

OBSERVATIONS WITH REGARDS TO CHINA'S RELATIONS WITH ROMANIA AND MOLDOVA¹

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Abstract

China's importance in the international arena is increasing, also including in the European region. In recent times there has particularly been an attempt to intensify relations in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative and in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, also through the creation of the 16 + 1 format. Two countries with connections to these initiatives are Romania and Moldova, the former being a European Union Member State and the latter a country with an Association Agreement with the European Union. Romania historically has strong ties to China, going back to the Cold War period, while Moldova now appears to have the potential to be able to play the role of an important partner for China in Eastern Europe.

Keywords: *China, Romania, Moldova, European Union, Belt and Road Initiative, bilateral relations*

1. Introduction

The rise of China and its growing influence has become a major factor in shaping the present international environment. As a result, we have seen China strengthening its relations with various countries around the globe, particularly in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative. Europe has been no exception to this, including the Central and Eastern European region. An important example of China reinforcing its ties to this region can be seen in the developing of its relations with both Romania and Moldova. Here there will be an overview of the basic framework of China-Romania relations, and important developments that have taken place in this relationship over time. Keeping

in mind that 2019 will mark 70 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Romania and the People's Republic of China¹, the author considers this article as a timely contribution to the literature on this important and current subject. Furthermore, this article shall also briefly survey China's relations with Moldova. The latter offers an interesting example of a small country in Eastern Europe which can be said to exist at a geopolitical crossroads, which appears to be pursuing something of a multivector foreign policy, part of which is the strengthening of bilateral relations with China.

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¹ Xinhua: *China, Romania agree to deepen cooperation in infrastructure, finance*, 8 July 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/08/c_137309015.htm (last access 14.09.2018).

2. Romania and China

In the post-communist period of its history, Romania has firmly placed itself within the European and Euro-Atlantic community, which has meant membership of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as the main defining features of its international identity. However, this has not precluded its pursuing constructive relations with third countries outside of this community, one particularly notable example being its relationship with China. This relationship rests on a strong tradition of historical bilateral relations. It can be said that Romania's establishment of diplomatic relations with China began when King Carol I sent notification of the independence of Romania to the Guangxu, Emperor of China, who in kind sent a positive response to this development². Later, Romania and the People's Republic of China established diplomatic relations on 5 October 1949, and the first ambassadors were exchanged in March of the following year³. In October 1971 Romania, as one of the co-sponsor states, voted for a resolution in the 26th United Nations General Assembly which called for the restoration of China's rights in the organization⁴. It can

even be said that at this time Romania was China's closest European ally⁵. Romania during the rule of Nicolae Ceaușescu played a not insignificant role in the normalization of relations between the United States of America and China⁶. The positive bonds which existed between Romania and China during the Ceausescu period must be seen in the context of both Romania and China's tensions with the Soviet Union, with both attempting to chart an independent path in the international arena and resisting Moscow's leadership⁷.

The Chinese side has explicitly recognized the historical roots of this relationship and its importance even in recent times. Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of People's Republic of China, said in a speech to the Romanian Parliament in 2013 that "Solid traditional friendship may serve as anchors for stable relations. Over the past 60 years and more since the establishment of diplomatic ties, our two countries have always lived in amity with each other and shared weal and woe" and that "Our two countries have always respected each other, treated each other as equals, firmly supported each other's core interests and fully respected each other's choice of development path. China is the

² Andrea Chiriu and Liu Zuokui: *Sino-Romanian Relations, from the First Ponta's government to Klaus Werner Iohannis's victory in the presidential elections*, 16 + 1 China-CEEC Think Tanks Network, 11 January 2011, <http://16plus1-thinktank.com/1/20160111/1094.html> (last access 23.09.2018).

³ Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Romania: *China and Romania (En)*, 16 February 2004, <http://ro.china-embassy.org/rom/zlgx/t66052.htm> (last access 30.09.2018).

⁴ China Daily: *Sino-Romania relations*, 8 June 2004, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-06/08/content_337604.htm (last access 30.09.2018).

⁵ Mihai Titienu: *Comment: Why is Romania's relation with China underdeveloped*, Romania Insider, 16 November 2016, <https://www.romania-insider.com/comment-romanias-relation-china-underdeveloped/> (last access 12.10.2018).

