

**Security Sector Reform in the Republic of Moldova:
Assessing the impact of international assistance**

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Date: June 14, 2019

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Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sanda." with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Abstract

Security Sector Reform (SSR) aims to create a secure environment by strengthening state institutions and ensure development, rule of law, good governance but its sustainability depends on the political commitment, local ownership and coordination of the reform. SSR evolved as an effort by the international actors to address security and development challenges in a fragile state as Moldova. SSR represents a critical tool and a key element in setting the Republic of Moldova towards an accountable, transparent and inclusive security sector that is responsive to society's needs. In Moldova SSR is undertaken by state institution in cooperation with bilateral or multilateral actors that are trying to bridge the gap between normative theory and practice on the ground. After almost two decades of SSR implementation in Moldova, the international efforts are not being considered sustainable because of a lack of comprehensive and holistic approach of the reform. This research examines the failure and challenges to implement SSR in Moldova looking at the coordination of the international assistance, local ownership of the reform, as well as, the fragile context of the country.

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Introduction

Security sector reform evolved as an effort to address the challenges in fragile states. At the end of the Cold War the promotion of the security sector reform, especially in post-conflict states, became one of the main objectives of the international community. Despite an enormous effort, there are just a few practical success stories on how to implement security sector reform in a sustainable and efficient way, within the framework of democratic governance and oversight.

SSR represents a critical tool and a key element in setting countries back on track towards strengthened institutions that are accountable, transparent and respond to the needs of the society. The main assumption is that everyone is better off when security sector represents “an asset, not an obstacle” (Schnabel and Born, 2011). The experience shows that the reform takes place in countries that are transitioning to democracy and are in an unstable security, political and social context. SSR is usually undertaken by state institution in cooperation with bilateral or multilateral actors that are trying to bridge the gap between normative theory and practice on the ground.

International actors have different mandates dealing with security sector reform, thus, including judicial, anti-corruption, police, defence, good governance areas, alongside with strengthening civil society organizations and local communities. One of the main elements in ensuring security sector reform represents the civil and democratic oversight.

A significant body of literature and research was developed around the concept of security sector reform, especially concerning the democratic governance, local ownership, as well as, design and implementation of the reform. Thus, the literature addresses the perspective of both policy practitioners and their experiences of implementing SSR in different contexts, and academia, which delves into the normative concept of the reform. But the key to success for

international actors is to follow the normative agenda while dealing with security sector reform and pay special attention to the country context, including alternative security actors.

A relevant case study on challenging SSR environment is the Republic of Moldova. After almost two decades of security sector reform implementation in country, the international efforts are not being considered sustainable because of a lack of comprehensive and holistic approach of the reform. The international actors had to shift their perspective and bridge the gap between normative and ideal SSR to the real context of the fragile country.

The Republic of Moldova is undergoing its security sector reform which was largely supported and driven by the western international actors. This research examines the failure and challenges to implement SSR in Moldova looking at the coordination of the international assistance, local ownership of the reform, as well as, the fragile context of the country consisting of the politicization and patronage of security institutions, political crises, systemic corruption, as well as non-transparent and non-inclusive decision-making processes. The legitimacy of state institutions is usually contested as the trust of citizens in Parliament, Government, judiciary drastically decreased from 20-30% in 2013 which culminated to 6-9% in 2017¹. Political instability has led to persistent inefficiencies, weak inter-institutional cooperation and excessive political influence on public institutions. Therefore, designing, coordinating and implementing security sector reform in an accountable, transparent and democratic governance framework is rather weak and prone to failure. Moreover, the lack of holistic approach towards SSR, that would include a wide range of stakeholders in order to answer the needs of the society, represents an obstacle.

The country's geopolitical crossroad between West (EU, NATO) and East (CIS) is felt at the level of domestic affairs and is affecting the security policies and options adopted by the state.

¹ According to the national Barometer of Public Opinion developed by the Institute of Public Policy

The thesis explores the implementation of the security sector reform in the Republic of Moldova and the international assistance offered by bilateral or multilateral actors.

