



Funded by the
European Union

International Conference **Identity, Security and Inclusivity** in border areas of South East Europe

Oradea, 10-11 June 2026



EURO
INCLUS

Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence
Project 101127601

<https://euroinclus.eu>



EuroINCLUS Research Center
Jean Monnet Center of Excellence

International Conference

***IDENTITY, SECURITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN
BORDER AREAS OF SOUTH EAST EUROPE***

.....

10 - 11 June 2026
Oradea, Romania

The Jean Monnet international conference will seek to identify and analyse the process of societal resilience in the context of the numerous sources of insecurity and inter-ethnic, inter-religious conflicts and the difficulties of integrating minorities, migrants and refugees from Southern and Eastern Europe.

The topics of the conference identify complex and multiple needs related to generating adequate public policies, consolidating knowledge, and proposing examples of good practice. Political instability, social insecurity, and even armed conflicts often find their sources in the asymmetric management of issues related to diversity, integration, and the inclusion of all communities.

The conference is organized by the University of Oradea, the EuroINCLUS Research Center - Jean Monnet Center of Excellence, the Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Science and Communication Science, and the Department of International Relations and European Studies, within the framework of Jean Monnet Project 101127601, EUROINCLUS, ***Identity, Security and Inclusivity in Border Areas of South East Europe.***

In this sense, we propose to find solutions, processes and elements which can be defined and used as actors involved in policy making at EU level, but, most importantly, actors that can channel EU values at the local level by promoting governance and openness to the citizens.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- The official languages of the conference are *English and Romanian*.
- Accepted proposals come from various disciplines, including political science, European studies and international relations, history, philosophy, sociology, law, anthropology, and linguistics.
- The conference will be held in a hybrid format (in person and online). Presentations may also be delivered online, and online participation will be available by invitation from the organizing committee.
- The organizers cover the printing and publication costs for all conference materials, including the volume containing the articles.
- Selected papers will be proposed for publication in the conference volume and in the following journals: *Inclusivity* and *Annals of the University of Oradea, Series of International Relations and European Studies* (indexed in several international databases).

Conference Programme

Organizers:

- University of Oradea
- EuroINCLUS Research Center - Jean Monnet Center of Excellence
- Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Science and Communication Science
- Department of International Relations and European Studies

The conference was financed by the Jean Monnet Center of Excellence
Project: 101127601, EUROINCLUS

The contents of the present material and its annexes do not necessarily reflect the opinion or the position of the European Commission

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Mihai Ovidiu Cercel, *National University of Political Studies and Public Administration*

Florentina Chirodea, *University of Oradea*

Melania-Gabriela Ciot, *Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca*

Anatoliy Kruglashov, *Chernivtsi Yuriy Fedkovych National University, University of Lodz, Poland*

Gabriel Moisa, *University of Oradea*

Natalia Putină, *Moldova State University*

Eduard Simion, *University of Oradea*

Alexandru Solcan, *Moldova State University*

Jovana Škorić, *University of Novi Sad*

Bogdan Ştefanachi, *“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iaşi*

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Coordinators, members of Jean Monnet Center of Excellence “*Identity, Security and Inclusivity in border areas of South East Europe*”:

Karla Barth, *University of Oradea*

Alina Stoica, *University of Oradea*

Luminița Şoproni, *University of Oradea*

Sorin Şipos, *University of Oradea*

Polgár István, *University of Oradea*

Mircea Brie, *University of Oradea* – project coordinator

Members:

Ioana Bordeianu, *University of Oradea*

Mariana Buda, *University of Oradea*

Cosmin Chiriac, *University of Oradea*

Cristina Dogot, *University of Oradea*

Dorin Dolghi, *University of Oradea*

Mihai Maci, *University of Oradea*

Mirela Mărcuț, *University of Oradea*

Mészáros Edina, *University of Oradea*

Laurențiu Petrila, *University of Oradea*

Constantin Țoca, *University of Oradea*

Wednesday, June 10

09:30 - 10:00 — **Participant arrival and registration**

Criș County Museum (Muzeul Țării Crișurilor)

10:00 - 10:30 — **Official opening of the conference**

Criș County Museum (Muzeul Țării Crișurilor)

Speakers:

Prof.univ.dr.habil. Sorin Șipoș, Vice-Rector for International Relations of the University of Oradea

Prof.univ.dr.habil. Gabriel Moisa, Dean of the Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Science and Communication Science, University of Oradea

Prof.univ.dr.habil. Karla Barth, Dean of the Faculty of Social-Humanistic Sciences

Prof.univ.dr.habil. Mircea Brie, University of Oradea – project coordinator

Scientific debates

Plenary Session

10 June 2026 | 10:30 - 12:30 | Criş County Museum (Muzeul Țării Crişurilor)

Chairperson: Mircea Brie, University of Oradea - project coordinator

Keynote speakers:

10:30 - 10:50

Radu Carp (Bucharest, Romania) - *What kind of European integration for which countries - will Hungary policy towards the Western Balkans change after the parliamentary elections of 12 April 2026?*

10:50 - 11:10

Ana Pantea (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) - *Competing Narratives, Limited Dialogue: EU–China Relations in an Era of Rivalry*

11:10 - 11:30

Karla Barth, Marius Țepelea (Oradea, Romania) - *Borderland Education and Multicultural Encounters: Perspectives from a Central Eastern European Context*

11:30 - 11:50

Horváthy Balázs, Knapp László (Győr, Hungary) - *Investor citizenship schemes in the Western Balkans and the EU enlargement*

11:50 - 12:10

Mircea Brie (Oradea, Romania) - *Identity as a Geopolitical Border in South-East Europe*

12:10 - 12:30 **Debates and Q&A**

13:00 - 15:00 **Lunch break**

PANEL 1 – 1st session

Cooperation and public policies towards the EU

10 June 2026 | Room V04, University of Oradea

Chairpersons: Cristina Maria Matiuța, Pavel Vintilă

15:00 - 15:15

Cristina Maria Matiuța (Oradea, Romania) - *Fighting corruption and transparency of political parties' finances as prerequisites of the EU's accession: The case of the Republic of Moldova*

15:15 - 15:30

Alin Moise (Bucharest, Romania) - *French and Chinese Projection of Influence in the Republic of Moldova. A Comparative Analysis of Trade relations and Bilateral agreements*

15:30 - 15:45

Pavel Vintilă (Chișinău, Republic of Moldova) - *National Identity as an Object of Analysis in Contemporary Political Science: A Theoretical Framework and a Case Study of the Republic of Moldova*

15:45 - 16:00

Cristian Bențe (Arad, Romania) - *Framing Societal Security in European Border Regions: Terminology, Threat Perception, and Policy Communication*

16:00 - 16:15

Christian Bergmann (Bern, Switzerland) - *Swiss Contributions to the Hungarian-Romanian Border Region. Did Switzerland Miss out on an Important Region?*

16:15 - 16:30

Ioana Bordeianu, Florentina Chirodea, Luminița Șoproni (Oradea, Romania) - *Reframing border security: Frontex, identity, and inclusivity in Southeast Europe*

16:30 - 16:45

Constantin-Vasile Țoca (Oradea, Romania) - *Cross-border Synergies in the Western Balkans: Territorial Cooperation and Development Programs, Instruments and Strategies towards European Integration*

16:45 - 17:00

Dan Apățeanu (Oradea, Romania) - *Digital inclusion in public services: Challenges and strategies*

17:00 - 17:15 **Debates, Q&A session**

17:15 - 17:30 **Coffee break**

PANEL 1 – 2nd session

Chairpersons: Edina Mészáros, Bardhok Bashota

17:30 - 17:45

Mészáros Edina (Oradea, Romania) - *Romania's Changing Migration Landscape: Toward a Destination Country for Third-Country Nationals?*

17:45 - 18:00

Bardhok Bashota (Prishtina, Kosovo) - *Resource Security and Sovereignty: 'Ujmani Lake' as a Strategic Node in the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue*

18:00 - 18:15

Claudiu Gabriel Bonaciu, Horia Laurențiu Cartiș (Oradea, Romania) - *The Impact of Strategic Shifts in the 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plan on Non-Agricultural Diversification and Social Inclusion: A Case Study of Bihor County, Romania*

18:15 - 18:30

Răzvan Chiș (Oradea, Romania) - *Disinformation as a Challenge to Republica Moldova's Integration into the European Union*

18:30 - 18:45

Alina Stoica, Bianca Larisa Gaidoș (Oradea, Romania) - *Romanian Border Cities and the European Spirit: Cultural Diplomacy as a Tool of Urban Inclusion*



18:45 - 19:00

Alba Gerdeci (Tirana, Albania) - *Human Rights in Albania: Are Digital Policies Deepening Inequality?*



19:00 - 19:15

Nataliia Nechaieva-Yuriichuk (Chernivtsi, Ukraine) - *Strategic Objectives in the Russian War: Identity and Democracy (on the examples of Ukraine and Moldova)*



19:15 - 19:30

Viona Rashica, Afrim Hoti (Prishtina, Kosovo) - *From Federation to Independent States: The Legal Challenges of Treaty Succession after the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*

19:30 - 20:00 **Debates, Q&A session**

20:00 **Dinner**

PANEL 2 – 1st session (online)



Socio-economic features and actions

10 June 2026 | Room V014, University of Oradea

Chairperson: Cosmin Chiriac



15:00 - 15:15

Bogdan Bolboacă (Bucharest, Romania) - *Between Alert and Abandonment: Rural Border Communities in Romania and the Institutional Gap in Wartime Proximity Security*



15:15 - 15:30

Victoria Bevziuc (Chişinău, Republic of Moldova) - *Republic of Moldova and Ukraine: institutional policies, response capacities, and the evolution of information resilience in the regional context*



15:30 - 15:45

Lorena Teoacă (Bucharest, Romania) - *From Line to Interface: Romania – Republic of Moldova Border Cooperation under EU Integration (2015-2025)*



15:45 - 16:00

Diana Vardianu (Bucharest, Romania) - *Hybrid Identity Model, Soft Power and Multiple Modernities: Turkis Cultural Diplomacy in Southeast Europe (2020–2024)*



16:00 - 16:15

Lucia Şchiopu (Chişinău, Republic of Moldova) - *Professional Development for Inclusive Language Teaching in Republic of Moldova*

16:15 - 16:30

Cosmin Chiriac (Oradea, Romania) - *Ethnic and political context in intermunicipal cooperation. The case of Intercommunity Development Associations in Romania*



16:30 - 16:45

Manuela Ștefănuț (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) - *From crisis to control: the securitization of migration in the context of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum*



16:45 - 17:00

Svetlana Cebotari (Chișinău, Republic of Moldova) – *Strategic Pakistan – Saudi Arabia Alliance in the Context of Regional Security Challenges*

17:00 - 17:15 **Debates, Q&A session**

17:15 - 17:30 **Coffee break**

PANEL 2 – 2nd session (online)

Chairperson: Cosmin Chiriac



17:30 - 17:45

Horățiu Bontea (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) - *A New Dayton Agreement? Balancing Ethnic Divisions and International Governance*



17:45 - 18:00

Andreea Negrău (New York, USA) - *Cultural Diplomacy as a Tool for Cooperation and Inclusion within European Identity – The Case of the Romanian Cultural Institute in New York within the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC)*



18:00 - 18:15

Maria Augusta Bârsan-Moigrădean (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) - *Security Through Integration? The EU Enlargement Process as a Stabilization Tool in South-East Europe*



18:15 - 18:30

Siyka Chavdarova (Sofia, Bulgaria) - *Inclusive education policies regarding cultural diversity in Bulgaria*



18:30 - 18:45

Natalia Putină (Chişinău, Republic of Moldova) - *Societal Cohesion as a Determinant of Societal Resilience in the Republic of Moldova*



18:45 - 19:00

Elif Cagatay (Wien, Austria) - *Affective Politics of Migration: Emotional Discourses on Migration in Austria*



19:00 - 19:15

Peter Odion Irabor (Osogbo, Nigeria) - *Trafficking and Smuggling of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria to Europe: Causes and Strategies of European Union to Migration Governance*



19:15 - 19:30

Yevheniya Yuriychuk, Oleksandr Fesenko (Chernivtsi, Ukraine) - *Inclusiveness of electronic elections as a necessary component of European integration: the example of Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia*



19:15 - 19:30

Oleksandr Korop (Chernivtsi, Ukraine) - *Measuring Wartime Legitimacy in Ukraine: Quantitative Indicators of Democratic Resilience in the Context of EU Enlargement*

19:45 - 20:00 **Debates, Q&A session**

20:00 **Dinner**

PANEL 3 – 1st session

Inclusion and Diversity in Border Areas

10 June 2026 | Room V015, University of Oradea

Chairpersons: Marius Tătar, Pavlo Molochko

15:00 - 15:15

Marius Ioan Tătar (Oradea, Romania) - *The Erosion of Solidarity with Ukrainian Refugees: Disinformation Mechanisms and Societal Insecurity in Romania*

15:15 - 15:30

Pavlo Molochko, Oleksandr Haina (Chernivtsi, Ukraine) - *The Impact of Public Opinion on the EU Security Architecture: from Institutional Integration to Societal Resilience*

15:30 - 15:45

Michelle Nica (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) - *Waste Identity: Environmental Governance and European Integration in a Multicultural Border Community in Romania*



15:45 - 16:00

Pénzes János (Debrecen, Hungary) - *Transforming ethnic patterns of border areas – case of Northeastern Hungary*

16:00 - 16:15

Marian Sitar (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), **Olga Lukina** (Bruxelles, Belgium), **Yuliia Horianinska** (Bratislava, Slovakia) - *Beyond Emergency Response: Community-Based Integration Ecosystems for Ukrainian Refugees in Romania, Slovakia, and Germany*

16:15 - 16:30

Leon Petroj (Oradea, Romania) - *The Impact of Protest Movements and European Integration in Serbia: Between Democratic Mobilization and Strategic Ambiguity*

16:30 - 16:45

Radics Zsolt (Debrecen, Hungary) - *Types of tourism development projects in the central section of the Hungarian-Romanian border*

16:45 - 17:00

Luminița Șoproni, Florentina Chirodea (Oradea, Romania) - *Social Economy Business Models and Sustainable Growth: An Analysis of Emerging Regional Dynamics*

17:00 - 17:15 **Debates, Q&A session**

17:15 - 17:30 **Coffee break**

PANEL 3 – 2nd session

Chairpersons: Marius Tătar, Pavlo Molochko

17:30 - 17:45

Bottyán Zsolt (Oradea, Romania) - *Infrastructural Interdependence, Energy Security, and Societal Inclusivity in East-Central Europe: Navigating the Geopolitical Crossroads*



17:45 - 18:00

Mircea-Ioan Matei (Warsaw, Poland) - *Development and Cooperation in the Border Area: Strengthening European Security through Romania–Poland Cooperation – A Frontex Operational Perspective*



18:00 - 18:15

Angela Solcan, Burea Svetlana (Chișinău, Republic of Moldova) – *A Multilingual Perspective on Communicative Competence and Developing Sustainable Peace in Education and Society*

18:15 - 18:30

Aurelian Roland Boiț (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) – *Neo-Chivalric Organizations as Actors of Societal Security: Cultural Microdiplomacy in the Practice of the Sovereign Templar Order Saint Martin*



18:30 - 18:45

Laura-Rebeca Stiegelbauer (Arad, Romania) - *Translating Identity, Mediating Inclusion: Language, AI, and Institutional Communication in Multilingual Border Regions*



18:45 - 19:00

Gelanda Shkurtaj (Tirana, Albania) - *Unequal social justice between the communist legacy and the vulnerable democracy*



19:00 - 19:15

Trón Zsuzsanna, Nádasi Levente (Debrecen, Hungary) - *EU convergence stability: assessment and new method*



19:15 - 19:30

Hiba Chaker (Casablanca, Morocco) - *The Asymmetry of Sources in Media Coverage of Islam and Immigration: Who Speaks, Who Is Spoken About?*

19:30 - 20:00 **Debates, Q&A session**

20:00 **Dinner**

Thursday, June 11

PANEL 1 – 3rd session

Cooperation and public policies towards the EU

11 June 2026 | Room V04, University of Oradea

Chairpersons: Mihai Cercel, István Polgár

09:30 - 09:45

Carmen Ungur Brehoi (Oradea, Romania) - *Constructing Regional Leadership Identity Through Local Media. Case Study: Ilie Bolojan*

09:45 - 10:00

Mihai Cercel, Andreea Roxana Țoi (Bucharest, Romania) - *The Rise of Subnational Actors: Romanian Cities' Adaptation to the International dynamics through City Diplomacy initiatives*

10:00 - 10:15

Alin Moise (Bucharest, Romania) - *The Construction of an Intercultural Society: Indigenous Minorities as an Integrative Factor. Case Study: The Sámi Indigenous Minority*

10:15 - 10:30

Jovana Škorić, Nenad Drašković (Novi Sad, Serbia) - *Social Protection Services and Social Inclusion in Novi Sad: Challenges and Development Perspectives*

10:30 - 10:45

Andreea Trifa (Oradea, Romania) - *Intercultural Dialogue and Diversity Management in Border Areas: Challenges and Opportunities for Social Inclusion in South-East Europe*