⁶ Deseret News: *Nixon Lauded Ceausescu For Help With China Relations*, 24 December 1989, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/78176/NIXON-LAUDED-CEAUSESCU-FOR-HELP-WITH-CHINA-RELATIONS.html> (last access 10.10.2018).

⁷ Simona R. Soare: *Romania and China: Rekindling the special relationship?* In Mikko Huotari, Miguel Otero-Iglesias, John Seaman and Alice Ekman (eds.): *Mapping Europe-China Relations A Bottom-Up Approach*, Mercator Institute for China Studies French Institute of International Relations (ifri) Elcano Royal Institute European Think-tank Network on China (ETNC), 2015, 66, https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/etnc_web_final_1-1.pdf (last access 23.09.2018).

largest developing country in the world and Romania the second largest among Central and Eastern European countries in terms of population and area. Romania is looking east for cooperation while China is expanding its westward opening-up. When our two countries are moving towards each other, there would be more common interests between us⁸.”

The change of political system in Romania in 1989 did not bring a complete rupture in relations between the two countries, with China stating at that time that ““Ideologies and social systems should not become the obstacle to establishing and developing the relations between different countries.....The relations should be established on the basis of common interests.....In accordance with the principles of respect for the choice of the people of every country and not interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, China will maintain friendly exchanges and economic cooperation with Poland, Hungary, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Romania and Bulgaria⁹”.

However, despite this, it is generally acknowledged that the relationship in Romania’s post-communist period has been

significantly different in terms of the level of its closeness and intensity as compared to that fostered and experienced during the communist period¹⁰. Some of the reasons for this include that post-communist Romania set as its primary foreign policy goals to integrate into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, primarily the European Union and NATO, and thus set as its main aim the deepening of relations with the members of these organizations¹¹. Additionally, China at the time of the change of system in Romania and the immediate aftermath, despite its importance as a world power even at that time, can be said not to have attained then the same level of development and influence that it now enjoys¹².

One important milestone in the recent history of Romanian-Chinese relations was the establishment in 2004 of a Comprehensive Friendly and Cooperative Partnership¹³. China in its international dealings has created a partnership network (CPN), and the status of Broad Friendship and Cooperation Partnership accorded to Romania belongs to the terminology of China’s diplomatic relations and its classification of the level of those relations with various countries¹⁴. Later in 2013

⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China: China-Romania Friendship and Cooperation Move Forward Like a Ship Sailing Far in High Gear Speech by H.E. Li Keqiang Premier of the State Council of People’s Republic of China at the Palace of the Romanian Parliament, Bucharest, 27 November 2013, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/lkqcxzdogjldrhwbdlmnyjxzsgsfwxcshhzzcygzlhy/t1114823.shtml (last access 23.09.2018).

⁹ Gao Ge: *The Development of Sino-Romania Relations After 1989*, Global Economic Observer, “Nicolae Titulescu” University of Bucharest, Faculty of Economic Sciences; Institute for World Economy of the Romanian Academy, vol. 5(1), June 2017, 127, http://www.globeco.ro/wp-content/uploads/vol/split/vol_5_no_1/geo_2017_vol5_no1_art_016.pdf (last access 23.09.2018).

¹⁰ Titielar *op. cit.*

¹¹ *Ibidem.*

¹² *Ibidem.*

¹³ Derek J. Mitchell: China and the Developing World. In Carola McGiffert (ed.): *Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States: Competition and Cooperation in the Developing World – A Report of the CSIS Smart Power Initiative*, Washington, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009, 126, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/090212_06china_developing.pdf (last access 13.10.2018).

¹⁴ Zhou Yiqi: *China’s Partnership Network Versus the U.S. Alliance System: Coexistence or Conflict?*, China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies, Vol. 03, No. 01, 2017, 1, 5, <https://www.worldscientific.com/doi/abs/10.1142/S2377740017500075> (last access 30.09.2018).

