



# FUTURE SCENARIOS FOR MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE BETWEEN THE CONFLICTING PRIORITIES OF EU-RUSSIA RELATIONS

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# INTRODUCTION

The development of the following four scenarios were part of the Summer School “Fragile statehood, minorities and armed conflicts - future scenarios for Moldova and Ukraine between the conflicting priorities of EU-Russia relations» held at the National University «Odessa Law Academy”, in Odessa/Ukraine from 11th to 16th September 2017. 20 students (10 from Moldova and 10 from Ukraine) with various academic backgrounds and from different regions worked together in mixed groups to give an outlook on how the world will look like in 2030. A special focus was given to the situation in their home countries. The summer school aimed to develop future scenarios for the political and ethnographic development of

the region with respect to fragile statehood, minorities and armed conflicts. In the first part, the foundations for the joint work on the project have been laid in an intercultural workshop. In the second part, an overview of the current situation in the post-Soviet area was given by lecturers and experts. The participants have been informed about the different aspects and challenges of conflict resolution. The regional focus was put on the conflicts in Transnistria and Eastern Ukraine. In the third part, the present publication of future scenarios for the EU-Russia-Relations and the Black Sea Region with a focus on Moldova and Ukraine, have been developed by the participants under the guidance of the lecturing team.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE FUTURE SCENARIOS

Following the intensive preparation by the experts, it was the participants task to develop future scenarios for the region. The first step was to determine the four “worlds”, on which the groups would later work on. An agreement on these four scenarios could be reached:

- Everything stays the same
- Everything is better

- Everything is worse
- Everything gets weirder

Afterwards, so-called drivers were determined, which were used to influence future development and thus provided a framework for the scenarios. In the course of the discussion and clustering, four out of a total of about 30 potential drivers were selected:

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- Euro-Atlantic political development
  - Eurasian political development
  - Internal dynamics in Moldova and Ukraine
  - Global economy

After this joint discussion, the participants went into their respective groups. These were randomly allocated by lottery and ensured that each group involved participants from both Moldova and Ukraine.

The scenario technique used in the seminar is a method of strategic planning used in science, politics and economics. The goal is to project, analyse and present possible developments in the mentioned conflicts in the region on the basis of current events. Taking into account the social, technical, economic, environmental and political trends, the developed scenarios for Ukraine and Moldova can then visualize causal processes and decision-making moments.

The development of our four “worlds” was completely independent from each other. Apart from the drivers, we did not use any common developments for the narrative. The results nevertheless give of comparable insights into potential futures that our participants envisioned, especially in hindsight of the (un)frozen conflicts in Moldova and Ukraine. In the first scenario, the group assumed a slow but steady move towards not resolving and the Donbass region

will become Ukraine’s Transnistria. The second world imagines a positive development in the region with Kyiv and Chişinău becoming close to signing a membership agreement with the EU. Scenario three envisions an Orwellian type of development with the formation of blocks being in constant dispute with each other. Last but not least, the fourth group tells us a democratic fairy tale, where unification and reuniting leads to a happily ever after in the region.

We are well aware that our scenarios are not a comprehensive academic approach to how the world is going to develop within the next 13 years. The exercise is rather to avoid group thinking when discussing future developments. Societal challenges in shaping the future of a country need alternative approaches. With our future scenarios, we will contribute a small piece to that puzzle.

We would like to thank all participants for the efforts they put into realising this publication. In only two days the groups developed an impressive set of potential scenarios, that give us a glimpse of the infinite possibilities of human development. We are very grateful for the opportunity to realise these efforts. Without the financial support of the DAAD, this would not have been possible. While the imagination of the students had no limitations during the workshop, our capabilities have very well been. In an ideal world, the groups would meet again after several

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weeks and discuss their findings, potentially refining their narrative. Nevertheless, this is documentation of the achievements of young Moldovans and Ukrainians thinking about the future. Their future. Our future. It is also a small illustration of a variety of activities that are ongoing in the region.

We also would like to thank all our experts for their input during the summer school. We will continue our engagement in, for and with the region and while we hope that none of the four scenarios will become reality, certain aspects of them hopefully become true.

## *Scenario 1: Everything stays the same*

# GOING SLOWLY DOESN'T PREVENT ARRIVING

In 2030 Moldova and Ukraine are defined by implemented reforms in public administration; foreign investments are attracted by the growth in areas such as agriculture, tourism, and IT. Substantial gains are also made towards energy independence and diversification of energy sources.

An overview of a global setting in year 2030 reveals a multi-polarized global arena within the context of a majorly unchanged world.

While the US has declined as a global actor in terms of economic and military power, the EU consolidated its global role both as an economic power and as a leader in international development cooperation. Despite differing perspectives on foreign and security policy, both actors are yet aware of the paramount importance of an open and trustful transatlantic dialogue.

The fast-growing economies acquire a viable strategic importance, and an imposing role on the global arena. This led to an increased influence in the global politics.