10:45 - 11:00

Gocha Kiguradze (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) - *Explaining Georgia's Stalled EU Accession Negotiations While Ukraine and Republic of Moldova Move Forward*

11:00 - 11:15 **Debates, Q&A session**

11:15 - 11:30 **Coffee break**

PANEL 1 – 4th session

Chairpersons: Mihai Cercel, István Polgár



11:30 - 11:45

Morena Shima (Mulhaxhia) (Tirana, Albania) - *The cross-border cooperation as a mechanism of transitional justice: The case of Albania*

11:45 - 12:00

Polgár István (Oradea, Romania) - *Refuge integration and inclusion in European border cities*



12:00 - 12:15

Anatoliy Kruglashov (Chernivtsi, Ukraine) - *Bridging over cleavages and gaps: democratic consolidation under wartime challenges and pressure*



12:15 - 12:30

Svetlana Cebotari (Chişinău, Republic of Moldova) – *Processus Centripetes et Centrifuges Dans L'Union Europeene: Dynamiques et de Fragmentation*



12:30 - 12:45

Radu Turcescu (Bucharest, Romania), **Laurențiu Petrila** (Oradea, Romania) – *Between Home and Europe: Competing Influences on Youth Electoral Behaviour in a Context of Migration and Integration*

12:45 - 13:00 **Debates, Q&A session**

13:00 - 15:00 **Lunch**

PANEL 2 – 3rd session

Socio-economic features and actions

11 June 2026 | Room V014, University of Oradea

Chairpersons: Florentina Chirodea, Simona Fer

09:30 - 09:45

Simona Fer (Oradea, Romania) - *Policy Perspectives on Societal Security in Europe through Fostering Communication, Diversity and Inclusion*

09:45 - 10:00

Alina Carmen Brihan (Oradea, Romania) - *The dynamics of the international actors' positioning towards the electoral processes in the Republic of Moldova (2024–2025)*

10:00 - 10:15

Andreea Vladiuc (Oradea, Romania) - *Societal Security and Minority Communities in the Municipality of Bălți*



10:15 - 10:30

Seline Semaan (Iași, Romania) - *Perception of the state and civic integration among Arab citizens in Israel: Insights from Voluntary national service in a democratic and multicultural state*

10:30 - 10:45 **Debates, Q&A session**

10:45 - 11:00 **Coffee break**

PANEL 2 – 4th session

Chairpersons: Florentina Chirodea, Simona Fer



11:00 - 11:15

Paulina Bieś-Srokosz, Michal Makuch (Częstochowa, Poland) - *Soft forms of public administration cooperation in border areas in Poland – between law and practice*

11:15 - 11:30

Mariana Svetlana Mureșan, Gabriela Ciot (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) - *The Case of the Ruthenians in Romania and Their Role in International Relations*



11:30 - 11:45

Bogdan Ștefanachi (Iași, Romania) - *The EU Geopolitical Perspective(s): Between Western Balkans and Eastern Neighborhood*



11:45 - 12:00

Adina – Ioana Hoza (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) - *Rule of Law or Rule of Politics? Enlargement Conditionality and the Uneven Protection of Minority Identities in South East Europe*



12:00 - 12:15

Cristina-Matilda Vănoagă (Alba Iulia, Romania), **Luciana-Mirela Butișcă** (Oradea, Romania) - *Socio-Economic Inclusion in the Context of the Just Transition and the European Green Deal: An Analysis of Governance and Political Discourse in the European Union and Romania*



12:15 - 12:30

Laurențiu Petrila (Oradea, Romania) - *Challenges to Romania's National Security in the Context of Rising Addictive Behaviours: Community-Based Inclusion Solutions*

12:30 - 12:45 **Debates, Q&A session**

13:00 - 15:00 **Lunch**

PANEL 4 – 1st session

Identitate, Ideologie și Incluziune Societală (Identity, Ideology and Societal Inclusion)

11 June 2026 | Room V015, University of Oradea

Chairpersons: Alexandru Solcan, Laura Ardelean

09:30 - 09:45

Alexandru Solcan (Chișinău, Republic of Moldova) – *Dimensiunea politică și societală în arhitectura de securitate a Republicii Moldova: interdependențe, vulnerabilități și opțiuni* (*The Political and Societal Dimension in the Security Architecture of the Republic of Moldova: Interdependencies, Vulnerabilities and Options*)

09:45 - 10:00

Sorin Șipoș, Cosmin Patca, Ioana Târb Blajec - *Comunitățile de slovaci din județele Bihor și Sălaj. Aspecte demografice (sec. XIX-prezent)* (*Slovak communities in Bihor and Sălaj counties. Demographic aspects (19th century-present)*)

10:00 - 10:15

Ana Orjuhovschi (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), **Mircea Brie** (Oradea, Romania) – *Comunitatea găgăuză din Republica Moldova. Identitatea ca frontieră și securitatea societală.* (*Gagauz Community from the Republic of Moldova. Identity as a Border and Societal Security*)

10:15 - 10:30

Laura Ardelean, Radu Romînașu (Oradea, Romania) – *Dincolo de refugiu: identitate, educație și ideologie. Un studiu de caz al grecilor din Bihor (1950–1960)* (*Beyond Refuge: Identity, Education, and Ideology. A Case Study of the Greeks in Bihor (1950–1960)*)



10:30 - 10:45

Marian Ionel Cutoi (Vienna, Austria) – *Construcția identității și dubla apartenență în cadrul comunității românești din Austria* (*Identity Construction and Dual Belonging within Romanian Community in Austria*)



10:45 - 11:00

Maria Gabriela Popuş (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) – De la identitate etnică la identitate religioasă: Comunitatea romilor penticostali din Lăzăreni (*From ethnic identity to religious identity: The community of Lăzăreni Pentecostal Roma*)



11:00 - 11:15

Fenesi Tibor (Oradea, Romania) – *Managementul informațiilor clasificate în România (Classified information management in Romania)*

11:15 - 11:30 **Debates, Q&A session**

11:30 - 11:45 **Coffee break**

PANEL 4 – 2nd session

Chairpersons: Alexandru Solcan, Laura Ardelean



11:45 - 12:00

Maria Enachi (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) - *AI-driven political communication and its implications for democratic resilience in the Republic of Moldova: consequences for EU accession conditionality*



12:00 - 12:15

Bűkfeyes-Rákossy Zsombor (Constanța, Romania) – *Institutional Cooperation and EU Funds Management in the Romania–Hungary Border Area*



12:15 - 12:30

Dorin Dolghi (Oradea, Romania) - *The concept of hybrid warfare and the shaping the EU strategic autonomy in the context of Russian-Ukrainian war*



12:30 - 12:45

Ștefania Mihai (Bucharest, Romania) - *The Politics of Identity: How Populist and Extremist Narratives in Romania Shape Public Opinion on Security and Inclusivity*

12:45 - 13:00 **Debates, Q&A session**

13:00 - 15:00 **Lunch**

CONCLUSIONS

11 June 2026 | 15:00 - 16:00 | Boardroom of the University of Oradea

Abstracts

Digital inclusion in public services: Challenges and strategies

Dan Apăteanu, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
danapateanu@yahoo.com

Abstract. This paper examines digital inclusion in public services, starting from the observation that the accelerated digitalization of public administrations risks deepening pre-existing social inequalities, especially for vulnerable groups. Building on a theoretical framework structured around the concept of the “digital divide” and its three levels—access, skills, and outcomes—the paper analyzes the technical, social, and institutional barriers that hinder the equitable adoption of digital government services (e-government). Drawing on a synthesis of recent scientific literature, it discusses the specific situation of older adults, low-income individuals, rural populations, and people with low levels of education, identifying factors such as insufficient digital skills, lack of trust in public administration, and poor design of electronic platforms as key drivers of digital exclusion. The study also examines the European and Romanian context, highlighting Romania’s persistent gap, as it ranked in 2024 among the last places in the EU both in e-government users and in basic digital skills. Based on the data and recommendations identified in the reviewed literature, the paper proposes a set of intervention strategies: tailored digital literacy programs, public–private partnerships, user-centered design, hybrid service delivery models, and policies that integrate digital inclusion into sustainable development objectives.

Beyond Refuge: Identity, Education, and Ideology. A Case Study of the Greeks in Bihor (1950–1960)

Laura Ardelean, *University of Oradea*, Oradea, Romania,
lala_ardelean@yahoo.com

Radu Romînaşu, *University of Oradea*, Oradea, România, rrd1214@yahoo.com

Abstract. The presentation explores the experience of Greek refugee children and families settled in Oradea after the Greek Civil War. Based primarily on archival sources preserved in the National Archives of Romania - Bihor County Service, the presentation analyzes the educational policies, living conditions, and ideological mechanisms through which the Romanian communist regime sought to integrate and reshape the identity of Greek

refugees. Particular attention is given to the role of schools, bilingual education, political indoctrination, and everyday life within the refugee community. By combining institutional documents with personal testimonies, the study highlights the complex interaction between humanitarian assistance, social adaptation, and ideological control in postwar Eastern Europe.

Resource Security and Sovereignty: ‘Ujmani Lake’ as a Strategic Node in the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue

Bardhok Bashota, University of Prishtina, Prishtina, Kosovo,
bardhok.bashota@uni-pr.edu

Abstract. This paper examines the geostrategic and legal significance of Ujmani Lake (Gazivoda) within the broader dispute over statehood, succession, and sovereignty between Kosovo and Serbia. Created in 1970 as an artificial lake, Ujman is located largely in northern Kosovo, while part of the boundary line between Kosovo and Serbia passes through its waters, making it a transboundary resource with major political implications.

Although relatively small in size, the lake is a crucial component of Kosovo’s national infrastructure and security. It supplies drinking water to more than one-third of the population, supports agricultural irrigation, and provides cooling water for the “Kosova A” and “Kosova B” thermal power plants, which generate nearly all of the country’s electricity. The paper argues that control over this resource is therefore directly linked to economic stability and state sovereignty.

On the legal level, the study considers Kosovo’s exclusion from the 2001 succession process of the former Yugoslavia and its recognition as a sui generis case through the Ahtisaari Plan (2007). Serbia continues to claim ownership of the lake in an effort to preserve influence over Kosovo’s critical infrastructure, while Kosovo asserts full sovereignty over the resources within its territory.

The paper also highlights the role of international mediation, with particular attention to the Washington Agreement (2020). The proposal for a feasibility study on joint lake management triggered strong political reactions in Pristina, where it was interpreted as a challenge to territorial integrity. The paper contends that Ujman functions as a litmus test for the effectiveness of EU- and U.S.-mediated dialogue, showing how disputes over natural resources can obstruct political normalization. It concludes that any durable

solution must balance technical cross-border management with the political realities that emerged after Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008.

Framing Societal Security in European Border Regions: Terminology, Threat Perception, and Policy Communication

Cristian Bente, "Vasile Goldiș" Western University of Arad, Arad, Romania,
bente.cristian@uvvg.ro

Abstract. In contemporary Europe, border regions represent complex environments where identity, security, and inclusion intersect under conditions of increased mobility, geopolitical tension, and institutional interdependence. Within this context, societal security is shaped not only by policies and institutional arrangements, but also by the ways in which threats, risks, and collective identities are framed and communicated.

This paper examines the role of discursive and terminological framing in shaping societal security in European border regions, with a particular focus on South East Europe. Drawing on perspectives from international relations and security studies, the analysis explores how key concepts such as threat, risk, resilience, and cooperation are constructed within policy and institutional discourse, and how these constructions influence both perception and response.

Particular attention is given to the relationship between terminology and threat perception. The way security issues are named and categorised affects how they are prioritised, how they are communicated to different audiences, and how policy responses are legitimised. In multilingual and multicultural border environments, these processes become more complex, as concepts circulate across linguistic and institutional boundaries.

The paper also addresses the challenges arising from conceptual ambiguity and inconsistency in the use of security-related terminology, especially in cross-border cooperation and policy coordination. Such inconsistencies may affect mutual understanding, trust, and the effectiveness of joint responses to shared challenges.

The study argues that societal security in border regions cannot be fully understood without taking into account the role of discursive framing. Terminology is not merely descriptive, but constitutive, shaping how security realities are perceived and acted upon. By situating language within broader processes of security governance, the paper contributes to ongoing debates on identity, cooperation, and stability in European border regions.

Swiss Contributions to the Hungarian-Romanian Border Region. Did Switzerland Miss out on an Important Region?

Christian Bergmann, Independent scholar, Marly, Switzerland,
c.bergmann2279@gmail.com

Abstract. The article pursues two main goals: the first is descriptive, the second is analytical. During the description phase, we will look at three objects: (1) the cross-border region between Hungary and Romania, (2) the Swiss cohesion funds for Romania, and (3) the Swiss cohesion funds for Hungary. When discussing Swiss cohesion funding, we are looking at four programs: the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Program 2009-2019, the second Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Program 2024-2034, the Swiss-Hungarian Cooperation Program 2007-2017, and the second Swiss-Hungarian Cooperation Program 2022-2029.

The article will not go into depth on the Swiss contribution funding; it will provide an overview of the four programs and the relevant projects for the conference topic: Identity, Security, and Inclusivity. That brings us to the article's second goal, the analytical part. We want to analyse how much attention is given to the border region between Hungary and Romania by those programs.

The sources used for this article will be primary documents issued by the involved parties, Switzerland, Hungary, and Romania. Additionally, we will present relevant results obtained by a PhD work concluded last year about the first Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Program.

There is also a bit of criticism towards the lack of Swiss involvement within the Hungarian-Romanian border region and the implemented programs. At this point, we can tell that the first Swiss contribution to Romania did not have any relevant projects in the mentioned border region. Our criticism stems from the fact that Switzerland has the most well-founded experience with multilingualism since Switzerland is made up of three language regions with distinct borders between them. Therefore, we would expect Switzerland to pay more attention to this important matter.

The descriptive part of the article will further reveal how much the other three programs invested in the border region.

Republic of Moldova and Ukraine: institutional policies, response capacities, and the evolution of information resilience in the regional context

Victoria Bevziuc, Moldova State University, Chişinău, Moldova,
victoriabevziuc@yahoo.ro

Abstract. This article examines the institutional policies, response capacities, and evolving information resilience of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the context of increasing regional challenges related to disinformation and hybrid threats. Although the two countries operate within different geopolitical and security environments, their experiences reveal both shared vulnerabilities and distinct strategic responses that contribute to a broader understanding of information security in Eastern Europe. The Republic of Moldova has made important steps in developing institutional frameworks and digital tools for monitoring and countering disinformation. However, these mechanisms remain in a process of consolidation and are constrained by limited resources, insufficient inter-institutional coordination, and persistent deficiencies in media literacy. The effectiveness of these efforts largely depends on the active involvement of civil society, independent media, and international partners, as well as on strengthening public trust and critical thinking among citizens. In contrast, Ukraine has developed more complex and adaptive mechanisms for managing the information space, particularly under the pressure of ongoing military conflict. Its approach includes rapid response strategies, advanced strategic communication, and coordinated action between state institutions, the military, media actors, and the private sector. The Ukrainian case highlights the importance of integrating information security into national defense policies and demonstrates how crisis conditions can accelerate institutional innovation and resilience in the face of hybrid threats.

Soft forms of public administration cooperation in border areas in Poland – between law and practice

Paulina Bieś-Srokosz, Jan Długosz University, Częstochowa, Poland,
PaulinaBiesSrokosz@interia.pl

Michał Makuch, Jan Długosz University, Częstochowa, Poland,
m.makuch@ujd.edu.pl

Abstract. The presentation focuses on soft forms of cooperation between public administrations in border areas. These regions are characterized by

the coexistence of different legal systems, administrative cultures, and procedures, which makes cooperation both necessary and challenging.

Soft forms of cooperation are informal and flexible activities, such as networks between institutions, informal agreements, joint projects, and cooperation forums. They are easier and faster to use than formal legal instruments, which makes them particularly useful in complex cross-border situations.

The paper presents selected examples of such cooperation and highlights their main advantages, including flexibility, reduced bureaucracy, and the ability to build trust between partners. At the same time, it points out their limitations, such as the lack of a clear legal basis, instability, and difficulties in enforcing decisions.

The analysis shows that soft forms of cooperation cannot replace formal law but should complement it. The relationship between law and practice is emphasized, as practical cooperation often precedes and influences legal regulations.

In conclusion, soft cooperation plays an important role in border areas and is likely to become even more significant in the future due to ongoing European integration.

Neo-Chivalric Organizations as Actors of Societal Security: Cultural Microdiplomacy in the Practice of the Sovereign Templar Order Saint Martin

Aurelian Roland Boiț, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
aurelianroland@yahoo.com

Abstract. In a European context increasingly shaped by identity fragmentation and the gradual erosion of social trust, societal security extends beyond the boundaries of institutional frameworks and becomes closely linked to the capacity of non-state actors to sustain cohesion. Against this background, the paper re-examines neo-chivalric organizations, approaching them as vectors of cultural microdiplomacy and as forms of intervention with tangible relevance for social stability.

The theoretical framework draws on societal security studies and on the understanding of Europe as a “culture of cultures.” Methodologically, the research adopts a qualitative perspective, focusing on a case study of the Sovereign Templar Order Saint Martin, developed within an ongoing doctoral research project.

