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PhD Thesis summary

Eastward extension of the European Administrative Space

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1. Introduction

The European enlargement of the European Administrative Space (EAS) approaches a different perspective on the europeanization of the states in the eastern neighborhood of the European Union (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), namely the reform of their national public administrations in order to transform them into european administrations.

In other words, the process of administrative transformation of the national public administrations of the eastern neighborhood states includes, on the one hand, the adoption of the principles of the European Administrative Space and, on the other hand, the development of an efficient public service to provide high quality services.

In fact, the paper examines the state of reforms implemented in 2010-2020 to establish compliance with European administrative principles (of the European Administrative Space and european good governance) and the development of electronic public services with the help of Union initiatives in the Eastern Neighborhood (The Eastern Partnership and EU4Digital), but also the administrative reform directions established by SIGMA.

The membership of the Eastern Neighborhood States in the European Administrative Space plays a strategic role for the Romania as a member of the European Union, integrated in the EAS, located in their immediate vicinity (Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). In this case, the enlargement of the EAS will strengthen a channel for communication and cooperation at administrative level between the member states and eastern neighbours to facilitate the exchange of good practice and the development of high-quality public services.

2. The topicality and novelty of the research topic

The topicality of the research stems from the fact that the national and international literature has so far focused on analyzing the principles of the European Administrative Space, the only extension addressed to the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia). and Turkey) through the Strategy for a credible enlargement perspective and improving the EU's involvement in the Western Balkans adopted in 2017.

The novelty is the integration of the Eastern Partnership initiative support in the reform of its six member states, in the process of adoption and observance of the principles of the European Administrative Space.

3. Research motivation

The reason why I chose to research this topic comes from the desire to address the issue of the states in the eastern neighborhood of the European Union from another point of view, namely administrative, because in my undergraduate paper I addressed the subject of reforming the Eastern Partnership as part of the Policy European Neighborhood. Thus, I aim to create a way to bring them closer to the European space by transforming the national public administrations of the six states into European administrations as members of the European Administrative Space.

4. Limits of research

The main limitation in the research was the difficulty of accessing current information on the administrative situation of the Eastern Neighborhood states. This was mainly due to the fact that a researcher from a state other than the one analyzed cannot request the public information to which citizens are entitled.

Secondly, a large part of the relevant research articles are not available in English, but in the mother tongue of the state (which makes it impossible to document correctly and coherently, even through the use of a translation program).

5. Research hypothesis

The hypothesis from which the research is based is that *the extension of the European Administrative Space to the Union's Eastern Neighborhood is possible by creating a set of specific administrative rules and principles.*

6. Research objectives

The main objectives of the research are: 1) Conducting administrative research on the eastern extension of the European Administrative Space, 2) Identifying the role of the Eastern Partnership in extending the European Administrative Space to the east and 3) Identifying a

set of european administrative principles and rules dedicated to the administrative systems of the Eastern Neighborhood states.

In addition to the general objectives mentioned above, the research also includes the following specific objectives: 1) Evolutions of the European Administrative Space through administrative strategies in Romania, 2) Identification of reforms registered by eastern european states on their national public administrations, 3) Identify the reforms of eastern european states in relation to the objectives of the Eastern Partnership Cooperation Platform 1: democracy, stability and good governance, 4) Identify the application and observance of European rules and regulations in the public domain within the states of Eastern Europe and 5) Identify the degree of compliance with the principles of the European Administrative Space within the Eastern European states.

7. The research methodology includes:

- ☒ The *method of content analysis* regarding the elements of public administration;
- ☒ *Comparative method* (Case study on administrative reforms in the Western Balkans - An example for Eastern Europe);
- ☒ *Weberian scale* (used to measure compliance with the principles of the European Administrative Space in the states in the eastern neighborhood of the Union)
- ☒ *Rational choice and sociological institutionalization*;
- ☒ *Performance-based public management model*;
- ☒ *The neo-Weberian model* (the three methods mentioned above contribute to the establishment of the current framework for administrative reform and public service in the states in the eastern neighborhood of the Union) and
- ☒ *S.W.O.T. Analysis* on the integration of the Eastern Neighborhood States into the European Union and their accession to the European Administrative Space.

8. Synthetic presentation of the chapters of the doctoral thesis

The doctoral thesis is structured in five chapters.

Chapter I: The European Administrative Space - Instrument for the Europeanisation of the Eastern Neighborhood of the European Union focuses on the theoretical framework for the eastward extension of the European Administrative Space (public administration and europeanisation).

The concept of the European Administrative Space was developed through the SIGMA program between 1998 and 1999 in order to set the minimum standards for public administration required of the Member States of the Union.

The European Administrative Space is *"an instrument and a mechanism for assessing the reforms of national public administrations, whose permanent enlargement does not have the same limits as the enlargement of the European Union and whose internal processes do not have the same intensity as those of European integration."*¹

In order to join the European Administrative Space, in addition to its geographical affiliation with the European continent, the Eastern Neighborhood states must adopt and respect its basic principles:

- ✚ *„Reliability and Predictability* (ensuring the activities of public institutions and administrative decisions in accordance with the law and the interest of citizens, the use of fair procedures, equal and non-discriminatory treatment and respect for the proportionality of the civil service);
- ✚ *Openness and Transparency* (ensuring the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process and free access to information of public interest on public administration actions and restrictions applied to civil servants);
- ✚ *Responsibility* (any administrative authority / institution and civil servants must be held accountable for their actions to other administrative, legislative or judicial authorities, without being exempted from control or review by others), and

¹ Matei, A.; Matei, L. and Iancu, D.C., *Socio-Statistical Research on the Internalization of the European Administrative Space Principles in the Romanian Public Administration* in Matei, L.; Davor, M. and Mrak, M. Kastelan, *European Administrative Space - Balkan Realities. South-Eastern European Administrative Studies*, ASsee Online Series, No. 3/2011, Ed. Economică, pp. 211 -223