Romania and China issued a Joint Declaration on deepening bilateral cooperation in the new circumstances¹⁵. It states that “The two countries have always had a strategic vision on the development of bilateral relations, considering each other as good friends and good and honest partners, who cooperate to their mutual advantage¹⁶”. The declaration includes support for the broader cooperation between the European Union and China, as well as the initiative of Central and Eastern European countries and China attempting to intensify their engagement¹⁷.

With Romania’s European integration and attaining full membership in the European Union in 2007, it can be now said that Romania and China’s relations must not only be seen in the context of bilateral connections, but also within broader multilateral context, which include all the obligations and responsibilities that Romania now has as a EU Member State. Relations between the European Union and China are based on several main instruments, particularly the 1985 Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the European Economic Community and the People’s

Republic of China, which still provides the basic legal framework for the EU-China relationship¹⁸. It has been proposed that this agreement eventually be upgraded and expanded¹⁹, as it is believed this would better reflect the realities of the present day relationship between Europe and China²⁰.

A major development in recent times and which has the potential to provide a new impetus for China’s engagement with Romania and the broader Central and Eastern European region has been the launching of its One Belt, One Road Initiative, also known as The Belt and Road Initiative. This was initiated with a speech that Chinese President Xi Jinping made on September 7 2013²¹, in which he said that “To forge closer economic ties, deepen cooperation and expand development space in the Eurasian region, we should take an innovative approach and jointly build an economic belt along the Silk Road” and that “This will be a great undertaking, benefiting the people of all countries along the route. To turn this into a reality, we may start with work in individual areas and link them up over time to cover the whole region²².”

Perhaps the most significant step towards China’s greater engagement with

¹⁵ Romanian Government: *Joint Declaration by the Government of Romania and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on deepening bilateral cooperation in the new circumstances*, 25 November 2013, <http://gov.ro/en/news/joint-declaration-by-the-government-of-romania-and-the-government-of-the-people-s-republic-of-china-on-deepening-bilateral-cooperation-in-the-new-circumstances> (last access 10.10.2018).

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ European Union External Action: Summary of Treaty, Treaties Office Database, <http://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/prepareCreateTreatiesWorkspace/treatiesGeneralData.do?step=0&redirect=true&treatyId=341> (last access 31.10.2018).

¹⁹ European Commission: *Closer partners, growing responsibilities*, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/china/docs/eu-china_leaflet_en.pdf [last access 30.09.2018].

²⁰ Zhang Jiao: *The EU-China relationship arriving at a bottleneck – A look at the ongoing negotiation of the PCA*, College of Europe: InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of European Union-China Relations, Issue 4 2011, 2, https://www.coleurope.eu/system/files_force/research-paper/eu_china_observer_4_2011.pdf?download=1 [last access 30.09.2018].

²¹ Michelle Witte: *Xi Jinping Calls for Regional Cooperation Via New Silk Road*, The Astana Times, 11 September 2013, <https://astanatimes.com/2013/09/xi-jinping-calls-for-regional-cooperation-via-new-silk-road/>, [last access 31.10.2018].

²² *Ibidem*.

the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in relation to the broader Belt and Road Initiative is the 16 + 1 Forum, which includes 16 Central and Eastern European countries, one of which is Romania²³. In addition, there are several observer countries to the forum²⁴. 16 + 1 began in 2012²⁵, and aims to strengthen the connection between China and states in Central and Eastern Europe in various key areas²⁶. A summit takes place every year within the context of the 16 + 1 format, which was held in Bulgaria in 2018,²⁷ and which shall be hosted by Croatia in 2019.²⁸ One specific Romanian contribution to 16 + 1 is the creation of the Center for Dialogue and Cooperation on Energy Projects 16 +1, which came into being with the support of Romania's Ministry for Energy and Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and which aims to help foster cooperation between China and Central and Eastern Europe in the area of energy based on the principles of the 16 + 1 format²⁹.

Certain major projects have been proposed and envisaged between Romania and China in recent times, one of the most prominent is in the field of energy, which is the proposed construction of two new reactors at the Cernavoda nuclear power plant³⁰. At the present time the Cernavoda plant produces around 20% of Romania's electricity³¹. In relation to the Cernavoda project, in 2015 China and Romania signed an agreement for the latter to construct these two nuclear reactors worth around 6 billion euros³². Romania's Nuclearelectrica, the country's nuclear power producer, has stated that it wishes to finalize negotiations with regards to the project with China General Nuclear Power Corporation by the end of 2018³³. Additionally, in early 2018 Romania's deputy energy minister Robert Tudorache stated that work on the two new nuclear reactors at Cernavoda may

²³ Meeting of China-CEEC Business Council and Business Organizations Latvia 2017: *About 16 + 1*, <http://ceec-china-latvia.org/page/about> [last access 30.09.2018].

