong, but a reminder of the wrong Russian approach that whoever speaks Russian is a Russian.

Still, no consensus has been yet reached on the matter. There is a clear vision that the language both Romanians and Moldovans speak is Romanian, but the positions on the ethnic origin remain divergent and should be tackled with due care.

Some of the experts rather criticize the approach of putting the issue of the Romanian/Moldovan minority on the agenda since it has little political impact, potentially can deteriorate the relations, and puts aside more important issues to be addressed and areas of cooperation to be developed. Moreover, as long as the Republic of Moldova remains an independent state, it is only normal to distinguish between Moldovans and Romanians.

Anyway, it is for the Romanians and the Moldovans to clarify this issue, perhaps with the mediation by Ukraine.

But a simple look taken into the outlooks of cooperation and the cultural proximity renders things clear: the anti-immigrant feeling in Romania towards the Syrian refugees, according to the recent polls, is at 85%, but had the immigrants come from Ukraine and not from Syria, then the anti-immigrant feelings would have probably been around 8-10%. Even the other neighboring nation, the Hungarians, are perceived as more conflict-oriented as compared to the Ukrainians.

Communities in Romania have offered assistance to “their Ukrainian brothers”, as they call them (this attitude is completely different from that displayed towards the Syrian minority, in similar circumstances).

Regarding the Romanian citizenship policy, the experts interviewed generally believe that nationals should be afforded the right to choose their citizenship. According to the Romanian experts, the government of Romania have never employed a proactive approach in granting citizenship. Romanian authorities demand the applicants to submit the necessary set of documents and to prove they are eligible for being granted the citizenship. They also explain that the Romanian citizenship is often acquired by the citizens of Ukraine for the economic purposes, and therefore, it should not be perceived as a revisionist policy. Another explanation could be that the citizenship policy was an opportunistic move aimed at attracting the votes of Romanian passport-holders leaving abroad. For instance, it is generally acknowledged that President Băsescu got elected with the votes of the Romanian citizens from Republic of Moldova.

Nevertheless, Romanian experts argue that living in an open world, and within the EU double citizenship policy, no further problems should occur.

Cooperation on Euro-Atlantic topics

As it can be seen, no stable structure can be traced in what the relations between Romanian and Ukraine are concerned. The bilateral interaction at this level has always swung around sensitive issues. By reference to the Black Sea, it is manifest that the two countries have considered each other economic competitors, rather than regional partners. As the analyst Natalia Belitser bluntly put it, there is vacuum between Romania and Ukraine. The Ukrainian analyst Yaroslav Mathychuk states that, while no wall has been erected between the two countries, with cooperation and good neighborly relations between regulated under the Treaty of 1997, not enough efforts are being employed by either party for the Romanians and Ukrainians to get to know each other.

In 2004, the newly elected president, Traian Băsescu used to define, in very clear words, the no. 1 priority for Romania. "Strengthening the strategic partnership with the US and London" (the wording Washington-London-Bucharest axis has been very popular in the media ever since) was on top of this work agenda. After 2004, the foreign policy of Romania was coordinated at NATO and EU level, that is far from Russia. While the former president Viktor Yushchenko had a pro-European vision, the Romanian-Ukrainian relations did not see any upswing during his office, except in respect of the Romania's positioning in the contact

area between NATO and the EU, on one hand, and the former Soviet Union countries, on the other hand; consequently, as the former president Traian Băsescu declared (in January 2015), "it should have been a stability factor". In fact, the relations between Romania and Ukraine couldn't have seen any such upswing as long as, on 13 September 2004, Romania referred to the dispute of Snake Island to the International Court of Justice. Once the case was opened, the bilateral relations became rather cold. Nevertheless, during 2004-2005, the communication at the level of presidents, that were put into office with the "orange" people's support, was quite intense. In the background, 2004 was an important year for both states: the orange pro-European and pro-American revolution in Kyiv, and Romania's accession to NATO and completion of the negotiations to join the EU in December.