- ✚ *Efficiency and Effectiveness* (Efficiency involves maintaining the balance between allocated resources and results, and Effectiveness ensures the achievement of public administration objectives and solving public problems recognized by law)."²

Thus, in order to transform the national public administrations of the states in the Union's eastern neighborhood into european administrations through the European Administrative Space, SIGMA has developed a number of Spaces of public administration reform:

1. *The strategic framework of public administration reform;*
2. *Coordination and political development;*
3. *Public service and human resources management;*
4. *Responsibility;*
5. *Provision of services;*
6. *Public finance management.*

The main conclusion of this chapter is that there is no general European administrative model valid for member states (given the diversity of their administrative systems and the unequal degree of development between West and East), which indicates the need to create a set of administrative rules and principles. dedicated to the states in the eastern neighborhood.

Chapter II: The specificity of the European Administrative Space in Romania focuses on the process of reforming the Romanian administrative system.

According to the *Administrative Code*, the romanian administrative system consists of:

🏛 *„Central public administration* (Articles 14-28) - represented by the executive public authority of the Romanian state, the *Government* (the prime minister and ministers, together with deputy prime ministers, state ministers, delegated ministers appointed by the President based on the vote trusted by Parliament).

🏛 *Central specialized administration* (Articles 51-61) - consisting of *Ministries* (carries out government policy in Spaces of interest established by the Government), *Secretary General of the Ministry* and *Deputy Secretaries General* (senior civil servants, appointed by competition / examination, on the basis of professionalism);

² Matei, A.; Matei, L., *European Administration. Normative fundamentals and systemic models* in Munich Personal RePEc Archive Paper, No. 24187, 1 August 2010, pp.9-11

Ⓐ *Local public administration* (Articles 105-173) - composed of *local public administration authorities from villages, cities and municipalities* (local councils and mayors) and *county public administration authorities* (county councils) elected by universal, equal, direct, secret ballot and freely expressed in accordance with the law."³

The process of reforming the romanian public administration focused on three distinct directions: civil service, public policies and decentralization, an approach that materialized through the adoption of administrative strategies in the period 2014-2020:

- *Strategy on the development of public policies at the level of local public administration 2011 - 2016*
- *Strategy for strengthening public administration 2014-2020*
- *Strategy for better regulation 2014-2020*
- *Vocational training strategy for public administration 2016-2020*
- *Strategy for the development of the civil service 2016-2020*

In addition to these administrative strategies, Romania has taken a major step in strengthening the national public administration, through the development of digital administration. Thus, following the adoption and implementation of EU Regulation 2018/1724 on the establishment of a single digital portal, the Romania has focused on facilitating citizens access to electronical information, procedures and support services and online problem solving.⁴

In this context, the Authority for the Digitization of Romania (ADR) was established in 2020, as a structure of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization responsible for coordinating the implementation of strategies and public policies in the field of digital transformation and information society.⁵

Therefore, starting with December 2020, romanian citizens have access through the National Electronic System to the following online public services:

³ *Codul Administrativ* <https://www.mmanpis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OUG-57-2019.pdf>

⁴ Accessed at 17:00, 13.06.2022 <https://www.e-guvernare.ro/despre>

⁵ Accessed at 17:30, 13.06.2022 <https://www.adr.gov.ro/>

- „information, procedures and assistance and troubleshooting services within the European Single Digital Gateway network, hosted by e-guvernare.ro;
- contact information of public institutions at central and local level;
- the national register of public institutions in Romania;
- submission of declarations to the National Agency for Fiscal Administration and
- the register of accredited certification service providers for the electronic signature."⁶

The romanian administrative system has the following electronic services: *electronic services integrated in the National Electronic System, independent electronic services used by ministries/central government agencies* (official sites) and *independent electronic services used by local public administrations* (official websites of town halls and local public institutions).

Therefore, after a long process of reform, the romanian administrative system has evolved into a european administration following the adoption of european administrative principles (ESA principles and those of good governance) by improving the performance of central and local public institutions in providing public services to citizens (the adoption of e-governance and the implementation of european directives in the administrative field and the increase of the professionalism of civil servants).

In conclusion, Romania's membership in the European Administrative Space is a key element of the administrative development of the state, which is an example to follow for the states in the eastern neighborhood of the European Union.

Chapter III: The role of the Eastern Partnership in the eastward expansion of the European Administrative Space aims to analyze how the reforms outlined by the Eastern Partnership contribute to their joining the European Administrative Space.

The Eastern Partnership - EaP (the eastern dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy) is the European Union's first initiative to support the reform of the Eastern Neighborhood states launched in 2008.

⁶ Accessed at 18:10, 13.06.2022 <https://www.e-guvernare.ro/>

Its main objective is to "*create the necessary conditions to accelerate political association and economic integration between the EU and partner states by providing political and financial support for political and socio-economic reforms*".⁷ It is important to mention that this initiative does not guarantee the status of a future candidate for accession, focusing mainly on the development of these states.

The basic elements that contribute to the administrative reform of the six Member States and whose evolution is analyzed in this chapter are:

- *Platform 1 for Cooperation: Democracy, Stability and Good Governance* (through which the main directions of reform are outlined), and
- *The Eastern Partnership Index* (a set of indicators that measures the progress of European democratic institutions and practices at the level of the six states).

In addition to these elements, the Eastern Partnership also addresses the principles of the European Administrative Space by setting targets for implementation by the member states:

A. "*Reliability and predictability* (legal certainty) – aims for an impartial and non-discriminatory public administration based on:

- Dividing the functions of public institutions according to legal competence;
- Respecting administrative discretion;
- Proportionality of the public offices in accordance with the law;
- Correct and impartial application of the law;
- Take the necessary administrative measures immediately and
- Respecting the professional integrity of civil servants by recruiting and promoting on criteria of worth and impartiality in the exercise of office.