The findings point to a structured pattern of action in which cultural, social, educational, and academic dimensions are closely interconnected. Community-oriented initiatives and charitable activities contribute to the development of social capital and trust; educational programs and civic engagement support processes of identity formation; while intercultural and interfaith dialogue helps reduce symbolic distances between social groups. At the same time, the organization's involvement in hosting an international conference dedicated to European cultural heritage creates a space of interaction between academia, civil society, and institutional practice.

The growing visibility of these initiatives, together with their recognition in both public and academic environments, suggests a form of legitimacy that goes beyond ceremonial representation, positioning the organization within an active framework of knowledge production and transnational cooperation.

Overall, the analysis indicates that cultural microdiplomacy can operate as a mechanism through which symbolic capital is translated into concrete social practices, shaping a model of intervention that contributes to reducing fragmentation and strengthening societal security. In this light, neo-chivalric organizations emerge as meaningful actors within the contemporary European landscape, capable of linking tradition, social engagement, and academic reflection into a coherent framework of cohesion.

A New Dayton Agreement? Balancing Ethnic Divisions and International Governance

Horațiu Bontea, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
horatiu.bontea7@gmail.com

Abstract. More than 30 years have passed since the signing of the Dayton Agreement, and it can be argued that a treaty initially designed to promote democratic state-building has instead resulted in a form of “negative peace,” characterized by the absence of war and direct conflict among the three constituent ethnic groups, rather than genuine political integration. Today, Bosnia and Herzegovina is part of the Western Balkans and has clearly set European integration as a strategic objective. At the end of 2022, the country was granted candidate status for European Union membership, and in March 2024 accession negotiations were expected to begin. However, two years later, the precise reform chapters required for advancing to the next stage of enlargement have yet to be clearly defined or effectively implemented. Based on these developments, it can be argued that the central obstacle to EU accession remains state reform, particularly the adoption of a new

constitution or at least a substantial constitutional overhaul. This raises a fundamental question: who will lead this reform process? While the Dayton Agreement is often regarded as a major achievement of the liberal approach in international relations, recent developments suggest that this framework has been gradually eroding, without a clear consensus on the normative foundations of an emerging global order. In this context, it remains uncertain whether the political elites of Bosnia and Herzegovina are capable of driving constitutional reform independently, or whether the European Union's normative influence should play a more decisive role. Furthermore, the potential contribution of civil society to this long-term transformation process warrants closer examination.

Reframing border security: Frontex, identity, and inclusivity in Southeast Europe

Ioana Bordeianu, Universitatea din Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
ioaborde@gmail.com

Florentina Chirodea, Universitatea din Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
fchirodea@uradea.ro

Luminița Șoproni, Universitatea din Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
lumivoicu@yahoo.com

Abstract. The present article examines the constructive and evolving role of Frontex in strengthening border security, enhancing intergovernmental cooperation, and promoting more inclusive governance frameworks across Southeast Europe. Being positioned at the core of the European Union's integrated border management architecture, Frontex has become instrumental in improving coordination between Member States and neighbouring partner - countries, particularly focusing in responding to increasingly complex and dynamic migration patterns.

The study analyses how Frontex's operational practices, including joint border missions, institutional capacity-building initiatives, and the deployment of advanced surveillance and identity verification technologies, contribute to both effective security enforcement and the safeguarding of fundamental rights. Rather than treating security and inclusivity as opposing objectives, the article highlights their complexity and growing interdependence within contemporary border governance.

Focusing on institutional analysis and being supported by case studies from key Southeast European border corridors, the research illustrates how Frontex facilitates cross-border operational synergy, reinforces administrative resilience, and promotes the standardization of procedures in

line with EU legal and regulatory frameworks. Particular attention is given to the agency's role in identity management systems, which not only enhance security screening and risk assessment but also support administrative inclusion in migration and asylum procedures.

The results indicate that Frontex plays a significant and often underappreciated role in mediating between security and inclusive governance objectives. Through mechanisms of transparency, structured accountability, and compliance with fundamental rights standards, the agency contributes to a more coherent, safer and balanced border governance regime. The article concludes that, when effectively operationalized, Frontex-led initiatives help advance a more resilient, coordinated, and normatively grounded model of border management in Southeast Europe.

Identity as a Geopolitical Border in South-East Europe

Mircea Brie, Universitatea din Oradea, Oradea, Romania, mbrie@uoradea.ro

Abstract. Collective identity frequently serves as a foundational pillar in state-building and institutional consolidation. We consider forms of ethnic, religious, linguistic, or even cultural identity. The state and its borders are not placed at the center of our analysis. The purpose of this research is to analyze the identity cleavages that lead to geopolitical borders within the societies of South-Eastern Europe. Our hypothesis is that the development of societal divisions in these states leads to geopolitical fragmentation and the construction of geopolitical borders within the society. Methodologically, this study relies on a qualitative, analytical, and comparative framework. The conceptual and theoretical paradigms are empirically anchored through targeted case studies, cross-referenced with public perception metrics and descriptive quantitative data.

The Impact of Strategic Shifts in the 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plan on Non-Agricultural Diversification and Social Inclusion: A Case Study of Bihor County, Romania

Claudiu Gabriel Bonaciu, Bihor Destination Management Agency, Oradea, Romania, gabibonaciu@gmail.com

Horia Laurențiu Carțiș, Universitatea din Oradea, Oradea, Romania, horiacartis@gmail.com

Abstract. During previous programming periods (2007-2013, 2014-2020), through Pillar II of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and funding via the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Union aimed to establish a strategic framework for diversifying the rural economy by stimulating non-agricultural activities. However, the new rural development policy outlined in the 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plan places the funding of non-agricultural activities under the responsibility of Local Action Groups (LAGs). The absence of a long-term strategic vision has limited the effectiveness of the social inclusion process; although economic diversification is an imperative necessity for rural entrepreneurs and residents, the fragmented implementation of this concept and the underfunding of activities hinder the achievement of expected cohesion objectives.

This study aims to analyze the contribution of non-agricultural activities to the labor market dynamics in rural areas, comparatively examining the effects of shifting strategic orientations in rural development policy and underfunding on economic activities in rural tourism.

The research focuses on the administrative-territorial units of Aușeu, Vadu Crișului, Șuncuiuș, and Bratca (Bihor County), which are member localities of the Local Action Group Association „Zona Aleșd – Valea Crișului Repede”.

The theoretical and empirical foundation of this endeavor is based on processing data from official statistics (European, national, and local), government documents, as well as a rigorous analysis of specialized literature, including doctoral theses and relevant scientific articles.

Between Alert and Abandonment: Rural Border Communities in Romania and the Institutional Gap in Wartime Proximity Security

Bogdan Bolboacă, University of Bucharest, București, Romania,
bolboacabogdan1@gmail.com

Abstract. The ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has generated a category of security experience that existing frameworks inadequately address: wartime proximity insecurity, whereby civilian communities in a non-belligerent NATO member state are exposed to direct material and psychological effects of an adjacent armed conflict, without benefiting from institutional responses commensurate with that exposure. This paper examines this phenomenon through the case of rural communities situated along Romania's eastern border where Russian drone operations targeting Ukrainian Danube port infrastructure have repeatedly spilled over onto Romanian territory.

Drawing on empirical data from official Romanian Ministry of National Defence communications and corroborating journalistic documentation, we map a pattern of escalating incidents: from the first drone fragments identified in September 2023 to the 25 April 2026 event in which a drone with a suspected explosive payload struck residential property in Galați, prompting the evacuation of 217 persons. By April 2026, Romanian authorities had recorded over 80 Russian attacks on Ukrainian territory in proximity to the Romanian border, 24 confirmed drone penetrations of national airspace, and 44 incidents involving fragments recovered on Romanian soil.

The paper engages with borderland marginalization literature (Andreas, 2003; Atzili, 2011; Blair, 2025), ontological security theory (Mitzen, 2006; Kim, 2024), and human security frameworks (Buzan et al., 1998) to argue that Romania's border communities experience a condition of double exclusion: structural marginalisation predating the conflict, compounded by their systematic omission from wartime governance. The paper further interrogates the gap between Romania's evolving legal framework, notably Law No. 73/2025 authorising drone interception, and its effective non-application due to the proximity of densely populated areas, revealing a juridical ambiguity with direct consequences for civilian protection. The paper concludes by proposing a model of inclusive border security

governance, integrating community participation, dedicated legal provisions for wartime proximity zones, and psychosocial support mechanisms as necessary complements to Romania's NATO and EU defence commitments.

Constructing Regional Leadership Identity Through Local Media. Case Study: Ilie Bolojan

Carmen Ungur-Brehoi, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
carmenbrehoi@gmail.com

Abstract. Local media play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of political leadership and contributing to the construction of regional (even national) identity, particularly in border areas where local narratives influence community cohesion and civic discourse. This paper examines how local written and online media in Bihor County construct the public governance image and a unique authority identity, that of Ilie Bolojan.

The present study focuses on three local newspapers—Bihoreanul, Crisana and Jurnal Bihorean and their associated news websites, that represent key sources of political information for the regions residents. Through qualitative content analysis of selected articles published between 2020 and 2025, the research investigates how media materials depict Bolojan's organization in relation to area-based development, administrative reforms, and urban transformation centered around Oradea city. The analysis identifies dominant narratives that portray Bolojan as a technocratic reformer, a symbol of modernization, and a central actor in territorial development initiatives. At the same time, some media coverage introduces critical perspectives that question governance decisions or highlight political controversies. By examining these media narratives, the study explores how local journalism contributes to establishing political legitimacy and creating the symbolic representation of regional leadership in border regions of South East Europe.

The dynamics of the international actors' positioning towards the electoral processes in the Republic of Moldova (2024-2025)

Alina – Carmen Brihan, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
alina_brihan@yahoo.com

Abstract. The paper aims to provide a comparative approach to the positions of the EU, OSCE and the Council of Europe, regarding the presidential

(including the republican constitutional referendum) and parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova, in 2024 and 2025.

In this regard, we will pursue the analysis of the official statements, reports and recommendations, etc., regarding the aforementioned electoral processes. The purpose of the analysis is to identify, on the one hand, the aspects mentioned by the three international organizations analyzed in terms of assessing the conduct of the three internal democratic processes, but also towards the pro-European direction of the Republic of Moldova, and on the other hand, the external pressures and challenges (hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, etc.) to which Moldova was subjected during these electoral processes, as specified by the aforementioned international actors.

Infrastructural Interdependence, Energy Security, and Societal Inclusivity in East-Central Europe: Navigating the Geopolitical Crossroads

Bottyán Botond-Zsolt, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
bottyán.zsolt@gmail.com

Abstract. The geopolitical architecture of East-Central Europe is undergoing rapid realignment due to the weaponization of energy interdependencies and the accelerating clean energy transition. Historically characterized by divergent national energy profiles, these states are at the epicenter of European Union efforts to forge a cohesive regional energy market.

This analysis investigates the dynamics of infrastructural interdependence among Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia, evaluating how shared energy infrastructure functions as a tool for regional security and societal inclusivity. The 2026 oil supply disruptions, triggered by Middle Eastern conflicts and a drone strike on the Brody oil hub in Ukraine, exposed the acute vulnerabilities of states like Hungary and Slovakia. Their heavy reliance on legacy networks constrains their geopolitical autonomy, whereas Romania's domestic resources position it as a vital anchor of regional resilience.

The study assesses the EU's response mechanisms, particularly the Trans-European Networks for Energy (TEN-E) regulation that fast-tracks cross-border interconnectors, and the highly targeted 2026 Accelerate EU framework designed to protect vulnerable consumers without distorting the market. Crucially, the research argues that macro-level integration must be

accompanied by micro-level societal inclusivity, utilizing the Social Climate Fund (SCF) to mitigate systemic energy poverty in fragile borderlands. Finally, the research highlights the Oradea-Debrecen Eurometropolis as a functional model, demonstrating how joint cross-border geothermal energy initiatives can dismantle historical divisions, combat energy poverty, and foster a shared regional identity.

Institutional Cooperation and EU Funds Management in the Romania–Hungary Border Area

Bűkfeyes-Rákossy Zsombor, Goodwill Consulting Group / Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, rakossy.zsombor@gwconsulting.ro

Abstract. This paper explores the institutional and legislative dimensions of EU funds management in Romania and Hungary through a comparative neoinstitutionalist perspective. Based on the author's doctoral research on fraud, irregularities, and anti-fraud mechanisms, the study highlights how administrative capacity, institutional cooperation, and regulatory differences influence cross-border development and the implementation of EU-funded projects in the Romania–Hungary border area. Particular attention is given to transparency, beneficiaries' perceptions, and the role of European institutions in strengthening regional cooperation.

Security Through Integration? The EU Enlargement Process as a Stabilization Tool in South-East Europe

Maria Augusta Bârsan-Moigrădean, Bogdan-Vodă University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, augustamoigradean@gmail.com

Abstract. The European Union's enlargement process has, for a long time, been seen as one of the key instruments of its foreign policy to promote stability to states outside of the EU. This paper's primary purpose is to examine the extent to which the accession process of the EU has provided a framework for the direct improvement of security in the South-East European Region. The reform experience of Bulgaria and Romania, as related to their transformational membership with the EU, has served as a model for demonstrating the point mentioned above. The approach is based on the theoretical framework of democratic conditionality within the context of the theory of Europeanisation. This article supports the idea that the opportunity of an accession creates tangible security benefits, such as the reduction of inter-state conflict, the resolution of border conflicts, the

improvement of the coordination between ethnic communities, etc.; however, these advantages will not be achieved if the credibility and consistency of the process of enlargement are not adequate. This paper discusses six nations which are Western Balkan candidate states, namely Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Kosovo. It looks at how much "enlargement fatigue," competition from Russia and China as global competitors, and internal divisions are tearing apart the stabilizing effect of an accession process that was created to bring stability to that region. The article also proposes what it believes will be a new form of security-based expansion and Regional Cooperation, and shows how the experience of East Central Europe may serve as a model for this next phase of expanding the European Union.

Affective Politics of Migration: Emotional Discourses on Migration in Austria

Elif Cagatay, University of Vienna, Wien, Austria,
Cagatay_Elif@alumni.ceu.edu

Abstract. Emotions play a central role in shaping migration governance by constructing migrants as threats through fear, while simultaneously mobilizing a broader range of emotions, including anger, humiliation, anxiety, solidarity, empathy, and love. This paper offers a theoretical discussion on how emotion-driven political discourses on migration relate to public attitudes in the host society of Austria, including nativism, anti-immigrant sentiments, and forms of affective polarization between citizens holding opposing views on migration.

While securitization theory, understood as the framing of migration as a security threat, and emerging scholarship on emotional discourse have examined migration governance, the interplay of both negative and positive emotions remains insufficiently explored. The paper critically examines migration discourses in Austria according to their emotional context. Austria represents an important case of European migration governance for its long-standing experience as a major destination country for migrants and its influential role in European migration policymaking.

The paper aims to focus on analyzing political narratives on migration, and to rethink how these narratives relate to host society perspectives on migration. It moves beyond a narrow focus on fear and securitization by arguing for the inclusion of positive emotions, such as empathy and solidarity, in shaping migration governance, public understandings of migration and intergroup relations.

Future research could apply this framework comparatively through a mixed-method approach to examine emotional migration discourses and host society perspectives across European states.

What kind of European integration for which countries - will Hungary policy towards the western Balkans change after the parliamentary elections of 12 April 2026?

Radu Carp, University of Bucharest, București, Romania,
radu.carp@fspub.unibuc.ro

Abstract. When a new president, Karol Nawrocki, has been elected in Poland in June 2025, it was thought that, because of his opposition to Tusk government, Poland will change its mind about the three seas initiative, supported rather by the Us than by the EU. Nevertheless, this did not happened Poland has remained firmly anchored in the framework of the foreign policy vision promoted by Brussels, acting vigorously on this Initiative as before.

The same problem of continuity or discontinuity is discussed in the context of the Hungary parliamentary elections of April 2026, but in a more radical way. Viktor Orban strongly supported the western Balkans countries, having a privileged relationship with the Bosnian leader Dodik or with the Serbian president Vucic, having the purpose to promote an agenda radically different from the one promoted by the EU in the region. Hungary made substantial investments in the economy, the banking sector, infrastructure and telecommunications in the Western Balkans, using also soft power instruments like student fellowships or supporting media and social media networks, with the purpose of promoting an anti-EU narrative. Hungary influence in the western Balkans cannot be compared with the influence of the EU, US, Russian Federation, Turkey or China - it is rather a niche influence, carefully targeted. A change in power in Budapest will align Hungary more to the EU objectives in the region, will bring more transparent investments and will contribute to less legitimacy for the regional leaders supported by Hungary so far. Whether a new government will be the advocate of EU expansion in the Western Balkans or it will promote its own objectives - this is unknown. The purpose of this contribution is, starting from the Polish precedent, to observe if Hungary will change and how much its attitude towards a major objective of foreign policy and to what extent Hungary wants to have closer relationship with EU Member states also active in the region, like Greece, Austria or Romania.

