

Solidarity in the context of the Eastern Partnership:

The cases of Georgia and Moldova



Zoé Baglin Pravnik 11093064 ES3-5

Supervisor: Enitsa Gabrovska

Date: 13-06-2016

The Hague University of Applied Sciences

Faculty of Management and Organisation

European Studies

Executive summary

The EaP was implemented in 2009 and focuses on fostering a political dialogue between the EU and its Eastern Partner countries, in order to draw them closer to European Integration and values. It does so through the ‘more for more’ approach, a reformulation of EU conditionality, which grants incentives to partner countries that successfully achieve the demanded reforms. One of the roles of the EaP is to bring a lasting political message of solidarity, yet this term is not defined clearly in the framework of the EaP. The goal of this research is to determine whether solidarity between the EU and two of the EU’s partner countries, Moldova and Georgia, has been increased after the establishment of the EaP.

In order to come closer to a definition of solidarity within the EaP, the literature review firstly examines the interpretation of solidarity as understood by various scholars and throughout different times. The sociological perspective of classical thinkers is provided, disclosing the interpretation of solidarity as a common responsibility in the context of social relations, while the political perspective reveals an interpretation of solidarity as the unification of individuals in opposing adverse forces. This leads to look at solidarity in the field of foreign policies of the EU, in which it is fostered through identity – more specifically the political and historical self of a state. Solidarity is also cultivated through the politics of identity, a concept which relates to the positive identification of states with each other, so as to ensure a cooperative security system. Solidarity has in that sense become a fundamental value of the EU and can be understood as the recognition of one’s own identity in others or as a form of social solidarity which induces social responsibility – such as the right to participate in a democracy. Solidarity in the EaP can in turn be defined as the conveyance of normative values to partner countries, which will result profitable to both the EU and its partner countries.

In determining the aims of the EaP, the identification of variables was made possible, regrouping the pace of implemented democratic, corruption and economic reforms. These were selected as they were the most emphasised upon and highlighted the action of boosting reciprocal solidarity. The research methods, whereby a qualitative research method is mainly used, are subsequently outlined, in which the measurement of solidarity is explained. This is done through the evaluation of the aforementioned variables for both Moldova and Georgia respectively. Key findings are presented, indicating overall limited performances and the slow implementation of reforms for all three criteria. This might be explained by inadequate advice and instructions from the EU to Moldova and Georgia, as well a tendency to fixate on the transposition of EU norms and regulations, which are not naturally in compliance with Moldova and Georgia’s political situation. Although the theory obtained from the literature demonstrates the presence of solidarity under certain forms, this study finds that an increase in solidarity cannot be confirmed.

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List of abbreviations

AA's	Association Agreements
AEI	Association for European Integration
ATP	Autonomous Trade Preference
CFSP	Common and Foreign Security Policy
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EU	European Union
GSP	Generalised System Preference
NIT	Nations in Transit Index
PRSM	Socialist Party
TACIS	Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UNM	United National Movement
VLAP's	Visa Liberalisation Action Plans

1. Introduction

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was formed in 2004, as a foreign policy instrument of the European Union (EU). It is mainly used as a framework that aims to secure the EU's outskirts and is arranged into two groups of countries in its neighbourhood: Southern and Eastern countries (Cadier, 2013). In order to create more distinct and adapted policies for these countries, two partnerships were created within the ENP in 2008 and implemented in 2009. The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was set up, regrouping the southern neighbours, and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) was successively introduced comprising six of the EU's neighbouring countries. These include: Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan and Armenia (Gromadzki, 2015). The principal aim behind the EaP is to create stronger ties between the EU and its Eastern partner countries, as well as drawing them closer to European integration and values (European Commission, 2015).

Overall, the desire to reach a stronger economic and political association between the EU and eastern partner countries was an important driving motive in initiating a partnership. Following this rapprochement, the EU and its members agreed to proceed to the further development of the bilateral cooperation with its Eastern partners into Association Agreements (AA's). This, in turn, would allow to determine the ability of the partner countries to commit to the conditions imposed on them, leading to the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). This Agreement results in the liberalisation of trade and investment with a regulatory framework based on EU standards. Another example is the introduction of full visa liberalisation for each of the partner countries in the long run and the enhancement of energy security through the implementation of sustainable reforms (Gromadzki, 2015). As a means to reinforce the desire of partner countries to commit to and strive for more democratic and transparent governments, and adopt more sustainable economic reforms, the 'more for more approach' was introduced. This concept is a reformulation of EU conditionality, which makes for a more solid affiliation with the EU and more inducement for partner countries that show advancement in carrying out reforms (Lehne, 2014). Since 2011, the EU has put forward the importance of this approach by giving it more emphasis. This has, in turn, enabled to draw a clear line between partner countries showing a real interest in growing closer ties with the EU (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova) and the ones that do not show such interest (Azerbaijan, Belarus and Armenia) (de Waal & Youngs, 2015).

In a communication to the European Parliament (EP) and the Council, the European Commission (EC) emphasises on the EaP's roles as follows: "The EaP should bring a lasting political message of EU solidarity, alongside additional, tangible support for their democratic and market-oriented reforms and the consolidation of their statehood and territorial integrity" (European Commission,

2008, p.2). The Commission subsequently employs terms such as ‘mutual commitments’ and ‘political association’ with regards to how the EaP will operate. In a concluding stance it further affirms that these objectives will have to be accomplished through a bilateral and multilateral track (European commission, 2008). However, the EU provides poor clarification on what is meant by the term ‘solidarity’. This causes to question the very nature of the EaP and the kind of value this ‘lasting political message of EU solidarity’ is to provide to partner countries.

In this report, the concept of solidarity will be given special emphasis and examined specifically in the context of the EaP. This necessity arises from the importance that it has acquired within the EU and the framework of the EaP without it ever having been extensively defined. The notion of solidarity is one that is widely used in a political realm, yet, the ambiguity of its connotation accounts for many misconception and misuse of the term. Moldova and Georgia will be used as case studies in this regard, whereby solidarity will be defined between the EU and Georgia and, in parallel, the EU and Moldova. The distinctions between Moldova and Georgia, which reflect the differences between their political backgrounds, will be the subject of comparative evaluation with the intention to contrast the degree of the EU’s involvement in each country, and to determine the level of EU solidarity achieved in both Georgia and Moldova. Different criteria for measuring solidarity will be chosen in order to examine the role and shape it takes in EU-Georgia and EU-Moldova relationships. Altogether, this research is an attempt at filling the gaps that one might encounter when wanting to understand the importance and meaning of solidarity in the context of the EaP.

1.1. Central research question and sub-questions

The research conducted in this dissertation will evaluate whether there was an increase in solidarity between the EU and Georgia and the EU and Moldova after the EaP was established in 2009, hence the central research question being:

“Has solidarity been increased between the EU and Georgia and the EU and Moldova after the establishment of the EaP?”

To be able to answer the central research question, the following sub questions were formulated:

1. How is solidarity defined according to scholars and how can it be defined under the EaP? - Solidarity is a much disputed term within its political connotation. In order to narrow its meaning down to fit into the context, appropriate literature by different scholars will be selected to help its better understanding. Subsequently, the most suitable definition will be chosen to adapt it to the framework of the EaP.
2. What are the mechanisms and aims behind the EaP? - Determining the aims of the EaP will allow for the identification of potential variables that will later be used to measure solidarity between Georgia and the EU, and Moldova and the EU.

3. What changes in the political and economic environment of Moldova and Georgia has the EaP prompted in the process of their rapprochement to the EU? – The changes triggered by the EaP will be evaluated on the basis of the previously identified criteria, enabling the measurement of solidarity.
4. What do the chosen variables indicate on solidarity brought by the EU to Georgia and Moldova? The data obtained from measuring solidarity will be compared with the data collected from the previous literature on solidarity, in a quest for the answer to the research question.

1.2. Structure

The report is organised into chapters that are divided into subsections. In the upcoming chapter a literature review will offer a broad examination of the existing literature on solidarity. Background information on the EaP will additionally be given in an ensuing chapter explaining its mechanism and aims. The methodology will then be presented, determining the exact research methods used in this dissertation and more specifically, the ways used to measure the concept of solidarity will be widely explained. The findings of the research will serve as a tool to examine the collected data. A discussion section will follow up in an attempt to evaluate and analyse the findings. Finally, conclusions will be made, compiling the data and the theory together in order to answer the research question. Recommendations for further research are also provided to close the report.