The main elements of reform analysed are the military and defence reform, internal affairs and justice reform which are supported by the international community through a comprehensive and multi-dimensional assistance. In this sense, SSR is being viewed as an element of donor programming, but also as foreign affairs policy.

This research also looks at how SSR can better be implemented in the Republic of Moldova, providing a set of recommendation in terms of alignment, coordination of the assistance, as well as, explores the implementation of the reform in a comprehensive and holistic way by respecting the principle of local ownership. The research question is the following: Why the international assistance to security sector reform in Moldova is not effective and did not achieve its goals? The main hypothesis is that the international assistance in security sector reform is not coordinated effectively and it's leading to an overlap of programmes, thus, diminishing the effectiveness of reform. Therefore, the principle of local ownership of the reform is not respected and fully understood by domestic and international stakeholders.

The thesis is organized in 3 Chapters which are the following: Chapter 1 delves into theories and current academic research concerning security sector reform, focusing on the local ownership and coordination of the assistance. The literature review emphasizes the specific of SSR in fragile post-conflict states. The exploration about the SSR programming in a country should start with a clear analysis of the concept and presenting the boundaries around it. It presents the SSR as an element of donor programming and analysis the importance of the local ownership, including the peculiarities of the state capture phenomenon merged with domestic legitimacy of security institutions in Moldova.

Chapter 2 explores the Security Sector Reform in the Republic of Moldova and provides an overview of the contextualization of the reform, reasons why it emerged, by analysing the main

stakeholders involved in the implementation of SSR. It analyses the security environment of the country, pursuing with the institutional framework and main stakeholders. Finally, the principle of local ownership of the reform is being examined, reviewing the actors that drive the reform processes.

Chapter 3 is exploring the convergence and divergences, including the coordination between donors and beneficiaries of SSR programmes. The Chapter maps the main donors, their interests and the challenges of cooperation between different stakeholders. Finally, it assesses the impact of the international assistance on SSR from the perspective of society's perception towards the security institutions.

From concept to context, the thesis elucidates on Moldova's experience with SSR programmes, presenting practical insights that could be learned by other actors in the process of ensuring international assistance to SSR.

Methodology

The thesis consists of qualitative and quantitative research methods for the reason that international assistance in security sector reform represents a complex question and calls for a comprehensive approach to explore it. In order to answer the research question will be used document analysis, law review, field research, semi-structured interviews and comprehensive panel data on international assistance. The literature review contains an overview of the current academic research concerning security sector reform, local ownership, coordination of aid, hybrid security governance systems and post-conflict security environment. The documents analysis includes a set of reports and studies developed by international governmental organizations, foundations, national institutions, think tanks and civil society.

The field research in the Republic of Moldova was conducted during 20-28 April 2019 and it consisted of semi-structured interviews. It allowed for a better understanding of the security sector reform and coordination of international assistance. During the field research were visited 4 cities Balti, Cahul, Chisinau and Comrat (see Figure 1). Chisinau represents the capital of the Republic of Moldova and headquarters for many international and national organizations, the main governmental institutions are in the capital. Balti and Cahul are considered the capital of the North and South of the country. For the purpose of this research was visited Comrat, which is the capital of Gagauzia, an autonomous region in Moldova.

Overall, 8 interviews were conducted with experts from civil society, officials from state institutions, representatives of international governmental organizations in the Republic of Moldova. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted in Romanian and English language. The interviews contained conceptual questions about the security sector reform objectives and activities, and specific questions about the agenda setting, dynamic of the projects and programmes, coordination of the assistance, local ownership and challenges of

SSR in Moldova. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the differences between policy and practice concerning the local ownership, coordination of assistance in SSR, convergences and divergences of main actors: donors and beneficiaries (state institutions).

Figure 1: Field work interviews



Setting the parameters for case selection

For the purpose of this research fragile states were chosen that are challenged to ensure good governance and are undergoing security sector reform. The population of countries used for the research represent post-soviet space, ex-communist countries which gained their independence in the beginning of '90. The number of cases is limited to the countries that are facing a frozen conflict (Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and are at the crossroad between East and West, at the confluence of geopolitical interests. The next criterion represents countries that are not part of the European Union and NATO, thus it can be analysed the

international assistance of those organizations without having a profound influence on domestic affairs.