In 2012, the decision made to sign the *Association Agreement* (March 2012) with Ukraine became a good opportunity to revive the Romanian-Ukrainian relations, in the open margin of the pro-European shift in Ukraine. Romania has repeatedly declared its support to the European course of Ukraine, so much the more that this required an alignment to the European policies. Similarly, Romania has repeatedly voiced its support to implementation of the association agreement between the EU and Ukraine¹, showing that this could have a positive impact on rendering the Ukrainian society more democratic and modern, as it happened for Romania. Referring to this period and until today, some Ukrainian analysts describe it as "an extended Honeymoon" (Sergiy Gerasymchuk), or "a new friend of Ukraine"². Thus, we can say that the relation between the political leadership of two countries has been energetically developing. In this context, the key achievement *per se* is establishment of friendly relations between the countries, in particular after 2013-2014 when Ukraine faced the challenge of the Russian Federation. To note that the Romanian authorities have not made the support afforded to Ukraine in its European course and, in particular for signing of the agreements with the European Union, conditional upon any matter whatsoever.

¹ See: <https://washington.mae.ro/en/romania-news/5760>; <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/ukrayina-ta-rumuniya-aktivizuyut-spivpracyu-zustrich-prezide-34953>
<http://www.unian.info/politics/832862-romania-backs-ukraines-eu-association-efforts.html>

² <http://www.unian.info/politics/1067966-a-new-friend-of-ukraine.html>

In February of 2015, of the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pavlo Klimkin, paid a visit to Bucharest. During this visit, the Minister had negotiations with the President of Romania Klaus Iohannis, the Vice Prime Minister, the Romanian Minister of Internal Affairs, Gabriel Oprea, the President of Senate, Calin Popescu-Tariceanu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bogdan Aurescu, and met with representatives of the Ukrainian community³. Similarly, on 17 March 2015, the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis, paid an official visit to Ukraine.

The main political parties in Romania – the social democrats and the liberals - have, in general, either a neutral or a friendly attitude towards Ukraine.

Romanian experts believe that the upcoming elections in Romania would not play a crucial role since the president, as the head of state, is responsible for the foreign policy, and consequently, the results of the parliamentary elections would not lead to the changes in policy applied by Romania towards Ukraine. In this regard, Romania benefits from the absence of, or rather the shy chances of the populist or radical parties to get into the parliament and, therefore, the risk of a more radicalized parliament is low.

Despite some internal battles being fought on matters of domestic politics, taxation etc., in terms of foreign policy, the political class of Romania has proven rather coherent. So, there are no reasons to expect any deterioration of the relations, but rather an improvement thereof driven by the improved economic cooperation.

If both parties – the Romanian government and the Ukrainian government - maintain a diplomatic tone and do not over-emphasize any issues, for instance border crossing, border management, border security, infrastructure, the relations are expected to remain positive also after the elections in Romania. Besides, the issue of Ukraine seldom comes on the agenda during the parliamentary elections. It is rather an issue during the presidential elections. The focus will be at very local level, and no one would want to awake any "sleeping dragons".

Speaking about the hypothetical risks that might occur further to the change of elites, most of the Romanian experts agree that even if the Social Democrats⁴ will come into power (which is perceived as a challenge by some of the Ukrainian experts), they would not change the

³ http://fes.kiev.ua/n/cms/fileadmin/upload2/prisma_policy2015_eng.pdf

⁴ <http://www.psd.ro/>

Romania's policy towards Ukraine. To the contrary, this policy is expected to pursue the same course. One of the reasons is that foreign policy issues are not politicized in Romania and the party's leadership rather relies on expertise and promotes competent ministers to deal with foreign relations (Romanian experts highlighted the professionalism of Titus Corlățean – PSD representative who run the MoFA between 2012-2014).

There is also consensus among the experts that none of the political parties will be interested in spoiling the relations with Ukraine. The only possible issue that might raise concerns in Ukraine is the future of the Republic of Moldova, which is featured in the discourse in the bilateral Romanian-Moldovan relations. However, once again, these are rather political speculations than a true mirroring of the chances that Romania and the Republic of Moldova become one state in a medium time horizon.

Băsescu, and his People's Movement Party (PMP), are among the politicians and the political parties that raised the concerns of the Romanian experts⁵. The experts interviewed agree that, over the past 25 years, Băsescu has proven the politician with the strongest potential for mobilizing public opinion, and changing the rules of the political game, although his reputation being partly destroyed. As noted by the Romanian experts, he is, to some extent, unpredictable and therefore could juggle with populist slogans on certain issues that might have direct or indirect impact on the Romania-Ukraine relations. His stance on Russia is apparently changing too – some of the experts even venturing to rate his behavior as “Trumpish”.