2. Literature review

This chapter will provide an in-depth examination of the crucial themes pertinent to the issues discussed in this dissertation. As mentioned in the introduction, the first stage will consist in looking at the concept of solidarity from different angles and more precisely the perspectives of scholars. The origins and earliest interpretations of the concept will first be looked at in order to build a solid groundwork to define it within the context of this research. Secondly, its notion in the realm of foreign policies will be explored, bringing the concept closer to the applicable definition for this research. Thirdly, a subsection on solidarity as defined by the EU will guide the reader towards understanding the path that solidarity has taken in the creation of the EaP. Finally, a clear definition will be established to discern the form that it takes in the EaP, which will later enable its measurement.

2.1 The foundations of solidarity

Solidarity is a broad concept that has been given a vast amount of attention throughout history. It finds its origins in a legal domain. A recent study by Viévard (2012) reveals that the term ‘solidarity’ was first defined in 1963 as “the idea that individuals are interdependently united through an obligation” (p.). In fact, plenty of theses, books and articles were particularly dedicated during the

middle of the 19th century to the fundamentals of solidarity as a concept in French and Roman law. Hayward (1959) mentions that the juridical notion of solidarity can be found in the French Code Civil of 1804 whereby it is stated that solidarity among debtors and creditors takes place in the form of mutual obligations and collective responsibility. The day to day connotation, however, that solidarity has adopted, refers rather to the mutual assistance that can be found among a family, a community or more generally, humanity (Viévard, 2012). To further review the foundations of solidarity, the literature will be divided into classic sociological interpretations and political interpretations of the term.

2.1.2 Solidarity from a classic sociological perspective

Already during the beginning of the Christian Era and throughout the Middle Ages, the concept of solidarity was progressively taking shape in the form of feelings of brotherhood, more commonly referred to as ‘fraternity’ (Stjernø, 2005). During the Enlightenment the term solidarity was only used in a juridical context, while ‘sociability’ was employed to refer to the interdependence among men and the duty of reciprocal assistance within a society (Viévard, 2012). However, the term fraternity saw a rebirth during the French revolution and was associated to notions of ‘liberty’ and ‘equality’.

The idea of solidarity became more politicised with time as Fourier and Leroux brought forward their views on the concept. The socialist perspective on solidarity of Fourier revolves around the notion of common responsibilities. Leroux complements to Fourier’s perspective on solidarity by elaborating on the idea that it can be interpreted as an exchange and connection between individuals that contribute to the enhancement of social relations (Stjernø, 2005). In addition to Fourier and Leroux, Comte and Durkheim also contributed greatly to the interpretation of solidarity. Comte places particular emphasis on the ‘continuity’ of solidarity as he believes that the concept mainly arises from the succession of generations (Rees, 2007). Durkheim expands on the concept and concludes that solidarity can be understood in terms of organic solidarity, on the one hand, and mechanical solidarity on the other. Whilst mechanical solidarity refers to the idea that individuals in a traditional society are directly connected through the values, customs and traditions that they share, organic solidarity refers to the idea that people indirectly rely on each other due to their vocational similarities (Müller, 1994).

By drawing on the concept of solidarity, Bourgeois believes that a ‘Solidarist’ movement can revive fraternity which includes a plan focused on re-intergrating a feeling of shared responsibility that would conform to individualism. Bourgeois places particular emphasis on this as, according to him,

social-liberals feared that mechanisms of 'laissez-faire' economy¹ were overtaking the concept of fraternity (Wilde, 2007). Subsequently, Stjernø (2005) explains that Weber's conception of solidarity brings the term closer to a political context because of his preoccupation with control and power within social relationships. The notion of solidarity is evoked in three of Weber's concepts that include 'social action', 'social relationships' and 'social class'. The first one implies an action shaped by one's subjective interpretation while also taking into account other individuals' attitudes, allowing it to influence the direction of this action. With the second one he argued that solidarity was the outcome of relationships that take other people's actions into consideration. Finally, Weber associates social class with class-consciousness, an indicator of the presence of solidarity within a social class (Stjernø, 2005).

In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that the relevance of solidarity in society is perceived as more than just a mere feeling. The section that follows moves on to reviewing the political interpretations on solidarity that will further allow to understand the use of the term at the EU level.

2.2.2 Solidarity from a political perspective

The shift in conception of solidarity from a sociological to a more politically shaped perspective demonstrates a major development of the term in time. Marx, Kautsky and Bernstein are all preoccupied with the unification of workers in an attempt to overcome the oppression of adverse forces, giving rise to progressive political movements such as socialism and social democracy. Their concern about the growing capitalism during their time represents a threat to solidarity, and they thus bring in alternative theories, ideologies and concepts that help us understand how solidarity was shaped throughout the years.

Marx, for instance, resorts to the notion of solidarity in the context of social classes. He makes the distinction between a 'class in itself', which is driven by objectivity, and a 'class for itself', whereby members are brought together on the basis of solidarity (Przeworski, 1997, p. 348). What is understood by solidarity in this regard, is the desire of those members involved to unite willingly. This desire is thus not driven by interests in opposing a different social class but rather to form authentic and natural relations to set up a true community² (Stjernø, 2005). In a similar vein, Kautsky further develops working class solidarity by integrating notions from a social democratic perspective, as he believes that solidarity is the result of proletarians sharing the same working

¹ An economic and political doctrine of the 19th century. Implies the limited involvement of the government in economic activities of members within a society (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d., 'Laissez-faire', para. 3).

² Marx is preoccupied with capitalism and its effects on social classes. He believes there cannot not be an honest feeling of community during capitalist times because individuals from a same class are solely united through the interests they share in opposing a different social class (Stjernø, 2005).

circumstances (Stjernø, 2005). To elaborate on this aspect, Kautsky views the dedication to a political party can serve to advocate for the identification and solidarity of the working class (Shandro, 1997).

In addition to Marx and Kautsky, Bernstein introduced a model of social democracy, which he believes to be a crucial tool for a rising labour movement that will foster solidarity (Esping-Andersen & van Kersbergen, 1992). He further argues that solidarity is primarily developed if workers are aware of their ability to diminish their reliance on employers through joining forces together with companions and regrouping their power in labour unions (Stjernø, 2005).

Together, these thinkers provide important insights into the political interpretation of solidarity. This will allow to come closer to a definition of solidarity as an integral part of the formulation of EU foreign policy, which will be discussed in the following section.

2.2 Solidarity and identities in European foreign policies

In a study conducted by Tulmets (2012), solidarity is viewed as a concept that arises from two different facets of foreign policy identity. She characterises these as the “historical self” and the “political self”, in connection with an individual or various “others” (Tulmets, 2012, p.15). These concepts are important as they determine the development of identities. Tulmets (2012) explains that the ‘political self’ illustrates the fundamentals of an identity and is established by shared standards and principles. It can in this manner, be founded on a general agreement within a nation, or it can also reveal different and clashing political beliefs. In that sense, being part of the EU, for example, translates into the advocacy for liberal-democratic beliefs. She goes on to explain that the ‘historical self’ is established by a shared history resulting in the distinct perception of a state’s ideals and beliefs. She illustrates this with the example of the effects of World War II on the creation of foreign policies within the EU, of which in particular Germany because it was based on an economic approach with a softened power, as opposed to a military one with a hard power.

By pointing this out, Tulmets (2012) ultimately defines the concept of solidarity in the context of foreign policy by characterising it as type of expression, which translates into being part of the same group of people or association including shared principles and beliefs. Solidarity can then be built between two countries on the grounds of the identities in question. The notion of solidarity is thus regarded as the reflection of political and historical identities which reveal a usual and ordinary approach, however, it can also disclose an approach defined by a country’s own benefits.

Aggestam (1999) supports the idea that identity in foreign policy is important for defining solidarity as an integral part of the foreign policy of the EU. She holds this view by indicating that policy-makers tend to employ the so-called ‘politics of identity’ in order to foster solidarity and cohesion.

Aggestam (1999) maintains that politics of identity regroups concepts regarding the political community, which is crucial to ensuring the proper enforcement of foreign policy. This is evident in the case of the aftermath of the Cold War, when the EU's foreign policy mechanism was transformed through the process of European integration, defined by Wendt³ as "a 'cooperative' security system, in which states identify positively with one another so that the security of each is perceived as the responsibility of all" (as cited in Aggestam, 1999, 'Europeanisation of foreign policy', para. 4).