An important criterion consists the experience of conflict that would have an impact on security policies of the state, moreover, the state should be fragile with systemic corruption and political instability. In this sense, Republic of Moldova represents a good case study to analyse the international assistance and security sector reform.

The Republic of Moldova was in the componence of the Soviet Union, currently being an independent state at the border with Romania and Ukraine with a frozen conflict (Transnistria). Moldova being at the border with NATO and EU can be observed how organizations are shaping the regional and national security policies. The international and bilateral cooperation are highlighted by the geopolitical tensions, which are projected at the internal level of affairs. The research will take into consideration the aspect of the state capacities to coordinate assistance among international actors and to assess the level of local ownership of the security sector reform.

Chapter 1. Literature review

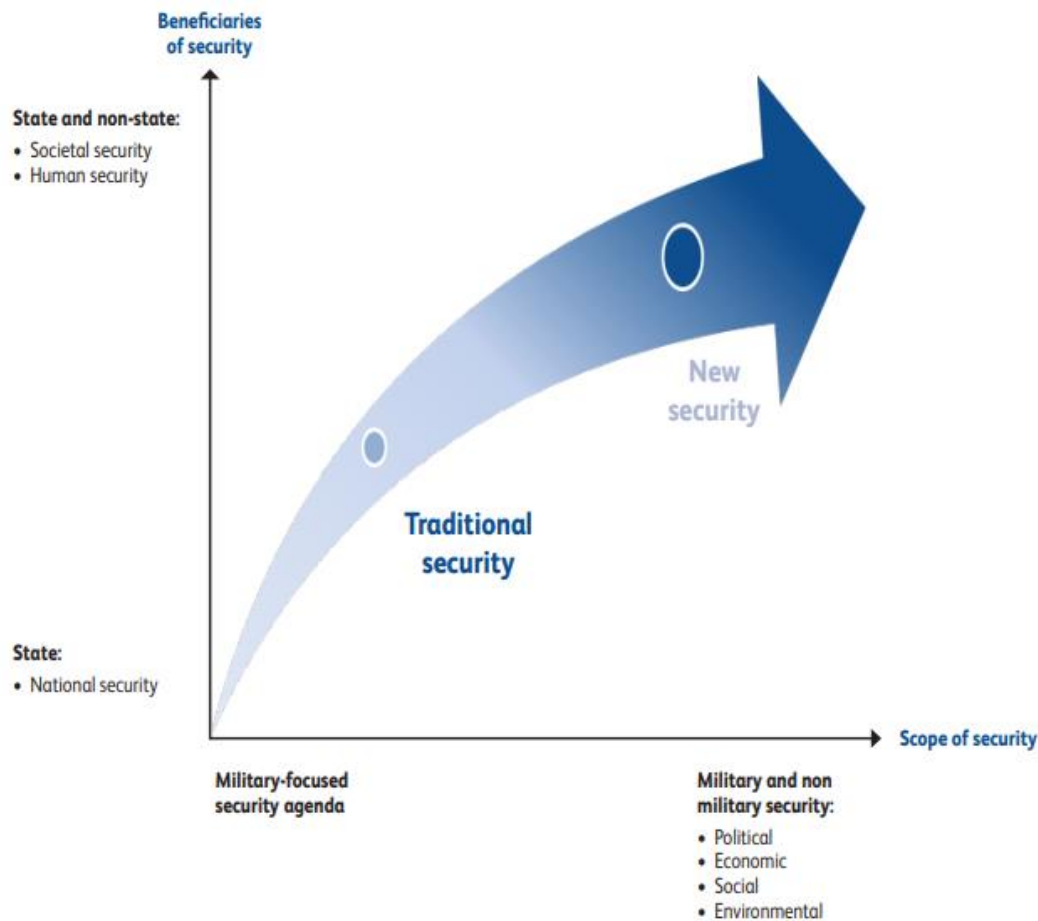
1.1 Definitions of Security Sector Reform