However, there are also some smaller political parties with the more hostile attitude towards Ukraine. One example is the United Romania Party (PRU) project⁶. A relatively dangerous sign is the fact that former prime-minister Victor Ponta is flirting with this nationalist force, but the good news is that the support they enjoy to it is relatively low. Besides, the social democrats refrain from any cooperation with PRU: PSD President Liviu Dragnea stated that the Social Democrats did not need the help of the United Romania Party nationalists, neither during the campaign, nor afterwards. “We don't want to have any kind of relations with a nationalist party,” PSD President pointed out. This statement came against the backdrop in

⁵ <https://pmponline.ro/#>

⁶ <http://www.partidulromaniaunita.org/>

which Bogdan Diaconu's party has recently recruited several MPs from PSD, UNPR and PMP, with the ex-Prime Minister Victor Ponta being invited to join the party too⁷.

Eventually, PRU is rather focused on paying lip service to reunification with the Republic of Moldova, and not with the territories that are part of Ukraine nowadays. Even if we are to accept as such the unfriendly attitude of this political force towards Ukraine, it is still too early to talk about the potential influence of this political project, which appears to be rather artificially created then ideologically driven. Besides, this party will hardly change the mainstream public opinion of the Romanians towards Russia, even despite the Russian media's efforts.

Nevertheless, we cannot overlook that fact that the situation of the Romanian minority in Ukraine could shape the way Ukraine is perceived in Romania. Any incident or instigation, though, could win PRU some additional votes.

Anyway, for Romania it is the US and the EU that remain its key partners. Obviously, the US is seen as the strategic partner in respect of security, and this is shaping the key directions of the Romanian foreign policy. Manifestly, there are forces that will try to soften rhetoric towards Russia, but the main priorities for Romania are not expected to change.

In 2016, only a moderate optimism regarding a qualitative improvement of the relations with Romania emerges from Kyiv. As shown in the introductory part of this Paper, for some Ukrainian experts in international relations, considering that for the time being the no. 1 problem of Ukraine is Russia, any cooperation opportunity is looked into in respect of the utility thereof for addressing that respective problem. We note here the favorable declarations made by Romanian officials for Ukraine in its ongoing conflict with Russia, as well as the support afforded by Romania in NATO, an organization that turned to the services offered by Romania to protect Ukraine from the cyber espionage of Russia. Thus, the Romanian experts are currently training Ukrainian IT experts and help other governmental Ukrainian institutions. The Ukrainian authorities state that, in addition to the classical war fought in the pro-Russian separatist provinces in Eastern Ukraine, the Russian government is also waging a

⁷ <http://www.nineoclock.ro/on-whose-political-partys-lists-will-ponta-win-another-stint-in-parliament-psds-or-prus/>

cyber war against their country. With the Romanian support, the attempts to infect the computer networks of governmental institutions in Kyiv, as well as other cyber espionage actions were fought back. The communities of experts consulted in Kyiv appear not to be aware of this situation. Therefore, given the major shift of the Ukrainian foreign policy against Russia, Romania and Ukraine are getting closer together under the NATO umbrella. The recent initiative (currently suspended by Bulgaria) whereby border guards from Ukraine, Romania and Turkey are to establish a joint patrol force at the Black Sea, as a stabilizing factor across the Region, should be construed in the same vein.

During his office, President Yanukovich swang between Russia and the European Union, even by delaying the Association Agreement with the European Union in view of establishing a tripartite Ukraine-European Union-Russia dialog, that was supposed to tackle economic and trade matters (November 2013). Additionally, according to the Ukrainian experts consulted, Yanukovich regime advanced an anti-Romanian local policy, in the border areas. During Yanukovich era, strengthening the cooperation with Romania proved a difficult endeavor, given the manifest pro-Western foreign policy pursued (and still pursued) by Romania. As early as 2003, in a speech delivered in September 2005 in Stanford University, the former president of Romania Traian Băsescu assessed that the Russia Federation treated the Black Sea as a "Russian lake" as they avoided any internationalization of the regional problems, given that "we all saw how our powerful neighbors at the Black orchestrated both generation and freezing of conflicts". The head of the Romanian state added that the Western democracies should direct their attention towards the Black Sea Region "before it's too late", to avoid replication of the events that had happened in the Western Balkans.

4. Civil Society Cooperation

Ukraine and Romania have already achieved some success in their bilateral relations. One example of successful settlement of a dispute is acceptance of the judgment of the International Court on Serpent Island (a judgment of the International Court of Justice rendered in 2009 provided for delineation of the continental shelf and the exclusive economic

zones, thus awarding Romania an important segment for prospecting deposits⁸). Both countries acceptance of the judgment was a sign of maturity in their bilateral relations.