Centripetal and Centrifugal Processes in the European Union: Dynamics of Cohesion and Fragmentation

Svetlana Cebotari, Moldova State University, Chișinău, Moldova,
svetlana.cebotari@usm.md

Abstract. The simultaneous presence of centripetal and centrifugal processes within the European Union configures a complex structural dynamic that shapes both the evolution of the integration process and the fragmentation tendencies of the European political and institutional system. The interaction between these two types of processes reflects the polymorphic nature of the European construction, situated at the intersection between the deepening of supranational integration and the persistence of the interests and autonomy of the Member States. Centripetal processes—manifested through the consolidation of common institutional mechanisms, the expansion of the *acquis communautaire*, the increasing economic interdependencies, and the progressive institutionalization of common policies—contribute to strengthening internal cohesion and to deepening supranational integration. In parallel, centrifugal processes are generated by persistent economic and political divergences among Member States, by populist and Eurosceptic pressures, by structural differences in development, and by systemic crises (economic, migratory, sanitary, or geopolitical), which may intensify fragmentation and limit the Union's capacity to act in a coherent and unified manner.

In this context, the present article aims to analyze and highlight the main centripetal and centrifugal trends manifested within the European space, as well as their impact on the future prospects of the European integration process.

Strategic Pakistan - Saudi Arabia Alliance in the Context of Regional Security Challenges

Svetlana Cebotari, Moldova State University, Chișinău, Moldova,
svetlana.cebotari@usm.md

Abstract. The strategic alliance concluded between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in 2025 represents a significant development in the evolving security dynamics of the Middle East and South Asia. In the context of growing geopolitical rivalries, regional instability, energy insecurity, and increasing competition among global powers, this bilateral partnership reflects a pragmatic convergence of the security interests of both states, as well as their

aspiration for greater strategic autonomy from traditional power centers. The agreement has major implications not only for bilateral relations, but also for the regional balance of power, influencing the strategic calculations of Iran, China, the United States, and Islamic multilateral organizations.

The geopolitical impact of this alliance extends beyond the bilateral dimension. The consolidation of the Islamabad - Riyadh axis contributes to the reconfiguration of regional power relations, particularly in relation to Iran and Tehran-backed non-state actors. At the same time, the emergence of a more autonomous Islamic security cooperation framework may foster a multipolar regional security architecture, reducing dependence on Western security guarantees and diversifying strategic cooperation mechanisms in the broader Middle East. Therefore, the present article aims to examine the main dimensions of the Pakistan - Saudi Arabia strategic alliance of 2025 and to analyze its implications for the regional security architecture, with particular emphasis on geopolitical transformations.

Inclusive education policies regarding cultural diversity in Bulgaria

Siyka Chavdarova, University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria,
s.chavdarovakostova@fp.uni-sofia.bg

Abstract. Since the beginning of the 21st century, Bulgaria has been implementing targeted policies regarding the integration of children from ethnic minorities. The main focuses of these policies were related to the study of the mother tongue and religion in school education, as well as some specifics of educational integration of Roma children by stimulating desegregation processes. Over the past 10 years changes have been observed in the way these policies were structured after the imposition of priority of the concept of inclusive education. In this regards, there is a debate about the extent to which educational integration and inclusive education are policies with parallelism or inclusion of the first in the second. It is interesting to note that policies regarding refugees and migrant children seem to remain outside this debate, interpreted mainly through the prism of the concept of inclusive education. It can be said that there are both some similarities and significant differences in the policies of inclusive education regarding these two main groups of children with cultural differences in Bulgaria – traditional ethnic groups and refugees/migrants.

Ethnic and political context in intermunicipal cooperation. The case of Intercommunity Development Associations in Romania

Cosmin Chiriac, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, cchiriac@uoradea.ro

Abstract. Ethnic and political contexts may shape intermunicipal cooperation, especially where ethnic groups extend across administrative boundaries. Existing research suggests that economic development and improved public services are often associated with better minority integration by providing better living conditions and opportunities for social participation. In Romania, Intercommunity Development Associations are a form of intermunicipal cooperation through which local and county administrative units collaborate to provide public services and pursue shared local, regional or zonal development goals. This paper examines whether ethnic and political contexts influence on the formation and continuity of these associations, without presuming their effects on integration outcomes.

Disinformation as a Challenge to Republica Moldova's Integration into the European Union

Răzvan Chiș, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, chisrazvan@yahoo.com

Abstract. The process of European Union enlargement encounters, with each new candidate member, a series of obstacles that require the aspiring state to align with the Union's high standards. In this regard, the integration path is conditioned by the achievement of a specific level of development in areas such as the reform of the rule of law, consolidation of democratic institutions, the reduction of economic gaps relative to member states, the adaption of the domestic economy to the European single market, as well as the implementation of normative acts with EU legislation.

In addition to the conditions mentioned above, about the candidate status of the Republic of Moldova, we note that it also faces challenges generated by instability and the regional geopolitical context, as well as social polarization between pro-EU and pro-Eastern orientations.

We analyze in this register a new challenge that can disrupt the already difficult mission of aspiring states to align with the Union's standards, namely disinformation. This does not constitute a stand-alone obstacle distinct from the other dimensions of the European Union integration process but rather operates as an amplifying factor of existing vulnerabilities. Thus, reduced institutional capacity, economic constraints, social polarization and geopolitical tensions are exploited through narratives disseminated in the

information space which heighten the perceived impact at the public level in relation to accession policy.

Disinformation manifests as a strategic instrument of external influence through which public perceptions of the accession process are altered by means of narratives that lead to imbalances and can even divert the entire process from its established trajectory. In this way, disinformation can undermine public support for the state's accession to the European Union, a dynamic that materializes through the interruption by political decision-makers of the continued implementation of the measures necessary to develop the Moldovan state.

The Rise of Subnational Actors: Romanian Cities' Adaptation to the International dynamics through City Diplomacy initiatives

Mihai Ovidiu Cercel, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania, mihai.cercel@dri.snsa.ro

Andreea Roxana Țoi, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania, andreea_toi@yahoo.com

Abstract. The rapid pace of globalization and increasing urbanization in recent decades has significantly challenged the traditional diplomacy paradigm, in which sovereign states are the exclusive actors over international relations. In this changing landscape, subnational actors — particularly large cities — have emerged as inevitable players on the global stage through a phenomenon scholars refer to as city diplomacy. This article explores the theoretical development of the concept within academic literature to understand how this phenomenon is taking shape in the Romanian context.

The study aims to analyze how selected major Romanian cities adapt to the international environment and engage in international relations. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative research design, utilizing document analysis: official public documents and strategic reports retrieved from the formal websites of the selected Romanian municipalities. The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the paradiplomatic efforts of the selected Romanian city by using the 6 dimensions framework of city diplomacy developed by Rogier van der Pluijm, covering security, development, economy, culture, networks, and representation. The selected framework does not aim to characterize exhaustively all the various dimensions of cities' paradiplomacy, but rather offers a understanding of the

dynamics of city diplomacy in Romania and how mature their paradiplomatic efforts have become.

Identity Construction and Dual Belonging within Romanian Community in Austria

Marian Ionel Cutoi, Independent scholar, Viena, Austria, mcutoi@yahoo.com

Abstract. Intra-EU migration generates significant reconfigurations of identity and forms of belonging in the context of interaction between distinct social spaces. This article examines identity construction among Romanian migrants in Austria, with particular attention to dual belonging and the configuration of hybrid identity within Romanian community. The analysis is grounded in a constructivist perspective, in which identity is conceptualized as a dynamic process shaped by social interactions and experiences of everyday life. The empirical component is based on a mixed-method approach that integrates quantitative data from a socio-economic survey conducted among the Romanian community in Austria with official statistical data. The study explores the relationship between language practices, social networks, perceptions of belonging, and patterns of everyday life in order to identify the mechanisms underlying identity construction. The findings indicate the presence of a stable pattern of dual belonging, characterized by differentiated orientations toward both the country of origin and the host society. Contextual language use, sustained social ties, and participation in Austrian socio-economic life reflect identity construction processes in which multiple elements are integrated into a coherent form of hybrid identity. The article proposes an interpretation of dual belonging as a process of identity construction, highlighting the processual and contextual nature of identity in the context of intra-EU mobility.

The concept of hybrid warfare and the shaping the EU strategic autonomy in the context of Russian-Ukrainian war

Dorin Dolghi, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, dolghid@gmail.com

Abstract. The Russian-Ukrainian war fundamentally reshaped the European security landscape, bringing new perspectives to the concept of hybrid warfare and its implications for the EU strategic autonomy. The paper examines how hybrid warfare has been employed in the conflict and how it has challenged the EU's existing security and policy frameworks. The study analyses the EU's evolving response to these multidimensional threats with particular attention to the efforts to reduce strategic dependencies, to enhance defense cooperation and more coherent action in external action, having in mind both progress and persistent limitations in the EU pursuit of strategic autonomy. The main argument is that Russian-Ukrainian war has acted as a catalyst for accelerating the EU's ambition to become a more capable and independent geopolitical actor. However, internal divergences among member states, resource constraints, and continued reliance on transatlantic partnership pose ongoing challenges. The findings contribute to better understanding and broader debates on the future of European security identity in an increasingly complex and contested international environment.

AI-driven political communication and its implications for democratic resilience in the Republic of Moldova: consequences for EU accession conditionality

Maria Enachi, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, enachimarie@gmail.com

Abstract. This paper will examine the emerging role of AI-driven political communication in shaping democratic resilience in the Republic of Moldova, with a focus on the implications for the process of accession to the European Union. As the Republic of Moldova advances on the path to European integration, adherence to democratic standards - such as electoral integrity, media pluralism, and trust in institutions, remains an essential condition. In this context, the rapid spread of artificial intelligence technologies introduces new forms of political influence, including algorithmic amplification, microtargeting, and synthetic content, which have the potential to reshape the information environment in subtle yet significant ways.

The study will examine how these AI-enabled practices interact with Moldova's existing vulnerabilities, including exposure to foreign disinformation campaigns, a polarized media landscape, and a fragile level of public trust in institutions. At the same time, the paper will assess how these dynamics may influence the European Union's assessment of the Republic of Moldova's readiness for accession, particularly in relation to political criteria and standards of democratic governance. It is argued that disinformation and influence operations facilitated by artificial intelligence can indirectly undermine accession prospects by eroding trust and complicating alignment with European standards on digital governance. Finally, this paper will contribute to the emerging literature on the intersection of technology, democracy, and international relations, proposing that artificial intelligence be understood as an emerging factor in the conditionality of the European Union's enlargement process.

Classified information management in Romania

Tibor Fenesi, Institution of the Prefect of Bihor County, Oradea, Romania,
fenesitibor5@gmail.com

Abstract. In a world where in a geopolitical context information is taken over, distortedly interpreted very quickly in all possible ways to influence/manipulate the masses of people, I strongly believe that a work on the management of classified information is very timely.

The presentation starts from an introduction to the field of classified information by defining the basic notions, analyzing the main theories of international relations and security, such as the realist theory, the liberalist theory; classifying the levels of classified information, defining the security official, highlighting his legal duties, presenting a security structure and its purpose in a public institution. Clear analysis of the legislative context in this field through clear elements of content taken over and presented from the perspective of current legislation, analysis of cases that fall under the scope of the security incident on a national level but also in an international context, key institutions respectively their powers according to legal duties.

Description and key concepts around which the presentation took place; This paper will synthesize the standards, procedures and fundamental concepts regarding the protection of classified information in Romania, taking into account the practical guide developed by the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) but also other public sources of inspiration according to the bibliography section. The central pillar of this system is the balance between the constitutional right to information and the need to protect national

security by limiting access to sensitive data. The analysis in this paper highlights the fact that the protection of classified information is not a static process, but a dynamic set of measures targeting four critical levels:

- personnel (security checks and training),
- documents (evidence and handling),
- physical security (security areas and material barriers) and
- industrial security (collaboration with private entities).

A major conclusion of the analysis is that the human factor represents the most vulnerable link, which is why the vetting process and the "need to know" principle are rigorously applied to prevent risks and threats to state security.

Policy Perspectives on Societal Security in Europe through Fostering Communication, Diversity and Inclusion

Simona Fer, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
simonag_1976@yahoo.com

Abstract. In the context of increasing cultural pluralism and digital communication transition, traditional security paradigms began to focus on state stability, insufficient aspect for addressing the complex dynamics of contemporary European societies. This study was thought through a communication-centered perspective, arguing that societal security is deeply achieved by the ways in which diversity is created and mediated in public discourse.

Drawing on interdisciplinary approaches from communication, social and European studies, the paper analyzes the way in which strategic communication and institutional discourse influence processes of social inclusion and exclusion. Particular attention is given to the role of intercultural communication in fostering mutual understanding and reducing perceived threats associated with diversity. The research highlights how inclusive communication practices can contribute to social cohesion, while exclusionary or polarized speeches may undermine integration and amplify societal vulnerabilities.

Methodologically, the paper combines discourse analysis with case-based insights from European contexts, illustrating the manner in which communication practices impact integration policies and public perceptions of security. The findings suggest that redefining societal security requires a transition toward more inclusive and participatory communication frameworks that recognize diversity as a resource not as a risk. The paper concludes that communication is not a tool but a constitutive element of

societal security in Europe, with significant implications for policy-making, media practice and the future of democratic coexistence.

Human Rights in Albania: Are Digital Policies Deepening Inequality?

Alba Gerdeci, EPOKA University, Tirana, Albania, agerdeci@epoka.edu.al

Abstract. This study examines how digital technologies are transforming fundamental rights in Albania, while also generating new regulatory challenges and reinforcing existing inequalities. Despite progress in digitalization, disparities in access, digital literacy, and inclusion persist, particularly among vulnerable groups. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives, the study explores key questions such as (a) What difference does it make to move online in contexts marked by uneven digital access? (b) How should freedom of expression be interpreted and protected in Albania's evolving digital environment? (c) How should human rights law respond to the regulatory and institutional challenges posed by digital technologies at the national level? and (d) What specific challenges do vulnerable groups in Albania face in accessing and benefiting from the digital realm? By situating Albania an emerging democracy, within broader regional and global debates, the paper offers a forward-looking analysis of digital rights and inclusion in a rapidly evolving digital environment.

Investor citizenship schemes in the Western Balkans and the EU enlargement

Horváthy Balázs, Széchenyi István University, Győr, Hungary, horvb@ga.sze.hu
Knapp László, Széchenyi István University, Győr, Hungary, knapp.laszlo@ga.sze.hu

Abstract. Investor citizenship programmes encourage the inflow of foreign capital by offering citizenship or accelerated naturalisation to individuals who make significant financial contributions in the form of investments to a country. Also known as 'golden passport' schemes, these programmes have been the subject of intense legal and policy debates within the EU over the past decade. In light of the evolving case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union, the Member State investor citizenship programmes conflict with the requirements arising from EU law, particularly the Union citizenship and principle of sincere cooperation. These requirements therefore significantly constrain the Member States' leeway, despite the fact that citizenship laws

form a core part of Member States' domestic legal regimes, and the relevant competence has not been conferred on the European Union.

The proposed paper considers investor citizenship programmes in the context of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans. It argues that the EU must apply the same strict legal standards to candidate countries during the accession process as it does to Member States, regardless of the status or outcome of the negotiations. The main reasons for this are that candidate countries mostly benefit from visa facilitation agreements, which allow their citizens to enter and stay in the Schengen area under simplified procedures, and their 'golden passport' schemes can be seen as a way of circumventing these preferential regimes. The first part of the paper outlines the criteria by which EU law assesses these programmes, and the requirements with which Member States must comply. The second part examines the historical context and importance of investor citizenship programmes in Western Balkan states, the principles upon which these regulations were established and the effect of the EU accession process on existing programmes in recent years. Finally, the paper determines the policy and regulatory leeway of candidate countries, and the available alternatives to increase their ability to attract foreign capital on the path to European Union membership.

Rule of Law or Rule of Politics? Enlargement Conditionality and the Uneven Protection of Minority Identities in South East Europe

Adina-Ioana Hoza, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
adina.hoza@ubbcluj.ro

Abstract. The EU's enlargement framework presents rule of law conditionality as an objective, merit-based instrument through which candidate countries demonstrate their readiness for accession. In practice, however, the application of this instrument has been shaped as much by internal EU political dynamics, bilateral disputes between member states and candidates, and shifting geopolitical priorities as by measurable reform progress. This paper examines the consequences of this politicization for minority communities across South East Europe, a region defined by complex ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity. It argues that the uneven political will to enforce rule of law conditionality consistently across candidate states creates a two-tier system of minority protection, where the strength of judicial independence and anti-discrimination frameworks in a given candidate country depends less on domestic reform capacity than on that country's geopolitical value to the EU at a given moment. Through a comparative

analysis of minority rights provisions in the accession processes of Western Balkan states alongside the accelerated candidacies of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, the paper examines the extent to which enlargement conditionality functions as a neutral equalizer in practice. This paper explores the need for a more consistent and minority-sensitive application of rule of law benchmarks. In doing so, it evaluates whether the current application of rule of law conditionality adequately addresses the majority-minority tensions that define the region's path toward European integration.