Although it overrun Putin and made space for political pluralism, Russia's current liberal governance is challenged by political uncertainty and scarce economic infrastructure.

Yet the Russian Federation maintained its strategic role in the region. This constellation has a spill-over effect on the smaller

states, especially the ones at the crossroads of strategic interests, such as Ukraine and Moldova. As these democracies have been long dominated by the political disturbances and social unrest, the development in these countries happens with small steps.

Both financial and technical international assistance supports the mitigation of the tensions with the unrecognized entities and strengthen the mechanisms to accommodate the national minorities. The region of Donbas has now transformed into a protracted conflict.

As many challenges lie ahead, the global cooperation materialises in areas such as economic development and climate change, especially regarding the transition to alternative energy sources.

Is it a long-awaited tranquillity, or a lull before the storm?

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## RUSSIAN FEDERATION

As expected, in 2018 Vladimir Putin won the presidential elections in Russia, well ahead of the opposition representative. As the organized protest marches turned out unsuccessful, Alexei Navalny vanishes from the political arena.

The Kremlin continues its policy of isolation, mistrust, and interstate tensions. The sanctions imposed by the US and the EU continue deteriorating Russia. Until 2024, the Russian Federation becomes a closer ally of China.

Russia's military sector is afflicted with the lack of funds, which results in the impossibility to sustain the confrontation with the EU and US on eye level. The absence of any substantial military victories and the frustrated electorate, which is also tired from empty promises, become the main centripetal forces in the movements aiming for a regime change.

In 2022, while Russian citizens are on the lookout for the candidates, several alternative candidates start promotional campaigns. One of them, Piotr Ivanov, looks convincing and is doing especially well in gaining wide support in several key regions of Russian Federation. The primary topics of his campaign have been focusing on domestic issues, including combating corruption in Russia and improving the economy.

In 2024, after Putin's two consecutive terms of service, Ivanov wins elections in Russia. He claims

to have decided to increase Russia's integration into the international system and mitigate the threat of future armed conflict. Tensions between Moscow and Washington start melting.

However, the reforming of the society's views is going slowly with the governments essential role in the foot-dragging. Despite using rhetoric of gradual conflict resolution and social change, the Kremlin avoids any direct cooperation with Ukraine and Moldova regarding the occupied territories. One year after the election, a narrative about Ivanov being a "Kremlin project" has started up in the international community and among Russian citizens. Several protest demonstrations have taken place in Ingushetia and Nizhny Novgorod.

While Ivanov's support is decreasing, the elections of 2030 are approaching. Opposition candidates charge the government in deceiving the people and betraying the democratic values, but no prominent leader is visible to replace the current one. Public polls show almost equal distribution of votes among Ivanov and two other candidates. All these factors reveal Russia's trend in decreasing as a global power.

The Russian Federation has serious concerns regarding the threat posed by a rapidly expanding China, particularly Beijing's growing

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appetite for natural resources which could eventually encroach

upon the Russian Far East and Siberia.

## GLOBAL PLAYERS

After Russia's change of direction in 2024, China starts moving towards independent economic development. Its economic presence in the region has increased, especially due to the development of industry and high technology. The development of technologies in China, including advances in space, are a significant contribution to the economy of the country, and an important aspect in the development of its military potential, and are subsequently strengthening of its influence.

This forced the countries of the region to unite and seek support from the US as a counterweight to Chinese domination. Washington tries to weaken China's influence in the world by increasing tension between China and India, without entering into a direct

confrontation. In 2020, an armed conflict in Bhutan started, on the brink of the spheres of interest of China and India. India reaches a high level of development due to the US investments and the sale of IT products and services.

China works on overcoming the US domination in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. However, in 2030 this strategy is not fully implemented yet due to existing cooperation between India and the US. Washington's partial financial and debt dependence on China, is used by the latter as an obvious lever of pressure to resolve the Taiwan issue. China's cooperation with North Korea, in particular in the fuel and energy complex, continues, which is be another lever of pressure on the US.

## THE US

The United States are marked by a crisis of governance. During the presidency of Donald Trump, his position on tax cuts, deregulation, and healthcare have damaged the image of the Republican party among citizens. As a result, it loses control of Congress in 2018, and the White House in 2020. The power is traditionally overtaken by the Democratic party. However, neither of the parties have stated a vision

on how to create the economy that is suitable for working Americans, or build a government that protects the needy and disadvantaged.

Until 2020 the focus is concentrated on the internal affairs, due to the the declined global economic power of the country.



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## THE EU

Despite internal struggles linked to youth unemployment, Euroscepticism and right-wing populist beliefs, EU undergoes another enlargement wave in the Balkan region. In 2023 Republic of Macedonia and Albania join the EU. Montenegro and Serbia are pending to join.

Brussels strengthens the cooperation among the member

states' national armies in the frame of a more consolidated common defence policy, and it also spreads its involvement and influence beyond its physical borders within international development.

The EU is gradually implementing the ban petrol powered cars, which fosters energy independence.

## MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE

Despite the internal struggles, both the US and the EU devoted constant attention to the countries of the Eastern Partnership and to the post-Soviet area in general. In this context, Moldova and Ukraine are of particular interest in the transatlantic cooperation, given that the countries are signatories of the Association Agreement, are situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the EU, are part of the Black Sea Synergy, and struggle with fragile statehood both in terms of territorial integrity and good governance (functional and effective institutions, transparency in decision-making etc.).

### ***Investments***

Due to the standing investment flows from the EU and US, Ukraine and Moldova managed to achieve success in various programmes and start-up projects. The EU investment and rising economic power contributed to the development

of the agricultural sector through purchasing new equipment and qualitative seeds. This allowed Moldova and Ukraine to improve the production standards and per se to reach higher ranks of competition within the European Single Market.

The boom in the IT-sector fostered through annual grants provided by the transatlantic region leads to the rise in employment and salary. The investments allocated to small business facilitate the local textile industries growth and access to the global market. Over the last ten years this trend has been contributing to the decrease of emigration from Moldova and Ukraine and gave an impulse to the slowly growing economy.

In addition to the agriculture and IT-sector, the Ukrainian economy also benefits from tourism as for the last decade this field has experienced a significant boost due to the foreign investments.

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A land reform, required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is adopted in Ukraine in 2018. According to it, from 2019 on, foreign residents may purchase land in Ukraine. This attracts additional interest and investment to Ukraine, in particular from China. This interest is closely related and dependant on Ukraine's infrastructure. China has opened the Ukrainian market in consequence of the slow but confident reforms in Ukraine, financial assistance from European economic unions and organizations, infrastructure development.

### ***Cooperation***

Yet, the outcomes of the transatlantic cooperation in Ukraine and Moldova aim on one hand for stronger political association and deeper economic integration, and on the other hand for increasing leverage that will ensure irreversibility in the transformation of both countries' societies, business environments and political establishments.

This translates in increased exports thanks to the harmonization of quality and sanitary standards; to the support of initiatives that enhance exports of strategic goods; to the monitoring of the trade from the US and EU as well as of the Ukrainian-Moldovan border.

Development of alternative energy sources and partial energy independence could be achieved through the fostering of power and natural gas interconnections with the EU.

### ***Reforms***

Pursuing the EU standards and values for achieving democracy, Ukraine and Moldova have approached finishing reforms in the administrative and territorial sector.

By 2020, the implementation of reforms in government procurement, taxation, banking system, land law and gas sector of Ukraine turned out to be successful. However, educational, healthcare, judicial and pension reforms are still pending.

Regarding the Moldovan reforms, progress in public administration could be achieved, the new structure of central administration works in a transparent way and local administration is in the process of reformation. Over time, the retirement reform has some positive aspects for effective pension calculation and offering the appropriate financial sources. The reform of the medical system has partially failed because there aren't enough specialists. Through donations of equipment and opportunities of professional development of doctors there are attempts to alleviate the situation, however the lack of young specialists prevails.

Given the predominant mistrust in public institutions, EU-US cooperation aims to strengthen the independence and the efforts to depoliticize those bodies. In this regard, Washington and Brussels made use of its strong and targeted

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political leverage to push for reforms in the judiciary, within the bodies of public administration, and to strengthen the independency and transparency of the actors of the civil society.

In 2020 the two countries still struggle to achieve an independent and depoliticized mass media. By 2030 slight improvements in this regard can be noticed. As such, the media coverage in Moldova and Ukraine provides the citizens with objective information about the pace of the reform process and the results for EU- and US-implemented projects, popularizing values such as democracy and rule of law and promoting social cohesion and diversity in the Moldovan and Ukrainian society.

### ***Frozen conflicts***

The dialogue between Moldova and Transnistria could achieve a breakthrough and due to this it was possible to recognize university degrees and gave the youth the chance to go to study in the Euro-Atlantic region. The access to the territory for the government in Chişinău remains closed.

Gagauzia has the same status but it became possible to intensify the cooperation with the minorities through projects made by international and national organizations. The political dialogue has an effective feedback in the society.

Crimea is still under the control of the Kremlin, but the administrative functionality has been stabilized and works according to Russian principles. The official language is Russian and the currency is the rouble. The dialogue between Ukraine and Crimea is mainly superficial.

Donbas has a statute of an unrecognized country like Transnistria in Moldova. It has own governance with a bureaucratic administrative system. They have created their own currency. The economic state of the “country” is in crisis because of the absence of investments. The dialogue between Ukraine and Donbas is also superficial.

The conflict became frozen.

## *Scenario 2: Everything is better*

### **RUBE GOLDBERG MACHINE**

If the process of negotiation is successfully concluded, the two countries will receive the status of a full member of the European Union in 2035.

#### ***Successful stories from former front-runners to almost conquering the membership of the EU***

The two former front-runners of the Eastern Partnership (EaP), Ukraine and Moldova, are now in Brussels negotiating the last chapter from the legislative alignment from the Copenhagen Criteria.

