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LUCIAN BLAGA
— DIN SIBIU —

ANUARUL

LABORATORULUI PENTRU ANALIZA CONFLICTULUI TRANSNISTREAN



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LABORATORULUI PENTRU ANALIZA CONFLICTULUI TRANSNISTREAN

**(YEARBOOK OF THE LABORATORY
FOR THE TRANSNISTRIAN CONFLICT
ANALYSIS)**

LABORATORUL PENTRU ANALIZA
CONFLICTULUI TRANSNISTREAN



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**LABORATORUL PENTRU ANALIZA
CONFLICTULUI TRANSNISTREAN**



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ARIA TEMATICĂ

Revista noastră publică articole de cercetare științifică destinată, în principal, următoarelor teme relevante pentru înțelegerea și prognozarea conflictului transnistrean:

- Originea și evoluția conflictului;
- Stadiul prezent și perspectivele de soluționare a conflictului;
- Interesele și acțiunile actorilor internaționali implicați;
- Platformele de negociere: arhitectura instituțională și rezultate;
- Dosarele negociate (sub aspect de securitate, politic, economic, al drepturilor omului, dar și dosare cu caracter tehnic);
- Descrierea și înțelegerea organizărilor sociale și instituționale pe malul stâng al Nistrului;
- Politicile Republicii Moldova în gestionarea conflictului;
- Cazuri comparative de separatism în lumea contemporană.

Pe de altă parte, oferim instrumente de lucru necesare cercetării, publicând analize, interviuri, documente și recenzii care au fost găzduite/diseminate de către Laboratorul pentru Analiza Conflictului Transnistrean în cursul anului precedent.

TOPICS

Our journal publishes scientific research articles mainly dedicated to the following topics relevant to the understanding and prognosis of the Transnistrian conflict:

- *The origin and evolution of the conflict;*
- *Present status and perspectives for conflict resolution;*
- *The interests and actions of the international actors involved;*
- *Negotiating platforms: institutional architecture and results;*
- *The files negotiated (in terms of security, political, economic, human rights, as well as technical files);*
- *Description and understanding of social and institutional organizations on the left bank of the Dniester River;*
- *The Republic of Moldova's conflict management policies;*
- *Comparative cases of separatism in the contemporary world.*

On the other hand, we will provide working tools for research, published analyzes, interviews, documents, and book reviews that were hosted/disseminated by the Laboratory for the Transnistrian Conflict Analysis during the previous year.

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PROBLEME TRANSNISTRENE / TRANSNISTRIAN ISSUES

Ruslana GROSU
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BUILDING TRANSNISTRIAN IDENTITY: ACADEMIC INSIGHTS ON HISTORICAL NARRATIVES, SYMBOLIC GOVERNANCE, AND GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS

Abstract:	<p><i>This article explores the identity-building processes of Transnistria, an unrecognized entity in Eastern Europe. Through an examination of symbolic nation-building, diversity policies, and the region's socio-political strategies, the paper identifies the distinct characteristics that underpin Transnistria's identity. The study also highlights challenges such as non-recognition, geopolitical dependencies, and ethnic tensions, offering implications for policy and research in multi-ethnic and unrecognized states.</i></p> <p><i>The paper includes references to articles and research that explore and justify the existence of a Transnistrian identity, ranging from perspectives that regard it as a fabricated construct to those that frame it as a bastion of multiculturalism, however, the author doesn't endorse the last viewpoints. Instead, these references are presented to illustrate the diversity and breadth of interpretations surrounding Transnistrian identity. By showcasing the contrasting perspectives, the study demonstrates the contested nature of the concept and highlights the complex debates it has generated in academic and political discourse.</i></p> <p><i>Moreover, the study critically addresses the symbolic policies implemented in Transnistria, which create an illusion of a functional model of diversity. In reality, these policies primarily serve an authoritarian regime that uses them as tools to consolidate its power rather than to genuinely foster social cohesion. The dominance of symbolic over substantive actions underscores the performative nature of these measures, which are designed to project inclusivity without delivering concrete outcomes for minority groups.</i></p>
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	<i>Ultimately, the promoted Transnistrian identity is portrayed as a political instrument rather than an authentic reflection of social unity. It is a mechanism employed by the ruling elite to legitimize their governance and differentiate Transnistria from the Republic of Moldova, rather than a genuine expression of shared cultural or ethnic solidarity among its diverse population. This analysis underscores the dissonance between the rhetoric of multiculturalism and the underlying political realities of the region.</i>
Keywords:	Transnistrian identity; Linguistic policies; Soviet legacy; Geopolitical influence; Contested statehood; Unrecognized state
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ROLUL OMBUDSMANULUI ÎN MONITORIZAREA DREPTURILOR OMULUI ÎN REGIUNEA TRANSNISTREANĂ A REPUBLICII MOLDOVA

