Report on the Scientific and Analytical Seminar

Eastern Partnership Policy Beyond 2020

Date and venue 17 October 2025, “Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu” State University of Cahul, Republic of Moldova

Project Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence “Strengthening and Sharing Knowledge about the European Union” - JMCoE-USC, No. 101126909

The Scientific and Analytical Seminar examined the evolution of the Eastern Partnership and its future role in the European Union’s relations with its Eastern neighbours. The event combined academic contributions with discussion of institutional reform, regional resilience and European integration. Its substantive results are documented in the seminar volume, which brings together six analytical contributions, discussion outcomes, a synthesis of findings and policy recommendations.

1 Purpose and objectives

The seminar aimed to assess the achievements and limitations of the Eastern Partnership since 2009 and identify priorities for its development in 2025-2030. Particular attention was given to the Republic of Moldova and to the relationship between neighbourhood cooperation and the EU enlargement process.

The objectives were to examine the effectiveness of the “More for More” approach; analyse democratic resilience, the rule of law and reform fatigue; consider the implications of the European Green Deal and the Digital Agenda; and explore how regional cooperation and a credible European perspective could support sustainable reforms.

2 Organisation and participation

The event was organised within the JMCoE-USC project. The seminar volume records the participation of university professors, researchers, experts and students. Presentations were delivered by Valentina Cornea, Ludmila Golovataia, Vitalie Cazacu, Elena Bădărău and Elena Mandaji. Other participants contributed to the discussion through questions, comments and consideration of the proposed recommendations. Their contributions connected historical policy assessment with institutional, economic and strategic questions relevant to European integration. The online registration form received 27 responses. According to the organiser’s estimate, approximately 40 people attended in person. Registration responses and estimated in-person attendance are reported separately, as they may overlap.

The programme was structured around three thematic blocks followed by a concluding session on recommendations. The published account describes presentations, discussion and group work, with proposed measures presented and assessed for their strategic importance.

3 Programme and substantive work

Evolution of the Eastern Partnership

Valentina Cornea examined achievements and limitations since 2009, including the key policy documents and the “20 Deliverables for 2020”. Ludmila Golovataia analysed the “More for More” model through comparison of associated and non-associated partner countries. Discussion addressed whether financial assistance and market access provide sufficient incentives for structural reforms, and how conditionality can respond to vested interests and reform fatigue.

Strategic challenges and new priorities

Vitalie Cazacu addressed democratic resilience, corruption, the rule of law and the sustainability of institutional reform. Elena Bădărău examined the integration of the European Green Deal and the Digital Agenda into the Eastern Partnership. The discussion linked these priorities to administrative capacity, investment needs and the economic circumstances of partner countries. Energy resilience, transport connectivity and regional cooperation were also considered as means of reducing external vulnerability.

Future positioning and European integration

Elena Mandaji presented an analysis of the Associated Trio and the changing role of the Eastern Partnership after 2022. Ludmila Golovataia addressed the relationship between a clear membership perspective and strategic ambiguity. The discussion considered how regional cooperation can complement accession-related reforms while accommodating different ambitions and capacities among partner countries.

4 Main findings and discussion outcomes

The published discussion outcomes identify broad agreement that the Eastern Partnership retains value as a flexible regional framework alongside the enlargement process. Differentiation was recognised as necessary to reflect the different commitments and reform performance of partner countries, while preserving opportunities for regional dialogue.

Democratic resilience emerged as a central condition for sustainable European integration. The findings emphasise that legislative approximation must be supported by judicial independence, effective public administration, anti-corruption institutions and accountability. The green and digital transitions were treated as drivers of competitiveness and modernisation whose implementation requires appropriate institutional and financial support.

The volume also records different views on the balance between a clearer membership perspective and political flexibility, and on whether greater differentiation could weaken the inclusiveness of the Eastern Partnership. These differences were retained in the published account rather than presented as unanimous conclusions.

5 Recommendations emerging from the seminar

The recommendations recorded in the seminar volume concern the European Union, governments of associated countries, universities and research institutions, and civil society. The principal directions can be summarised as follows:

- Preserve the Eastern Partnership as a flexible regional framework that complements the enlargement process, with transparent and merit-based differentiation.
- Strengthen democratic resilience through sustained support for judicial independence, public administration, anti-corruption institutions and continuity of reforms.
- Support green and digital transformation through technical cooperation, investment and knowledge sharing adapted to partner countries' capacities.
- Expand practical regional cooperation in energy, transport, digital governance and the exchange of reform experience.
- Improve the predictability of accession requirements and monitoring, while strengthening research, informed public debate and cooperation between universities and society.

6 Materials and dissemination

The documentary outputs comprise Romanian and English versions of the programme and the volume Eastern Partnership Policy Beyond 2020: Challenges and Opportunities for Moldova and the European Union. The volume identifies Ludmila Golovataia as coordinator and editor-in-chief and bears the publication place and year Chișinău 2026. This publication date is distinct from the seminar date of 17 October 2025.

The volume provides a lasting record of the analytical work and discussion. It includes the programme, the six substantive contributions, discussion outcomes, a synthesis, policy recommendations and conclusions. Photographic documentation is included in the seminar materials and is not reproduced in this report. The project webpage provides access to the programmes and the seminar materials.

7 Contribution to the project

The seminar contributed to the Centre's objective of strengthening and sharing knowledge about the European Union by connecting EU studies with policy questions relevant to Moldova. Its documented outputs provide material for teaching, further research and informed discussion of European integration. This report accompanies the informational and educational materials assembled for D2.1; it records the event and its substantive results.

Documentary basis

This report is based on the Romanian and English seminar programmes and the supplied seminar volume, particularly "About the Scientific and Analytical Seminar" (printed pp. 8-11), "Discussion Outcomes" (pp. 104-108), "Policy Recommendations" (pp. 121-127) and "Conclusions" (pp. 128-130).

Project webpage: Seminar announcement and downloadable materials

Prepared by:

Ludmila Golovataia, PhD, Associate Professor

Project Coordinator, JMCoE-USC — Grant Agreement No. 101126909

Date: 31 October 2026