B. *Openness and transparency* - aims to enable external control and investigations into administrative decisions affecting natural and legal persons by:

- Protecting the public interest by reducing cases of maladministration and reducing corruption in public office;
- Protecting citizens' rights by providing information on administrative decisions and granting the right to appeal by court order, and

⁷ Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague, 7 May 2009, Council of The European Union, 8435/09 (Presse 78), Brussels, 7 May 2009, pp.5-6

- Guaranteeing the free access of the citizens to the public registers.

C. *Responsibility* - claims the liability of civil servants for their actions before other administrative, legislative and judicial authorities by:

- Monitoring and analyzing the actions of civil servants and institutions and
- Creating institutions and mechanisms for supervising the exercise of public office (internal and external audit, courts, inspectorates, etc.)

D. *Efficiency and effectiveness* - aims to maintain an appropriate relationship between the resources allocated and the results obtained (efficiency) and the achievement of the administrative objectives set by law and / or public policies (effectiveness) by:

- Providing high quality public services;
- Ensuring social protection for all citizens and
- Development of public service infrastructure.”⁸

Furthermore, in order to establish the stage of administrative reform of the six member states, it is necessary to follow the evolution of the following indicators (corresponding to the principles of the European Administrative Space):

- ☒ „A1- *Rule of law* - the extent to which civil servants comply with the law and the level of trust of citizens in the exercise of public office;
- ☒ A2- *Favoritism in Government decisions* - the extent to which the Government takes preferential decisions regarding the elaboration of public policies and contracts;
- ☒ A3- *Irregular payments and supplements* - the degree of acceptance by government officials of the bribe;
- ☒ B1- *Transparency in government policies* - ease of obtaining information on changes in government policies and regulations;
- ☒ B2- *Corruption Perceptions Index* - administrative and political aspects of corruption (bribery, embezzlement of public funds and anti-corruption measures);

⁸ Bayramov, V.; Hovhannisian, K.; Kasemets, K. et al., *Public Administration in EU Eastern Partner Countries: Comparative Report 2011*, Eesti Idapartnerluse Keskus, Estonian Center of Eastern Partnership, No 11, Tallinn, December 2011, pp.17-20

- ☒ *B3- E-government* - the degree of implementation of public services in local and central government institutions;
- ☒ *C1- Responsibility and freedom of expression* - the extent to which citizens have access to the choice of Government and respect for freedom of expression;
- ☒ *C2- Judicial independence* - the extent to which the judiciary is independent of the influence of members of the government, citizens or companies;
- ☒ *C3- Diversity of public funds* - the way in which public funds are directed to companies, individuals or groups;
- ☒ *D1- Quality of regulation* - the ability of the Government to formulate and implement public policies that promote the development of the private sector;
- ☒ *D2- Government effectiveness* - perception of the quality of public services and the degree of independence from political pressures and
- ☒ *D3- Waste of government funds* - efficiency of government spending in providing necessary public goods and services.”⁹

As a result, following the reforms implemented in 2007-2014, neighboring states are still facing a high degree of non-compliance with the principles of the EAS, the only indicator that shows a positive evolution of administrative reform is that of e-government (all states have made approaches in the development of electronic public services).

Moreover, following the reform process from 2015-2017 (examined with the help of the EaP Index), the main aspects that need to be intensified are:

- *human rights violations* (Belarus);
- *limiting the provision of public information* (Republic of Moldova, Belarus and Azerbaijan);
- *violation of media freedom* (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine);
- *violation of freedom of expression and assembly* (Belarus, Azerbaijan and Armenia) and
- *corruption of the judiciary* (Belarus and Ukraine).

⁹ Ibidem, pp.18-21



In conclusion, the Eastern Partnership provided the necessary impetus for the process of reforming the states in the eastern neighborhood by outlining directions for reform and supporting their efforts, continued through the European Administrative Space.

Chapter IV: The European Administrative Space and the realities of Eastern Europe includes, on the one hand, the brief presentation of the administrative systems of the eastern neighborhood states and, on the other hand, the degree of reform of their national public administrations.

In addition to the Spaces of administrative reform, SIGMA has set the requirements for a public service at European standards, namely:

- ☒ *Recruitment of civil servants on worth criteria;*
- ☒ *Guaranteeing equal opportunities in the public space;*
- ☒ *Ending of public office under fair conditions;*
- ☒ *Mobility, promotion and demotion of civil servants are objective, transparent and based on worth;*
- ☒ *Fair remuneration and transparency of civil servants;*
- ☒ *Ensuring the regular training of civil servants and the correct evaluation of performance;*
- ☒ *Promoting integrity and preventing corruption in the public service and*
- ☒ *Applying disciplinary procedures with the right to appeal to civil servants.*

Therefore, following the analysis of the reforms implemented in the period 2015-2019, with the help of the reports prepared by SIGMA on the administrative reform of the states in the eastern neighborhood, I conclude that:

-  *Armenia* needs to implement a system for monitoring the performance of the provision of administrative services to citizens and optimizing free access to public information and services online.
-  In the case of *Azerbaijan*, it is imperative to apply the principle of recruiting administrative staff on the basis of worth (education and professional experience) and to eliminate political appointments to management positions.

- ✚ In *Belarus*, the main issues to be addressed are the violation of human rights and freedoms (a situation visible in public protests), in addition to corruption and the violation of the rule of law.
- ✚ *Georgia* needs to eliminate discriminatory treatment of women's access to public office and unequal opportunities to participate in competitions for public office.
- ✚ In the case of the *Republic of Moldova*, the application of the principle of worthocracy in the selection of administrative staff is not homogeneous, given that senior positions are filled by political appointments, not by competition based on training, which facilitates the development of corruption in public office.
- ✚ *Ukraine* must focus on the objective application of meritocracy (senior officials are appointed and cannot be dismissed).