²⁴ ERT International: *Greece observer at the 6th CEEC Summit in Hungary*, 2017, <http://int.ert.gr/greece-observer-at-the-6th-ceec-summit-in-hungary/> [last access 30.09.2018].

²⁵ Eszter Zalan: *Hungary-Serbia railway launched at China summit*, Euobserver, 29 November 2017, <https://euobserver.com/eu-china/140068> [last access 30.09.2018].

²⁶ About 16 + 1 *op. cit.*

²⁷ Noinvite.com: *Beijing Says that the Meeting with Eastern European in Sofia is not Postponed*, 13 March 2018, <http://www.novinite.com/articles/188663/Beijing+Says+that+the+Meeting+with+Eastern+Europe+in+Sofia+is+not+Postponed> [last access 30.09.2018].

²⁸ Government of the Republic of Croatia: *Croatia to host 16 + 1 initiative summit next year*, 6 July 2018, <https://vlada.gov.hr/news/croatia-to-host-16-1-initiative-summit-next-year/24118> [last access 30.09.2018].

²⁹ Center for Dialogue and Cooperation on Energy Projects 16 +1: *Mission and objectives*, <http://www.cdcep-16plus1.org/index.php?page=mission-and-objectives> [last access 13.10.2018].

³⁰ Valentina Crivat: *Romania and China – Friends with No Benefits*, The Market for Ideas, No. 4, Mar-April 2017, <http://www.themarketforideas.com/romania-and-china-friends-with-no-benefits-a250/> [last access 30.09.2018].

³¹ World Nuclear Association: *Nuclear Power in Romania*, October 2017, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-o-s/romania.aspx> [last access 12.10.2018].

³² Tsvetelia Tsoleva, Noah Barkin, Robin Emmott: *China's ambitions in eastern Europe to face scrutiny at summit*, Reuters, 4 July 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-eastereurope/chinas-ambitions-in-eastern-europe-to-face-scrutiny-at-summit-idUSKBN1JU1NR> [last access 24.09.2018].

³³ Romania Insider: *Romanian nuclear power producer aims to finalize negotiations for new reactors this year*, 19 July 2018, <https://www.romania-insider.com/nuclearelectrica-finalize-negotiations-new-reactors/> [last access 12.10.2018].

commence in 2020³⁴. It has been predicted that the Cernavoda project has the potential to transform Romania into a regional electricity hub and create thousands of new jobs³⁵.

With Romania taking over the rotating presidency of the European Union in 2019 and which, as already been mentioned, happens to be the same year as the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Romania and the People's Republic of China, Romania's Prime Minister Viorica Dancila has said that this would provide an opportunity for the country to actively promote ties between the European Union and China, and to strengthen the 16 + 1 cooperation³⁶.

3. Moldova and China

Moldova, by virtue of geography, history and other factors, can be said to be a country which in recent times has followed something of a multidimensional foreign policy. One manifestation of this is that despite the fact that it signed an Association Agreement with the European Union, in April 2017 Moldova was granted observer status in the Eurasian Economic Union, being the first country to have received this status³⁷. Another aspect of its

multidimensional foreign policy is its strengthening relations with China. In examining this relationship, we see an interesting dynamic at work, with one of Europe's smaller countries dealing with a state with the world's largest population and which is also one of the world's great powers. Nonetheless, there is a strong mutual interest in deepening and strengthening relations.