Collectively, these works highlight solidarity as integral part of the formulation of foreign policy of the EU, particularly because identity plays an important role in fostering solidarity which, in turn, leads to an effective foreign policy at the EU level.

2.3 Solidarity as a fundamental value of the European Union

As solidarity is an important concept to the foreign policy of the EU, one can arguably understand that it has also become a fundamental value. Borgmann-Prebil and Ross (2010) argue that solidarity has been used extensively by bodies and institutions of the EU. However, these authors also point out that the term has not been properly defined. More importantly they refer to a quote asserting that "authors do not argue for a correct, but rather for a sound, use of the term" (as cited in Borgmann-Prebil & Ross, p. 2010). So what really is the true meaning of solidarity as employed by the European Union?

Sangiovanni (2012) notes that the first appearances of the term solidarity in EU treaties, reveal the intention of making it an elementary and constitutional value in the undertakings of European integration. It is indeed stated within the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, that "the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity" (as cited in Fossum, 2003, p. 320). Fossum (2003) interprets this reference to solidarity as a desire to seek for similitudes among the many different cultural backgrounds, because solidarity involves the recognition of one's own identity in others. He further claims the strong focus on solidarity demonstrates an inclination to create a "thicker sense of Europeanness" (p. 326).

Subsequently, Scholz (2014) analyses the concept of solidarity from the perspective of human rights. The author claims on the one hand that solidarity is a concept that can be understood as the principal foundation for human rights. As an example, she firstly makes reference to the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Right, observing the presence of solidarity in the first article whereby it is stated that the concept of solidarity is valid in the context of an ethical society in which every individual is given equal righteous and fair treatments: this is thus defined as 'moral solidarity'

³ Alexander Wendt is a political scientist who has a social constructivist approach to the study of international relations (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d., 'Alexander Wendt', para. 1).

(p.52). Secondly, Scholz (2014) claims that human rights have often engendered the fight and recognition from political solidarity movement in universal human rights records, calling it ‘political solidarity’. Finally, she also mentions the importance of a basic comprehension of our mutual concerns which make up the groundwork for solidarity, characterising it of ‘social solidarity’. On the other hand, the scholar argues that each individual has a right to solidarity. Scholtz (2014) links these statements to the EU by declaring that this can be observed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, in which civic solidarity induces the social responsibilities of making sure all individuals have access to primary necessities, such as a right to participate in a democracy, regardless of their social weaknesses.

Additionally, Karagiannis (2007) considers two types of solidarity that might be resorted to by the EU but claims that they cannot coexist with one another. One form consists of solidarity within the EU and can thus be characterised as ‘social solidarity’, while the other form is a solidarity that is concerned with matters external to the EU and can be characterised as ‘human solidarity’ (Karagiannis, 2007, p.6). The author correspondingly identifies two different modes of solidarity as described by the EU treaties in the context of its relations to the rest of the world: a ‘static’ and a ‘dynamic’ mode. On the one hand, the static mode refers to the “values and interests of European societies” (Karagiannis, 2007, p.6). On the other hand, the dynamic mode is perceived as an objective, as something yet to be accomplished. Despite the given definitions, the term remains an ambiguous concept. The use of solidarity in treaties and other official EU documents varies inconsistently by providing statements of what solidarity is and what it should be (Karagiannis, 2007).

As it can be observed from reviewing the literature, solidarity at the level of the EU can be interpreted in various ways. Namely, it can be seen as a constitutional value of European integration, through which Fossum (2003) interprets solidarity as the recognition of one’s own identity with others. Scholz (2008) further identifies a form of ‘social solidarity’, which can be applied to the EU in the sense that this type of solidarity induces social responsibilities. Finally, Karagiannis (2007) distinguishes among ‘social solidarity’, which is one that is employed within the EU, and ‘human solidarity’, which refers to the EU’s relations with the rest of the world. The following section will analyse what the EU intends to manifest when making use of solidarity in the framework of the EaP/ENP⁴.

2.4 Defining solidarity for the EaP/ENP

As was pointed out in the introduction to this paper, the goals central to the EaP are outlined by the European Commission as follows: “The EaP should bring a lasting political message of EU

⁴ In the following section solidarity is defined for both the EaP and ENP because they are interlinked to a certain extent, as the EaP derived from the ENP (see chap.3 ‘Mechanisms and aims of the EaP’).

solidarity, alongside additional, tangible support for their democratic and market-oriented reforms and the consolidation of their statehood and territorial integrity.” (European Commission, 2008, p.2). The aims that consist at striving for more democracy, a more transparent economy and a better integration are clearly stated and also further elaborated upon. However, solidarity is an aspect that remains in the shadow of the aforementioned aims. As we have been able to observe previously, the term solidarity is one that EU officials tend to employ without providing a clear direction or definition of the term.

Barbé & Johansson-Nogués (2008), characterise the EU’s approach of ‘positive-sum fashion’ when it comes to discussing concerns (such as security issues) with its partner countries. This implies the EU’s intention in showing that both the EU and the partner countries are to benefit from collaborating with each other on the management of issues. The notion of ‘force for good’ in analysing the stance taken by the EU regarding the ENP, is one that is quite recurrent in articles evaluating the ENP’s features. Scott (2009) argues that the EU has two very different roles to play as a ‘geopolitical actor’. On the one hand, it finds itself bound to take actions based on a rather ‘self-interested’ and realist approach. On the other, it aims at setting an example as to demonstrate what is considered a normative power⁵, by supporting “democracy, human rights, ...international solidarity etc.” and encouraging the implementation of these values worldwide (Scott, 2009). The notion of ‘force for good’ is also evoked and attributed to the EU by Barbé & Johansson-Nogués (2008), who underline the EU’s motive behind the ENP in having joint objectives, principles and ‘enlightened self-interest’⁶.

The evidence presented in this section suggests that the EU is an actor that has two different roles when acting at the level of the ENP/EaP. On the one hand it needs to act in the light of its interest, while on the other hand, it holds the role of promoter of values such as democracy, human rights and international solidarity. As a result, it can be deduced that solidarity as conveyed by the EU under the ENP/EaP, can be best understood as the promotion of the aforementioned values to the Eastern partner countries in such a way that will both benefit the EU and its partner countries.

Overall this literature review highlights the complexity of defining the term solidarity. This chapter has shown the development of the different interpretations of solidarity over time. In particular, solidarity has been defined through classic sociological interpretations, such as those by Fourier, Leroux, Comte, Durkheim, Bourgeois, and Weber, as well as the political interpretations of the term,

⁵ Normative power is defined according to Manners (2002), as the “ability to define what passes as ‘normal’ in world politics” (as cited in de Wekker & Niemann, 2010, p.4).

⁶ This is the idea that “what is in the public interest is in the interest of all individuals of the groups” (Merriam-Webster, n.d., “Enlightened self-interest”, para. 1)

such as those by Marx, Kautsky, and Bernstein. Whereas the first group of thinkers associate solidarity with common responsibilities and the enhancement of social relations within a community or society, the second group of thinkers identify solidarity in the unification of workers and the creation of political movements in an attempt to oppose adverse forces. As a result, this has led to the development of an interpretation of solidarity that can be used in European foreign policy. Specifically, solidarity comes forward through identity – in particular the political and historical self of the European member state. Even more so, it has been shown that solidarity in foreign policy becomes a type of expression of the state in which it conducts a politics of identity. Solidarity has therefore become a core value of the EU as it is used in the European bodies and institutions, integration, the building of a European identity, in its treaties, and on the level of social and human rights. To conclude, this section of the literature defines solidarity in the EaP as the conveyance of normative values to partner countries that will result profitable to both the EU and its partner countries. Hence, this definition allows this research to proceed with the identification of variables which will be used to measure solidarity.

3. Mechanisms and aims of the EaP

Having defined what is meant by solidarity in the context of the EaP, this chapter goes on to investigate the rationales behind the EaP so as to identify and outline the variables that will be used to measure solidarity. First this section will investigate the transition of the ENP into the EaP. It will then go on to explain the use of conditionality in the EaP as its principal driving force. Finally, the EaP's objectives will be outlined and looked at into detail.