The shift of power that happened in Moldova in 2018 and in Ukraine in 2019, as well as other internal factors will lead these countries to a full integration to the European Union.

Their path became easier to follow when in 2023 the regime of the Russian Federation collapsed failing to maintain full control of

Transnistria, Crimea as well as the Donbas region. Being forced to fall back, because of the deterioration of the economic situation, caused by continuously high expenditures on arms and military, as well as of the impeccable growth of the clean energy sector and the subsequent lower export rates of natural resources.

In 2018 United Kingdom postponed the negotiation process with the European Union regarding Brexit until 2020. The refugee crisis still remains a challenge for the EU, however because of the high level of cooperation and successful negotiation in Geneva on 25 January 2019 between Turkey and EU, the regulation of the flow of immigrants became easier to control.

#### **RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

The international arena in 2018 was focused on the upcoming Russian presidential elections. Washington as well as Brussels thought that due to the protests from 2017, the Russian Federation will become a more democratic

country. However, the Russian elections of 2018 failed to bring a democratic regime change in the country. Despite its fragile and unstable economic situation, the Kremlin continued to be more and more aggressive in Eastern Europe.

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In this context Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia started to look for support on the international arena.

In 2019 Russia started to exercise a military operation in Transnistria and expanded its influence more aggressively in the Donbas region. This raised Washington's and Brussels' awareness, who tried to bring Moscow to the negotiation table. In 2020 a solution proposed by the UN Security Council to position UN peacekeeping troops across the Donbas' borders, but was vetoed by the Kremlin. Putin wanted to position the UN peacekeeping troops just across the borders between Ukraine and the Donbas region. This obstinate opposition led to an active involvement of the USA in the region. Suddenly the EU focused its attention even more to this region, positioning NATO troops on its borders and inviting the Moldova and Ukraine to take part in military exercises, one of which took place in Romania in 2020, just after the denial of the UN proposal. However, Russia tried to maintain its position by all means.

In this context and with the sanctions still in force, one of the solutions to exert even more pressure on the Russian

government, the USA negotiated an agreement within OPEC with regards to the petroleum prices. Due to the following decrease in revenues and the aforementioned big expenses on the military, that also had to be maintained in other territories, the Russian economy was on the verge of collapsing. In 2023 opposition movements started to spread all over Russia and demanded snap elections which Putin ultimately agreed to.

In 2024, after the victory of the opposition, the country was waiting for democratic change. As a sign of support of the new regime in Russia, that was indeed pursuing democratic reforms, Washington and Brussels removed the sanctions gradually and started a comprehensive cooperation with Moscow from 2025 on. The Eurasian Economic Union is still a vivid organisation, working properly under Russian dominance, that is now focusing on convincing potential new members to join through economic means.

All these events had positive impacts on the situation in Moldova regarding Transnistria and also to a lesser extent in Gagauzia, as well as in Ukraine's disputed territories.

## MOLDOVA

The proposal of a change in the electoral system sparked continuous protests in Moldova from 2017 on. This led to an even

higher involvement of the EU in the country. Because corruption and emigration became even more acute problems in the

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region, the government was forced to the negotiation table. During the Summit in Bucharest, that took place on 28 September 2018, concerning the change of the proportional representation system to a mixed electoral system, the Moldovan government was left with two options: receiving less financial support from Brussels and introduce the electoral reform or to take the advice from the Venice Commission. The government chose the latter and the elections in Moldova were won by Partidul Acțiune și Solidaritate (PAS) and Platforma Demnitate și Adevăr (DA). The Socialist Party and Democratic Party could only win a small amount of mandates in the parliament. Because PAS and DA could form a majority they cooperated and pushed reforms in the areas of justice, economy and education. They also enhanced the cooperation between Chișinău, Transnistria and Gagauzia.

Nevertheless, from 2018 until 2022 the relationship with Tiraspol were coined by ups and downs. The Russian 14<sup>th</sup> army remained their presence until 2023, and the Lei started only to be used as official currency from 2024, when the Russian Federation was dealing with its internal problems.

Educational reform in Transnistria opened the possibilities for an exchange of students, if they successfully passed the Romanian language exam, which contributed to further convergence. In 2020, after long negotiations the cars in

Transnistria had the same number plates as in Moldova, and Tiraspol also gained access for some of its products to the EU's market. In 2023 Transnistria became again an official part of the Republic of Moldova with special rights granted for the minorities on the territories. Without any support from Russia, the Transnistrian government stepped down and accepted the reintegration.

Gagauzia, after years of being the spoiled child in the family, finally had to face in yearly 2020 a list of demands for receiving the next tranche of money from EU as well as from Moldova. One of the demands was a change in their curricula, increase in informing the citizens regarding all the investments, in the region also a bigger degree of transparency, and of collaboration between the two governments, and payment of their taxes. The opposition from the government was hard. And the tension arose as a consequence, however when in 2023 the situation in Russia became critic, and Chisinau gave the last offer, that despite money and stronger bonds with EU they will also get to represent their people in the parliament they took the deal without any further delay.