Trafficking and Smuggling of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria to Europe: Causes and Strategies of European Union to Migration Governance

Peter Odion Irabor, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria,
peteriraborodion12@gmail.com

Abstract. This study examined the factors that causes trafficking and smuggling of irregular migrants from Nigeria to Europe and examined migration governance put in place by the European Union to curbing trafficking and smuggling of irregular migrants from Nigeria to Europe. The study made use of qualitative data through Individual In-depth Interviews (IDIs) conducted on representative from European External Action Service, European Union delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Frontex, International Organisation for Migration, Nigeria Immigration Service, Idia Renaissance and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons. Findings from the study showed some of the factors that causes trafficking and smuggling of irregular migrants from Nigeria to Europe which include border porosity with other Africa countries, the cultural belief that remittance flow improve economic standard of families, travelling by flight from Lagos to Turkey which is relatively easy for irregular migrants who gain access to external borders of the EU member states, as well as lack of effective monitoring and control by the security officials as a result of bribes they demand from smugglers and traffickers. Moreover, findings from the study revealed some of the migration governance that were put in place by the EU to curbing trafficking and smuggling of irregular migrants from Nigeria to Europe which include the adoption of revised 2000 Cotonou agreement, establishment of European Migrant Smuggling Centre and Information Clearing House to identify illegal internet content use by smugglers, establishment of Visa Information System to detect fraudulent visa as well as the establishment of EUTF for Africa in Nigeria which emphasis on legal migration and sustainable development. Albeit these strategies, the study

concluded that strict migration governance to curbing the activities of the traffickers and smugglers of Nigerian irregular migrants to Europe has resulted in the navigation and detection of riskier routes to Europe.

Explaining Georgia's Stalled EU Accession Negotiations While Ukraine and Republic of Moldova Move Forward

Gocha Kiguradze, Babeş Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
gocha.kiguradze@stud.ubbcluj.ro

Abstract. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has forced the European Union to renew its enlargement momentum as a strategic shift for security and political stabilization in Europe. By obtaining candidate status, Ukraine and Moldova secured their places in the accession process, while Georgia's progress slowed significantly. Just a year later, in December 2023, Georgia was granted candidate status due to the population's long-standing European aspirations, which should have halted its stagnation in the accession trajectory.

This paper seeks to explain why Georgia was separated from the trio (Moldova and Ukraine) by analyzing the political, societal, and geopolitical dynamics shaping their relationships with the European Union. It argues that, despite the ongoing war and Russian propaganda, Kyiv and Chişinău continue to implement reforms and align with European policies, while Tbilisi is facing severe political polarization and protests against flawed elections, as well as stalled accession negotiations.

The analysis is based on three decisive factors: EU-related reforms, free elections, and the erosion of democratic processes. These factors demonstrate that Georgia's stalled negotiations are strongly dependent on political developments, which have worsened significantly over the past three years.

The findings will contribute to understanding the causes of Georgia's stalled integration process. They will also highlight the risks of a differentiated enlargement process, which could increase Russia's influence in the region.

Measuring Wartime Legitimacy in Ukraine: Quantitative Indicators of Democratic Resilience in the Context of EU Enlargement

Oleksandr Korop, Yuriy Fedkovych National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine,
korop.oleksandr@chnu.edu.ua

Abstract. Russia's full-scale invasion has transformed the political and societal conditions under which Ukraine pursues European integration. This

paper examines wartime legitimacy in Ukraine as a key dimension of democratic resilience and as a relevant factor in the country's EU enlargement trajectory. The study examines how public trust, institutional support, electoral expectations, attitudes toward democratic governance, and perceptions of security can serve as quantitative indicators of political legitimacy in conditions of war. Drawing on survey-based and institutional indicators, the paper proposes an analytical framework for measuring the resilience of Ukraine's political system during wartime. It argues that wartime legitimacy is not limited to support for state institutions, but also includes citizens' confidence in democratic procedures, belief in the continuity of political representation, and expectations regarding Ukraine's European future. By linking wartime governance, societal security, and the EU enlargement, the paper contributes to broader debates on how candidate states facing external aggression can maintain democratic legitimacy and social inclusiveness while undergoing political, institutional, and security-related transformation.

Bridging over cleavages and gaps: democratic consolidation under wartime challenges and pressure

Anatoliy Kruglashov, Yuriy Fedkovych National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine, *University of Lodz, Poland*, akruglas@gmail.com

Abstract. Nowadays, security and democracy are under common threat, stemming from Russian aggression, the USA unpredictability, and populism temptations. Ukraine fights not only against military attacks from Russia on the frontline, but also against them in the rear, far beyond the frontline. It must sustain democratic consolidation and societal resilience vis-à-vis the severe pressure of war losses, trauma, and grief. Ukraine faces with psychological, informational, and overtly cognitive war, which the Kremlin launches against an independent state, the EU, and NATO. To avoid losing the country and statehood, Ukraine must prioritize societal cohesion, ensuring all citizens are included in national resistance and resilience-building. It also means overcoming traditional regional, cultural, and ethnic divisions inherited from the past. It also means everyday confrontation against aggressive Russian propaganda and information attacks, aiming at undermining the unity within Ukraine, and solidarity with Ukraine in Europe and worldwide. Those factors are exacerbated with the mass exodus of Ukrainian citizens abroad after the full-scale invasion, and problems of internal displaced persons relocation and accommodation into their new local and regional economic, social, and political processes. The presentation

considers the advantages and remaining problems of Ukraine's fight for national consolidation, as well as the issue of citizen inclusiveness in the country's resilience and future recovery.

Development and Cooperation in the Border Area: Strengthening European Security through Romania–Poland Cooperation – A Frontex Operational Perspective

Mircea-Ioan Matei, Frontex Border and Coast Guard Agency HQ, Warsaw, Poland, eu_matei_mircea@yahoo.com

Abstract. The content of the paper will cover aspects of the management of the external borders of the European Union, as a strategic priority. As the host of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), Poland plays a central role in shaping operational coordination, capability development and common responses to cross-border threats. Romania, being positioned at the eastern border of the EU and actively involved in Frontex operations (the first pilot project regarding the operational organization in the form of contingents), contributes with expertise in integrated border management, deploys surveillance technologies and regional cooperation models.

This topic will explore how the development of cross-border and operational cooperation supported by Frontex will enhance security, resilience and socio-economic stability in border regions. There will be an assessment of the mechanisms through which Member States collaborate on risk analysis, joint operations, return management and capacity building, while addressing the challenges posed by migration, organized crime and hybrid threats. Drawing on the shared experiences of Romania and Poland, the paper highlights practical models of cooperation, the added value of EU-level coordination, and the future trajectory of border management in the context of enlargement, technological transformation, and regional security dynamics.

The paper aims to provide policymakers, practitioners, and researchers with a deeper understanding of how cooperation in the field of border development and security can strengthen the EU's broader strategic objectives, while promoting stability and partnership along Europe's borders, especially in the context of a border war. The approach will be two-pronged, with a focus on developing cooperation between Poland and Romania, exemplified by solid cases.

The contribution of this paper lies in offering a Frontex centred operational perspective that connects national capabilities with EU level security

objectives, providing insights relevant for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers engaged in European border management.

Fighting corruption and transparency of political parties finances as prerequisites of the EU's accession: The case of the Republic of Moldova

Cristina Maria Matiuta, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
cristinamatiuta@yahoo.com

Abstract. Corruption is still a serious problem in the Republic of Moldova, despite the authorities' efforts to combat the phenomenon. After the proclamation of independence in 1991, the economic chaos created by the transition from a planned to a market economy, non-transparent privatizations, endemic poverty, unstable legislation, and the limited administrative capacity of state institutions have created fertile ground for corruption at all levels of public life. The winners of the economic transition, the so-called oligarchs, came to control state institutions through their networks.

If in the case of the former communist countries that joined the European Union, the fight against corruption was strictly monitored both in the pre-accession and post-accession phases, in the case of the Republic of Moldova there were no direct constraints and pressures like those applied by the EU to candidate or member states (through the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism, for example). With the submission of the application for accession to the European Union (in March 2022) and the opening of accession negotiations (in June 2024), the Republic of Moldova has committed to strengthening the mechanisms for preventing and combating corruption and aligning with European standards.

An important dimension of corruption, which fueled citizens' distrust in state institutions, political parties and politicians, is related to the non-transparent financing of political parties and electoral campaigns. Political parties have long managed to keep their income away from public control through permissive and unclear rules. In recent years things have improved, both in terms of rules and actual practices. Public financing of political parties has gained ground, gradually becoming their main source of income, reducing their dependence on private donors, while private financing has been subject to stricter rules, and control bodies have gained increased powers. The paper aims to investigate the progress in fighting corruption and the regulations of parties financing, based on the reports of the Central Electoral Commission and the monitoring of some non-governmental organizations.

Romania's Changing Migration Landscape: Toward a Destination Country for Third Country Nationals?

Mészáros Edina, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, edina_lilla@yahoo.com

Abstract. An examination of Romania's migratory profile across time indicates that the management of asylum seekers and the integration of refugees has not been prioritised on its national agenda, with Romania predominantly regarded as a nation of emigrants rather than immigrants. Nevertheless, the 2015 refugee crisis, the conflict in Ukraine, and the persistent rise in asylum applications have necessitated the re-evaluation and modification of migration and integration policy. Despite Romania's recent and steady rise in asylum applications, international protection requests, and finalised employment contracts with foreign workers, it remains predominantly viewed as a transit country rather than a destination for beneficiaries of international protection and migrant labourers. The 2015 refugee crisis underscored the absence of a unified approach to the administration and integration of third-country nationals, prompting the elaboration of a National Immigration Strategy. In contrast, several native experts, such as Coşciug and his colleagues, contend that during and subsequent to Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a shift in the country's migration profile, indicating its potential to develop into a new destination country. Compared to earlier research findings, investigations conducted after 2020/2021 reveal a heightened interest among foreigners in long-term residency in the country. Furthermore, The Economist draws comparisons between Romania's present situation and that of 1970s Italy, noting that both countries have shifted from emigration to immigration. Conversely, Romania is experiencing a significant labour shortage attributed to extensive emigration, prompting companies to hire foreign workers, particularly from economically disadvantaged Asian countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh. This research analyses the transformation of Romania's migration profile and evaluates the potential for Romania to emerge as a destination country in the next years, especially following its full Schengen membership. The quantitative examination of data from the relevant authorities indicates an increasing tendency in asylum seekers and foreign workers arriving in Romania, particularly in the post-Covid era. The inquiry pertains to the potential of refugees and foreign workers to address the labour market deficit resulting from the significant exodus of Romanian nationals.

The Politics of Identity: How Populist and Extremist Narratives in Romania Shape Public Opinion on Security and Inclusivity

Ștefania Mihai, Mihai Viteazul National Intelligence Academy in Bucharest, Romania, mihai.stefania@animv.eu

Abstract. Populist and extremist narratives in Romania have had a significant impact on public discourse, particularly in the context of national security and social inclusion. In a country with a complex history and a diverse social landscape, these narratives have been used as a powerful tool to influence public opinion. This paper analyzes how these narratives manipulate concepts such as national identity, security, and social cohesion, presenting them as essential for protecting traditional values and national unity. By exploiting fears related to cultural dilution, external threats, and the erosion of fundamental values, these narratives have managed to capture the attention of a significant portion of the population. Through rhetorical devices, media manipulation, and policy proposals, they create narratives that address anxieties related to migration, multiculturalism, and European integration. The paper examines how populist and extremist narratives can influence perceptions of security and inclusion, undermining democratic norms and affecting fundamental rights. Methodologically, the research will rely on qualitative discourse analysis, frame analysis, and thematic content analysis of political speeches, media texts, public communication, and social media discourse. These methods will help identify recurring themes, rhetorical patterns, and representations of identity, security, and inclusion within extremist narratives.

French and Chinese Projection of Influence in the Republic of Moldova. A Comparative Analysis of Trade Relations and Bilateral Agreements

Alin Ionuț Cornel Moise, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania, alin.moise.24@drd.snsa.ro

Abstract. The study is based on a comparative analysis of bilateral agreements between the Republic of Moldova and the two states, France and the China, as well as on the foreign trade of the Republic of Moldova structured by groups of goods according to the Combined Nomenclature. The main objective is to evaluate the implications of these two states—characterized by different models of cooperation—in the Republic of Moldova.

The study refers to 1) the analysis of the interests of the two states, which employ different models of assistance to a beneficiary state, depending on exports and imports structured by groups of goods; 2) the analysis of the interests of the two states in relation to the bilateral agreements between the signatory states.

By analyzing statistical data and bilateral documents, the article seeks to provide an original contribution to the specialized literature. The result offers an integrated perspective on the interests of the two states in the Republic of Moldova.

The Construction of an Intercultural Society: Indigenous Minorities as an Integrative Factor. Case Study: The Sámi Indigenous Minority

Alin Ionuț Cornel Moise, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania, alin.moise.24@drd.snspa.ro

Abstract. The study is grounded in an analysis of the indigenous Sámi minority in Northern Scandinavia. Its principal objectives concern the role of integration of the Sámi minority within the societies of the Scandinavian Peninsula, as well as the mechanisms through which this community promotes its culture and educational practices.

The study examines 1) the cultural diplomacy of the Sámi minority; 2) the intercultural education of the Sámi minority and 3) the integration model of the Sámi minority in Northern Scandinavia.

By advancing a potential model of integration for an indigenous minority within an intercultural society, the article seeks to make an original contribution to the academic literature.

The Impact of Public Opinion on the EU Security Architecture: from Institutional Integration to Societal Resilience

Pavlo Molochko, Yuriy Fedkovych National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine, p.molochko@chnu.edu.ua

Oleksandr Haina, Yuriy Fedkovych National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine, haina.oleksandr@chnu.edu.ua

Abstract. The European security landscape is currently navigating a period of profound transformation, driven by a fundamental shift in public perceptions of traditional strategic alliances. For decades, the security architecture of the European Union was built upon the “peace dividend” and

a heavy reliance on the United States as the ultimate security guarantor. However, this long-standing paradigm has been destabilized by shifting geopolitical priorities in Washington and the return of large-scale conventional warfare to the European continent. Recent empirical data suggest that the European public increasingly views the United States as a volatile partner rather than a permanent shield. In key EU member states, favorable perceptions of U.S. strategic reliability have declined sharply, from 47% to 29% in recent years. This shift in public sentiment has fundamentally altered the discourse surrounding European “Strategic Autonomy”, moving it from a theoretical political preference to a perceived necessity for continental survival.

Central to this evolution is a distinctive paradox within contemporary European society that this research identifies as the “resilience gap”. On one hand, there is overwhelming public support for institutional military integration. Specifically, 82% of EU citizens favor strengthening cooperation in the field of security and defense. Furthermore, 56% of respondents support a “maximalist” vision for the EU, believing that the Union should be capable of independent military action and have its own army, rather than functioning merely as a group of states that consult with one another. However, this institutional ambition is contrasted by a critical deficit in individual societal resilience. Using Gallup International data, this study compares the “readiness to fight” across different regions, revealing that while 62% of Ukrainians and 55% of Moldovans express a personal readiness to defend their states, the average across the European Union stands at only 32%. In several Western European nations, this figure is significantly lower, indicating a disconnect between the public’s desire for a strong collective defense structure and their personal willingness to participate in that defense.

The research concludes that the future of the EU security architecture depends on bridging this gap between institutional ambition and societal reality. Ukraine is no longer merely a recipient of security assistance but has emerged as a vital pillar for the EU’s future architecture. Ukraine’s high level of societal resilience and its practical experience in national mobilization serve as a necessary model for the EU that has grown accustomed to peace. For the European Union to transition from a “civilian power” to a credible military actor, it must integrate more than just military hardware and budgets; it must adopt the culture of societal readiness characterized by frontline states. Ultimately, the impact of public opinion suggests that while the architecture of European defense is being redesigned at an institutional level, its long-term viability will depend on revitalizing the human element

of security and fostering a deeper sense of societal resilience across the continent.

The Case of the Ruthenians in Romania and Their Role in International Relations

Mariana Svetlana Mureșan, Babeș Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
mariana.petretchi@ubbcluj.ro

Gabriela Ciot, Babeș Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
melania.ciot@ubbcluj.ro

Abstract. This paper explores the complex process through which the Ruthenian community in Romania negotiates its identity across local, national, and European dimensions. Situated at the intersection of historical legacy, cultural preservation, and contemporary political frameworks, the Ruthenians represent a compelling case of how minority groups contribute to the broader construction of European identity.

The study examines how local community practices—such as language use, religious traditions, and cultural institutions—serve as foundational elements in maintaining ethnic distinctiveness while simultaneously enabling integration into national and supranational structures. Particular attention is given to the role of community organizations and cross-border networks in fostering a sense of belonging that transcends state boundaries.

In addition, the study explores the role of the Ruthenian community in international relations through transnational cooperation, cross-border cultural initiatives, and participation in European minority networks. These activities demonstrate how minority groups act as intermediaries between states and international institutions, contributing to policy diffusion and the promotion of shared norms regarding diversity and inclusion.

By combining perspectives from ethnography, political science, and European studies, the research underscores how the Ruthenians in Romania exemplify the dynamic interplay between local rootedness and European integration. Their experience illustrates that European identity is not a uniform construct, but rather a layered and evolving process shaped by diverse cultural narratives.

Ultimately, the paper argues that understanding such communities is essential for rethinking European identity as inclusive, pluralistic, and grounded in lived cultural realities.