3.1 From enlargement to EaP

Enlargement was an important factor behind the creation of partnerships and agreements between the EU and its surroundings over time. Indeed, whenever new states join the EU, it naturally is surrounded by new neighbours for whom it has to decide on new policies and how it will go about its external relations. Following the enlargement of Central and Eastern European countries from 2004 to 2007, the ENP was initiated and regrouped Eastern as well as Southern countries adjacent to the EU (Park, 2014). It was set up with the purpose of securing stability in those countries in order to prevent any imbalances from affecting the EU territory.

An additional aspect that the ENP was to focus on, was the phenomenon known as 'enlargement fatigue' (Smith, 2005). Enlargement has generally been perceived as a success story, as former communist countries were given the opportunity to be part of an innovative development, but these views progressively changed. Both EU institutions and the public started to become very antipathetic to the joining of new members after the fifth enlargement gathered 25 European member states in total. This is visible in EU official documents and also through the Eurobarometer poll showing that

a clear majority of Europeans do not feel well informed on what the consequences and issues of enlargement are (Devrim & Schulz, 2009).

After realising that the structure of the ENP alone was restricted in tackling problems in the neighbourhood, the EU decided to implement a more targeted mechanism specifically directed at the neighbouring Eastern European countries. As Korosteleva et al. (2013) mention in an article, the 'Eastern dimension' of the ENP was put into action in an attempt to target issues at a more local level, as well as to create a more distinctive approach for the East. The establishment for the initial ENP can best be understood through two different rationales, according to Christou (2010). On the one hand, through a normative/duty rationale, the EU's main purpose in setting up the ENP was to maintain harmonious and cooperative relations with neighbouring countries in order to prevent their isolation. The EaP being an extension of the ENP, engagements of cohesion, safety and affluence were thus further emphasised upon in EU reports. On the other hand, if one looks to understand the establishment of the ENP and EaP from a threat/risk perspective, the EU's intention under that narrative was principally to supervise hazards, perils and security issues likely to cause difficulties to the neighbourhood (Christou, 2010).

3.2 The use of conditionality in the EaP

In order to fully comprehend the mechanism of the EaP it is important to look at the principal driving force behind it, a tool known as conditionality (also more commonly referred to as the 'more for more approach'). Conditionality is an approach generally used to prompt development and adjustments in countries where political stability is strongly needed. These may consist of physical incentives such as financial aid, military safeguard or access to the market through the removal of free trade barriers (Schimmelfennig, 2007). The biggest and most interesting inducement is undeniably the prospect of accession (Schimmelfennig & Scholtz, 2008).

Ensuing EU statements of 'enlargement fatigue', the initial ENP mechanism made use of conditionality without granting the perspective of membership to partner countries. Due to the high political instability at the neighbouring borders, the EU expressed through its European Security Strategy its desire to focus on issues prone to affect EU territory by means of encouraging the adoption of democratic values (Sasse, 2008). Conditionality under the ENP became a form of 'conditionality-lite', meant for countries to whom membership is not offered. Instead, countries were given access to the four freedoms that include the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons. The free movement of persons was nevertheless interchanged with visa facilitation arrangements and the removal of trade barriers was given priority, using the sharing of the EU internal market with partner countries as the elementary basis for inducement.

Furthermore, an important aspect that can be observed during the ENP's beginnings, was the lack of political amendments identified and associated with admission to the EU internal market and other

allowances. The focus initially lied rather on granting means of entry to the market in exchange for implementation of reforms in the field of production, finance and energy (Sasse, 2008). The following section will look at the different kinds of agreements that were formed under the EaP and how they function into more details.

3.3 Agreements and objectives of the EaP

The EaP is structured on the basis of a bilateral and a multilateral approach through which agreements, flagship initiative, financial instruments and joint policy platforms are decided upon by the EU and the countries belonging to the EaP (Korosteleva, Natorski & Simao, 2013). The bilateral track is to foster the relations of the EU with each partner country through the signing and establishment of AA's. These agreements aim at building up political discourse, granting partial access to the EU internal market, assisting partner countries financially and the close collaboration between the EU and partner countries on different policy areas (specific AA's will be looked at into more detail in the following paragraph). Bilateral relations are an important aspect in the EaP as eastern partners are to benefit politically and economically from it the most. Multilateral relations in the EaP appear under the form of joint programs in different policy fields (the specific themes will be discussed into detail in the following paragraph). The principal aims of the multilateral track include a closer collaboration at the level of regional policy, the fostering of multilateral exchange in important fields, as well as getting partner countries ready to enter the internal market (Hillion & Mayhew, 2009).

As described by the European Commission, "Association Agreements provide a blueprint for partner countries to develop good governance, improve justice and strengthen the rule of law..." (European Commission, 2015). AA's come in different forms and are established for different purposes. They firstly address the political bond and the economic integration of partner countries, which is ensured through DCFTA's. This agreement grants partner countries opportunities in the trading of goods through the removal of taxes and further suppresses the restrictions on the amount of imported or exported goods. The policies encompassed in the DCFTA's are closely interlinked with the EU acquis (Wolczuk, 2011). AA's further comprise the prospects of a close political association, giving partner countries the chance to take part in key projects at the EU level such as the Common and Foreign Security Policy (CFSP). The term association is important in that it supposes more than just a conversation exchange, meaning partner countries have the possibility to actively take part in matters concerning third countries (Hillion & Mayhew, 2009). Another important element that makes up the AA's is the mobility of persons which becomes liberalised under the partnership. Visa liberalisation Action Plans (VLAP's) were thus instituted for three of the six partner countries (Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine), after having fulfilled all the necessary criteria. The commission characterises Visa Liberalisation as "one of the Eastern Partnership's key long-term objectives"

(European Commission 2015). Liberalisation signifies more than the mere possibility for citizens to travel from one country to another, it does indeed form important connections between EU and Eastern neighbours' citizens concerning private, professional or touristic matters, which involves the exchange of knowledge and experience to a certain degree. This is crucial for the advancement of partner countries in terms of innovative development as well as for their democratisation and is thus a step towards their further integration of European values (Fomina, 2011). Other agreements include cooperation in different areas, such as local economy, agriculture, environment and education among others. Assistance to these sectors in partner countries consist of, for example, the establishment of programmes helping small businesses grow and become more competitive.

The multilateral approach regroups four different thematic platforms that are to facilitate the communication between the EU and partner countries over their collaboration in various significant fields. One of its function is also to boost reciprocal solidarity (Hillion & Mayhew, 2009). The first platform focuses on democracy, good governance and stability, which targets essential governmental areas. Within this first platform, the Panel on Common Security and Defence Policy cooperation was established in an attempt to provide guidance and better preparation in this field through seminars and training programmes for partner countries' representatives. A second Panel on migration and asylum was set, covering issues dealt by labour migrants such as detention, trafficking and asylum. Informative sessions were also given on access to their rights. The third Panel deals with the fight against corruption through coaching seminars during which ideas and experiences are exchanged. Further Panels with the purpose of improving the functioning of the judiciary, border management and public administration are also given priority, again through the implementation of learning programmes and exchanges of ideas and practices. Important financial tools were moreover launched to support partner countries in carrying out reforms regarding human rights, democracy, fair law enforcement and communities (European Commission, 2015). The second thematic platform is entitled "Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies" and encompasses several panels. Issues and matters regarding transport, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), environment, trade, agriculture and digital markets are covered with the help of workshops, learning programmes and training sessions, applied in a similar way as for the first platform. The next platform is on energy security issues and is of tremendous importance to the EU and Eastern European countries due to their dependence on energy supply and strong interest in the reliability of countries furnishing energy. The goal is for the EU and partner countries to come to an accord over energy laws. The fourth platform is one that encourages the exchange of communication and contact among people from the EU and partner countries. The emphasis is set on the youth, artists, teachers etc., with the establishment of programmes such as 'Erasmus' in the field of education. Finally, flagship initiatives covering various areas are also comprised in the multilateral approach. They target integrated border management; the prevention and preparedness to natural and manmade disasters; small and medium-

sized enterprises; the promotion of good environmental governance; and energy efficiency and sustainability.

As it can be noted, objectives and functions under the multilateral track pursued by the EU and partner countries are mainly focused on fostering democracy, the eradication of corruption and the adoption of beneficial economic reforms. On the basis of these three principal objectives in the context of the EaP's multilateral dimension, the action of boosting 'reciprocal solidarity' is mentioned as one of the outcomes. On account of solidarity being highlighted in this facet of the EaP, the aforementioned aims will be considered as the variables meant to measure solidarity. This will be explained in the next chapter.