In 2022, PAS and DA won a second mandate, which enabled them to further pursue their reforms. Because Moldova put a bigger emphasis on developing the clean energy sector and on diversification of its energy sources, the prices for electricity and petroleum products

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could be kept on a normal level while at the same time salaries slightly increased contribution to economic development. Especially in the IT sector, new jobs were created and the economic growth in Moldova became sustainable. After the elections in 2026, the government was formed by the Socialist Democratic Party and the Green Party, with many representatives coming from Transnistria. Therefore, a reconstruction of all the bridges on the Dniester was proposed, which should all be covered

with solar panels. Even though the reconstruction plan was implemented for most of them by now, with the solar power plan is met with hesitation by the government.

Gagauzia and Transnistria now are working very closely with Chişinău, the situation of the minorities is less and less tensioned, also due to different summer schools and cooperation projects in education. Moldova works now hard trying to achieve membership of the EU, as does its neighbour Ukraine.

## UKRAINE

In 2019, as result of election in Ukraine, a new party joined the parliament with liberal democratic values and fresh views on the transformation of political system in the country. A new draft law on reform of the parliament into a bicameral legislative body was adopted with efforts of this party. A referendum held in 2020 approved this reform. Amendments were constitutionalized and the period their enforcement had started. Already in 2024, elections were held in the new bicameral parliament with a lower chamber of 225 deputies (elected at general elections) and with a higher chamber of 25 representatives from every oblast. This second chamber could block decisions and in turn, the lower chamber had the right of veto with absolute majority.

Reforms in the economy were directed towards the development of the agricultural sector, focussing on cultivating ecological products. This enabled a drastic increase of exports rates to other countries and subsequently to a rise of the GDP. Another focus was put on the expansion of alternative energy sources from sun, wind, and water. As a result, 35% of the Ukrainian energy production was “green”, which only needed to be increased to 40% by 2035 as one of the conditions for EU membership.

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Furthermore, the IT sector became a major driver in the development of the country. It led to many changes such as creating electronic government as well as decreasing the level of bureaucracy and corruption.

Concerning the situation in the Eastern part of Ukraine, the conflict had been stopped. Both sides withdrew their troops and the Donbass region got the status of a demilitarized zone in 2027. Since then, the region was being rebuilt. After an improvement that situation, international organizations came back to focus on solving the issues about Crimea. By 2030, 67 % of Ukrainians were proud of their nation, roots and country.



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OLESIA KOBENKO, OLHA MAKUKHA, OLGA RUSOVA, IULIA SERBINOVICI,  
CATALINA TURCAN

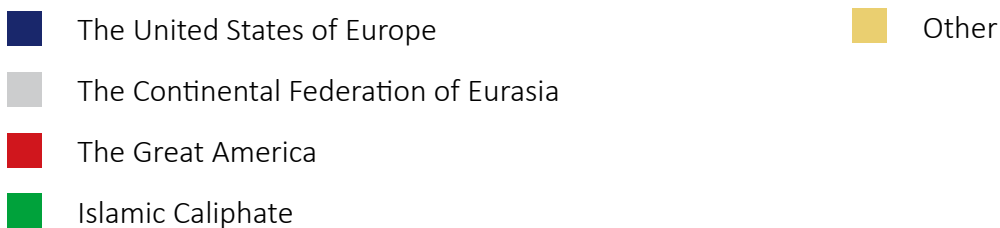
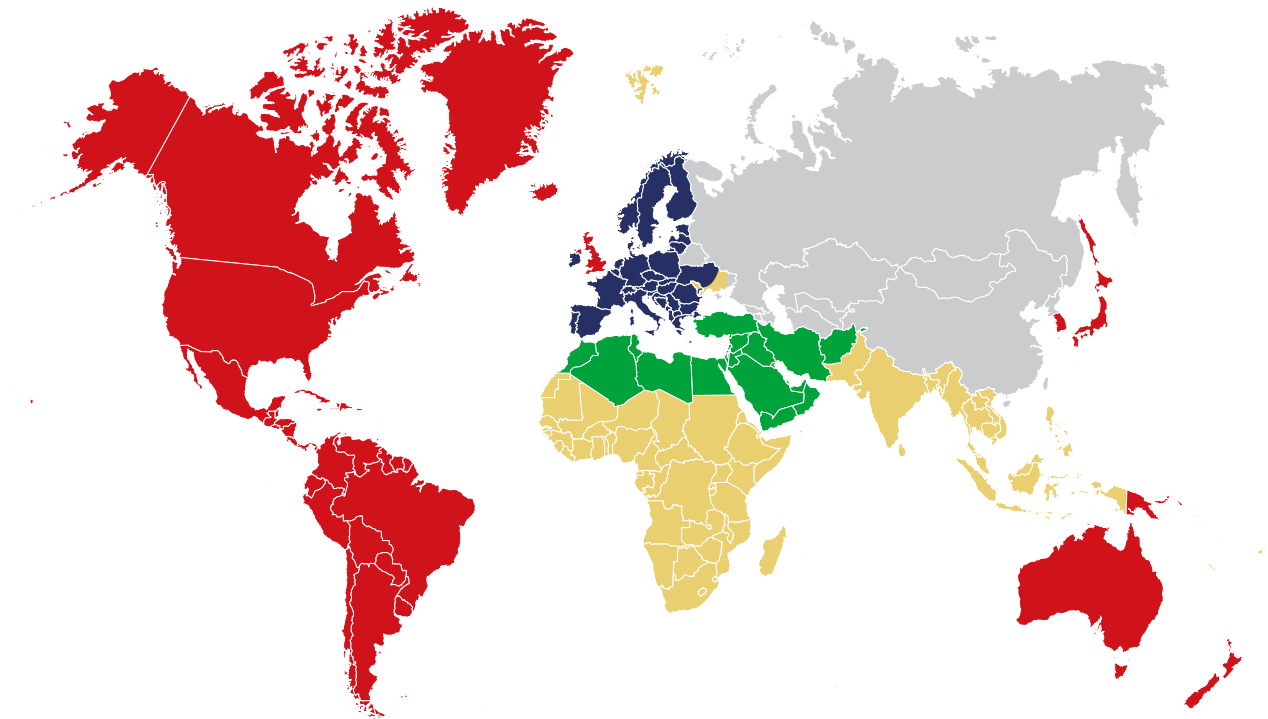
## *Scenario 3: Everything is worse*