Moreover, in terms of compliance with the principles of the European Administrative Space and the requirements of a high-performing public service, the six states have made significant progress, as follows:

ARMENIA

First of all, Armenia has integrated the principle of *reliability and predictability* into the national public administration by:

- *Decentralization of the process of implementing administrative reforms and of the process of elaborating public policies* (sharing the attributions of the competent institutions in the targeted field);
- *Policy development in accordance with legislation*;
- *Recruitment and promotion of civil servants on the basis of worth and equal treatment* (organizing competitions for public office in which citizens can participate regardless of race / sex / religion / ethnicity / residence and awarding the position of the candidate who obtained the best score);
- *Adoption of a fair remuneration system* (civil servants are paid according to their rank and receive bonuses based on performance);
- *Evaluation of the performance of civil servants* (conducted twice a year to capture the efficiency of compliance with their duties and the quality of services provided).

Second of all, the principle of *openness and transparency* is reflected in the following measures adopted by the Government of Armenia:

- *Providing citizens with public information on public legislation and policies* (institutions have the obligation to make the legislation adopted on their official website available to citizens or to post it in a visible and accessible place to those to whom the act is addressed);
- *Transparency of government decisions* (they are made available to the public online before the session, and the minutes of government meetings are kept and distributed after the sessions to all stakeholders);
- *Public consultation initiatives* (On the one hand, the executive bodies are obliged to publish the draft public policies on the website of the Ministry of Justice for consultation by citizens within 15 days, to apply and motivate the non-application of their comments. on the other hand, public polls, meetings, stakeholder meetings and open hearings may be organized);
- *Application of objective criteria for ending of office* (restructuring or closure of posts) and
- *Adoption of measures to prevent corruption and ensure discipline in the public service* (civil servants have the right to challenge the sanctions granted, they cannot exercise another paid function - except for scientific, pedagogical and creative works - and are forbidden to accept gifts).

Thirdly, the principle of *responsibility* has been applied through:

- *Fair treatment in administrative disputes* (citizens have the right to file a complaint in court for non-provision of public services by an institution and to receive a response to their request);
- *Assumption of liability of public institutions in case of violation of the law and awarding compensation to injured persons* and
- *Sanctioning civil servants* (they can be dismissed in case of violation of the law, failure to perform their duties and abuse of power).

Last but not least, in terms of *efficiency and effectiveness* Armenia made progress through:

- *Providing the necessary support for administrative reforms by the Government;*

- *Accessibility of public services for all citizens* (although information on the administrative procedure is publicly available, citizens do not have the opportunity to submit or request documents online and cannot schedule visits to state institutions, and the digital signature is not provided free of charge);
- *Medium-term budget and debt management*;
- *Regulation of a public procurement framework and internal audit* (provision of information on the medium-term budget, expenditure and examination of public procurement complaints and participation in tenders of all economic operators).

AZERBAIJAN

On the one hand, Azerbaijan's progress in adopting the EAS principles is limited, there are some measures taken in terms of *reliability and predictability*:

- *Equal treatment in public office* (organization of competitions in which citizens can participate regardless of race / sex / religion / ethnicity / residence);
- *Adoption of a fair remuneration system* (civil servants are paid according to their rank and receive performance bonuses);
- *Ensuring the professional development of civil servants* (courses organized by the Civil Service Commission and the Academy of State Administration);
- *Evaluating the performance of civil servants* (captures the efficiency of compliance and the quality of services provided to citizens).

On the other hand, the principle of *openness and transparency* was internalized through:

- *The application of objective criteria for the ending of the civil service* (liquidation of a state body and reduction of staff - Armenian civil servants entitled to be appointed to a post with the salary and profession corresponding to the previous position) and
- *Adopt measures to promote the integrity of the civil service and prevent corruption* (refusal of gifts and declaration of income information and prohibition of holding another paid position).

Last but not least, it is important to mention the responsibility of civil servants for violating the legislation in force and non-compliance with their duties by sanctioning them by the competent authority (which leads to their dismissal).

BELARUS

Although we cannot speak of progress in the internalisation of European administrative principles, Belarus has a long way to go in terms of its transformation into a European administration (a longer period of time is needed for reform). However, this does not prevent it from joining the European Administrative Space.

GEORGIA

First of all, Georgia has internalized the principle of *reliability and predictability* through:

- *Decentralization of the public policy implementation process* (division of responsibilities of the competent institutions in the field concerned);
- *Policy development in accordance with legislation;*
- *Worth recruitment of civil servants;*
- *Equal treatment in public office* (except that women have limited access to senior positions and decision-making);
- *Adopting a fair remuneration system* (civil servants are paid according to their rank and receive performance bonuses) and
- *Ensuring the professional development of civil servants* (each public institution grants civil servants a 3-5 month training leave).

Second of all, the principle of *openness and transparency* has been applied through:

- *Transparency of government decisions* (although the government agenda is available to citizens, decisions are not published on the Government's website, but on the Legislative Herald of Georgia platform);
- *Application of objective criteria for ending of employment* (voluntary ending of employment, dissolution of an institution and reduction of staff) and
- *Taking measures to promote integrity and prevent corruption in the public service* (prohibiting the simultaneous occupation of another post inside and outside the

public service, activity in an agency or enterprise which the civil servant has systematically supervised for the last three years, and receiving gifts during the service and declaring the assets in a public electronic register).

Last but not least, the principle of *responsibility* is implemented in the case of sanctioning civil servants for violating the legislation in force and non-compliance with their duties by sanctioning them by the competent authority (demotion or dismissal).