Putting aside the territorial disputes, the window of opportunity created out of the Romanians' empathy towards Ukraine has put in place the necessary preconditions for improved relations and progress in the other fields which have been highlighted by civil society activists and think tanks for about decade.

A significant step ahead is the direct flight between Kyiv and Bucharest. That's a significant contribution to people-to-people cooperation.

Besides, cross-border cooperation and small border movement also have a significant impact on improvement of the bilateral relations. Nevertheless, of importance is also the fact that Ukrainians and the Ukrainian diplomats understood why Romania had to align the level of border protection to the Schengen requirements, and this has not turned out to be an additional obstacle in the way of cross-border cooperation.

Except for cross-border cooperation, Ukrainian-based organizations receive funding through the Department of Interethnic Relations. Additionally, MoFA provides Official Development Assistance⁹, and Ukraine, as one of the key funding priorities, received support in border management and immigration matters.

Regarding the cross-border smuggling, the Romanian party has never accused, either formally or informally, their Ukrainian counterparts of facilitating smuggling. The feeling is prevalingly positive.

According to the Romanian experts, the crisis in Syria put Ukraine in an advantageous position because it shows Romanians what being a migrant and refugee means, and if the Romanians are to chose between Syrians and Romanians, they would obviously choose the Ukrainians.

Romanian society is becoming more open to Ukraine and this has already become a trend. Some Romanians perceive Ukraine as a potential ally in case the conflict between Russia and

⁸ <http://rbd.doingbusiness.ro/articles/romania-and-the-russia-ukraine-conflict/2977/2>

⁹ <https://www.mae.ro/en/node/2062>

the West escalate, since the majority of Romanians have little trust, if any, in Russia. The general understanding is that cooperation is a must for the sake of common security.

Cooperation within the Wider Black Sea region, under the Black Sea NGO Forum or the Romanian-Ukrainian civil society forum, or by building bridges between the young leaders of the region, could become an effective platform for tackling the aforementioned problems.

Another, less formalized, but no less efficient platform for interaction of civil society activists is the Ukraine-Romania International Experts' Consortium¹⁰. This group has been created as under the Project "Ukraine-Romania Relations: Perceptions, Perspectives, Priorities" supported by the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (Project of the US German Marshall Fund). It is operated as a platform for the exchange of opinions regarding the burning issues in the bilateral relations between Ukraine and Romania, discussing the new initiatives, and sharing research findings. At first, the Consortium included members of only few organizations which were implementing joint projects, but during the first two years of operation, the Consortium managed to draw the attention of many experts and scholars from different countries of the world.

Although the majority of the experts are from Ukraine and Romania, there are also experts from Moldova, as well as from other countries of Western Europe. A major achievement of the Consortium is the fact that it does not include only experts and researchers, but also the representatives of decision-making community – those who have a direct impact on the decisions that affect the Ukrainian-Romanian relations. Among the relevant actors, we can list representatives of the local self-government, diplomatic corps, etc. Today, the Consortium includes more than 410 members, as either followers of, or direct participants in the discussions.

5. Security and Economy

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/215298688542236/>

Ukraine and Romania take important steps forward in the field of *security cooperation*. An agreement to boost military and other forms of cooperation was signed with the new government of Ukraine on 10 March 2014.

Romania has also set the foundation for an enhanced cooperation between the Navies of the two countries that share the same values. In this regard, Romania coordinates its regional policy with the NATO allies and the EU. It could hardly be supposed that Romania will pursue other initiatives without approval by, and consultations with NATO and the United States, Germany and France. However, in the opinion of the experts interviewed, Ukraine can and should suggest any counter-proposals that may be acceptable for NATO. More cooperation on soft issues and enhanced interoperability are definitely needed. The education and training reform under NATO and the EU umbrella is the most efficient format.

Direct cooperation with the Romanians can be of added value. Romania has experience in both adapting and adopting the security proposals made by the Western allies. This a great premise for a better cooperation between Ukraine and Romania in the future.

Additionally, division of the eastern flank between North and South is another problem that can be tackled, despite the problems and priorities being often neglected in the South. The A2AD bubble, however, is a problem of both the North and the South.

Regarding the *economic cooperation*, according to the data obtained in the interviews with Romanian experts, despite the decline in the bilateral trade between Romania and Ukraine, there is still a lot of room for mutually beneficial economic ties.