# 2030. NEW GLOBAL DISORDER

The World  
in 2030.

Map created by  
Dmytro Mykhailov

*“Peace is War...  
Independence is Ghetto...  
Integration is Autarky...”*



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The process of global regionalization is heterogeneous. Depending on the type of inherent challenges, each of the regions faces different phases of transformation. These are the processes of either enlargement and/or fragmentation.

## WORLD'S OUTLOOK

By the year 2030, the transformation of political space became the major tendency of global development. Creating regional entities, nation-states aim at a more efficient way of solving their political, economic and/ or security-related issues. Continental federations become the main actors of the international system, namely The Great Americas (GA),

The United States of Europe (USE) and The Continental Federation of Eurasia (CFE). The territory of Middle East is known as the Islamic Caliphate. The remaining part of the globe is the battle field for gaining resources between these federations. Considering the geographical location of Ukraine and Moldova, they are perceived as limitrophus (buffer zone).

## THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

The continuous neglecting of national interests within the European Union led to its significant restructuration. It splits into several separate integration entities due to the adopted policy of multi-speed Europe. Despite the refusal of deepening political integration, the necessity in regulation of economic cooperation remains, saving the existing supra-national institutions in their limited functional capacity. The Benelux countries, Italy, Germany, France, Austria constitute the Old Europe, being driven by the idea to preserve the deepening of political integration.

The Scandinavian countries, namely Denmark, Sweden, Finland create the Nordic Block based on their economic similarities. Norway views the newly emerged sub region as an economically attractive partner and became its member in 2023. Booming E-Estonia joined the entity due to their geographical proximity.

Lastly, Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania, Malta, Lithuania, Latvia and Bulgaria represent the sub region of New Europe. The intention towards a more independent policy from Brussels constitutes their unifying factor.

As for the Southern Europe, Spain, Portugal and Greece do not participate in any of the above mentioned projects because of their economic weakness.

Noteworthy is that the sub regions of The United States of Europe experience intensification of separatist movements. This, in turn, leads to the creation of ghetto districts as a preventive measure. They are Catalonia, Bask, Sicily, Kosovo, Transilvania.

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## THE CONTINENTAL FEDERATION OF EURASIA

The Russian initiative to establish strong and robust Eurasian Union as it is known today eventually fails. Economic recession caused by the inability to export energy and mineral fuels greatly weakens the USSR's successor. In this critical situation, Russia and its loyal ally Belarus create the Commonwealth of Slavic States to mutually benefit their economies. At the same time the Central Asian countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan created The Muslim Caspian Brotherhood

which was later joined by Caucasus Muslim countries and Russian Muslim Subjects. During the 2020s China started actively implementing its large-scale project of developing trade infrastructure networks. China became the main investor in the region which made it the most powerful regional actor. By the 2030 the Commonwealth of Slavic States, the Muslim Caspian Brotherhood and China combined their political spaces that was named The Continental Federation of Eurasia.

## GLOBAL ECONOMY

The political transformation of the international system also naturally has an impact on the world economy. The system is characterized by the concepts of autarky, isolation and inter-continental rivalry. Economic interdependence no longer exists since trade relations are taking

place only within the continental federations. For instance, the USE's dependence on the Eurasian gas is reduced due to the successful implementation of their energy strategy 2030, and the main gas flows are reoriented eastwards.

## UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA

Unsuccessful attempts to resolve the Donbass issue in favour of Ukraine forced Kyiv to officially abandon this territory. By the year 2023, Donbas is absorbed by the CFE because of its economic unsustainability, while the Crimean Peninsula keeps its annexation status. As for the rest of Ukraine, the pro-European policy vector brings it to the full membership within the block of New Europe, as part of

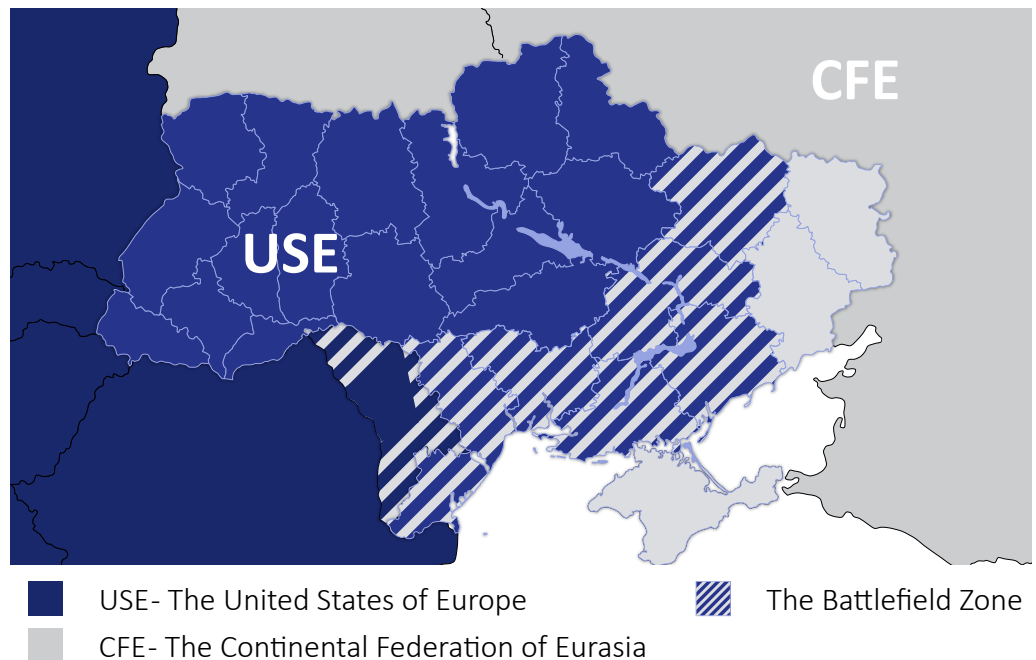
the USE. Such a decisive policy line, however, did not produce peace. Relatively quick rehabilitation of Donbas' economy by 2027 makes Transnistrians striving for accession to the CFE. In the referendum of the same year, 80 % of respondents on that territory vote positively for joining the Eastern bloc, which, as a result, gives a spark to new tensions in the south-eastern part of Ukraine. Being driven by

the necessity to ensure economic sustainability of the newly accessed territories along the Dniester river, in 2030 the CFE invades Ukrainian borders further in the East and South, declaring war against the USE. As for Moldova, its political heterogeneity and absence of a strong leadership brings the country to a territorial divide by 2030. The aforementioned referendum for joining the CFE held in 2027 on the

territory of Transnistria, and the possibility of border rearrangement between the USE and the CFE, also inspires Gagauzia to opt for the inclusion of its territory to the Eastern continental federation. Meanwhile, the Moldovan central and northern parts preserve their territorial unity within New Europe as a constituent of the CFE since 2025.

Ukraine and  
Moldova in 2030.

Map created by  
Dmytro  
Mykhailov



## *Scenario 4: Everything get weirder*

# THE FUTURE IN ROSE-TINTED GLASSES/ DEMOCRATIC FAIRY-TALE

The Republic of Moldova as a part of Romania (with Transnistria) and Ukraine (unitary state within the borders of 2013), become members of the EU.

In 2030 the world has the following situation: the USA return to the isolation policy of the Monroe Doctrine. The EU closes its borders and gets regionalized. Russia becomes a democratic federation. China becomes the predominant force on the Asian continent. North Korea allies with China and these two politically and culturally related states begin to realize an offensive

against the Russian Federation, as a result Siberia gets absorbed by the joint political giant. The Kremlin prefers to focus exclusively on its Asian area of influence. Moldavans and Ukrainians use this chance and put in practice the previously impossible mission of regaining control over the Russian influenced territories, receiving political support from Brussels and Washington.

## RUSSIA

The EU sanctions led to weakening and subsequently a collapse of the Putin regime. As a result of this, a decentralization process in whole country began. In the Asian regions of Russia, China promised money for the development of the economy and payment for salaries and pensions, something the Kremlin was no longer able to provide. Beijing started a process of political and economic colonization of Siberia. Using the pretense of the Russian argumentation – to protect Chinese citizens – Siberia is occupied. The Kremlin has to face a boomerang effect of their policies

in Eastern Europe.