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

First of all, the Republic of Moldova has applied the principle of *reliability and predictability* by adopting the following measures:

- *Decentralization of the public policy implementation process* (division of responsibilities of the competent institutions in the field concerned);
- *Worth recruitment of civil servants* (except for the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs);
- *Equal treatment in public service* (access of all citizens to public office and respect for gender equality);
- *Adoption of a fair remuneration system* (civil servants are paid according to their rank and receive bonuses based on performance);
- *Ensuring the professional development of civil servants* (all civil servants must follow an annual 40-hour training program - those with a junior degree having an 80-hour program) and
- *Evaluation of the performance of civil servants* (conducted annually to capture the efficiency of compliance and the quality of services provided).

Second of all, the principle of *openness and transparency* has been internalized through the adoption of the following measures:

- *Ensuring the transparency of government decisions* (Government meetings are public and can be watched online, unless the Prime Minister announces the closing of a meeting and the agenda and materials of government sessions are available on the Government website, decisions are published on a separate platform);

- *Citizen participation in the decision-making process* (citizens have at least 15 days to make recommendations on the proposed initiative, unless the decision is taken in an emergency);
- *Guaranteeing free access to public information* (citizens have the right to request access to any public information from institutions);
- *Applying objective criteria for the ending of civil service* (changing the structure of a public institution and reducing staff) and
- *Adopt measures to promote integrity, prevent corruption and ensure discipline in the civil service* (compliance with the Code of Conduct for Civil Servants and restricting the simultaneous exercise of several public functions by a civil servant).

Thirdly, the principle of *responsibility* was applied through:

- *Use of fair treatment in administrative disputes* (treatment of all cases of infringement of citizens' rights to public services by an institution and their distribution to the competent court);
- *Assuming public authorities in case of wrongdoing and providing adequate compensation to injured citizens* (a public institution may be obliged by the court to pay compensation for material / intangible damages caused by an illegal administrative act and failure to resolve the case on time) and
- *Applying disciplinary procedures to civil servants for repeated delays in work, improper recruitment or performance appraisal procedures* (warning, demotion or dismissal).

Last but not least, in terms of *efficiency and effectiveness* the Republic of Moldova made progress through:

- *Providing the necessary financial support for administrative reforms by the Government* (through the Medium-Term Budget Framework);
- *Medium-term planning* (allocation of financial resources for each Space of the public domain and debt management);
- *Ensuring public services accessible to all citizens* (through the Register of Territorial Branches of the State Enterprise - for basic administrative documents and the Joint Bureau for Information and Services - for digital services);

- *Regulation of an internal audit framework* (each public institution is responsible for conducting the internal audit - holding to an auditor) and
- *Regulation of a public procurement framework* (despite the lack of experts in the field, public procurement is open to all economic operators - except those included in the list of prohibited operators).

UKRAINE

First of all, Ukraine has internalized the principle of *reliability and predictability* by adopting the following measures:

- *Decentralization of the public policy implementation process and application of administrative reforms* (division of the attributions of the competent institutions according to the targeted field);
- *Worth recruitment of civil servants* (excluding management positions - categories 1 and 2);
- *Equal treatment in public office* (organization of competitions in which citizens can participate regardless of race / sex / religion / ethnicity / residence);
- *Adoption of a fair remuneration system* (civil servants are paid according to their rank and receive bonuses based on performance);
- *Ensuring the professional development of civil servants* (organization of courses by the National Agency for Public Service of Ukraine with a duration of between 72 and 108 hours per year for each civil servant) and
- *Evaluation of the performance of civil servants* (it is carried out annually by the head of the institution, except for 1-year-old officials to capture the efficiency of compliance and the quality of services provided to citizens).

Second of all, the principle of *openness and transparency* was applied through:

- *Ensuring free access to public information for all citizens* (legal acts are made available to the public within 15 days of adoption);
- *Application of objective criteria for ending of employment* (ending of an employment contract by the employer in case of liquidation, reorganization, bankruptcy, conversion of a company/institution/organization, dismissal or reduction of staff - made without reason for management positions) and

- *Active participation of civil society in the decision-making process* (public consultation for a period of 15 days on the website of the executive body responsible for the respective policy, citizens having access to the necessary information).

Thirdly, the principle of responsibility was applied through:

- *Adoption of measures to promote integrity, prevent corruption and ensure discipline in the public service* (civil servants are prohibited from engaging in other paid activities, receiving donations or gifts - except in cases of hospitality and activation as a member of a board of another institution for profit);
- *Use of fair treatment in administrative litigation* (citizens have the right to lodge a complaint with the court about the non-provision of public services by a public institution and receive material damages for the litigation created);
- *Liability of public authorities in case of wrongdoing and adequate compensation to injured citizens* (a public institution is liable for damages caused to individuals or legal entities as a result of illegal decisions, actions or inactivity of public bodies and damage created by the approval of an illegal and repealed legal act)
- *Applying disciplinary proceedings to civil servants for non-fulfillment of duties and violation of applicable law* (sanctions include reprimand, notification of professional incompetence, suspension from a higher official rank and dismissal).

Last but not least, in terms of *efficiency and effectiveness* Ukraine made progress through:

- *Provide the necessary financial support for administrative reforms* (reform activities are financed from the village budget and donors) and
- *Ensuring access to public services for all citizens* (through a national network of administrative services).

In conclusion, the period 2010-2020 represents a crucial stage in the development of the administrative systems of the states in the eastern neighborhood of the European Union, during which time major reforms were implemented both at the level of public institutions (central and local) and the civil service, promotion, remuneration and sanctioning of civil servants) in order to provide high quality public services to all citizens.

Given that their degree of application and compliance is incomplete and uneven, there is a need to create a set of European administrative rules and principles dedicated to the eastern neighborhood states in order to become European administrations.