The concept of security has traditionally been viewed from a state-centric perspective. In the aftermath of the Cold War a new approach towards security emerged, one that was centred on people and their rights (Ball 2010; OECD 2007 and 2009). New concepts as human security, good governance and security sector reform were developed and gained more traction. Due to a more comprehensive approach of the functioning of security sector and actors involved, was possible to focus on social and human rights perspective in conflict mitigation and peace building. As a result, the concept encompasses the well-being of the people and state. The international community started to champion the SSR and offered assistance to states. SSR it was understood as part of conflict prevention, management and reduction taking into consideration that more civil wars emerged and changed the nature of warfare and conflict. By the end of Cold War and with the break-up of the Soviet Union took place a shift of the geopolitical priorities of Western powers towards the liberalization of countries in the Eastern Europe. Thus, the break of the bipolar worlds led to a dialogue between the security and developments actors in order to strengthen the assistance policies. (Ball 2010)

Security Sector Reform is a key element of the conflict prevention, management and reduction peace building processes and usually is undertaken by state institution in cooperation with bilateral or multilateral actors. Even though there is no agreed definition of SSR, commonly it refers to reform and strengthening the security and justice institutions in a state (DCAF 2015, Wulf 2011, Ansorg and Gordon 2019). Some of the challenges encountered by policy makers include the practical incorporation of SSR principles as local ownership, accountability and

transparency and a very important dilemma represents the actors and institutions who are integrated in the reform.

Figure 2. Evolution of the security concept



Source: ISSAT DCAF

SSR is a comprehensive process that aims to strengthen institutions that provide security and justice, by making them effective, accountable, transparent and responsible for ensuring people's needs and respecting their rights (Carparini 2004; ISSAT and DCAF 2012).

SSR is not aiming just at armed forces and their efficacy, its purpose is to ensure the compliance with the principles of transparency, accountability, civilian oversight and ensuring good governance of the security institutions (Bendix and Stanley 2008). SSR should be implemented in a holistic approach by including a diverse pool of stakeholders and having a multi-sectoral

framework by including armed forces, intelligence, police, justice, border management and oversight institutions. For an effective holistic approach, SSR implementers should have a very good understanding of the institutions involved, their functions, policies, specific of the sector, local and political context. Some of the limitations consist in resources and expertise of the donors, competing interests and politization of the reform. SSR is valuable due to its applicability in developed and developing countries, it is a reminder of obligation of the state to provide public goods on terms of security and ensure the democratic oversight. (Caparini 2004)

SSR programs that are coordinated by international actors are often guided by the Weberian model of statehood, which aims to strengthen the capacities of the state, being the legitimate monopoly of power. According to Jackson (2011), the “liberal peace-building” used security sector reform for state building. But the transfer of the liberal political architecture to non-liberal states led to failure and “ahistorical institutions alien to the local population”.

There is more than one framework/pattern to implement security sector reform. Instead of having a model that can be replicated in different cases, policy makers should develop local expertise and contextualize the reform. The integration of non-state actors in the reform process was acknowledged by policymakers and academia (Caparini 2004; Gordon 2014; Derks 2012, Schroeder et al 2014). Moreover, it was studied the necessity to include supra-state actors as multilateral organizations (UN 2014, Huber and Karim 2018). Thus, some SSR programs include civil society and local actors in their activities, therefore, ensuring a hybrid approach to Security Sector Reform (Schroeder et al, 2014), regardless, there is still little development in looking beyond the state actors and other stakeholders in the reform process. It can be noticed that literature tends to underscore the importance of non-state actors, public support of the people and trust in state, which is paramount for state legitimacy and effectiveness of the

policies implemented (Jackson 2010). By having a combined framework of top-down and bottom-up approach to the reform, policy interventions can “achieve the normative goals of protecting people from the coercive power of the state” (Schroeder and Chappuis, 2014).