Cultural Diplomacy as a Tool for Cooperation and Inclusion within European Identity – The Case of the Romanian Cultural Institute in New York within the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC)

Andreea Negrău, Romanian Cultural Institute in New York, USA,
negrauandreea@yahoo.com

Abstract. The aim of this paper is to explore how cultural diplomacy operates in an international context, what instruments are used by states and cultural institutions to increase visibility and influence, and how partnerships and institutional cooperation contribute to the development of a shared and impactful cultural message. The research engages with key concepts such as Soft Power, cultural diplomacy, shared European values, cooperation between cultural institutes and local partners, intercultural dialogue, inclusion, and social cohesion through culture. The methodology is based on a qualitative case study of the Romanian Cultural Institute within EUNIC, combining institutional analysis, official documentation, strategic partnerships, and participant observation informed by my professional experience within the institution. This approach allows for an understanding of both the operational and strategic dimensions of cultural diplomacy in practice.

Strategic Objectives in the Russian War: Identity and Democracy (on the examples of Ukraine and Moldova)

Nataliia Nechaieva-Yuriichuk, Yuriy Fedkovych National University,
Chernivtsi, Ukraine, n.nechayeva-yuriychuk@chnu.edu.ua

Abstract. The Russian-Ukrainian war has revealed that contemporary Russia is a neo-imperial state intent on controlling political processes in neighbouring countries. Moscow now openly employs military force, disinformation, and hybrid instruments to undermine national identities and democratic systems in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. This strategy is particularly evident in Ukraine and Moldova, whose political stability is critical to the security of Europe's eastern flank. Ukraine remains the main target of Russia's neo-imperial ambitions. From the outset of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014, and especially after February 24, 2022, the Kremlin has questioned the existence of the Ukrainian people and disseminated disinformation narratives to discredit the Ukrainian state. By military invasion, common with information warfare, which also includes

leveraging religion as a tool of cognitive influence, Moscow seeks to expand the ‘Russian world’ and erode Ukrainian resistance. The Kremlin uses disinformation, manipulation, and propaganda to undermine trust in democratic institutions, European integration, and international support for Ukraine. Despite everything, Ukraine continues to serve as a model of societal resilience and cohesion.

Moldova, Ukraine’s neighbour, has been in a state of hybrid confrontation with Russia even before it became independent. Since the start of the 1990s, Moscow has leveraged the Transnistria and Gagauzia issues to sustain and enhance its influence in the region. The 2024 and 2025 presidential and parliamentary elections became a critical test of Moldovan society’s capacity to defend the state’s democratic and European trajectory, and to assert its identity independent of the ‘Russian world’. Despite significant financial investments by Russia, estimated at tens or even hundreds of thousands of euros, Moldova has chosen to pursue European integration.

Russia’s hybrid offensive against Ukraine and Moldova illustrates Moscow’s intent not only to retain these countries within its sphere of influence, but also to enhance its impact on European security and alter the regional balance of power in its favour.

Waste Identity: Environmental Governance and European Integration in a Multicultural Border Community in Romania

Michelle Nica, Babeş Bolyai University, Faculty of European Studies, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, michellenica26@gmail.com

Abstract. Environmental governance is rarely examined as a mechanism of identity construction and social inclusion. This paper argues that community-level waste management initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe can function as vectors of European norm internalization, producing measurable shifts in collective identity, intercultural inclusion, and civic engagement that extend beyond the technical domain of waste policy.

Drawing on a constructivist theoretical framework and interviews conducted in Sălacea — a rural multicultural community in Bihor County, Romania, situated in the Romanian-Hungarian border area — this paper examines how a waste management initiative transformed the community's relationship to European identity and intercultural solidarity. The paper traces how supranational environmental norms were internalized at community level through social learning, moral framing, and identity reconstruction.

We produce three key findings. First, environmental governance can serve as a practical instrument of European integration at the community level.

Second, designing inclusive environmental programs in multicultural communities is itself a form of diversity management, with direct consequences for interethnic relations and social cohesion. Third, locally driven initiatives led by committed actors can achieve social inclusion outcomes.

Gagauz Community from the Republic of Moldova. Identity as a Border and Societal Security

Ana Orjuhovschi, Babeş Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
orjuhovschia@gmail.com

Mircea Brie, Universitatea din Oradea, Oradea, Romania, mbrie@uoradea.ro

Abstract. Societal security and internal political transformations in the Republic of Moldova are intrinsically linked to broader geopolitical fluctuations and existential identity cleavages within the population. Among these, the Gagauz community constitutes a highly significant expression of ethnocultural pluralism, underpinned by a specialized framework of territorial autonomy. From a conceptual standpoint, identity—manifested at the individual, group, or community level—serves as a catalyst for both convergence and divergence vis-à-vis the 'Other.' Identity constructions inevitably demarcate symbolic or ideological borders.

Methodologically, this analysis focuses primarily on the identity boundaries generated by specific ethno-religious, linguistic, and cultural factors, as well as the unique regional mindset. The purpose of the research is to investigate the Gagauz community in the Republic of Moldova through the analysis of the dynamics of identity borders, the state of societal security, and the identity-driven geopolitical preferences manifested within the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia. This examination of external determinants aims to elucidate the structural mechanisms utilized by foreign powers, particularly the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey, to project influence within the Gagauz community. We advance a twofold hypothesis regarding the Gagauz community: first, that geopolitical preferences are fundamentally determined by ethno-national, linguistic, cultural, and religious identity markers; and second, that societal security is intrinsically linked to external influence. Consequently, this space exhibits a pronounced geopolitical polarization and fragmentation, which actively drives the construction of identity-based boundaries. In this paper, the research question formulated is: how did the identity borders influence the geopolitical choices and societal security of Gagauzians in the Republic of Moldova?

Competing Narratives, Limited Dialogue: EU–China Relations in an Era of Rivalry

Ana Pantea, Babeş Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
ana.pantea@ubbcluj.ro

Abstract. This paper examines EU–China relations in the context of intensifying global rivalry, arguing that the trajectory of the relationship is shaped not only by material interests and geopolitical competition, but also by the persistence of competing strategic narratives. While existing scholarship often emphasises economic interdependence and power politics, the paper highlights how divergent interpretations of global order, legitimacy, and cooperation structure the dynamics of engagement between the two actors. In an increasingly multipolar international system, the European Union and China advance distinct visions of international order. Since the European Commission’s 2019 strategic outlook, the EU has framed China simultaneously as a partner, economic competitor, and systemic rival, reflecting a rule-based and categorical approach to international relations. In contrast, China promotes a more relational and context-dependent understanding of international cooperation, centred on sovereignty, coexistence, and flexible partnerships.

The paper argues that these competing narratives generate a persistent mismatch in expectations and interpretations, producing what is conceptualised as a condition of “limited dialogue.” In this context, interaction continues across multiple domains, yet mutual intelligibility remains constrained. This dynamic contributes to the securitisation of economic relations, the stagnation of key agreements, and the consolidation of a broader pattern of managed strategic tension.

Transforming ethnic patterns of border areas – case of Northeastern Hungary

Pénzes János, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary,
penzes.janos@science.unideb.hu

Abstract. Hungary is regarded as one of the most homogenous countries in Europe regarding the ethnic decomposition, although, recent tendencies represent the altering ethnic patterns primarily along the border areas of Hungary. Different reasons – demographic processes, altering territorial development trajectories, increasing permeability of borders as the results of the EU accession and Schengen borders.

The paper draws the attention to the changes in the presence and rates of minorities in the border areas of Northeastern Hungary on the basis of census data and collected local governmental estimations.

Challenges to Romania's National Security in the Context of Rising Addictive Behaviours: Community-Based Inclusion Solutions

Laurențiu Petrila, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
lauren.petrila@gmail.com

Abstract. Globalisation, beyond its economic and cultural benefits, has generated a series of structural vulnerabilities that compel a reassessment of the national security paradigm in a multidimensional key. The present study examines this expanded framework in the case of Romania, a state that concentrates a particular configuration of risks owing to its geopolitical positioning and to a regional context shaped by the war in Ukraine. Romania's situation is rendered especially complex by the overlapping of its military and geopolitical dimensions. Through the present study, we propose an analytical inquiry into a national security risk that remains under-thematised in public debate yet is of a gravity difficult to measure, namely the phenomenon of addiction understood in a broad sense. According to the 2024 report of the World Health Organisation, Romania regrettably ranks first globally in pure alcohol consumption per capita among individuals aged 15 and over. In parallel, the National Anti-Drug Agency reports a significant increase in the consumption of illicit substances. In addition to these, behavioural addictions such as gambling and social media dependence have recently gained traction, disproportionately affecting the younger population. The study narrows its analysis to the addictive phenomena associated with alcohol and illicit substance consumption, comparatively examining the framework of governmental public policies and the interventions of NGOs, with particular attention to functional models of community-based inclusion. The central argument maintains that an effective national security strategy in a post-globalisation context requires operational complementarity between state action and civic initiative, moving beyond a strictly coercive paradigm in favour of an integrative one.

The Impact of Protest Movements and European Integration in Serbia: Between Democratic Mobilization and Strategic Ambiguity

Leon Petroj, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, leonpetroj11@yahoo.com

Abstract. This paper examines the relationship between recent protest movements in Serbia and the country's ongoing process of European Integration, situating these developments within broader debates on democratic backsliding and EU enlargement policy in the Western Balkans. Rather than treating protests as episodic disruptions, the analysis approaches them as expressions of deeper structural tensions between domestic governance practices and the normative framework promoted by the European Union.

Drawing on existing scholarship on hybrid regimes and the concept of "stabilitocracy", the paper argues that the current wave of civic and student mobilization reflects a dual crisis of legitimacy. On the one hand, protesters challenge the consolidation of executive power, media capture, and the erosion of institutional accountability. On the other hand, they implicitly question the credibility and consistency of the EU as a transformative actor, particularly in light of its often cautious or ambiguous responses to democratic deficiencies in candidate countries.

The paper identifies three interrelated dynamics. First, protest movements contribute to a gradual erosion of public trust in the European project, especially among younger generations who perceive a gap between EU rhetoric and practice. Second, they simultaneously foster new forms of political engagement and civic agency, thereby reinforcing democratic norms from below. Third, these developments expose the limitations of the EU's conditionality based approach, which has increasingly prioritized stability over substantive democratic reform.

Building on these observations, the paper introduces the notion of "contested integration", to capture the coexistence of formal commitment to EU accession and growing societal ambivalence toward it. It concludes that protest movements in Serbia should not be understood solely as obstacles to integration, but as potential catalysts for redefining the terms under which integration unfolds. Their ultimate impact will depend on whether both domestic actors and EU institutions are willing to address the underlying inconsistencies that these protests bring to the fore.

From ethnic identity to religious identity: The community of Lăzăreni Pentecostal Roma

Maria Gabriela Popuș, Babeș Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
gabriela_popus@yahoo.com

Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to identify the social, ethnic, and historical factors that lead many individuals from the Roma community to choose the path of the Pentecostal Church. Thus, I examined the common points from a social perspective between the two, and, following the study, I identified similarities such as marginalization, discrimination, and the stereotypes to which both communities have been subjected.

Firstly, both Roma people and Pentecostals have been identified through opposing stereotypes. Thus, by joining the Pentecostal community, Roma individuals challenge and reverse existing stereotypes about them. We can also observe similarities between them from a community perspective, as both are united and place family and its values at the center. The activity of the Pentecostal faith, especially in its early stages, is not formally transmitted (for example, through theological seminars), which allows Roma individuals to convert more easily to the Pentecostal Church, having the possibility to choose a pastor from their own community and to preach in their native language.

Secondly, I analyzed the integration of Roma individuals into the Pentecostal faith and, from there, their more effective integration outside their ethnic group and the Church, through methods, projects, and foundations created to support them. In this way, they work together and succeed in achieving the integration of both the ethnic and the religious communities, moving from marginalization to active participation in society.

In conclusion, although we are dealing with two distinct identities at the beginning, we can identify common elements that unite them and the ways in which they manage to achieve integration into society, transitioning from stereotypes and marginalization to visibility and involvement.

Refuge integration and inclusion in European border cities

Polgár István, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, istvan.polgar@uoradea.ro

Abstract. By the end of 2025, Europe, hosted about one-third of all refugees globally. Large-scale arrivals in 2015 – 2016 highlighted the limits of conventional approaches to refugee integration and called for more coordinated responses across different stakeholders and levels of

government. This led to the creation of innovative urban agendas on refugee inclusion.

Border cities from the South Eastern border of the EU have played a defining role in the inclusion and local integration of the displaced and stateless people, continually taking the lead in the short and longer-term response to large-scale migration influxes.

The scale and pace of the influx from Ukraine placed an extra demand on many cities never witnessed in Europe, while the activation of the European Union's Temporary Protection Directive afforded rapid access to rights and services which removed otherwise lengthy administrative hurdles that could normally take years to overcome, and which were resolved in a matter of weeks and months.

The research examines the policy reforms and new institutional practices needed to better sustain integration efforts and enhance capacities for inclusive local development and it focuses on five persistent challenges from the field, present at the level of border cities.

Societal Cohesion as a Determinant of Societal Resilience in the Republic of Moldova

Natalia Putină, Moldova State University, Chisinău, nataliaputina@yahoo.com

Abstract. This paper examines societal cohesion as a structural determinant of societal resilience in the Republic of Moldova, drawing on theoretical frameworks from the literature on social capital, governance, and resilience. The analysis focuses on how dimensions such as institutional trust, social solidarity, and inclusion shape the capacity of societies to absorb, adapt to, and transform in response to internal and external shocks. Methodologically, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining empirical data from recent sociological surveys, policy documents, and academic literature. The findings highlight a set of structural vulnerabilities, including low levels of institutional trust, identity-based polarization, and social fragmentation, which undermine societal cohesion and resilience. At the same time, the paper identifies emerging resilience mechanisms, such as community-level social capital and processes of Europeanization. The paper argues that societal cohesion functions as a key mediating variable between governance and resilience, influencing social stability and the effectiveness of crisis responses.

Types of tourism development projects in the central section of the Hungarian-Romanian border

Radics Zsolt, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary,
radics.zsolt@science.unideb.hu

Abstract. This presentation examines tourism development projects in the Hungarian–Romanian border region as tools for social inclusion and multilevel cooperation within the framework of European integration. The analysis focuses on EU-funded cross-border programs from 2004 to 2025 that promote regional cohesion, institutional cooperation, and relations between ethnic and cultural communities in the field of tourism. The research demonstrates what lessons the Hungarian–Romanian border region can offer as a model of integration in Central and Eastern Europe for future enlargement processes.

From Federation to Independent States: The Legal Challenges of Treaty Succession after the Dissolution of Yugoslavia

Viona Rashica, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Kosovo,
viona.rashica@uni-pr.edu

Afrim Hoti, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Kosovo, afrim.hoti@uni-pr.edu

Abstract. The dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) remains a landmark case in modern international law regarding state succession. This paper provides a legal analysis of the transition from a unified federation to multiple sovereign states, examining the tension between the tabula rasa principle and the necessity of legal continuity. Unlike traditional decolonization, the Yugoslav collapse challenged established norms. The international community, guided by the Badinter Arbitration Committee, rejected the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia’s claim to sole continuity, declaring instead that the SFRY had ceased to exist. The study categorizes legal challenges into three areas: the succession of multilateral human rights treaties, the fate of bilateral agreements, and the status of territorial treaties. Central focus is placed on the 2001 Agreement on Succession Issues, the definitive framework for distributing assets and treaty obligations among successor states. Furthermore, the paper analyzes how this precedent influenced the 1978 Vienna Convention, particularly regarding the "automatic succession" of human rights obligations to prevent legal vacuums. Ultimately, this research argues that the Yugoslav case

shifted international practice toward a functional approach that prioritizes the stability of the international legal order and the protection of individual rights over absolute Westphalian sovereignty.

Professional Development for Inclusive Language Teaching in Republic of Moldova

Lucia Șchiopu, State Pedagogical University “Ion Creangă, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, schiopu.lucia@upsc.md

Abstract. This article presents the development of inclusive education in Republic of Moldova focusing on the role of language teachers. It analyzes important national documents such as the National Programme for the Development of Inclusive Education (2024–2027), which aims to provide equal access to quality education for all learners including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

The article describes the Inclusive Reform and outlines the schools’ accessibility, cooperation, and adaption of teaching practices to create inclusive learning environments. It also examines key methodological guides and the importance of early inclusive education. The special attention is given to the challenges faced by language teachers, who undergo the process of change, explained using three stages: resistance, exploration, and consolidation. In the process of change the language teachers need to adapt their teaching methods, materials, and assessment to diverse learners. For this reason, the article also proposes an Inclusive Professional In-Service Teacher Training Programme that helps teachers develop inclusive teaching competencies. The programme focuses on practical activities, collaboration, reflection, and the use of digital tools. Inclusive education in Republic of Moldova requires continuous teacher training and strong cooperation between institutions to support teachers in creating more effective and inclusive classrooms.