Diplomatic relations were established between the People's Republic of China and Moldova on 30 January 1992³⁸. To date Moldova and China have signed 61 cooperation agreements between them in various different sectors³⁹. As of 2018, the volume of trade between of Moldova and China was around 245.5 million dollars, an increase of close to 36.5% since the previous year⁴⁰. Chiril Gaburici, Moldova's Minister of Economy and Infrastructure said that "We know that China's market has more than 1.3 billion consumers, we want to export and have a liberalized regime for the strategic products - wine, cereals, dried fruit, animal

³⁴ Central European Financial Observer.eu: *Romania: Works on nuclear reactors may start in 2020*, 9 February 2018, <https://financialobserver.eu/recent-news/romania-works-on-nuclear-reactors-may-start-in-2020/> [last access 30.09.2018].

³⁵ Raluca Besliu: *China is Using the Balkans as a Testing Ground to Expand its Nuclear Industry*, *Balkanist*, 30 March 2017, <http://balkanist.net/china-is-using-the-balkans-as-a-testing-ground-to-expand-its-nuclear-industry/> [last access 12.10.2018].

³⁶ Xinhua: *Spotlight: China, CEEC envision new prospects for 16+1 cooperation*, 8 July 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/08/c_137309738.htm [last access 24.09.2018].

³⁷ Sam Morgan: *Moldova granted observer status in Eurasian Union*, *Euractiv*, 19 April 2017, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/moldova-granted-observer-status-in-eurasian-union/>, [last access 02.08.2018].

³⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova: *25 years of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Moldova and People' Republic of China*, Press Releases, 30 January 2017, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/press-releases-en/506778/> [last access 10.10.2018].

³⁹ Moldpres State News Agency: *Moldova interested in deepening bilateral relations with China*, 18 July 2018, <https://www.moldpres.md/en/news/2018/07/18/18006304> [last access 05.10.2018].

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

products, industrial products, etc⁴¹.” An important trade development between the two countries in recent times relates to an increase in Moldova’s wine exports to China, which this year has reached 10% of its total wine exports this year, and is now one of the five major markets for Moldovan wine.⁴² China has also made it known that it is willing to connect the Belt and Road Initiative to Moldova’s strategy for development.⁴³ Moldova has also expressed a desire to participate in the 16 + 1 forum⁴⁴, and it has also been speculated that the country may have aspirations of joining the 16 + 1 platform in the future⁴⁵. This could be as a full member, or it could be as an observer country.

A major development took place in the bilateral relationship when on 28 December 2017 Moldova and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Launching China-Moldova Free Trade Agreement Negotiations⁴⁶. This was signed by Moldovan Economy and Infrastructure Ministry Secretary Iuliana Dragalin and China’s Vice-Minister of Trade, Fu Ziying⁴⁷. The background to the signing of

this memorandum was the China-Moldova FTA Joint Feasibility Study, which was launched in December 2016, and concluded in May 2017⁴⁸. The Chinese Ministry of Commerce stated that the study concluded “that establishing China-Moldova Free Trade Zone would help reach a closer bilateral relationship, tap economic and trade cooperation potential and promote the development of the two countries’ economy⁴⁹”.

There is an important factor which must be borne in mind with regards to Moldova and its relations with China, which is that the country has an Association Agreement with the European Union, as opposed to being a full Member State of the European Union. This Association Agreement was signed in June 2014 and coming into full effect since July 2016⁵⁰, and belongs to what has been described as the „New Generation” of Association Agreements, which are much more extensive and comprehensive than those which have existed previously, aiming at a deep integration with the European Union⁵¹. However, at the same time, these agreements

⁴¹ Publika: *Top-rated Second round of negotiations on FTA Moldova-China concluded*, 30 July 2018, https://en.publika.md/top-rated-second-round-of-negotiations-on-fta-moldova---china-concluded-_2652592.html [last access 05.10.2018].

⁴² Xinhua: *China becomes important market of Moldova’s wine export*, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-08/24/c_137413886.htm [last access 05.10.2018].

⁴³ Econs.com: *China to boost Belt and Road cooperation with Moldova, Azerbaijan*, <http://www.ecns.cn/news/2018-09-20/detail-ifyyehna1447614.shtml> [last access 05.10.2018].

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ Richard Q. Turcsanyi: *What to Expect at the 2018 China-CEE 16 + 1 Summit*, The Diplomat, 6 July 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/07/what-to-expect-at-the-2018-china-cee-161-summit/> [last access 03.10.2018].