4. Methodology

Overall a substantial gap in the literature as to whether the establishment of the EaP has promoted more solidarity between the EU and Georgia, and the EU and Moldova was found. In order to uncover this aspect of the research, this chapter will disclose the methods employed to measure whether an increase in solidarity was provided or not after the establishment of the EaP.

4.1. Research approach

A qualitative research method is used in order to meet the research objectives. McNabb (2010) defines qualitative research as "a set of nonstatistical inquiry techniques and processes used to gather data about social phenomena" (p. 225). More precisely, this research is based on an iterative approach, meaning data is constantly re-evaluated from a reflexive angle in order to allow the observation of new knowledge and perceptions (Srivastava, 2009).

A case study research was furthermore opted for, in which two cases are analysed and described in detail and for which various academic sources and data are gathered. More specifically, a collective case study design is used, usually involving two or more case studies, with the instrumental purpose of giving a broader understanding in the relevant field of research (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2011, pp. 374-376). Eckstein defines a case study as "a phenomenon for which we report and interpret only a single measure on any pertinent variable." (as cited in Van Wynsberghe & Khan, 2007, p.81). Two countries that form part of the EaP, namely Moldova and Georgia, were chosen as case studies for this research.

The iterative method is applied through the use of a deductive and inductive mechanism⁷. The literature review has provided us with solid and pertinent academic theory in regards to the central theme which led to the gathering of data by means of a case study design. Appropriate secondary

⁷ In this case the theory has a deductive role and thus an explanatory one (the theory allows us to understand the most important aspects of this research). The data extracted, however, has an inductive role and thus an exploratory one (the data allows us to formulate eventual hypotheses).

data will be collected through desk research and the findings will accordingly be contrasted with the theory in the literature to be able to confirm what was accounted in the literature, as well as provide an answer to the research question and make eventual new observations.

4.2 Measuring solidarity in the context of the EaP

The concept of solidarity among the EU and Georgia and the EU and Moldova, needs to be measured in an attempt to determine if it is increased in the context of the EaP. To achieve this objective, the success of the EaP will be evaluated to the extent of three particular variables in both Georgia and Moldova, which include:

- The pace of democratic reforms implemented
- The level of corruption tackled
- The efforts to implement economic reforms

These were identified when the EaP's aims were laid out, and more specifically when the targeted reforms to be implemented in partner countries were pinpointed. Kumar (2005) defines a variable as “an image, perception, or concept that is capable of measurement—hence capable of taking on different values...” (p.55). For this research, the variables in question will be used as a unit of measurement. More precisely, they are defined as qualitative variables because they involve a measurement in categories rather than a measurement based on numbers (ex: income in dollars and cents), known as ‘continuous variables’. The first option is preferable as the variables in question are measured on the basis of ‘levels’, ‘pace’ and ‘efforts’, which are most likely to result in the identification of categories like ‘high’ or ‘low’ (Kumar, 2005, p. 65).

4.3 Limitations of the research and research methods

First of all, due to a major limitation in time and other resources, qualitative interviews were not included as part of the research. Additionally, it was decided that interviews that could have been potentially conducted with members of the Georgian or Moldovan embassy or other relevant institutions, for example, would not have added significant value to this research. Initially, the prospect of conducting interviews with policy experts on the EaP from think tanks was envisaged, but it was concluded unnecessary due to the lack of knowledge experts could have provided in regards to solidarity.

Secondly, because a substantial gap was found in the literature regarding the concept of solidarity as defined by the EU in the EaP, this makes it consequently harder to measure the possible increase in solidarity in both Georgia and Moldova. The accuracy of the identified variables as indicators of the level of solidarity in each country is to be taken into account with the outlook that there were limitations provided in the literature review.

Finally, the risk of bias coming from the researcher might have also limited some aspects on the research. In blaming the EU for turning a good act of solidarity into the act of serving their self-interest's purposes, for example, the EU's actions are in turn perceived negatively. Other views on this matter might provide a different stance on the research. However, the academic sources used to write this report should hopefully disprove contrary views.

5. Findings

This chapter will present the findings acquired for this research, after having selected and analysed the data showing measures of the three identified variables for each country. The development and status of each country's variable will mainly be presented through academic articles and country reports, and in some cases the European Integration Index 2014 for Eastern partner countries will be used. This will hopefully provide an insight on the progress of Georgia and Moldova since the establishment of the EaP in 2009.

5.1 The pace of implemented (electoral) democratic reforms

One of the goals comprehended in the first thematic platform of the multilateral track is the promotion of democracy in Eastern partner countries, as it was previously identified. Along with that objective comes good governance and stability (see section 3.3). Nilsson and Silander (2016), argue that developments of democracy are, however, barely visible through the years since the establishment of the ENP and the ensuing EaP. In order to have a clearer idea of the differences and improvements in Georgia and Moldova in terms of democracy, the Freedom House's Nations in Transit Index (NIT) illustrates the latter by grading the performance of their democratic institutions (see table 1).

Table 1: NIT Average democratic scores

Year Country	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
Moldova	4.71	5.07	4.96	5.07	4.96	4.82	4.86
Georgia	4.83	4.96	4.68	4.93	4.86	4.75	4.64

(source: Freedom House's Nations in transit Index)

The rating starts prior to the initiation of the ENP in 2003, showing relatively low scores for both countries. When the EaP was introduced in 2009, it can be noted that the democracy for both

countries is slightly less performant than in 2003⁸. In an attempt to be as meticulous as possible and to provide a better differentiation of the two countries' democratic performance, the situations for each countries will be respectively analysed.

5.1.1 Moldova

Moldova is generally perceived as the most exemplary model among other partner countries (Raik, 2011). Following the signing of the EaP and subsequent to the country's parliamentary elections in 2010, the Alliance for European Integration (AEI) was established through Moldova's Democratic Party, Liberal-Democratic Party and Liberal Party. The pro-European party, however, remained weak in the parliament and along came a period of political fragility due to disaccord among the parties to elect a president (Dusciac, 2014). Despite this turmoil, the efforts from Moldova to form the AIE was acknowledged by the EU who accelerated the dialogue on signing the AA's and Visa liberalisation agreements. The EU has proven to be quite present on the scene of Moldova's domestic political situation through consultative efforts and intervening in cases of domestic conflicts. All political parties have additionally shown readiness to take guidance from EU representatives into consideration (Raik, 2011).

The AA's with Moldova were enacted in September 2014. The latter was meant for the country's democratic institutions to evolve and for the advocacy of human rights to be maintained. The ensuing parliamentary elections had the prospect of a successful outcome, however, they were compromised due to misleading actions. These included the forbidden removal of certain candidates and admittance of political parties right before the actual elections (European Commission, 2015). Compliance with European electoral laws is indeed an important requirement for partner countries to improve on their democratic performance. Timus (2013) highlights this point in her article by analysing EU demands for specific reforms and the changes carried out by the Moldovan government. These essentially consisted in reducing electoral threshold⁹, ensuring the political presence of ethnic and provincial parties and resolve the disarray regarding domestic conflicts¹⁰. Moldova has in that regard improved some of its electoral practices, lowering its threshold, facilitating the voting system, and more generally urging its governing Communist Party to have a tolerant attitude towards EU matching democratic changes.

A central issue can nevertheless be observed in the way the EU attempts at instituting those changes. Timus (2013), indeed, argues that although the provided instructions are focused and well-defined,

⁸ The legend is as follows: Consolidated democracy (1-2); semi consolidated democracy (3); Transitional government or hybrid regime (4); semi-consolidated authoritarian regime (5) and consolidated authoritarian regime (6-7) (Nilsson & Silander, 2016).

⁹ This is the minimum required amount of votes for a political party to be represented.

¹⁰ The region of Transdnistria has undergone political unrest since the 1990's. In the aftermath of the collapse of USSR, Russia had claimed control over the region while Romania also tried to make its presence felt through influencing policies (Sasse, 2011).

there is insufficient guidance on how to adapt and exercise these at a domestic level. Furthermore, the author asserts that this gives the liberty to the dominant parties to decide upon the suitability of EU advice for their political system. Consequently, Moldova's political elites have for instance implemented some of the reforms right before parliamentary elections were to take place. This in turn augmented chances of elections for governing parties while leaving very little prospects of election for adversary political parties (Timus, 2013).