Chapter V: The Extended European Administrative Space (E.E.A.S.) - the set of European rules and administrative principles dedicated to the states in the eastern neighborhood of the European Union

According to the S.W.O.T Analysis on EU integration and membership of EAS (shown in the table below), the process of joining the Union is a long one and requires the implementation of reforms in all Spaces of public space, not just administrative, their transformation into European administrations being an easier way to Europeanize the states in the eastern neighborhood.

	Integration into the European Union	Membership in the European Administrative Space
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ The right to participate in the European decision-making process ☒ Access to European funds for development ☒ Freedom of movement within the territory of the member states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Exchange of good administrative practices with the developed countries of the European Union ☒ Reforming the administrative system in line with European administrative principles
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Poor level of political, economic, social and administrative development compared to member states ☒ Difficulty in implementing Union decisions, directives and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Eastern states do not enjoy the same rights as EU members ☒ Eastern states cannot participate in the European decision-making process
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Acquisition of full membership of the European Union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Transforming national public administrations into European administrations ☒ Development of a high quality public service in line with European

		administrative principles
Threats	☒ The accession process is a long one and requires the implementation of reforms at all levels of the public space (political, economic, educational, legal), not just administrative	☒ Freedom of movement in the European Union and access to the european market are not guaranteed (agreements with the EU are required - minor threat)

An important point to note is that joining the European Administrative Space does not guarantee the acquisition of the status of candidate for membership or member of the European Union given that its expansion aims at transforming national public administrations into public administrations and not enlarging the territorial borders of the EU.

As a result, joining the EAS is an important step in the administrative development of the eastern neighborhood states by adopting and implementing european standards in the administrative field and reforming national public administrations (both at the institutional level and in the provision of public services).

Likewise the states of Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans Reform aims to strengthen the rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms, reform the judiciary, fight corruption and democratically reform national public administrations.

In conclusion, the adoption of the Strategy for a credible enlargement perspective and for improving the EU's involvement in the Western Balkans plays an important role in implementing reforms to streamline the provision of public services by developing the necessary framework for their digitization and improving human resource management. , transparency and accountability for recruitment and promotion in the public service.

Therefore, the reform efforts in the Western Balkans are an example of good practice for the eastern neighborhood states and emphasize the need to create a set of dedicated european rules and administrative principles.

Another important aspect, in addition to adopting these principles, is the development of digital public administration in order to optimize the process of providing information and

public services to the citizen without having to travel to the institution (important element especially during the crisis generated by COVID-19) .

In other words, at the level of the European Administrative Space, a high-performance administrative system is based on both digital and classical public administration. In fact, each state is administratively prepared for scenarios such as the COVID-19 crisis, when the physical level of the local public administration was closed during the state of emergency, the activity being transferred to the online environment.

Digital public administration offers a number of benefits for both the citizen and public institutions, such as saving travel time, simplifying the bureaucratic process, digital archiving of documents and streamlining the administrative process. However, an administrative system does not have to be fully digitized, given that part of the population either does not know how to use digital platforms or does not have access to the internet.

Given that the European Administrative Space is a way of interconnecting member states national public administrations, digital administration plays an important role in its functioning and development.

In this regard, the European Union laid the foundations of the EU4Digital initiative in 2018 for the digital transformation of the Eastern Partnership Member States in the period 2019-2022 through the implementation of four European actions and programs:

- “*EU4Digital Facility* - promoting the digital economy and signature, in line with EU rules and practices;
- *EU4Digital - Broadband strategies in the EaP region* - supporting the implementation of national development strategies;
- *EU4Digital: Cybersecurity EAST Project* - strengthening cybersecurity and increasing citizens' trust in digital services;
- *EU4Digital: EaPConnect* - expanding network infrastructure to bring together EU research and education communities and Eastern partner countries.”¹⁰

Therefore, the development of digital public administration in the eastern neighborhood states plays an important role both in streamlining the administrative process and the

¹⁰ Accessed at 30.05.2022, 17:00 <https://eufordigital.eu/discover-eu/the-eu4digital-initiative/>

provision of public services to citizens, and in transforming into european administrations in order to join the European Administrative Space.

The Extended European Administrative Space (E.E.A.S.) is a component of the European Administrative Space, with a set of distinct rules applicable to each state and not guaranteeing accession to the European Union.

The main objective of the E.E.A.S. consists in *transforming the national public administrations of the six states into European administrations in order to provide high quality services to the citizens* (available to all equally, addressing the needs of the citizens and based on compliance with the legislation in force). In other words, this transformation will take into account both the reforms carried out so far with the help of the Eastern Partnership and the directions drawn by SIGMA, as well as the determination of their current situation and the need for additional changes established by each state.

Similarly to the European Administrative Space, E.E.A.S. will be based on the adoption and observance of both the principles underlying the functioning of the EAS and the principles of european good governance.

Reliability and Predictability

According to this principle, the activity of public institutions both at central and local level must be carried out in accordance with the legislation in force, is proportionally divided and aims to provide the services requested by citizens equally and in a non-discriminatory manner. This will help to strengthen citizens' trust in public institutions and their satisfaction with the provision of public services.

Openness and Transparency

Through this principle, the involvement of the citizen in the decision-making process is ensured (through public consultations in physical or online format, in which citizens can express their opinions, complaints and recommendations on public policies adopted at local level, except for security decisions). state and those of a secret nature) and everyone is guaranteed free access to public information on the work of public institutions (displayed either at the headquarters of the institutions or on their official website).

Thus, taking into account the citizen's point of view and guaranteeing the necessary information (constantly updated) the quality of public services provided by state institutions will be increased because it will focus more on the needs of citizens.

Responsibility

According to this principle, all civil servants (both at central and local level) regardless of their function (leadership or execution) are sanctioned disciplinary or criminal depending on the case for violating the law or for failing to perform their duties.