⁴⁶ Ministry of Commerce People’s Republic of China: *China and Moldova Officially Launch the FTA Negotiations*, 29 December 2017, <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/article/newsrelease/significantnews/201801/20180102694506.shtml> [last access 03.10.2018].

⁴⁷ Moldova.org: *Moldova and China begin talks on Free Trade Agreement*, <http://www.moldova.org/en/moldova-china-begin-talks-free-trade-agreement/> [last access 03.10.2018].

⁴⁸ Ministry of Commerce People’s Republic of China *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ European Commission: *Countries and Regions: Moldova*, <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/moldova/> [last access 13.10.2018].

⁵¹ Roman Petrov and Peter Van Elsuwege: *What does the Association Agreement mean for Ukraine, the EU and its Member States? A Legal Appraisal*. In Aalt W. Heringa (ed.): *Het eersteraadgevend referendum. Het EU-*

fall short of the full obligations and rights of membership in the European Union, even lacking an explicit membership perspective. It may be argued that this gives Moldova a certain flexibility to establish a free trade agreement with China, which is something it would not be able to do independently if it were a full Member State of the European Union.⁵² Article 157(1) of the Moldova's Association Agreement with the European Union explicitly states that „This Agreement shall not preclude the maintenance or establishment of customs unions, other free trade areas or arrangements for frontier traffic except in so far as they conflict with the trade arrangements provided for in this Agreement⁵³”.

It should be noted that a precedent for a free trade agreement with China being entered into by a state that has this type of “new generation” Association Agreement with the European Union is Georgia, which signed such an agreement with China in May 2017 and which later came into effect on 1 January 2018⁵⁴. It has also been said that if a free trade agreement can be successfully concluded between China and Moldova, as the latter is located in Eastern Europe, it could possibly set an example for the wider region⁵⁵. It should also be mentioned that a reason why Moldova can be attractive as a trading partner for China is this very

Association Agreement which it has with the European Union. In the same way that Ukraine has been described as a desirable destination for Chinese investment due to its similar Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the European Union, having the potential to act as a vital transit country to the European Union, being located at the crossroads between East and West⁵⁶, so it could be argued that Moldova may have the potential to play a similar role.

Conclusion

Romania's past and present relations with China reflect the countries multifaceted diplomatic history. Despite the change in political system and less emphasis being placed on the relationship than during Romania's communist period, the connection has continued to develop in various ways, and must now also be seen within the context of the broader European Union-China relationship, and also in light of China's Belt and Road Initiative and such multilateral initiatives as the 16 + 1 format. In relation to Moldova, the country's desire to expand its relations with China in the form of a free trade agreement can be seen in the broader context of that state's multidimensional foreign policy, and may

Oekraïne Associatieakkoord. Den Haag, Montesquieu Institute, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2779920 [last access 05.10.2018].

⁵² This relates to the Common Commercial Policy (CCP) and the complete transference by the Member States to the EU of this particular competence. See Paul Craig and Grainne De Burca: *EU Law: Text, Cases, and Materials*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 5th edition, 2011, 311.

⁵³ *Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part*, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2014.260.01.0004.01.ENG [last access 09.10.2018].

⁵⁴ Tamara Karelidze: *China-Georgia FTA Takes Effect*, Emerging Europe, 3 January 2018, <https://emerging-europe.com/news/china-georgia-fta-takes-effect/> [last access 03.10.2018].

⁵⁵ Liu Zhen: *Can a China-Moldova free-trade deal give Beijing a foothold in eastern Europe?*, South China Morning Post, 29 December 2017, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2126179/can-china-moldova-free-trade-deal-give-beijing-foothold> [last access 03.10.2018].

⁵⁶ Xinhua: *Belt and Road Initiative holds vast development opportunities for Ukraine: First Vice PM*, 10 October 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/04/c_136658920.htm [last access 05.10.2018]; Olena Mykal: *Why China Is Interested in Ukraine*, The Diplomat, 10 March 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/03/why-china-is-interested-in-ukraine/> [last access 05.10.2018].

act as an interesting example of certain countries embarking on the path of European integration, while not yet having gained full European Union membership, and at the

same time attempting to expand and deepen their relations with China, giving them a more comprehensive character.

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