Despite Moldova's attempts at driving towards an EU political and electoral model, its efforts have not shown significant positive result to the deception of EU officials. During the 2014 elections, the popularity of the pro-European formed coalition¹¹ had decreased, showing the public's uncertainty and mistrust regarding the capability and readiness of the party to institute necessary political changes (Brett & Knott, 2015). Threshold was additionally back on the rise, which according to Brett and Knott (2015) was increased to block parliamentary access to the Socialist Party (PSRM). As it can be observed, the actions of the pro-European coalitions have the Moldovan population to question their reliability over time due to the confusion and turmoil caused. This leads to believe that the pace of Moldova's democratic reforms is considerably slow, as its adoption of reforms has proven to be more complicated than expected.

5.1.2 Georgia

Georgia has commonly been acknowledged as a country with a solid inclination to institute democratic development. There is indeed significant backing from the Georgian population in that regard, as well as a general political consent (Paul, 2015). The country found itself in different states of political transformation over the years following the impacts of the Rose revolution and the Russian invasion of 2008, and this has been crucial in defining the country's pro-European stance in the EaP (De Waal, 2011). In spite of its strong desire of rapprochement to EU standards and values, it does not seem have succeeded in establishing a stable democracy. De Waal (2011) argues that Georgia has not 'democratised' but rather 'modernised' (p. 20), and that its government is also more forceful rather than progressive.

In similarity with Moldova, one of the targeted issues by the EU in Georgia was the suitability of its electoral practices. The main goal behind it was to make sure there were fair and comprehensive political methods. An important requirement for Georgia was the presence of a true pluralism in its political system and the possibility of a reasonable communication among the governing and opposition parties (Timus, 2013). In terms of its democratic performance, Georgia has long been classified as a transitional or hybrid regime prior to 2011, meaning its elections were constant and competitively held, however there were inconsistencies regarding the constraint that candidates and opposing parties have undergone. One eminent problem, as stated by Aprasidze (2011), relates to

¹¹ Liberal Democrats/PLDM, Democrats/PDM and Liberals/PL (Brett & Knott, 2015).

the electoral roll, in which not all registered candidates were featured, while other unidentified names also appeared leading to the suspicious manoeuvring of the government. This has been recurrent in all elections up until the 2010 ones. An accord was subsequently reached to institute a committee made up of representatives from the governing party and opposition parties in order to ensure the better regulation of the electoral roll. This however has had a limited impact due to inadequate financing of and collaboration among the parties (Aprasidze, 2011).

When the Georgian Dream Coalition was formed in 2012 led by young billionaire Ivanishvili, elections adopted a fairer and a more transparent stance, as current president Saakashvili's United National Movement (UNM) lost a considerable amount of parliamentary seats (Fairbanks & Gugushvili, 2015). This was in turn a decisive moment for the path of the country's democratic development and the first time that it experienced a transition in power since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Following this success, the municipal elections of 2014 were also held in considerable transparency and competitiveness with augmented pluralism, which was remarked by the Council of Europe (Administration of the Government of Georgia, 2015).

Georgia's engagement in transitioning into a more democratic regime is mostly visible through its latest election results. The country, has shown remarkable progress in the recent years in spite of the political turmoil and territorial conflicts it was subjected to. Nevertheless, this does not mean Georgia has attained a democratic peak, and greater achievements in the direction of more pluralistic methods should be foreseen in the future (Cecire, 2013).

5.2 Level of corruption

The tackling of corruption in partner countries is one of the objectives under the first thematic platform of the EaP. Levels of corruption in Georgia and Moldova are not scaled very positively on a global level. Georgia has a score of 52¹² on a global scale and ranks 48/168, while Moldova is a poorer performer with a score of 33 and ranks 103/168 (Transparency International, 2015). In order to depict the corruption in each country in a clear and differentiated approach, respective situations will be analysed accordingly.

Table 2: Transparency International - Corruption scores

Performance Country	Score (out of 100)	Ranking (out of 168 countries)
Moldova	33	103

¹² 0 being 'highly corrupt' and 100 being 'very clean' (Transparency International, 2015)

Georgia	52	48
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(source: Transparency International, 2015)

5.2.1 Moldova

Corruption in Moldova is considered to be a serious concern as can be stated from its global score. Public opinion reports on corruption as being one of the leading issue in the country. While bribery accounts for an important share of corruption, the most affected sectors in the country are the judiciary, political parties and the parliament (Transparency International, 2015). Moldova's country report by the European Commission (2015), has accentuated the importance of improving reforms to tackle corruption, as its pace slowed down in mid-2014. The sectors that remain the most affected include "the judiciary, customs, public procurement, health, the social sphere and education." (p.6).

Several institutions have been set up, with the purpose of eliminating corruption. These consist of the National Anti-Corruption Centre, the National Integrity Commission, the Anti-Corruption Prosecution and the Court of Accounts. The issue with how these operate, however, lies in the lack of support in finances and employees, as well as an inaccuracy of the tasks that need to be managed. Moreover, these institutions haven't acquired independence from the Moldovan government meaning they are prone to be politically influenced (Butković & Samardžija, 2015). Additionally, in the period of 2013 to 2014, the adoption of reforms regarding the freedom of media was unsatisfactory as the laws on ownership were 'blocked', whereas they had already been ratified, resulting in unfair and uneven media content (Lovitt, 2015). In the judiciary sector, reforms slowed down regarding the public prosecution service, which did not acquire independence. Reforms directed at public administration and fiscal decentralisation were also restricted (European Commission, 2015).

Several strategies with the goal of combatting corruption have been established over the period of 2011 until 2015, generating some improvements regarding the digitalising of tools and practices of public authorities in order to increase transparency. As a result, the Ministry's daily activities were made public on its official website. There was nevertheless insufficient advancement, and digitalisation reforms were not enforced at all levels, such as the government. This was mainly due to the inconsistency in enforcing the different strategies and lack of ability from the established organisation to collaborate (Sobják, 2015). It can be noticed that Moldova has generally not been very persistent in carrying out its reforms. According to Botan (2015), the key to striving for less corruption lies in dissociating reforms and strategies from any political influence.

5.2.2 Georgia

In the aftermath of Georgia's transformation from a soviet country to an independent one, not much was done to combat corruption (Börzel & Pamuk, 2011). This has changed however and Georgia is

now known for having made substantial progress in that domain. Changes and reforms have indeed been instituted in an attempt to prevent corruption such as declaring passive and active bribery illegal, establishing a code of ethics for civil servants, reinforce regulations on money laundering etc. (Transparency International, 2015, p. 19). According to Transparency International (2015), however, the country could still make use of an anti-corruption organisation whose role would be to oversee the imposition of anti-corruption laws.

In the period of a decade (from 2000 to 2010), Georgia had received an amount of about 180 million Euros to engage in the fight against corruption. This was powered by the Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States¹³ (TACIS), which later became the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument¹⁴ (ENPI). These were EU instruments aimed at tackling corruption by means of financial and technical assistance (Börzel & van Hüllen, 2014). Börzel & van Hüllen (2014) further state that developments in the fight against corruption started to be visible as soon as president Saakashvili decided to undertake this responsibility. As a result, significant reforms in the police forces followed with the creation of a police academy for which examination became compulsory, along with higher incomes. Moreover, penalties and imprisonment were now enforced for corruption transgressions and crimes.

As soon as the pro-European Georgian Dream coalition transitioned into the governing party in 2012, it was very much focused on condemning individuals who had made abuse of power in the past (especially from the former opposition party UNM). The former prime minister Merabishvili was arrested and put on trial, leading to a five-year imprisonment on the basis of corruption charges. More cases of corruption followed, steering unease among EU officials who cautioned the coalition against politically motivated prosecutions. Charges of corruptions were in some cases, however, dismissed and other particularly important reforms took place giving the judiciary more independence, and the media more accessibility to courtrooms (Lovitt, 2015).

As it can be observed, EU intervention in the fight against corruption in Georgia is very much concentrated on the transmission of standards, guidelines and practices aiming at reforming the country's underlying institutions, whereas capacity-building is less emphasised on (Börzel & van Hüllen, 2014). According to Börzel & Pamuk (2011), the EU's efforts in triggering a transfer of its own norms and rules upon Georgia's government has balanced the situation as opposed to having altered it completely. Although undeniable progress has been achieved, efforts will need to persist in order to prevent regression.

¹³ TACIS aimed at backing the advancement of privatisation, the amendment of education, public administration and social services as well as transport, energy, agricultural, telecommunication and environmental policies (Börzel & van Hüllen, 2014, p.14).