Energy is a promising field for the economic cooperation. One of the priorities for both Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova is building interconnectors to join European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity, and having in place interconnectors with a safe transmission network that is capable of meeting Europe's current and future needs and also of being part of European Electricity Grid Initiative (EEGI). This is a challenge for the national operators, but Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, as signatories of the Energy Community Treaty, have to take advantage of their membership of the European energy market. Some progress has already be reported, for instance the interconnector with Slovakia, but there is still much to be done.

In 2016, the gas network operators in Romania and Ukraine signed interconnection agreements. These agreements are a crucial step towards opening the Trans-Balkan pipeline system to transport gas and a trade in line with EU rules, and have already been welcomed by the European Commission.

Companies that are likely to be interested in the development of the respective economic relations are oil and gas producers: “Romgaz”¹¹ (Romgaz is the largest natural gas producer and the main supplier in Romania. It is a joint stock company owned 70% by the Romanian State) and “Petrom”¹² (OMV Petrom is a subsidiary of OMV and the group is the largest oil and gas group in South-Eastern Europe. OMV Petrom is the main crude oil producer in Romania and supplies around half of the internal gas production – joint projects could be developed with “Naftogaz”).

Transgaz¹³ – a state-owned company, which is the technical operator of the national natural gas transmission system in Romania, Transelectrica¹⁴ – an electricity transmission system operator in Romania – can also be potential partners for their peer Ukrainian companies.

Furthermore, there are Romanian local companies well equipped and developed for drilling wells that can provide services to Ukrainian counterparts at significantly lower costs. Romania can assist Ukraine in drilling good wells at low prices and in a cost efficient way.

While the energy projects in the Black Sea Region remain questionable, their potential cannot be questioned. The reserves can only be explored if wells are drilled. Besides, the Russian military aggression against Ukraine and annexation of Crimea render further explorations almost impossible.

Experts also agree that the potential of cooperation in trade is far from being exhausted. However, some voices argue that the regional projects with the involvement of the Republic of Moldova have but a theoretical potential to be successful, while the economic potential of both Romania and Ukraine is significantly higher. At the same time, some experts believe that such a trilateral format could prove more attractive for the EU, the US and Chinese

¹¹ <https://www.romgaz.ro/>

¹² <https://www.omvpetrom.com/portal/01/petromcom/header/Home>

¹³ <http://new.transgaz.ro/en>

¹⁴ <http://www.transelectrica.ro/web/tel/home>

investors. Moreover, while being beneficial for all three countries, it also demands that more efforts are put in the political dialog and for a correlation with the strategies of the international economic players, based on their own determinations.

As positive experiences, the experts indicted that, back in 2013, there were medical companies ready to invest into private hospitals in Ukraine. Equally, some donors were eager to invest in urban development in Crimea before the annexation. In 2012, UNDP carried out a rehabilitation programme in Crimea. The conflict has changed the situation dramatically, but today Romanians perceive Ukraine as a wounded brother and they are willing to help; for this reason the market remains potentially interesting.

Regarding cross-border cooperation programmes: the two countries participated in the Joint Operational Program Romania–Ukraine–Republic of Moldova 2007-2013, one of the EU’s European Neighborhood and Partnership Instruments financed with EUR 130 million. However, in the opinion of the experts interviewed, both Romania and Poland, as the EU’s border countries, could have done more to bring money to the projects at the Eastern borders of the EU. In this regard, the recent governmental instability in Romania (a crisis that broke out after the fire in a Bucharest nightclub (“Colectiv”)) has been an obstacle for undertaking full-scale activities in this field.

It is worth mentioning also that in absence of a sound judicial reform, it is virtually impossible to attract Romanian business to Ukraine. Corruption is the obstacle that prevents Romanians from getting more involved.

Eventually, people and businesses follow the opportunities, and if there is a risk that your property can be bombed, you would probably choose another destination for your investments. Therefore, the Ukrainian government needs to put in place a straightforward policy: providing reliable information to the interested businesses about both the areas where it is safe to invest, as well as those where the security situation remains unstable and beyond the control of the national government. Businesses need to see stability.