Title :	THE ROLE OF THE OMBUDSMAN IN MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE TRANSNISTRIAN REGION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
Abstract:	<i>The Ombudsman is the National Institution for the Protection of Human Rights with an extended mandate to prevent, protect and promote human rights. The Office of the Ombudsman of Moldova has been reaccredited with the “A” status, the highest status offered to national institutions for the protection of human rights, which shows the correspondence of its mandate with the Paris Principles on the functioning of the Ombudsman Institution. This</i>

	<p><i>international certification gives the Ombudsman of Moldova opportunities to extend its traditionally known attributions (e.g. examining complaints) to functions of mediator, monitoring and reporting on human rights, etc. The role of the Ombudsman institution in conflict areas has been less addressed in the specialized doctrine. Although it does not have access to the Transnistrian region and is not involved in the negotiation process or working groups, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Moldova closely monitors the situation regarding the respect for human rights in the region, resolves claims and mediates complex processes. An active role in this process is played by the Office's representative office in the village of Varnița, which opened in 2012. This monitoring process includes both observing the level of human rights protection by the constitutional authorities and the level of protection of individuals' rights by the de facto administration. We note that the Office of the People's Advocate of Moldova has extensive experience in the field, which can be assimilated from other similar institutions. In this paper, the authors try to describe what the role of the People's Advocate for conflict zones would be, what this institution could achieve in the field, and what the challenges, but also the opportunities for this title would be. The paper does not claim to be perfect, but rather a premise for further multi-aspect research.</i></p>
Keywords:	People's Advocate; Ombudsman; International human rights standards; Office of the People's Advocate; Transnistrian region; Venice Commission; Paris Principles.
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**CROSS-BORDER ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE CONTEXT OF
 THE WAR IN UKRAINE. SPECIFICS OF THE TRANSNISTRIAN
 SEGMENT OF THE BORDER OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

Abstract:	<p><i>In the context of the war in Ukraine, cross-border organized crime is becoming an increasingly present phenomenon in the region, increasingly attracting the attention of national governments and international organizations, as well as the academic community and civil society. In the context of the new geopolitical realities, conditioned by the unjustified invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, cross-border organized crime is becoming one of the phenomena present in the region, including in the Republic of Moldova.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding organized crime using the Transnistrian segment of the Republic of Moldova border, the phenomenon of cross-border organized crime includes human trafficking (for prostitution or forced labor), migrant smuggling, drug trafficking, illicit goods trafficking, counterfeiting, cultural activities related to goods trafficking, arms trafficking, armed robbery and money laundering the money.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of this article is to highlight the main aspects of cross-border crime conditioned by the war in Ukraine.</i></p>
Keywords:	<p>Cross-border crime; War; Drug trafficking; Arms trafficking; Illegal migration; Border; Security</p>
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**РОССИЙСКО-УКРАИНСКИЙ ВООРУЖЕННЫЙ КОНФЛИКТ И
ПРИДНЕСТРОВЬЕ:
ВОЗМОЖНО ЛИ ИЗМЕНЕНИЕ ПОЗИЦИИ РОССИИ?**

Title:	RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN ARMED CONFLICT AND TRANSNISTRIA: IS IT POSSIBLE FOR RUSSIA TO CHANGE ITS POSITION?
Abstract:	<p><i>Transnistria is a pro-Russian region situated in the East of the Republic of Moldova, sandwiched between Chisinau and Ukraine. It is attracted by Moscow, Kyiv, Chisinau, and other capitals. In peacetime, the unhurried negotiation process was quite satisfactory for all interested parties. In the context of the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Transnistria becomes a factor that causes concern and sometimes irritation among many politicians and military personnel.</i></p> <p><i>In Kyiv, there are some fears that military sabotage in the direction of Odesa is possible from Transnistria. On the other hand, proposals are being made to take control of the region, thereby inflicting a significant military, political, and image defeat on Russia. In Chisinau, plans for the country's reintegration under the new conditions are discussed. But at the same time, they would like to avoid unjustified risks. In Tiraspol, they watch everything that is happening with alarm and apprehension. And they do not lose hope that in the event of an escalation of the situation, Moscow will provide Transnistria with assistance and support. All these circumstances force Russia to keep the situation under constant control to react at the right moment to any changes in the situation around Transnistria.</i></p> <p><i>The situation is extremely complicated and at any moment can move from a calm phase to a fast development of events.</i></p>
Keywords:	Transnistria; Conflict; Moldova; Neutral status; Negotiations; Russia; War in Ukraine.
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NICHITA SMOCHINĂ – BRIEF BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abstract:	<p><i>Nichita Smochină, originally from the outskirts of the city of Dubăsari on the bank of the Dniester, is the main personality of Transnistrian Romanians starting with the installation of the Bolshevik regime and until the maturity of the communist regime in Romania.</i></p> <p><i>He established and managed associations of Transnistrian Romanians and periodical publications intended for them; wrote books and articles about the ethno-political reality in Transnistria; he has held administrative positions in which he has leveraged his research expertise. He was a member of the Romanian Academy.</i></p> <p><i>Isolated and persecuted by the communist regime in Romania, he was allowed to return to the field of research in the last years of his life (under the conditions of the ban on the Transnistrian subject).</i></p> <p><i>His memory is in a consistent recovery process, both in the Republic of Moldova and in Romania.</i></p>
Keywords:	Nichita Smochină; Transnistria; Transnistrian Romanians; Association of Transnistrian Romanians
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CONFLICTE “ÎNGHEȚATE” / “FROZEN” CONFLICTS