¹⁴ ENPI is more directed at good governance (Börzel & van Hüllen, 2014, p.14).

5.3 Implementation of economic reforms

The proper economic integration of the EaP countries stands on the Commission's agenda as the second thematic platform of the multilateral track. One of the main interesting prospect for the partners is the liberalisation of trade which falls under the DCFTA. This is of course to be achieved through the implementation of key economic reforms which essentially pushes partners to comply with EU acquis and rules. When Georgia and Moldova signed the AA's in 2014 they were given instant access to the DCFTA (Dragan, 2015). According to the latest EaP index, Georgia scores a higher approximation¹⁵ score than Moldova, but a lower one in linkage¹⁶ (see table 2). The two countries' performances in implementing economic reforms will be analysed into more detail in the following sections.

Table 3: Approximation and Linkage scores - Moldova & Georgia

Economic performance Country	Approximation scores in market economy and DCFTA	Linkage scores in trade and economic integration
Moldova	0.61	0.71
Georgia	0.67	0.56

(Source: European Integration Index 2014 for Eastern Partnership Countries)

5.3.1 Moldova

Moldova's economy has not been prosperous in the past two decades. The country mostly exports commodities, such as wine, but restrictive measures were imposed by Russia in the aftermath of the 2008 war with Georgia (Bockova & Lenc, 2015). In signing the AA's, Moldova engages in improving its deteriorating economy and increase competition. In order to regulate the evolution of the agreement, the Association Council was set up, which is composed of EU and Moldovan representatives. The agreements make reference to the necessity of transferring knowledge on diverse policies, assessments and competences in order to ensure an operational market economy. The approximation of EU regulations on is also required to tackle monopolies and ensure a competitive environment (Bulgari, 2015).

In 2013, the country attained a peak in its economy, reaching an increase of 8.9%. This was nevertheless not triggered by the implementation of economic reforms, instead agriculture had mostly prospered in relation to good weather circumstances. Unfortunately, the economic situation deteriorated as cases of corruption in the banking sector arose. Fraud was indeed on the rise and very

¹⁵ Approximation refers to the convergence of EU regulations and standards in EaP countries (Lovitt, 2015).

¹⁶ Linkage refers to the level of collaboration among the EU and partner countries, trade flows and assistance provided to EaP countries (Lovitt, 2015)

little was done to prevent such infringements (Lovitt, 2015). In 2014, the country's economic progress estimate had thus lowered, but yet remained higher than most of the other Eastern partners. Here again, growth in the agricultural sector was partly responsible, along with Moldova's industrial sector and domestic trade. The banking sector remained fraudulent through the year of 2014, as questionable transactions were carried out resulting in important losses of capital. Additionally, Moldova's trade relations with the EU strengthened through the DCFTA since the country maintained diminished trade relations with Russia because of territorial conflicts (Lupusor, Fala, Morcofîlo & Cenusă, 2015).

The DCFTA's principal purpose is to bring about economic prosperity through liberalisation of trade, consequently resulting in the modernisation of partner countries' economies. Accordingly, through Generalised System Preferences (GSP) and Autonomous Trade Preferences (ATP), the EU grants partner countries the possibility to export products with reduced duties. Moldova was moved from GSP to ATP, permitting unlimited admission to the EU market and the removal of taxes on exports (Dragan, 2015). Moldova has, in that sense, benefitted from enhanced trade flows, business, market development as well as improved standards of living (Bulgari, 2015, p. 56). However, the country needs to remain aware of its exposure to possible fall backs such as decreased demands on exports but also impacts on imports¹⁷, as the tariffs are removed (Bulgari, 2015). To conclude, Moldova's economic prospects seem to have a certain potential, nonetheless, the close monitoring and assessment of different sectors and the impacts the DCFTA might have on them is crucial.

5.3.2 Georgia

Georgia has had difficulties in establishing an economic model that could allow the country to prosper and develop due to its drastic and uneasy regime changes over time. The passage from a command economy to a market economy after its independence resulted in some inaccuracies but it has since then remarkably improved, providing its population with an easier mechanism to initiate businesses as well as the introduction of reformed employment regulations (Papava, 2014).

As previously stated, the DCFTA is an important prospect for EaP countries. Georgia's outlook for expanding trade relations with the EU lies in the broadening of its exports. This is especially important for the country due to the restrictions on trade imposed by Russia following the war in 2008 (Khuntsaria, 2014). The DCFTA was accordingly signed in 2014 enabling the country to enjoy the removal and in some cases reduced tariffs on exported and imported goods, technical barriers to trade (such as rules and other technical requirement) were also diminished, customs facilitation, transparency measures etc. were also included (Ambramishvili, 2016). Like Moldova, the country was classified under the GSP, it was moved however to GSP+ which allowed for trade tariffs to be

¹⁷ If tariffs are removed, the import of products from the EU is likely to increase (as they will be cheaper), which could impact local producers (Radeke, 2012).

diminished or removed (in some cases). According to Delcour (2013), however, a normal free-trade agreement would have been a more beneficiary option as access to more products would have been available to Georgia, and the full scope of regulations to be adopted wouldn't have been included. This was indeed perceived as precarious for the country's situation due to the liberal means employed to institute reforms (Delcour, 2013).

Figures in a 2013 European Commission report predicted Georgia's exports and imports to grow 12% and 7,5% respectively and for its GDP to grow by +4.3% on the long run upon full realisation of reforms (as cited in Manoli, 2013, p. 62). The EU's expectations were correct in this regard as trade with member states have seen an improvement (both exports and imports), the main exports being agricultural product such as nuts. In the sector of business, the country has also been performing well and has earned an elevated standard in terms of economic freedom due to its liberal regulations in regards to business. The fragility of Georgia's political surroundings, however, interferes with the progress made, slowing down the flow of investment (Abramishvili, 2016).

The selected variables have now each been applied respectively to Moldova and Georgia, providing some insights into the countries' level of democracy, corruption and economic development. For each of these variables, certain aspects were looked into with more focus than others. This is mainly due to the extensive amount of data that exists regarding the topics in question. However, the appropriate data has been filtered accordingly in order to assess the most important trends. These findings will now lead to a discussion, which will evaluate the level of solidarity provided by the EU to Moldova and Georgia.

6. Discussion

Within this chapter a thorough analysis will be conducted as to assess the EU's success in conveying solidarity to Moldova and Georgia. This will be carried out through the comparison of the theory acquired from the literature with the obtained data. The impact of the changes brought by the EaP on the previously identified variables under Moldova and Georgia's political and economic domains will each be accordingly analysed and contrasted to the theory on the concept of solidarity.

6.1 Analysis of the EaP's impact upon Georgia and Moldova' democracy

The current study found that the changes instituted in regards to Moldova's democracy after the establishment of the EaP have not been significantly positive. Indeed, only slight improvements can be observed mainly through the country's establishment of a pro-European political party and efforts in reducing electoral threshold. This study also found that the inconsistency and irregularity in which Moldova's government attempts at implementing electoral reforms is due to the lack of guidance provided by the EU to Moldova in applying those reforms at a domestic level. As such, the study suggests that the EU does not take into account the necessity for the country to adapt to those changes in accordance with its current political situation. Therefore, the most important finding of this study

on democracy in Moldova is that the will of Moldovans remains strong in moving closer towards EU standards and principles, but that the fragility of its regime and governmental structure does not permit the country to follow the path of a durable and steady growth in terms of its democracy levels.

In comparison to Moldova, the study found that Georgia seems to have a better record of democratic performance from 2012 onwards. While it was found that Georgia strives to include better electoral circumstances, it also found that the country is financially and cooperatively challenged in particular in its attempts to found a regulative body for the electoral roll. Nevertheless, the study has shown that this has not completely hindered Georgia's efforts to improve democratically, and therefore, it was found that Georgia has now surpassed Moldova in that sense. However, it was also pointed out that the EU has not taken any tailored and specific measures into consideration in order to ensure the proper adaptation of the required reforms to the country's precarious political instability. In that regard, the same issues as in Moldova can be observed in Georgia.