This ensures the legal framework for public services and strengthens citizens' trust in public institutions. Of course, the sanctioned civil servant has the right to challenge the decision of the management in court, which takes into account his presumption of innocence on the one hand and ensures the correctness of the sentence applied.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

Certainly one of the most important features of a quality public service, the principles of efficiency and effectiveness involve the use of resources by administrative bodies (human, financial and time) to solve public problems identified by citizens and to ensure the best methods of providing public services (both in physical format in public institutions and in electronic format on their official websites)

In this case, we can discuss the trend of digitization of public services (by introducing certificates, passports and fingerprint, making available to citizens in electronic format information of public interest and the possibility of completing and registering online applications and scheduling consultation meetings at the institution's headquarters) on the one hand, as well as on the identification and application of strategies to streamline the resolution of citizens' requests within the public institution by eliminating excessive bureaucracy.

The principle of openness

According to this principle, the decisions taken by public institutions and the public policies to be implemented at local level are made available to the citizen in order to guarantee his timely information and the possibility of identifying irregularities regarding

non-compliance with existing legislation, fundamental rights and freedoms. and to give them the opportunity to make recommendations for improving the work of local public institutions.

The principle of participation

This principle aims at involving civil society in the local decision-making process directly or through specialized institutions, ensuring that the decisions taken by public authorities are in line with the needs and demands of citizens, so that they are not based on the institution's own interests. In this way, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms regarding freedom of expression and association is guaranteed, which leads to an increase in citizens' confidence in the correctness of public decisions and the fact that their voice is heard.

The principle of responsibility

In this case, the responsibility does not only refer to the assumption of irregularities from the legal and disciplinary point of view of civil servants, but also to the efficient division of functions and activities between public institutions both at central and local level in order to provide services. public quality in accordance with the law. In addition, compliance with this principle helps to repair and prevent cases of maladministration.

The principle of effectiveness

According to this principle, efficiency aims not only at the efficient use of resources (human, financial and time) to meet the objectives of public institutions, but also at creating a framework for assessing the efficiency of providing public services to citizens. equally, without discrimination).

The principle of coherence

This principle aims at the conformity of public decisions with the national legislation in force, the European and international norms and the respect of the fundamental human rights and freedoms. In addition, the activities and objectives of public institutions at the local level must be drawn up and implemented in accordance with the law and subject to judicial sanctions in the event of irregularities / non-compliances.

🏰 The Extended European Administrative Space has the following characteristics:

Acquisition of membership of the European Union is not guaranteed

Due to the fact that the E.E.A.S. is part of the European Administrative Space dedicated to the eastern neighborhood states, it implies only a formal relationship with EU members characterized by the exchange of good administrative practices between them on the one hand and respect for administrative principles. on the other hand. It follows that the six member states are not involved in the Union's decision-making process and are not subject to the european acquis.

Exchange of best practices with EAS member states

EAS member states will issue recommendations to the central institutions of the E.E.A.S. member states on streamlining the administrative act and the provision of public services. Thus, the eastern neighborhood states will receive advice on the methods and techniques of public service delivery used by the more developed countries of the West of the EU.

Compliance with the European Code of Good Administrative Behavior

As European administrations, the six eastern neighborhood states must adopt the rules of conduct laid down by the Union in the administrative field of decision-making in the interests of citizens, guaranteeing free access to public information, resolving their requests in an equal and timely manner, avoiding cases of abuse of power by civil servants and the use of ethical behavior in the civil service.

Thus, by applying and complying with these provisions, the states of the eastern neighborhood will develop a public service at European standards available equally to all citizens and businesses.

Using the principle of meritocracy in recruiting and promoting civil servants, both centrally and locally

On the one hand, the hiring of new or senior officials will be based on their competencies - bachelor's/master's/doctoral degrees in the field and professional experience - senior positions requiring seniority. On the other hand, promotion to a higher position will take into account the same criteria, adding the performance they have achieved so far (objectives achieved, ethical behavior, compliance with the law and regular professional evaluation). This will lead

to the development of a professional administrative team at the level of public institutions, prepared to solve the demands of the citizens and to act in crisis situations).

Equitable remuneration of civil servants according to grade and seniority

In other words, the salary of a senior official will be much higher than that of a newcomer, to which may be added supplements for their performance. In this case, we must mention that it is not allowed to receive financial attention or any kind of gifts from citizens for the provision of public services, acts that lead to maladministration. In such cases, the official concerned must refuse the citizen's favor and perform his duties or be dismissed in order to avoid the spread of corruption in the institution.

Periodic evaluation of civil servants

Civil servants, regardless of their rank, must be assessed annually in order to identify the degree of performance of their duties, their behavior towards citizens and compliance with legislation in order to prevent the creation of maladministration. Thus, officials who do not have a positive evaluation for a longer period of time will either be advised to rectify or be fired depending on their shortcomings.

Moreover, in this way, irregularities in the performance of professional activity at the level of all public institutions can be identified and established ways to improve them and avoid cases of unprofessionalism on the part of civil servants.

Ensuring the professional development of civil servants

Public institutions are responsible for providing opportunities for regular professional development of civil servants regardless of their degree through specialized courses (organized by various specialized institutions or certain universities) in order to streamline the public services provided. Thus, the higher the degree of employee training, the higher the satisfaction of the citizens regarding the provision of public services and the trust in the local / central administration.

Disciplinary sanctioning of civil servants

In the event of criminal offenses, such as acts of corruption and violations of applicable law, human rights and freedoms, unethical behavior towards citizens and failure to perform their duties, civil servants (regardless of their rank) will be subject to disciplinary or criminal sanctions, depending on the gravity of the act. The public institution will investigate the irregularities and decide which is the most appropriate sanction, mentioning the possibility of challenging in court the decision by the official concerned in order to avoid the application of an unjust punishment and respect for his presumption of innocence.