The consultations with the experts in Kyiv suggest that business cooperation could be supported and intermediated by the Romanian and Ukrainian Chambers of Commerce. A first step could be making available specific information about the respective economic needs of

each country to the business environments in both Romania, and Ukraine. While Ukraine has developed models of good cooperation (such as with Poland, Lithuania, etc.), the analyst Yaroslav Matiychyk, Director of the Strategic and Security Studies Group in Kyiv, points to the lack of any efforts, including in business matters. Businessmen are unaware of what they could sell in the neighboring country. He proposes that bilateral forums are put in place for producers of materials and goods, providers of logistic services, etc. following the Poland-Germany model. Governments can too step in to define the economic cooperation priorities.

People in Romania do not understand much of the situation in Ukraine. They need to be better informed on this issue. This applies to businesses, too. International studies on that could prove useful for both each of the countries, and Brussels. The independent bodies, for instance trustworthy international institutions, supported by the private businesses, could be used as sources of such information. Under such circumstances, we believe that the pressure on Ukraine should be relieved, while being reassured of the support its sovereignty enjoys in its prevailing fight for security and territorial integrity. After losing Crimea, Ukraine should be handled with softer gloves to some extent, given the difficult situation it needs to deal with in the East; this is another reason for Kyiv to temper its approach to the issue of minorities.

Both Romania, and Ukraine are members of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. This organization outlines multilateral political and economic initiatives that are aimed at fostering interaction at the Black Sea in order to keep the peace, stability and prosperity, as well as good neighborly relations across the region. Thus, both states can participate in cooperation structures in the Black Sea or Danube region, advancing joint initiatives. An idea that could be looked into deeper is that the NGO Forum in the Black Sea Region - a project that is supported and financed by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Black Sea Trust Foundation - is managed alternatively by the states at the Black Sea. The Romanian MoFA showed interest in the Black Sea cooperation, that has acquired a particular strategic dimension after 2014, when the layout of the Black Sea became first a disputed topic. Under such circumstances, Romania is increasingly becoming the most attractive EU member to advance an enhanced role of the EU in the Black Sea Region, under the umbrella of a strategic approach.

Conclusions and Recommendations

To conclude this study, we will try to estimate the odds that the two countries cooperate on much better and mutually beneficial terms in the future. We have identified some windows of opportunity for cooperation:

- Strengthening the expert communities in both countries, and empowering them to start developing the relations between Ukraine and Romania into a strategic partnership within the Wider Black Sea Region.
- Cooperation on cyber security fundamental rights and security across the region are common problems, in particular given that Romania has assumed a leadership role in safeguarding the cyber security of Ukraine, and new security measures are being implemented under a Trust Fund to build Ukraine's cyber defence capacity, in the aftermath of the events triggered by the tensed Russian-Ukrainian relations, and as a response to the needs of the North Atlantic Alliance to consolidate its eastern border.
- Cooperation in the energy sector

The lack of information, and thus the distorted perception of Ukrainians, remain problems for Romania to solve, despite the recent warm-up of the relations and the improved image of Ukrainians. People in Romania do not understand much of the situation in Ukraine. They need to be better informed on this issue. This applies to businesses, too. International studies on that could prove useful for both each of the countries, and Brussels. The independent bodies (e.g. trustworthy international institutions), supported by the private businesses, could be used as sources of such information.

More information is needed from Ukraine: on the current developments, the history of Ukraine, as well as the historical relations between Romania and Ukraine. That could help counterweighting the stereotype that Ukraine has never existed, and reversing the Russia-imposed myth that Ukraine never had statehood. The information about Ukraine can be conveyed also via the EU delegations. Still, direct contacts are equally more important and powerful.

New faces on TV and in the social media are desperately needed. Joint media initiatives, as well as investigative media projects can be of added value. Thus, the interest for Kyiv could be enhanced, by shaping messages adequately, creating the possibility that true experts are invited to Ukraine to take part in TV shows, etc. The politicians that are currently very supportive towards Ukrainians need also to be brought in the spotlight. The relations could be further promoted via the Internet channels, and establishing personal contacts (for instance, at student level).

Furthermore, Romanians could facilitate the access of Ukrainians to the labor market more than they are doing now, by lowering the requirements imposed to foreign workers employed in Romania (for instance, for high profile workers, the minimum three average salaries, while for unskilled workers, one average salary), and other barriers. This is something to be featured in the political discourse because Romania can pass a governmental ordinance to reduce the bureaucracy or the procedures for certain citizens for a certain period of time. The unemployment rate in Bucharest is 1.4%, which means that Bucharest and its surrounding areas are in demand for employees (if the Ministry of Labor does consider these opportunities, it would still have only a limited room for maneuver under the EU restrictive regulations concerning the third-country nationals, including the Eastern parties).