Security Sector Reform aims to create a secure environment by strengthening state institutions and ensure development, rule of law and good governance but it depends mainly on the political environment, coherence and coordination of the reform (UN 2013). Currently, there are different approaches to define the security sector reform. The thesis will use the definition of security sector that include all actors and institutions that have legitimate responsibility to oversight and ensure security of the state and its people. Legitimacy can be enshrined in the Constitution or in the legal framework of the state (Fluri and Cibotaru, 2015).

SSR concept suffered changes from the classical and narrow approach to a holistic one. Initially, the security sector mostly focused armed forces, including institutions which had the legitimate authority to use force (IPU-DCAF 2003). But gradually, the security sector has switched to a broader concept, which includes security control and management bodies, judicial institutions, non-state security forces, to an extent which includes civil society organizations, local authorities and other non-state actors (Jackson 2018).

Bakes and Scheye (2007) delves into the fallacies of SSR approaches, focusing on the fragile states and the lacunae of the state-centric approach. Thus, fragile states usually lack the capacities and resources to implement the SSR programmes and the state is not the solely security and justice provider. Some of the assumptions about SSR lead to lack of effectiveness of programmes implemented. Failures of the SSR programmes might derive one the one side from the lack of political commitment and on the other hand from “state-centric bias that overlooks the needs of the end user”.

The main actors that shaped the normative debate regarding SSR in Eastern European countries were NATO, EU, UN and bilateral actors as US, Canada, Germany and UK. The agendas and priorities on SSR differed among actors.

1.2 Whose Security?

Notwithstanding that SSR programming, in general, tends to be centred on human rights and their needs, in practice the reform fails to answer the needs of the society (Baker and Scheye 2007). According to Hebert Wulf, SSR should address “the security of every single being within society”. The process should also include voices that are at the margins or that were not taken in consideration by the political elite (Farr 2004). SSR can ensure the needs of the society in different way. First is by ensuring the respect of human rights, dignity and equality and respond to the needs of the vulnerable groups. The state institutions should implement fair policy, laws and regulations that protect the rights and ensure rule of law. SSR “should lead to the government and the security services becoming more responsive to the security concerns of citizens”. Are also important the efforts made by the international community to promote the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security that calls the states to integrate the gender perspective and acknowledges the impact of violence and conflict on girls, boys, women and men. SSR should ensure the good governance of the security institutions which have the purpose to ensure the security and respect of human rights of all members of society.

1.3 Local ownership

Who owns the SSR programmes and what does local entail? Local ownership means that reform is being designed, carried out by local actors rather than external. The local ownership

of reform is connected to the people-centred approach, it implies that different stakeholders participate in the process of policy cycle (DCAF 2012). The practice of SSR programming shows that external actors are driving the reform process, having an assertion that their experiences are universally applicable and replicable, without taking into account the context, traditions and specific of the region. Each activity and programme under auspices of SSR should be tailored to the local context and need of the people. But local ownership does not necessary mean that it should be develop only state institutions or government, it rather means that a diverse pool of local non-state actors should be involved in the process. According to Laurie Nathan (2007), local ownership controls all the steps in SSR intervention and is based on human rights, democratic oversight and accountability principles.

Local ownership is recognized as one of the fundamental principles of SSR (Gordon 2014; IECD 2007). An inclusive and community engaged SSR could ensure that the public trust in state institutions will increase and thus, will bring legitimacy to the reform and will not leave the state vulnerable. In case if the SSR is not implemented by taking into consideration the local context, traditions and customs, it can result in neglected institutions that are not serving its purpose. In this sense, a good example is the failed justice reform in East Timor (Armstrong et al 2012) and the dropped security strategy in Kosovo (Blease and Qehaja 2013).

An inclusive SSR should include the following actors (Nathan 2007):

- the decision-makers;
- the implementing agencies;
- the designers of the reforms;
- the advisers; and
- the interested parties, which include official bodies as well as non-governmental bodies and beneficiaries.