Perception of the state and civic integration among Arab citizens in Israel: Insights from Voluntary national service in a democratic and multicultural state

Seline Semaan, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Iași, Romania, seseline95@gmail.com

Abstract. This article examines the perceptions of Arab citizens in Israel toward Voluntary National Service (VNS) within the context of a state that

defines itself as both Jewish and democratic. The research addresses a central question: how do Arab citizens interpret and experience national service as a mechanism of civic integration in a multicultural yet politically complex society? Drawing on qualitative methodology, the study employs a case study approach and utilizes semi-structured interviews to capture the lived experiences, attitudes, and interpretations of participants from diverse backgrounds. The research is grounded in key theoretical frameworks, including Will Kymlicka's theory of liberal multiculturalism and Charles Taylor's concept of the politics of recognition. These frameworks provide a lens for understanding the relationship between minority rights, identity, and state policies. Findings reveal that perceptions of VNS are not uniform but exist along a spectrum. Some participants view national service pragmatically, as a pathway to social mobility, skill development, and integration into broader society. Others, however, perceive it as a complex and sometimes problematic institution, shaped by tensions related to identity, belonging, and the lack of full recognition within the state. A significant finding of the study is the gap between formal civic inclusion and lived experience. While VNS is intended to promote participation and integration, participation alone does not necessarily foster a strong sense of belonging. For many Arab citizens, engagement in national service highlights deeper structural inequalities and symbolic exclusion. The study also identifies ambivalence among participants who navigate dual identities and conflicting expectations.

The cross-border cooperation as a mechanism of transitional justice: The case of Albania

Morena Shima (Mulhaxhia), EPOKA University, Tirana, Albania,
mmulhaxhia@epoka.edu.al

Abstract. This abstract shows the co-relationship between cross-border cooperation and transitional justice in Albania. As cross-border cooperation is being promoted as an instrument for economic development and European integration, its role in facilitating the transitional justice process is underestimated in the existing literature. This study shows that cross-border mechanisms can contribute to revealing the truth, sharing the archiving findings, strengthening the collective memory as well as reaching reconciliation.

By using an analytic and comparative approach, this study analyzes the existing practices in Albania and other countries in the region by taking in consideration national policies, institutional reports as well as academic

literature. Findings suggest that cross-border mechanisms have an important role in addressing unresolved issues of the past, moreover, in the context of a fragmented system of transitional justice even after 1991.

This study contributes to the literature of transitional justice by proposing the need for a detailed approach that relates cross-border policies with the transitional justice objectives by contributing to building trust, long term stability and reconciliation in the region.

Unequal social justice between the communist legacy and the vulnerable democracy

Gelanda Shkurtaj, Epoka University, Tirana, Albania, gshkurtaj@epoka.edu.al

Abstract. In Albania, communism was established after the Bolshevik model before the end of the Second World War. From its foundation to its fall, thousands of Albanians were killed, imprisoned, and politically persecuted as they opposed the dictatorial ideology within it. The regime's collapse posed the challenge of the implementation of transitional justice to repair the social imbalance legacy. After thirty years, no persecutor was punished, no regrets, no forgiveness is made. The extended period of vulnerable democracy lacked historical truth. Indeed, the most serious risks are the time passing by and the restoration of social justice coming over. The article reveals the role of education to overcome social division, in the post-communist particular context, where other means of transitional justice have failed. Research through a local historical narrative, intertwined with sociology theories, highlights the double decisive role of education in presenting the past and healing of wounds, thus addressing the discrepancies towards social repair. A fragile democracy, built upon the ruins of communism, serves as a case study of how social equality can be fostered through education, thus influencing the international paradigm of social justice.

Social Protection Services and Social Inclusion in Novi Sad: Challenges and Development Perspectives

Jovana Škorić, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia,
jovana.skoric@ff.uns.ac.rs

Nenad Drašković, City Administration for Social and Child Protection, Novi Sad, Serbia, nenad.draskovic.ns@gmail.com

Abstract. The social protection system at the local level plays a significant role in improving citizens' quality of life and promoting the social inclusion

of vulnerable social groups. As one of the larger urban centers in the Republic of Serbia, the City of Novi Sad develops various social protection services aimed at supporting children, youth, families, older persons, persons with disabilities, as well as other users at risk of social exclusion.

The aim of this paper is to present the existing social protection services in the territory of Novi Sad, as well as the key challenges related to their functioning and further development. Particular attention will be given to the accessibility and effectiveness of services in the context of social inclusion, with a focus on challenges such as limited resources, the need to strengthen intersectoral cooperation, and the harmonization of services with the actual needs of beneficiaries.

The paper will also present the results of research on services intended for the Roma population, with special emphasis on the perspectives of Roma families and the challenges they face in exercising their rights and using available services. The analysis will include perceptions of service accessibility, the level of users' awareness, as well as barriers that may contribute to the social exclusion of this social group.

The paper will highlight the importance of developing inclusive and accessible local social protection services, as well as the need for the continuous improvement of policies and practices that contribute to greater social inclusion and equality for all citizens.

The Asymmetry of Sources in Media Coverage of Islam and Immigration: Who Speaks, Who Is Spoken About?

Hiba Chaker, Hassan II University of Casablanca, Morocco,
hebachak@gmail.com

Abstract. In liberal democracies, access to media speech constitutes a central form of symbolic power. Van Dijk's foundational work (*Racism and the Press*, 1991) established that migrants and Muslims appear structurally in the press as objects of discourse rather than as speaking subjects. This observation, empirically documented, remains insufficiently articulated to its conditions of production: why does this asymmetry reproduce itself, through which mechanisms, and with what effects on the construction of public problems? This communication proposes, through a comparative conceptual analysis, an integrated theoretical framework articulating the sociology of the journalistic field (Bourdieu, 1996), the theory of primary definers (Hall et al., 1978), Charaudeau's semiolinguistics (2005) and Sayad's sociology (1999), in order to account for source asymmetry not as a residual bias but as a structural mechanism producing otherness. The added value of this

approach lies in connecting the macro level (media field structure), the meso level (professional routines) and the micro level (citation modalities), thereby offering an operationalizable analytical model for studying media representations of Islam and immigration in Europe.

Slovak communities in Bihor and Sălaj counties. Demographic aspects (19th century-present)

Sorin Șipoș, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, sorin.sipos@yahoo.com

Cosmin Patca, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
cosminpatca@yahoo.com

Ioana Târb Blajec, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
ioana.blajec@yahoo.com

Abstract. Situated in North-Western Romania, Bihor and Sălaj counties are home to the largest Slovak population in the country. Political changes influenced the ethnic and confessional structure of the population. In the Contemporary Era, the economic development determined a higher standard of living for the inhabitants in the area. Therefore, large groups of Slovak colonists settled here, mainly for economic reasons. But after 1989, the Slovak community deals with problems related to demographic decline, economic restructuring, aging population, migration of young people and of labour force, loss of cultural identity. The paper aims to analyze the evolution of the Slovak communities in Bihor and Sălaj counties, starting from the end of the 19th century until the present, based on the main documentary sources (official population censuses), in order to see how they evolve from a demographic point of view, depending on different factors (political, economic, social, cultural).

Social Economy Business Models and Sustainable Growth: An Analysis of Emerging Regional Dynamics

Luninița Șoproni, University of Oradea, Romania, lumivoicu@yahoo.com

Florentina Chirodea, University of Oradea, Romania, fchirodea@uoradea.ro

Abstract. This paper examines how social economy business models contribute to sustainable growth by reinforcing regional competitiveness and supporting inclusive economic development. The analysis highlights the ways in which these organisations enhance labour market participation, diversify local production systems, and generate resource efficient activities

that strengthen long term economic resilience. Empirical evidence from Romania illustrates how such mechanisms operate in regions shaped by mixed urban–rural structures, demographic pressures, and cross border economic interactions. The findings show that social economy business models complement traditional market actors, consolidate local value chains, and create favourable conditions for sustainable regional dynamics. The paper argues that integrating the social economy into development strategies can generate significant economic spillovers and support more balanced and resilient growth trajectories.

The Political and Societal Dimension in the Security Architecture of the Republic of Moldova: Interdependencies, Vulnerabilities and Options

Alexandru Solcan, Moldova State University, Chişinău, Moldova,
asolcan@gmail.com

Abstract. The fundamental dimensions of security have undergone continuous evolution over time. National security is linked to the security of society and the individual. The role and place of the political domain within the overall social system leave no room for interpretation regarding how it can influence and shape other structures of society: economic, social, cultural, military, the legal system, education, etc.

The structural components of the political system, as well as the concrete forms of their organization, functioning, and interaction, can directly affect national security capacity. From the substructures of the political system and the entities formed as a result of their interaction, which exert pressure on national security, the following can be highlighted: the political regime, the mode of governance, the electoral system, political culture, and the characteristics of the political elite. Political decisions can most directly influence social cohesion, and a fragmented society becomes a factor of vulnerability for political security.

In the Republic of Moldova, there is a noted fragility of political institutions, caused, among other factors, by the regulatory framework, which often disregards the interdependence between legitimacy, competencies, and responsibilities, as well as by the lack of objective mechanisms for motivating and holding the political class accountable. All of these aspects have a direct impact on social cohesion as an important factor in the process of European integration.

In this article, we aim to address the issue of the correlation between political and societal security, taking as a reference the realities of the Republic of

Moldova, the existing vulnerabilities, and the identification of solutions to overcome them.

A Multilingual Perspective on Communicative Competence and Developing Sustainable Peace in Education and Society

Angela Solcan, “Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, solcan.angela@upsc.md

Burea Svetlana, “Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, burea.svetlana@upsc.md

Abstract. Multilingualism and diversity have become key features of today’s world, shaping how people learn, communicate, and live together. In this context, communicative competence can no longer be understood only as correct or fluent language use. Societies marked by mobility, migration, cultural plurality, social tension, and fast technological change require speakers who can listen, understand, negotiate meaning, and build trust across languages and cultures. This change is also reflected in education reform. In many national systems, including the Moldovan one, curriculum development is moving from a mainly competence-based model toward one that gives greater weight to values, inclusion, responsibility, and peaceful coexistence. The article uses a theoretical and conceptual approach, drawing on multilingual education, translanguaging, intercultural communicative competence, and peace education. It shows how multilingual and translanguaging practices help learners use their full language repertoire, express identity, take part in dialogue, and develop more inclusive forms of communication that can support sustainable peace in education and society.

Beyond Emergency Response: Community-Based Integration Ecosystems for Ukrainian Refugees in Romania, Slovakia, and Germany

Marian Sitar, Babeş Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, mariansitar15@gmail.com

Olga Lukina, YMCA Romania, Olga Lukina YMCA Europe, olga@ymcaeurope.com

Yuliia Horianinska, YMCA Slovakia, Yuliia@ymca.sk

Abstract. More than two years after the escalation of Russia’s war against Ukraine, refugee integration across Europe increasingly requires long-term

and community-oriented approaches capable of moving beyond emergency humanitarian assistance. While early interventions focused primarily on immediate protection and basic needs, current realities demonstrate the growing importance of sustainable mechanisms supporting social inclusion, labour market participation, psychosocial wellbeing, and community belonging.

This study examines how community-based integration ecosystems can contribute to the long-term inclusion of Ukrainian refugees through the “eDU Hubs and Mobile Centres” (EHMC) model implemented in Romania, Slovakia, and Germany under the ESF-SI-2024-UA-01 programme. The research investigates whether integrated local hubs combining educational support, employment guidance, psychosocial assistance, childcare, language learning, and stakeholder collaboration can function as scalable and transferable mechanisms for refugee inclusion across different European contexts.

The paper presents findings from the exploratory and needs assessment phase of the project, coordinated transnationally by YMCA Slovakia together with YMCA Romania, YMCA Europe, and YMCA Germany. Methodologically, the research employs a qualitative and comparative approach, combining stakeholder consultations, participatory observation, collaborative innovation discussions, and thematic analysis of local integration dynamics across urban and rural settings. Particular attention is given to institutional cooperation, refugee participation, and the relationship between local service accessibility and social cohesion.

Preliminary findings indicate a gradual transition from short-term humanitarian dependency toward demands associated with long-term socio-economic participation and community stability. Refugees increasingly identify employment continuity, mental health support, educational opportunities, and social connectedness as central integration priorities. At the same time, the findings highlight persistent disparities in access to services between urban and peripheral communities, reinforcing the importance of mobile and locally embedded outreach mechanisms.

The study further suggests that integration outcomes improve when refugee support is organised through collaborative local ecosystems involving civil society organisations, public institutions, businesses, educational actors, and refugee-led participation structures. In this regard, the EHMC model contributes to ongoing European discussions concerning social innovation, participatory integration governance, and scalable community-based responses for displaced populations.

The EU Geopolitical Perspective(s): Between Western Balkans and Eastern Neighborhood

Bogdan Ștefanachi, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Iași, Romania,
stbogdan2000@gmail.com

Abstract. After the end of the Cold War the European enlargement process becoming an integral part of the EU's attraction power for the citizens of these countries. However, the EU expanding borders was accompanied (if not preceded) by the transformation of future members in line with the conditions imposed by the Union, which underpin the very stability of the European project. Yet, after the success of the 2004/2007 enlargement, the process began to lose its political relevance: what became known as "enlargement fatigue" culminated, in the case of the Western Balkans, in a process of resistance to enlargement, characterized by technical and formal negotiations that exclude any form of adaptability. In the context of war in Ukraine, the 2022 EU re-activation of enlargement (re)confirms its utility as a border stabilization and peace-building mechanism. In the same time, the war in Ukraine has politicized the EU enlargement process, shifting the focus from the Western Balkans to the Eastern neighborhood (Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia). Thus, based on a critical analysis of official European documents and the relevance of European political leadership, the study aims to achieve two objectives. On one hand, to identify to what extent a geopolitical logic of enlargement can subsume or even replace meritocratic criteria, and on the other hand, to examine whether, if the EU has not (yet) identified a success scenario for the Western Balkans, it will be able to propose a functional one for the much more complex architecture of its Eastern neighborhood. This perspective could underline a possible new narrative for the future of the EU position within the transatlantic security cooperation.

From crisis to control: the securitization of migration in the context of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

Manuela Ștefanuț, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
maria.stefanut@stud.ubbcluj.ro

Abstract. This paper examines the paradigm shift in European management following the full-scale implementation of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum in 2026. Utilizing the securitization theory developed by the Copenhagen Schol, this research argues that the EU has successfully transitioned from a crisis management reactive stance to a systemic control

proactive framework, effectively moving migration from the realm of social policy to the core of the regional security agenda.

The analysis is structured around two main pillars. First, it evaluates the legal implications of the mandatory pre-entry screening and accelerated border procedures, scrutinizing how the legal fiction of non-entry impacts the fundamental rights of asylum seekers and the principle of non-refoulement, creating tension between administrative efficiency and judicial protection. Second, the paper explores the leadership and communication strategies employed by international organizations and EU agencies, such as Frontex, to legitimize the militarization of borders in South-East Europe.

By focusing on the border areas of the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean, the study highlights how the narrative of regaining control influences regional activity and social cohesion, concluding that while the New Pact provides a unified legal basis for border security, it risks institutionalizing a permanent state of exception that may undermine the long-term inclusivity goals of the European project.

Translating Identity, Mediating Inclusion: Language, AI, and Institutional Communication in Multilingual Border Regions

Laura-Rebeca Stiegelbauer, “Vasile Goldiș” Western University of Arad,
Arad, Romania, stiegelbauer.laura@uvvg.ro

Abstract. In the context of intensified European integration, multilingual border regions in South East Europe represent complex spaces where identity, inclusion, and institutional communication intersect. Within such environments, universities and public institutions operate across linguistic and cultural boundaries, addressing diverse audiences through multilingual discourse.

This paper examines the role of translation as a form of intercultural mediation through which institutional identity is constructed, negotiated, and projected. Moving beyond a traditional understanding of translation as linguistic transfer, the analysis conceptualises it as a situated practice shaped by context, audience, and communicative purpose. Particular attention is given to institutional communication in Higher Education, where translation contributes not only to accessibility, but also to the representation of institutional coherence and credibility across languages.

The paper also explores the growing use of Artificial Intelligence in translation and institutional communication. While AI tools support efficiency, multilingual dissemination, and internationalisation, they also introduce challenges related to nuance, cultural alignment, and the

standardisation of discourse. These developments raise important questions regarding authorship, control over meaning, and the preservation of institutional identity.

Drawing on a practice-informed perspective grounded in institutional translation, the paper argues that communication in multilingual contexts is not merely technical, but strategic. Translation and AI-assisted communication function as key mechanisms through which inclusion is enacted and institutional identity is shaped. This paper is intended to contribute to ongoing debates on intercultural communication, diversity management, and societal inclusion in border regions.

Romanian Border Cities and the European Spirit: Cultural Diplomacy as a Tool of Urban Inclusion

Alina Stoica, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, stoicaalina79@yahoo.com, gaidos.larisa1@gmail.com

Bianca Larisa Gaidoș, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, stoicaalina79@yahoo.com, gaidos.larisa1@gmail.com

Abstract. In the context of European integration, border cities have become key actors in fostering cooperation, intercultural dialogue, and the promotion of shared European values beyond the nation-state framework. This paper examines how Romanian border cities contribute to the strengthening of the European spirit through cultural diplomacy and urban inclusion strategies. Focusing on a comparative case study of Oradea and Timișoara, the research explores how local authorities and urban stakeholders engage in cross-border cooperation, cultural initiatives, and international networks to enhance social cohesion and European identity at the local level. The methodology is based on qualitative analysis of institutional strategies, cultural programs, and relevant European projects implemented in the two cities. The findings suggest that cultural diplomacy functions as an effective instrument of urban inclusion, facilitating both external cooperation and internal social cohesion. Moreover, the study highlights that Romanian border cities are not merely peripheral spaces, but active contributors to the European integration process, acting as intermediaries between local communities and broader European structures. The paper argues that urban paradplomacy and cultural diplomacy together reinforce the European spirit by transforming cities into dynamic spaces of inclusion, diversity management, and transnational cooperation.