People and businesses usually follow the opportunities, and if there is a risk that your property can be bombed, you would probably choose another destination for your investments. Therefore, the Ukrainian government needs to put in place a straightforward policy: providing reliable information to the interested businesses about both the areas where it is safe to invest, as well as those where the security situation remains unstable and beyond the control of the national government. Businesses need to see stability.

People in the border areas feel much more comfortable with the Ukrainians, know them better and are eager to go forward with cooperation and promoting Ukraine as a partner country.

More students' exchanges, more business connections and more contacts in general can bring the countries closer together. This can help promoting Romanian in Ukraine, and Ukraine in

Romania, and provide genuine opportunities to learn more about our common values and the European identity.

Romania seems to be interested in cooperation with the Visegrad countries and Poland in particular, and the cooperation with them plus Ukraine can be very helpful for the development of this format.

Another instrument for the improvement of the relations is the cultural institute. Therefore, the opening of the cultural institute in Ukraine equals to an investment in developing the relations and, provided that the institute expands its activities not only to Romanians but also to Ukrainians, the barriers between the two countries could be taken down, and a new agenda for the bilateral relations could be put in place.

Cooperation in consultancy could prove of added value, provided that development of the economic relations really takes off. Ukraine can become the Romania's gateway to the East, while Romania the Ukraine's gateway to the Balkans.

IT is another area where Ukrainians and Romanians have good prospects of cooperation.

Another the promising direction is tourism. Ukraine is an increasingly more interesting travel destination for the affordable prices offered, and secure travel destinations; despite the war in the East, resorts such as Odessa could still be better perceived than Turkey. Provided that the infrastructure is further developed, including a road to connect Romania to Odessa, this dimension is likely to have a positive impact on development.

Today, cultural cooperation appears stuck in the 19th century, although there is a lot of things that can be done for the modern young artists, who do not feel connected. People on both sides of the border have to be anchored in the new realities. Interethnic cooperation and multicultural projects in the areas with Ukrainian minority from Romania, and Romanian minority in Ukraine. The communities of Romanians and Ukrainians could be equally involved in cultural projects. The fact that Romanian formally recognizes the Ukrainian minority could be an advantage for consolidating the cultural bilateral relations. Romania and Ukraine could use the Tatar minority, present in both countries, as cooperation liaison. Romanian is only promoted in the board regions of Ukraine, and targets specifically the

Romanian minority, and not the general population. This could be in line with the provisions of art. 11 of the Treaty for Good Neighborly and Cooperation Relations that read "the contracting parties will support enhanced contacts between their citizens, as well as between the non-governmental civic organizations and associations in the two countries". Kyiv proposed setting up "clubs" to foster academic cooperation and interaction, not only within the minority communities, but across the country.

Last but not least, a trilateral of interests could come into shape: Romania-Ukraine-Moldova. For Romania, Moldova is the most important country in the region. It is in Romania's best interest that Ukraine is stable, as the developments in Ukraine are liable to have a material impact on Moldova, and vice-versa. Under such circumstances, Bucharest and Kyiv are following with the interest the developments on the political scene in Chișinău where the month of November sees the electoral debates in full progress. Ukraine and Moldova are now faced with separatist regions that threaten their integrity and sovereignty.

In the end, this Analysis Paper provides the Romanian and Ukrainian parties with additional resources that can be tapped in to increase the trust between experts and the civil society representatives, as well as the stakeholders in the field of democratic development and security, and to make a contribution to development of joint regional actions that target both Ukraine and Romania.

Annex 1

Interview Frame

Organizing the interviews

The interview will be scheduled with the support of the host partner. Data collection is due to take place in September-October 2016 in both Bucharest and Kyiv. The Ukrainian expert will travel to Bucharest, where the Romanian project team will arrange the meetings with the interviewees. The Bucharest expert will travel to Ukraine, where the Ukrainian expert will assist in organizing the interviews. Resources needed: transport and accommodation in Bucharest/Kyiv.

Introduction to the interview

Project presentation and gaining consent for tape recording, if relevant, at the start of the interview.

Information on the objective of interview and the aim of the study will be provided to each interviewee. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. Each participant will be asked if s/he consents to be interviewed and for the interview to be recorded using a digital tape recorder.