Researchers state that in some cases the SSR programmes failed due to the inability and lack of flexibility of donors to adapt their programmes to the needs of the beneficiary state, especially in the developing states that don't have the administrative and financial capacities to lead the institutional reform (Easterly 2002).

But there are limitations in implementing the local ownership of SSR, as local actors can tergiversate the reform process or they can use it in their own interests to achieve their own political agenda. Or in some countries can be the case that local actors are asking for more external involvement and lead in the SSR processes, due to various reasons including the lack of responsibility for certain reforms or desire to receive more financial assistance (Gordon 2014).

The examples of limitations of local ownership can be seen on all continents, in Sierra Leone and Moldova, where certain political parties are using SSR and international assistance as a mean to keep their political dominance and prolong the duration of being in power.

Timothy Donais states that because SSR was developed in a Western framework, the donor perspective is about "making their security institutions look more like our security institutions" (2008). Thus, could be observed a tension between 2 groups of interests, on the one hand driven by external actors and on the other hand the local actors.

1.4 State capture and SSR

The fragile states are vulnerable to become captured by interest groups and influential oligarchs. In this sense, the thesis will make an overview of the state capture phenomenon, that has traditionally referred to the process in which certain actors coop the state to achieve narrowly distributed outcomes (Hellman, 1998; Hellman et al, 2003). Academia has focused on a unidirectional understanding of this process which does not adequately describe the

reality. First, the state is not a black box (Guthrie, Okhmatovskiy, Schoenman, and Xiao, 2012). Rather, it is necessary to unpack the relevant actors within the state to understand the process better. Second, actors are not uniform. State capture and its effects on security sector reform is better understood as a multi-relational phenomenon that suggests that both the state actors and the politics influence different outcomes. In the Republic of Moldova the phenomenon of state capture or elite capture describes how ties are established between government and other political actors and the process of politization of security state institutions in order to favour certain outcomes.

The risks of state capture are especially present in security sector, because of some important specificities of the sector. The literature on security and state capture is scarce, and mostly consists of policy-oriented studies. The literature in general outlines several reasons that make defence and security sector susceptible to corruption and other illegal activities, and these include the enforcement of secrecy by the government as well as the large value programmes involved, as well as the strategic importance of the sector (Pyman et al, 2009; Courtney et al, 2002; Roberts, 2004).

Operationalizing SSR in fragile states is challenging, but the key to success for international actors is to follow the normative agenda while dealing with security sector reform and pay special attention to the country context, respect the principle of local ownership and include alternative security actors.

A relevant case study on challenging SSR environment is the Republic of Moldova, the following two chapter will delve in the implementation of the reform, exploring the position of international actors who had to shift their perspective and bridge the gap between normative and ideal SSR to the real context of the fragile country.

Chapter 2. Security Sector Reform in the Republic of Moldova

The implementation of security sector reform can be affected by political culture, geopolitical interests, security environment and institutional framework. Embracing the policy imperative to support security system governance within SSR programming means that security provision is properly linked to civil oversight, ownership and accountability. This Chapter presents the case study of the Republic of Moldova, delving into the complex and challenging environment to operate SSR programmes. The main elements of reform analysed are the military and defence reform, internal affairs and justice reform which are supported by the international community through a comprehensive and multi-dimensional assistance. In this sense, SSR is being viewed as an element of donor programming, but also as foreign affairs policy of donors.

This chapter is organized as follows. Firstly, the security environment of the Republic of Moldova is explored and analysed, including the fragile domestic context and different perspectives that might affect the sustainability of the SSR. Secondly, a brief overview of the history of SSR in Moldova is examined, including the national policy documents and legal framework that are shaping the reform. Thirdly, the institutional framework and main stakeholders are analysed, the main objectives and responsibilities of the actors and the holistic approach that should be considered in Moldova to ensure a sustainable and efficient SSR. Finally, the principle of local ownership of the reform is being examined, reviewing the actors that drive the reform processes.