In reference to the literature whereby it is theorised that the EU's tactic in combatting security issues (initially when the ENP was established) of "positive-sum fashion" (see section 2.4), it is important to point out the possible formation of a pattern. In the case of Moldova and Georgia's improvement of democracy levels, it can be hypothesised that the EU seeks to secure democratic reforms to prevent undemocratic trends from affecting its territory. This might be explained by the facts that a "positive-sum fashion" among the EU and both countries, by which all parties are to benefit from the reforms agreed upon, might be the most accurate interpretation of solidarity in the context of democracy. Additionally, in reviewing the literature, the perspective of a civic solidarity through which the right to participate in a democracy is a social responsibility, might explain the institution of democratic reforms in Moldova and Georgia as encouraged by the EU. In a parallel and broader perspective, the meaning of solidarity as defined in the European foreign policy framework and highlighted in the literature review, is relevant in this situation. Indeed, the necessity for Moldova and Georgia to adopt EU democratic standards seem to indicate the EU's inclination to make Moldova and Georgia a part of its 'political self', so as to associate the countries with the advocacy of liberal-democratic beliefs. It can therefore be assumed that the interpretation of solidarity in this case relates to the context of EU foreign policies.

6.2 Analysis of the EaP's impact upon Georgia and Moldova's corruption

The most important finding of this study was that the efforts to tackle the level of corruption in Moldova seem to be less effective in comparison to the efforts of Georgia. A possible explanation might be that Moldova has attempted to set up anti-corruption bodies with regulatory objectives, but the study has shown that Moldova finds itself financially limited and challenged by a high level of unemployment, with a lack of clarity in regards to the management of tasks. Additionally, it was

found that the inconsistencies in operating strategies and the restriction of cooperation among the organisation has been a challenging aspect.

In contrast with Moldova, the study found that the undertaking of reforms against corruption in Georgia took an important turn as the pro-European coalition came to power in 2012. It was shown that this has led to the intensive engagement in instituting reforms in various domains, through the establishment of laws and regulations as well as important amendments in Police forces. The country was provided with financial aid through the means of EU instruments such as the ENPI, however, this has not been sufficient in tackling the problem of corruption. Moreover, it was also found that drastic changes have not been visible, particularly because the focus of the EU is rather on the transposition of its norms. Therefore, the results of Georgia's financially assisted fight against corruption seem to be less efficient than if capacity-building had been more emphasised upon with regards to the issue of corruption.

As mentioned in the literature review, identity in foreign policy is an important groundwork in defining solidarity. In the case of Moldova and Georgia's corruption, the finding confirms the link between the positive identification with one another (Georgia and Moldova with the EU respectively) and the view that the security of each is the responsibility of all. This might be related to the fact that through the adoption of liberal democratic reforms and the tackling of corruption, Moldova and Georgia's efforts in that regard, contribute not only to its own but also to the EU's security. It can thus be hypothesised that in pushing Moldova and Georgia to lower their level of corruption, the EU ensures the proper enforcement of its foreign policy through which solidarity is fostered. Furthermore, the theory on solidarity as a constitutional value of the EU might explain the EU's desire to see Moldova and Georgia get closer to EU norms (in this case through the lowering of corruption), as this implies striving for more resemblances among the EU and Moldova and the EU and Georgia, and thus the recognition of the EU's identity in the two countries. Finally, it can also be hypothesised that the EU's attempt at making Moldova and Georgia tackle its corruption levels is understood as a 'static mode' of solidarity, by which values and interests of European societies are primarily the focus.

6.3 Analysis of the EaP's impact upon Georgia and Moldova's economy

The result of this study indicate that increases in Moldova's economy are not primarily due to the implementation of reforms, but rather to the favourable climatic conditions which have allowed to boost performance in the agricultural sector. However, it was also found that cases of corruption in the banking sector have prevented Moldova's economy from further improving. Another important finding however was the DCFTA's impact, which resulted profitable to the country's trade flows, market development and standards of living. The study, however, finds that close regulation of the effects the DCFTA might have on Moldova's imports and exports is necessary in order to prevent

decreased demands in the case of exports and increased imports as tariffs are reduced, which in this case might impact local producers.

In the case of Georgia, it was found that in spite of the country's rough beginnings in setting up a model of economy with the purpose of triggering growth, it was able to institute a mechanism to facilitate the initiation of business along with reformed employment regulations. In similarity with Moldova, the study shows that Georgia's signing of the DCFTA brings positive impacts on the country's trade and it also allows it to be part of an updated trade agreement. Nevertheless, it is argued that a normal free trade agreement would have sufficed as this grants access to a wider range of products and the body of regulations does not need to be adopted integrally. This result may be explained by the fact that the adoption of regulations was not in conformity with the country's situation and means in implementing reforms.

In this study, the findings confirm the association of Moldova and Georgia's adjustment to EU trade with the identification of the EU in the two countries through the implementation of the DCFTA. As specified in the literature, this may be interpreted as the EU looking for similitudes in both countries as to recognise its own identity in them in order to foster solidarity. However, it can be noted that this study does not necessarily relate to the theory regarding the aspect of solidarity as a means of securing the EU's economy or surroundings, as it was found that trade with Moldova and Georgia has very little to no effects on the EU's economy. Therefore, the theory suggesting that the EU acts in light of its interests cannot be confirmed by the results of this study.

Overall, it can be observed that the efforts of Moldova and Georgia to implement reforms from the perspective of its democracy, corruption and economy, vary in accordance with their political situation and the kind of assistance provided by the EU. In a concluding stance, the following implications can be confirmed. Firstly, Moldova's pace in instituting democratic changes is rather slow in comparison to Georgia, who's pace can be qualified of average. This suggests a low level of solidarity among the EU and Moldova and the EU and Georgia, which may be explained by a lack of EU guidance to implement democratic reforms and insufficiently tailored measures in dealing with both countries' precarious political situation. Secondly and in similarity with the previous case, the pace of Moldova in implementing corruption reforms is slow in contrast with Georgia. This also indicates a rather low level of solidarity among the EU and both countries, which could be attributed to a lack of clarity in the management of the tasks as well as too much focus on the transposition of norms from the EU's part. Lastly, the pace by which economic reforms are implemented in Moldova does not reveal much superior results than the previous ones, while Georgia's also remains similar. This demonstrate, once more, a limited level of solidarity that may be due to the adopted regulations not being in compliance with Moldova and Georgia's political situation and limited means to implement those reforms.

7. Conclusion

This section will close this dissertation by providing an overview of what has been discussed. More specifically the research objectives will be revised and the essential stages of the research will be reviewed. Finally, an answer to the central research question will be provided. Recommendations for further research will also be given in an attempt to suggest improvements and ways of making this study more valuable in the future.

The main goal of this research is to provide an answer to the following research question: “Has solidarity been increased between the EU and Georgia and the EU and Moldova after the establishment of the EaP? Four sub-questions were formulated to answer the research objectives. These consisted in defining the concept of solidarity under the EaP; identifying the potential variables in an attempt to measure solidarity between Georgia and the EU, and Moldova and the EU; evaluating the changes triggered by the EaP on the basis of the previously identified criteria; and analysing the obtained data with the theory from the literature to answer the research question.

The first research objective was carried out by means of a literature review on the concept of solidarity, through which the most important interpretations of solidarity were taken into account. The second objective was achieved by way of determining the EaP’s aims in a background chapter of the EaP. The third objective was accomplished through the collection of data on the changes instituted by both countries in regards to their democracy, corruption and economy. Finally, the last objective was met by contrasting the theory obtained from the literature with the data compiled in the findings.

Having met all of the research objectives, it can now be concluded that solidarity appears not to have been increased between the EU and Moldova and the EU and Georgia. Whereas, the theory acquired from the literature suggests that solidarity is present within the realm of the EaP, the findings imply an inconsistency in the EU’s efforts to increase solidarity. The study has indeed highlighted that both Georgia and Moldova have a limited performance in instituting democratic, corruption and economic reforms. The pace of Moldova in comparison to Georgia seems to be slower when carrying out those reforms. Nevertheless, results show that scores in the three domains for Georgia remain low. A significant lack of guidance from the EU’s part is unfortunately apparent, along with insufficient tailoring of the reforms that Moldova and Georgia are to adopt. Moreover, the EU has not provided enough clarity in the respect of delineating the management of the countries’ tasks and it also seems to have a tendency to fixate on the transfer of EU norms and regulations which does not always conform to the political situation of the country, nor to the way it operates in instituting changes. It can therefore be deduced that the literature has provided a solid groundwork for understanding the concept of solidarity, which has subsequently permitted to identify the EU’s attempts at establishing solidarity, yet the findings have disproved the possibility of an increase in solidarity.

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