Interview Guide

Historical and Cultural Issues

What are, in your opinion, the main points of disagreement in the relations between Ukraine and Romania?

What steps have been taken by the two countries, after 1940, to build mutual trust and cooperation?

What are the points of disagreement that have not yet been satisfactorily addressed by the representatives of the two nations?

How would you comment on the situation of the Romanian minority in Ukraine/Ukrainian minority in Romania?

To what extent the citizenship policies of Bucharest undermine Ukraine's statehood?

To what extent Ukraine's policies regarding minorities affect Romania's interests?

Are there any reasonable concerns about Romania's possible territorial claims or any active intervention by the Romanian authorities in the issue of the Romanians living in the territories Northern Bucovina and Southern Basarabia in Ukraine?

What impact would the opening of a Romanian cultural institute in Chernivtsi have?

Political Attitudes

To what extent the mutual perceptions have been influenced by the fact that Ukraine was a member state, while Romania a satellite state of the Soviet Union?

Would you please briefly depict the political views expressed in society on the issue of the Romanian-Ukrainian relations by all the political groups?

Note: political programs of the political parties, the governmental program of the political party/coalition of parties that runs government, statements of political leaders regarding the foreign policy, etc.

What are the major subjects addressed by the civil society in both countries?

Note: the final report will present a list of the main projects/activities initiated by civil society actors in both countries, over the last 5 years

What are the institutions, organizations, associations and publications interested in Romanian-Ukrainian bilateral relations, active relationship - at least 3 examples?

Note: the final report will include a list thereof

How has the sea border and Bâstroe channel dispute influenced the overall relations between the two countries?

Civil Society Cooperation

Can you provide examples of historical divergences between the two countries as perceived by the population? (for the historians and sociologists interviewed – based on references/empirical data)

To what extent Romanian/Ukrainian minority's rights are put on the state institutions and non-state actors' agenda?

How the stories of Romanians/Ukrainians in Ukraine/Romania are construed by the media, the government and the civil society actors?

Security and Economy

Romania is preparing for parliamentary elections in the fall, resulting also into a change of government – as main factor of the foreign policy. What would be the key challenge for the new executive in Bucharest in terms of the bilateral relations?

How will Ukraine position itself towards the joint "common NATO" fleet aimed at deterring Russia in the Black Sea? Are the Ukrainians likely to elect a pro-NATO/E.U. new parliament or rather one willing to negotiate, for instance, the status of Crimea?

Do you think that the common NATO fleet in the Black Sea will worsen Ukraine's relations with Russia?

Would the technical cooperation have a greater chance of success? (For instance, the Romanian-Ukrainian Joint Presidential Commission (CMPRU) or bilateral trade)

Target Groups

Think tank experts/analysts

NGO representatives

Diplomats

Members of the academic environment

Annex 2 List of experts interviewed

Ukrainian experts
Dmytro Shulga, manager at International Renaissance Foundation (Open Society Network)
Yaroslav Matiychyk, Director at Strategic and Security Studies Group
Sergiy Hackman, professor with Chernivtsi University, cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Romania specialist
Nataliya Belitser, Minority Rights expert at Pylyp Orlyk Institute for Democracy
Oleksandr Skipalsky, general ret., Ex deputy head of SSU, military & security analyst
Vasyl Filipchuk, President of the International Center for Policy Studies
Grygoriy Perepelytsia, professor with the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine
Mykhailo Honchar, President of the Center for Global Studies "Strategy XXI"
Romanian experts
Răzvan Nicolescu, energy expert/ former minister of Energy, Romania
Mircea Mocanu, Head of IOM Romania
Mihai Sebe, analyst
Ciprian Ciucu, Romanian Center for European Policies
Agnes Nicolescu, expert in international relations
Iulia Joja, defence and military expert
Valentin Burada, expert
Ana Aelenei, Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation,

German Marshall Fund
Prof. Mihail Ionescu, National School of Political and Administrative Studies, International Relations Department
Șerban Filip Ciuculescu, senior researcher with the Institute for Political Studies of Defence and Military History
Prof. Liliana Popescu, National School for Political and Administrative Studies
Adrian Niculescu, Professor/Historian, National School for Political Studies
Sergiu Panainte, expert

Special thanks to the Romanian Ambassador to Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Cristian-Leon Țurcanu, the former Romanian Ambassador to Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Cornel Ionescu and His Excellency Mr. Teofil Rendiuk, Chargé d'affaires, Ukraine Embassy in Bucharest.