Mihai MELINTEI
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A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST AND SECOND NAGORNO-KARABAKH WARS

Abstract:	<p><i>The Nagorno-Karabakh wars is one of the most protracted and complex disputes in the post-Soviet space, involving Armenia and Azerbaijan over the control of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The first war broke out in the late 1980s and early 1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnically Armenian-majority area, had been under Azerbaijani control during Soviet regime. As tensions between Armenians and Azerbaijanis grew, the conflict escalated into a full-scale war from 1991 to 1994. The result was a devastating loss of life, mass displacement, and a de facto Armenian control over Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding Azerbaijani territories, although these gains were never internationally recognized.</i></p> <p><i>A fragile ceasefire was agreed upon in 1994, but the situation remained volatile with periodic skirmishes. The second war erupted in September 2020, with Azerbaijan launching a large-scale offensive to reclaim Nagorno-Karabakh. The 2020 conflict was marked by heavy military engagement, with Azerbaijan receiving support from Turkey, while Russia played a mediating role. The war ended with a ceasefire agreement brokered by Russia, shifting the region’s geopolitical dynamics and strengthening Azerbaijan’s position. Despite the ceasefire, tensions remain high, and the conflict continues to shape relations in the South Caucasus.</i></p>
Keywords:	Nagorno-Karabakh; War; Post-Soviet space; Geopolitics; South Caucasus; Conflicts.
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CAZUL KOSOVO: SEPARATISM ȘI INDEPENDENȚĂ

Title:	THE KOSOVO CASE: SEPARATISM AND INDEPENDENCE
Abstract:	<p><i>Kosovo, a de-facto state in the Balkans, with a history of ethnic and political conflict, has pursued independence amid a complex separatist dynamic.</i></p> <p><i>This paper examines Kosovo's evolution through the lenses of separatism, focusing on pivotal milestones: the aftermath of the 1999 war, Ibrahim Rugova's reforms, and the 2008 Declaration of Independence. Furthermore, it explores the ongoing challenges Kosovo faces in securing full international recognition, especially considering opposition from key states and regional geopolitical complexities.</i></p> <p><i>The study aims to assess Kosovo's current global position, focusing on its prospects for international recognition and European integration.</i></p>
Keywords:	Kosovo; Separatism; Independence; International recognition; Geopolitics
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**GEORGIA SUB ASEDIUL SEPARATISMULUI:
ABHAZIA ȘI OSETIA DE SUD**

Title:	GEORGIA UNDER SEPARATE SIEGE: ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA
Abstract:	<p><i>This article analyzes the case of separatism in post-soviet Georgia. Starting from the main causes that led to the secessionist movements, the cases of South Ossetia and Abkhazia are described in detail. Throughout the article, the position of the Russian Federation regarding one disputant's claims or another will be defined. Russian implication on this matter through the peacekeeping forces has had a great impact on the development of the situation. Considering this fact, there was a possibility for a potential ceasefire and to establish some interstate relations, only under Russian monitoring.</i></p> <p><i>Most of the conflicts taking place in the South Caucasus region imply the presence of the Russian state. Nevertheless, their political elites overestimate the capability of Moscow in the proceeding to find an equitable solution that would benefit all the conflictual sides.</i></p>
Keywords:	Georgia; the Georgian- South Ossetian Conflict; the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict; Russian Federation; Ethnical Conflict; Independence; Sovereignty
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RECENZII / REVIEWS

Iuliana Neagoș
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THE ARMED CONFLICT OF THE DNIESTER. THREE DECADES LATER (PETER LANG, 2023)

Abstract:	<i>The volume “The Armed Conflict of the Dniester. Three Decades Later” published by the prestigious Peter Lang Publishing Group, represents the 3rd in the “South-East European History” series. It presents a valuable scientific source of information and analysis, particularly considering present events in Ukraine. The authors provide an original approach to the Dniester conflict, from 1992. They collect and analyze information and offer valuable interpretations within the frame of the regional security and geopolitical context.</i>
Keywords:	Dniester; Armed conflict; Frozen conflicts, Transnistrian conflict
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