2.1 Security environment in the Republic of Moldova

The security of the Republic of Moldova is deeply affected by the geopolitical considerations, economic and natural resources dependency, social and political underdevelopment, as well as,

systemic corruption. The geopolitical context is manifested from the exterior and interior. As, mentioned by official from the Minister of Interior during the interview *“the internal politics of the country are divided into 2 blocks: one that supports a deeper cooperation with the East (Russian Federation and the security system) and West (becoming an EU and NATO member). In this sense, the security options and policies developed by the Government, Parliament are not coordinated and follow the path of the political decision-makers.”* The specific context of the Republic of Moldova is affected by a “public policy dichotomy” (Ratchev 2015) which influences in a negative way the implementation of SSR.

Moldova’s international security context emerged in 1991 with the independence of the state and was deeply affected by the international armed conflict in Transnistria, between armed forces of Moldova and Transnistria which was supported indirectly by the Russian Federation. Currently, the negotiations and peace building process are being coordinated by the international actors as OSCE. Transnistria is being seen as one of the “pivotal Kremlin-backed frozen conflicts in which proxy forces and direct military engagement are used to promote Russian interests in an effort to stop further expansion of the non-Russia-controlled area of Europe.” This is an important factor in understanding Moldova’s security policies and clash between two visions and options for Moldova’s security. According to the interviewee, Rosian Vasilo, independent security expert, in the last years, *“the Transnistria’s military drills, build-up and exercises increased considerable. As, the reaction from EU and NATO is of a low-intensity, it seems that the currently debate of decision makers is between strengthening the security and defence capabilities of the country or maintain a low-profile to prevent a potential escalation of the conflict.”*²

² In Transnistria currently are 3 different armed forces including the Transnistria army, Operational Group of Russian forces (14th Army) and the Russian peace-keeping forces.

Moldova is a distinct case in the post-soviet space because of incorporated status of permanent neutrality, according to Art. 11 of the Constitution, and the country “will not admit the stationing of any foreign military troops on its territory”, which is in contradiction with the ground reality.

Since the independence, Moldova’s strategic environment always has been more or less complicated. The country’s foreign and security policy, being based on the neutral status, has actually been carried along multiple vectors in the direction of the EU and Western partners. According to Leonid Litra, “regional context does not allow Moldova to deal alone with the challenges ahead and therefore Chisinau will have to adjust its foreign and security policy in the direction of balancing between the East and the West”. The effect of “geopoliticising” policies must be understood and assessed in order to understand the sustainability of SSR in Moldova.

The domestic context is fragile as police, justice sector is curbed by corruption and is not serving the community. The trust in state institutions is low (24% trust according to Barometer of Public Opinion), thus each action and reform undertook by the Government or other authorities is lacking legitimacy. Moreover, the human rights paradigm is not enforced at each step of policy making.

As SSR is complex and multi-dimensional, in the following paragraph will make a brief overview of the main reform with took place in Moldova the internal affairs, justice and army reforms.

The internal affairs reform took place in 2013 and aimed to restructure the system which was too bureaucratic. It is necessary to note that police views themselves mainly as a law enforcement agency and not as being engaged in community. Thus, positioning themselves as

such leads to a certain set of actions which increases the capacities of the institution as a law enforcement agency that it still guided by political and private interests. The internal affairs reform comprised following institutions police, border police and exceptional situations department. The reform had to develop a transparent and more efficient system of internal affairs, with clear delimitation between policy making and policy implementation functions, as well as elimination of functional disparities and overlap. Even though the reaction to incidents decreased, the internal affairs could not be fully depoliticized, independent and well-functioning. According to the official from the Minister of Interior Affairs *“Police has an enhanced presence in major cities but in villages and small town there is a lack of police, therefore, in the rural areas the reaction time is much longer than the standards.”*

In 2017 was undertook the justice reform which was supported mainly by the European Union. Although, the reform was supported by the European Union with 700 million EUR, the responsible authorities did not implement all actions as stipulated in the reform agenda and did not manifest commitment. Thus, in the aftermath of the reform the EU suspended the assistance for the reform due to lack of political commitment of the state institutions.