The Erosion of Solidarity with Ukrainian Refugees: Disinformation Mechanisms and Societal Insecurity in Romania

Marius Ioan Tătar, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, mtatar@uoradea.ro

Abstract. This paper analyzes the erosion of solidarity with Ukrainian refugees in Romania through disinformation narratives that reframe humanitarian protection as a problem of social, fiscal, and identity-based competition in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. More specifically, the study examines how these narratives discursively construct refugees as privileged beneficiaries of support mechanisms, while portraying the Romanian state as neglecting its own vulnerable citizens in order to fulfil external obligations. Theoretically, the paper combines the literature on societal security and welfare chauvinism with the proposed concept of the fiscal securitization of solidarity, in order to explain how refugee support is transformed into a supposed threat to local resources and social cohesion, while also being used to undermine institutional trust. Empirically, the study employs thematic discourse analysis on a corpus of disinformation cases systematically compiled from fact-checking platforms and specialized reports, contextualized through an analysis of official documents and public opinion data. The findings suggest that disinformation efforts about Ukrainian refugees seeks not only to stigmatize a vulnerable group, but also to delegitimize democratic solidarity along the south-eastern border of the European Union.

Borderland Education and Multicultural Encounters: Perspectives from a Central Eastern European Context

Marius Tepelea, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania kbarth@uoradea.ro

Karla Barth, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania mariustepelea@yahoo.com

Abstract. This paper examines how borderland dynamics shape educational practices and intercultural encounters in Central Eastern Europe, using the city of Oradea—located on the Romanian Hungarian frontier—as a representative case. Border regions function as contact zones where linguistic diversity, historical layers, and cross border mobility intersect, generating distinctive educational ecologies. Drawing on regional examples and institutional practices, the paper analyses how schools and universities in Oradea operate as spaces where identities are negotiated, cultural

boundaries are reinterpreted, and pedagogical approaches adapt to plural contexts.

Three dimensions structure the analysis. First, the paper discusses border pedagogy as a framework that fosters intercultural competence, critical reflexivity, and relational understandings of identity. Second, it explores cross border cooperation—including joint programs, bilingual initiatives, and mobility schemes—as a driver for inclusive and innovative educational cultures. Third, it addresses the challenges specific to frontier regions, such as curricular asymmetries, language barriers, demographic shifts, and policy discontinuities.

By situating Oradea within broader Central Eastern European borderland dynamics, the paper argues that frontier spaces are not peripheral but laboratories of coexistence, offering valuable insights for rethinking multicultural education in an era marked by mobility, diversity, and geopolitical complexity.

From Line to Interface: Romania – Republic of Moldova Border Cooperation under EU Integration (2015-2025)

Lorena Teoacă, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania, ghitalorena9@gmail.com

Abstract. Over the past decade, the border between Romania and the Republic of Moldova has significantly changed, evolving from a traditional space of territorial separation into a complex point of interaction where people, information and border authorities cooperate and connect. This paper explores the developments that were made in the area of border governance, as well as the alignment process of the Republic of Moldova to the European Integrated Border Management standards. Moreover, the study analyzes the steps taken by the Republic of Moldova towards European integration from the border management perspective and the role Romania had in facilitating this process.

This article adopts a document-based, qualitative methodology, using official sources such as bilateral agreements, European Commission assessments and border police reports. This paper analyzes how the cooperation between Romania and the Republic of Moldova has changed over the course of a decade (2015-2025), taking into account key dimensions such as operational practices, the coordination between institutions at the border and technological alignment. The findings of the research suggest that the transformation was made in three main phases: an initial period of institutional consolidation and increasing inter-institutional interaction (2015

to 2018), a modernization phase, characterized by capacity building and deepening of operational practices (2018-2022) and the stage of accelerated cooperation, compelled by geopolitical circumstances and the Republic of Moldova's status as an EU candidate.

This paper contends that the cooperation between Romania and the Republic of Moldova reflects a compelling case of external Europeanization in the field of border governance, implying that norms and practices are diffused using bilateral cooperation. Thus, the border between those two states gradually evolves from a dividing line to an interface rooted in the principles of the European Union.

Cross-border Synergies in the Western Balkans: Territorial Cooperation and Development Programs, Instruments and Strategies towards European Integration

Constantin Țoca, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania, ctv_i@yahoo.com

Abstract. The borderlands of the Western Balkans represent a complex geopolitical space, where socio-economic asymmetries and historical legacies often transform borders into rigid lines of demarcation rather than points of convergence. Within the current context of the European Union enlargement process, cross-border cooperation ceases to be merely a peripheral administrative tool, evolving instead into an indispensable strategic component for stability, inclusivity and social security.

This paper analyzes the current architecture of cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans, financed through European Union instruments during the 2021-2027 programming period.

The research examines three relevant dimensions of cross-border cooperation in Western Balkans:

- financial instruments, IPA III,
- territorial cooperation programs including Intra-Western Balkans IPA CBC Programs, Interreg IPA Programs between EU Member States and the Western Balkans, as well as Transnational and Interregional Programs,
- cooperation strategies acting as policy frameworks, such as the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region EUSDR, the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region EUSAIR, and the Western Balkans Investment Framework WBIF.

Consequently, the cross-border development architecture in the Western Balkans architecture is structurally governed by the 2021-2027 financial package through the pillars of IPA III, while being strategically accelerated

by the 2024-2027 Growth Facility and closely oriented toward the sustainability targets of the Green Agenda.

Between Home and Europe: Competing Influences on Youth Electoral Behaviour in a Context of Migration and Integration

Radu Turcescu, National School of Political and Administrative Studies,
Bucharest, Romania, raduturcescu22@icloud.com

Laurențiu Petrila, University of Oradea, Romania, lauren.petrila@gmail.com

Abstract. In the context of intensified migration flows, European integration, and the expansion of digital communication, the electoral behaviour of young citizens is increasingly shaped by overlapping and sometimes conflicting sources of influence. This paper explores the extent to which youth political behaviour is structured by primary socialization—particularly family-based norms and values—versus broader cultural influences associated with European integration, mobility, and digital environments.

Focusing on young voters in Romania, the study investigates how exposure to transnational experiences—such as migration (direct or within the family), travel, and interaction with European cultural models through social media—reshapes attitudes towards democracy, civic participation, and political choice. At the same time, it examines the persistence of locally embedded belief systems, transmitted through family and immediate social networks, which continue to play a significant role in shaping political orientations.

The paper argues that youth electoral behaviour is not the result of a linear socialization process, but rather the outcome of a dynamic negotiation between competing normative frameworks: one rooted in national and familial contexts, and the other influenced by transnational and European-level narratives. This tension becomes particularly relevant in South-East Europe, where historical legacies, economic disparities, and patterns of migration create distinct conditions for identity formation and political engagement.

By addressing this duality, the study contributes to broader discussions on integration, inclusion, and societal cohesion, as well as to debates concerning the future of democratic participation in the European Union. It highlights the need to better understand how emerging generations reconcile local and transnational influences when forming political preferences, especially in the context of ongoing EU enlargement and regional transformation.

Intercultural Dialogue and Diversity Management in Border Areas: Challenges and Opportunities for Social Inclusion in South-East Europe

Andreea Trifa, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
trifaandreeaalexandra@gmail.com

Abstract. The border regions of South-East Europe represent some of the most dynamic and culturally diverse spaces within the contemporary European landscape, where ethnic, linguistic, religious and historical particularities continue to shape social interaction, regional cooperation and identity construction. In the context of globalization, migration dynamics and the evolving process of European integration, intercultural dialogue and diversity management have emerged as essential instruments for fostering social cohesion, inclusion and societal resilience.

This paper seeks to examine the role of interculturalism and multiculturalism in promoting inclusive societies and sustainable cooperation within border areas, with particular emphasis on the Romanian border space and the broader East-Central European context. The research explores the extent to which cultural diplomacy, intercultural education and institutional cooperation mechanisms contribute to reducing social fragmentation, combating stereotypes and strengthening mutual trust between communities characterized by multiple identities and historical sensitivities.

Furthermore, the study addresses the contemporary challenges generated by demographic transformations, migration flows, identity-based tensions and the resurgence of nationalist discourses, highlighting the growing importance of inclusive public policies and intercultural approaches in preserving societal stability and democratic values. By employing an interdisciplinary perspective that combines European studies, security studies and intercultural communication, the paper aims to identify relevant practices and strategic approaches capable of supporting peaceful coexistence and long-term regional cooperation.

The research argues that intercultural dialogue should be understood not merely as a cultural or educational dimension, but as a strategic component of societal security and European integration, particularly in border regions where diversity constitutes both a challenge and a significant opportunity for development and cooperation.

EU convergence stability: assessment and new method

Trón Zsuzsanna, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary,
tron.zsuzsanna@econ.unideb.hu

Nádasi Levente, University of Debrecen, Hungary,
nadasi.levente@econ.unideb.hu

Abstract. This study reviews approaches for assessing economic convergence and proposes a novel indicator based on the Poincaré plot to capture growth instability in addition to economic growth. The empirical analysis focuses on NUTS 2 regions over the last decade, and this new method evaluates the consistency of growth over time. The findings point to the presence of convergence, with less developed regions typically exhibiting faster growth. At the same time, more advanced regions tend to show greater variability in their growth paths. Overall, the results underline that convergence is a multifaceted phenomenon that benefits from a multidimensional analytical perspective. The proposed instability indicator offers useful insights for policymakers seeking to foster more balanced and stable convergence, including in the context of the Western Balkans.

Hybrid Identity Model, Soft Power and Multiple Modernities: Turkis Cultural Diplomacy in Southeast Europe (2020–2024)

Diana Vardianu, National University of Political Studies and Public
Administration, Bucharest, Romania, vardianudiana@yahoo.com

Abstract. This study analyzes how Turkey is recalibrating its influence in Southeast Europe through cultural diplomacy and soft power in a period of geopolitical reconfiguration (2020–2024). The period of the COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for the intensification of the identity discourse and highlighted an increasingly visible competition between cultural models, calling into question the hegemony of the Western model in managing global crises. Wars, multipolarity and the reconfiguration of the world order have been added to this global crisis. Starting from the theoretical framework of multiple modernities, the research investigates the promotion of a hybrid identity model, capable of reconciling religious heritage and tradition with the demands of contemporary modernity.

By using a qualitative methodology — focused on the discourse and content analysis of the activities carried out by key cultural and educational institutions such as the Yunus Emre Institute, TIKA and YTB — the paper aims to decipher the narratives through which Ankara projects a non-

Western model of modernity in the region. The study offers a comparative perspective between Romania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, highlighting how cultural proximity and historical continuity shape the reception of Turkish influence. The cultural vision of Turkey in the analyzed areas is articulated on three levels: the re-historicization of space (Pax Ottomana), non-Western modernity (conservative technological progress) and the geo-cultural centrality of Ankara. Discourse and content analysis identifies this strategy through indicators of tradition such as "common heritage", "friendly country", "vefa" (loyalty), "köprü" (bridge), which legitimizes Turkish cultural authority as the guardian of local memory. Complementarily, modernity is assumed through digitization projects, functioning as a technological sovereignty that offers politically unconditional digital expertise solutions, securing the institutional memory of the region.

Thus, the comparative analysis emphasizes that the success or failure of an identity model does not depend only on the center of power that exports it, but above all on the resilience and specificity of the cultural, political and social context of the receiving state.

Socio-Economic Inclusion in the Context of the Just Transition and the European Green Deal: An Analysis of Governance and Political Discourse in the European Union and Romania

Cristina-Matilda Vănoagă, University of Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia, Romania,
cristinamatildavanoaga@gmail.com

Luciana -Mirela Butișcă, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
luciana.butisca@gmail.com

Abstract. The transition toward climate neutrality, advanced through the European Green Deal, is redefining the relationship between environmental policies, economic development, and social cohesion within the European Union. In this context, socio-economic inclusion has become a central principle of the European normative architecture. This paper examines how socio-economic inclusion is conceptualised and integrated into the strategic documents of the European Commission and into national public policies in Romania, and how it is discursively constructed at both the European and national levels. The research adopts a qualitative design based on document analysis and critical discourse analysis. The findings indicate that, at the European level, socio-economic inclusion is articulated as a constitutive normative principle of the green transition, encompassing solidarity, equity, and territorial cohesion. By contrast, in national strategic documents and political discourse, inclusion is often embedded within a predominantly

economic and investment-oriented framework, with emphasis placed on modernisation and the absorption of European funds. This discursive and institutional asymmetry may affect the coherence of implementation and the effectiveness of measures intended for vulnerable communities.

Societal Security and Minority Communities in the Municipality of Bălți

Andreea Vladiuc, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania,
andreeavladiuc@gmail.com

Abstract. The Republic of Moldova represents a complex multicultural space shaped by ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity. In this context, societal security has become an important topic in relation to social cohesion, identity, and interethnic relations. The municipality of Bălți, one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the country, offers a relevant case for analyzing the relationship between minority communities and societal stability in contemporary Moldova.

This paper aims to examine how ethnic and linguistic diversity influences societal security in the municipality of Bălți. The study focuses on the coexistence of different ethnic groups, the role of language and identity, and the challenges related to social inclusion and community cohesion. Particular attention is given to the ways in which political polarization, regional instability, and external geopolitical influences may affect interethnic relations and perceptions of security within society.

The research is based on a qualitative approach, using perspectives from political science, European studies, and societal security theory. The paper analyzes the importance of dialogue, inclusion, and mutual trust in maintaining social stability in a multicultural environment. In addition, the study discusses the role of local institutions, education, and public discourse in promoting peaceful coexistence and reducing social divisions.

The paper argues that societal security in the Republic of Moldova depends not only on state institutions and political stability, but also on the capacity of local communities to manage diversity, encourage inclusion, and strengthen social cohesion. Through the case of Bălți, the research highlights the importance of interethnic cooperation and inclusive policies in maintaining stability within a diverse society.

National Identity as an Object of Analysis in Contemporary Political Science: A Theoretical Framework and a Case Study of the Republic of Moldova

Pavel Vintilă, State University of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova,
vintilapavelmail@gmail.com

Abstract. National identity remains one of the foundational concepts of political science and, at the same time, one of its most contested. Its theoretical status is marked by the absence of consensus regarding the nature, the origin, and the degree of mutability of the phenomenon. The article proceeds from the premise that this absence of consensus does not indicate a deficiency of scholarship, but rather expresses the complex and multidimensional character of the object of study.

To this end, the paper examines the principal theoretical orientations devoted to the analysis of national identity. The classical currents: primordialism, modernism, and constructivism, formulate divergent answers to the problem of the origin and continuity of identity, yet each entails explanatory limits. Subsequent orientations, such as ethnosymbolism, institutionalism, social identity theory, and the study of multiple identities, seek to overcome these limits, without any of them offering, in isolation, a sufficient explanation. On this basis, the article argues that national identity can be analysed more rigorously through an integrative perspective that articulates the complementary contributions of the various orientations. In order to test the usefulness of this perspective, the paper applies it to the case of the Republic of Moldova, a state in which national identity remains contested and is configured at the intersection of internal processes of state-building with external factors, among which the process of European integration occupies a distinct place.

The conclusion shows that no single theoretical orientation accounts on its own for the situation in the Republic of Moldova, and that an integrative perspective offers a more suitable framework of analysis for the East European states undergoing integration.

Inclusiveness of electronic elections as a necessary component of European integration: the example of Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia

Yevheniya Yuriychuk, Chernivtsi National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine,
y.yuriychuk@chnu.edu.ua

Oleksandr Fesenko, Chernivtsi National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine,
fesenko.oleksandr@chnu.edu.ua

Abstract. Ensuring inclusiveness during the digitalization of electoral and referendum processes—as required by international democratic electoral standards, particularly those regarding electronic voting—is a necessary component of European integration. This involves ensuring equal, barrier-free, and full access to the electoral process for all citizens, regardless of their health status, physical capabilities, or age; in other words, creating conditions under which everyone can exercise their right to vote and be elected. This includes removing barriers for traditionally marginalized groups, such as religious or linguistic minorities, women, youth, older citizens, and persons with disabilities.

We consider inclusiveness to be a core component of integrity, reliability, openness, transparency, voter awareness, security, and trust in electronic elections during the pre-election, election day, and post-election periods. The purpose of this analysis is to examine the inclusiveness of the digitalized electoral process and assess its competitiveness and the equality of opportunities it provides to all groups across the political spectrum.

For the border regions of South-Eastern Europe that have chosen a European integration development vector, balancing the security and inclusivity aspects of electronic elections is a complex task. The Council of Europe facilitates this process through institutional, organizational, and financial measures, particularly through international projects. Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the implementation of these projects in Ukraine was suspended. At the same time, Georgia and Moldova made maximum use of their opportunities during the first half of the 2020s. Studying their experience implementing new digital technologies across all stages of the electoral process will strengthen the democratic foundations of post-war societies.