Thus, the occurrence of such cases at the level of public institutions may be limited and emphasis will be placed on ensuring that all administrative staff comply with the legislation in force and the rules.

Use of ethical behavior by all civil servants at all administrative levels

From the moment they are hired, civil servants will be instructed to behave ethically within the institution (arriving on time for the start of the work schedule, using a kind tone in discussions with citizens and refusing any attention from them) to ensure a high level of satisfaction of citizens with the services provided.

Modernization of public service delivery methods

With regard to the development of public administration at the level of the states in the eastern neighborhood of the European Union, the trend of digitization of public services will focus on the electronic provision of public information on the website of the institutions, the possibility of scheduling online visits to the institution, completing and sending online the various applications for requesting documents and creating one-stop shops dedicated to electronic services. These reforms will be implemented gradually by each state (if they are not currently in use or need to be optimized).

In other words, the development of digital administration at the level of the eastern neighborhood states contributes to optimizing the provision of public services to citizens, the functioning of public institutions and the creation of a communication channel for the exchange of information and good practices with member states of the EAS.

In addition, I propose the establishment of a special institution to discuss the current state of reform of national public administrations to european standards of the E.E.A.S. member

states, namely the Administrative Support Authority (A.S.A.). The A.S.A. is represented by a forum consisting of a representative of the governments of the member states and experts in the Spaces of administration within the EAS, which meets every six months to determine the quality of public administration and how it can be implemented.

Furthermore, irregularities at the local government level will be provided to the A.S.A. by the ombudsman institution in each member state (except Belarus), as it will forward complaints and recommendations received from citizens on how public services are provided by public institutions at local level (city, commune, village), as well as dissatisfaction with the services provided by the central administration.

Last but not least, the oversight and implementation of the administrative reforms of the systems of these states will be the responsibility of the A.S.A., with plans being established for each state after analyzing the current situation within the state (circumstances known only to members of their administration) coherence and sustainability of reforms.

The core components of the E.E.A.S. which contributes to the administrative transformation of the states in the Union's eastern neighborhood, namely:

- the work carried out by the Administrative Support Authority at the level of the six member states and the reports drawn up following regular meetings on the need to continue the reform process or to implement good practices used in the EAS;
- reports submitted by Ombudsman-type institutions (which help to signal administrative irregularities and citizens' satisfaction with the public services provided);
- reports on the state of play of reforms at member state level, prepared by administrative experts and submitted to the Administrative Support Authority (for the preparation of the discussion portfolio at A.S.A. meetings), and
- the analysis of the degree of observance of the principles of the European Administrative Space and of the European good governance (by following the reports made by SIGMA and the evolution of the administrative dimension of the Eastern Partnership).

9. Conclusions and recommendations

The eastward expansion of the European Administrative Space will take place in the next seven stages, being finalized by joining the six states in the eastern neighborhood within the EAS:

1. *Outlining the directions for reform* (by establishing the administrative principles to be adopted and implemented);

In this regard, in order to transform into European administrations, the six eastern neighborhood states must adopt and respect the principles of the European Administrative Space (Reliability and Predictability, Openness and Transparency, Accountability, Efficiency and Effectiveness), the principles of good European governance (Openness, Participation, Accountability, Effectiveness and Consistency) and the provisions of the European Code of Good Administrative Behavior.

2. *Analysis of the administrative systems of the eastern neighborhood states* (in order to examine how they are structured and to identify the gaps that need to be overcome through reforms);
3. *Analysis of the state reform path* (carried out within the six Spaces of administrative reform proposed by SIGMA: ♦ Strategic framework for public administration reform, ♦ Coordination and political development, ♦ Public service and human resources management, ♦ Responsibility, ♦ Provision of services and ♦ Management of public finances and reform objectives set out in Platform 1 of the Eastern Partnership Cooperation: democracy, stability and good governance on compliance with European administrative principles);

In this regard, in my research I followed the six states from the two perspectives (Reports prepared by SIGMA and those on the reforms of Platform 1 for EaP cooperation) in the period 2010-2020. There is no doubt that this period is not a decisive one in terms of the ability to transform the six states into a European administration, but rather an impetus to create a European administrative system dedicated to them in order to join the European Administrative Space.

4. Develop a set of european rules and administrative principles for the states in the eastern neighborhood of the European Union

Given that there is no general european administrative system for the member states of the European Union, due to the diversity of administrative systems and the unequal degree of development between West and East, it is necessary to create a set of european administrative rules and principles dedicated to the eastern neighborhood. In addition, by not granting membership or a future candidate for the European Union, this dedicated system will have a set of special rules according to their administrative situation and the current degree of administrative reform.

- 5. Establishing the current administrative situation at the level of the six states (this step must be put into practice by the experts in the administrative field and the management of the main administrative institutions within the states)*
- 6. Strengthen a digital channel for administrative cooperation and exchange of best practices with the member states of the European Union (by supporting the development of digital administration in the six states of the eastern neighborhood, in order to optimize public institutions and provide public services to citizens)*

Thus, by developing the digital administration at the level of the eastern neighborhood states, it contributes to the optimization of the provision of public services to citizens (fast and free access to current information from the public space and electronic services: document submissions and requests), public institutions (reducing bureaucracy and the timing of citizens' requests) and the creation of a communication channel for the exchange of information and good practice with the member states of the European Administrative Space.

7. The implementation of the E.E.A.S. at the level of the states in the eastern neighborhood of the European Union.

Therefore, the Enlarged European Administrative Space will finalize the process of transforming the administrative systems of the states in the Eastern Neighborhood of the European Union into European administrations, started through the Eastern Partnership and continued through the gradual reforms.

In conclusion, following the application of E.E.A.S. in the eastern european states, they are joining the European Administrative Space as european administrations, which does not affect their efforts to join the European Union (three of the six states making significant progress in this direction: Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia) .

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