The Kremlin is forced to ask for help from the USA and the EU in order to stabilize the internal economic and political situation. This North Atlantic coalition agrees to help only under two conditions: democratization of Russia and reduction of nuclear weapons.

In 2018, democratic elections are held in Russia. The new democratically elected government of Russia extradites Putin to tribunal in The Hague and the verdict accuses him of crimes against humanity. Moscow retreats its army from Transnistria,

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Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Crimea and Donbass. Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan regain control over their territories. Russia has to pay reparation payments to Ukraine.

Except for Chinese Siberia, The Russian Federation becomes a democratic state and a regional power.

## USA AND EU

Both international actors had taken on their own responsibility to many global problems, such as the fight against terrorism, global warming and regional wars. As a result, Brussels and Washington choose to no longer interfere in the Middle East.

The EU decides to accept the Republic of Moldova as a member as part of Romania, and in 2020 Ukraine joins as well. Brussels understands that it is too difficult to administrate such a big territory (ideas of Junkers federalization) and assigns Poland as a leader of this region. Europe creates its own army, and NATO stops to play an important role in this region. The USA continues a mostly

isolationist foreign policy because Trump has won a second term and his successor keeps the same visions. China becomes the leader of an Asian Union.

The rapid technological development in G7 results in high unemployment rates and in order to stop the huge outside migration from developing countries, the USA and the EU decide to change their status and policy which leads to restriction of refugees and foreign labor force inflow.

In 2018, USA takes an important initiative in mediation of the Russian internal conflicts and undertakes task to reduce the number of Russian nuclear weapons (START-3).

## GLOBAL ECONOMY

In 2030, on every continent – except Australia – because of the economic development, similar organizations like the EU are formed, using European integration as a model for deeper cooperation. Green

energy becomes a global trend, hitting the natural resources based Russian economy. Global warming is significantly reduced. The oil exporting Arab countries are also losing their influence.

## THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

In October 2017 president Igor Dodon is arrested and declared to be a traitor due to his actions to call Russian Army as a stability element against protesters in Chişinău. After

the Plahotniuc government gets rid of this political “puppet”, it began to intensify the negotiations with the EU about the possible membership. Brussels suggests that it would be

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better if Moldova will be accepted to the EU as part of Romania. The negotiations between Bucharest and Chişinău take place and the treaty is signed. On 27th of March 2018 Moldova and Transnistria signed the Union with Romania, according to which the newly established Moldovan autonomic region gets a special status.

The EU supplies a significant amount of money for infrastructure and

technological development of this region. Romania and Moldova become the Silicon Valley of the EU. Russian becomes the second official language after Romanian. The educational reform transforms this sector to one of the five best in the world. The leading administration of the state is represented by invited EU experts who finally get rid of any corruption. The Moldovan autonomic region is called the “Switzerland of the Eastern Europe”.

## UKRAINE

In 2018 Ukraine regained the control over the previously occupied territories. The same year it received reparation payments from Russia and funds from the Western partners to restore the infrastructure and bring stability all over the Donbass area and Crimea.

Crimea becomes an autonomic republic and Crimean Tatars receive official the right to represent themselves through Mejlis. The representatives of Crimean Autonomy Republic have seats in the upper official legal institutions of the Ukrainian state.

The presidential elections are won by a woman, Iryna Geraschenko, who previously has been responsible for resolving the armed conflict in Donbass region. Since she contributed to the reintegration of the territories to Ukraine, she got the highest voter turnout in the elections. Under her initiative Ukraine joins the EU in 2020. Alternative energy resources ensure energy security. The complete decentralization

reform and increased investments and EU donations allow every region in Ukraine to use its particular economic potential in a proper way. The East of the country restores its industry power; South including Crimea, develops one of the best tourist resorts in Europe; North and West modernize their agriculture sector and become the leading trade center.

Ukraine establishes effective cooperation with Moldova in terms of IT and other fields of science and economy. Ukraine becomes a leading democracy in the whole EU and taking into account its geographic and resource potential, it becomes one of the leading financial and economic states in Europe and the world!

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## DISCLAIMER

Responsibility for the information and views set out in this publication lies entirely with the authors of the respective scenarios. The groups were randomly distributed and consisted of both Moldovan and Ukrainian participants.

Scenario Everything stays the same “Going slowly doesn’t prevent arriving”: Elena Antohi, Anastasia Deli, Anton Lisnychenko, Liudmyla Melnyk, Viktoriia Shainoga

Scenario Everything is better “Rube Goldberg machine”: Olesea Ababii, Cristina Carmanu, Ilya Hudymenko, Yuliia Kolomiets, Veronika Pshenychnykova

Scenario Everything is worse “2030. New Global Disorder”: Olesia Kobenko, Olha Makukha, Olga Rusova, Iulia Serbinovici, Catalina Turcan

Scenario Everything get weirder “The Future in Rose-Tinted Glasses/ Democratic Fairy-Tale”: Marina Butcu, Olesea Cotiujanu, Adrian Rosca, Olena Stovpac, Irina Vyshnia

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