As stated by Nathan Laurie, the main elements for a sustainable reform are legitimacy, capacity building, political, financial commitment and human resources. In this sense, the justice reform took place without taking into consideration the financial aspects and commitment. A sustainable reform can't take place based solely on donors' financial resources. In the aftermath of Moldova's failure to implement the Association Agreement and public officials being involved in money laundering schemes, the European Union started to impose conditionality in assisting certain projects and programmes. One of the paramount reasons of the justice and internal affairs reform was the high level of corruption, bureaucracy and lack of trust from citizens.

2.2 Security Sector Reform Processes in the Republic of Moldova

Starting with the independence, the Republic of Moldova signed and ratified International legal Conventions and became a member of the United Nations. Therefore, the country started to become connected to the international security system.

The defence reform which took place in the wake of the armed conflict (1992) steered the discussions about the necessity to undertake SSR. The first attempts to implement SSR took place in 2005-2008, with the Individual Partnership Action Plan between Moldova and NATO, which lead to military reform and formation of a command structure on civil-military relations (Parliament Decision No 1315). SSR was discussed at the level of civil society and academia and it was considered by state institutions in the process of NATO Partnership and Review Process under the aegis of Partnership for Peace Programme. While NATO had a strong perspective on SSR in the Republic of Moldova, the European Union did not have a defined Eastern European security strategy in the early 2000. In 2006, the EU published the General report on its activities which stated the importance of SSR, including the development national and regional policies aiming to strengthen state institutions and respond to security threats. By prioritizing and institutionalizing SSR with partner states, the European Unions and NATO prepared the ground for future programmes which were supported by themselves.

The NATO-Moldova dialogue evolved in the direction of European Union Integration and the IPAP provisions stated the necessity to align the state with the EU values and standards which lead to the EU Moldova Action Plan (2005) and Association Agreement which was signed in 2014.

Policy documents and legal framework

The definition of the security sector is provided by the National Security Strategy adopted in July 2011 by the Parliament, which is considered the most important document that reflect the future policies regarding national security. According to the Strategy, security sector reform aims to identify, prevent and counteract threats and risks with an impact on state security and includes state institutions with a mandate of force intended to ensure citizens and state protection (operational level) and civilian state institutions that exercise functions of governance, planning, control and surveillance in the security system (administrative level).

It is worth mentioning that this definition represents a classical and narrow approach to SSR, having an emphasis on state institutions and ignoring paramilitary forces, non-state actors, and civil society actors. The classical understanding of SSR should be considered because this is an important element that answers how the main security actors perceive themselves in the framework of sharing responsibilities.

Figure 3. The objectives of Security Sector Reform

OBJECTIVES OF SSR	
Effectiveness:	The security sector needs access to qualified professionals, clear mandates and legal frameworks, and sound decision-making.
Affordability:	The security sector needs to be affordable and adapted according to the security needs of men, women, girls and boys.
Accountability:	The security sector needs to be under democratic civilian control, representative of the whole population, and subjected to proactive and reactive accountability.
Transparency:	The security sector has to be transparent in order to combat corruption and nepotism. Information should always be made available to the greatest extent possible.

The structure and content of the National Security Strategy denotes the characteristics of a "transition" document (Fluri and Cibotaru, 2015), the provisions of which have limited practical application and don't serve as the backbone for the further development of policies concerning security sector reform.

The SSR in the Republic of Moldova is taking place due to international support that was offered by multinational organizations and through bilateral cooperation. But the foreign aid projected the gap between theory and practice, as Moldova is lacking the institutional and administrative structures that creates difficulties in the process of implementation of the reform (Easterly 2002).

2.3 Actors – Relevant Stakeholders

According to literature and policy makers SSR should be implemented in a holistic approach by including a diverse pool of stakeholders and having a multi-sectoral framework. For an effective holistic approach, SSR implementers should have a very good understanding of the institutions involved, their functions, policies, specific of the sector, local and political context. Notwithstanding, the ground reality in the Republic of Moldova depicts the classical and narrow approach to SSR, having an emphasis on state institutions and ignoring paramilitary forces, non-state actors, and civil society actors.

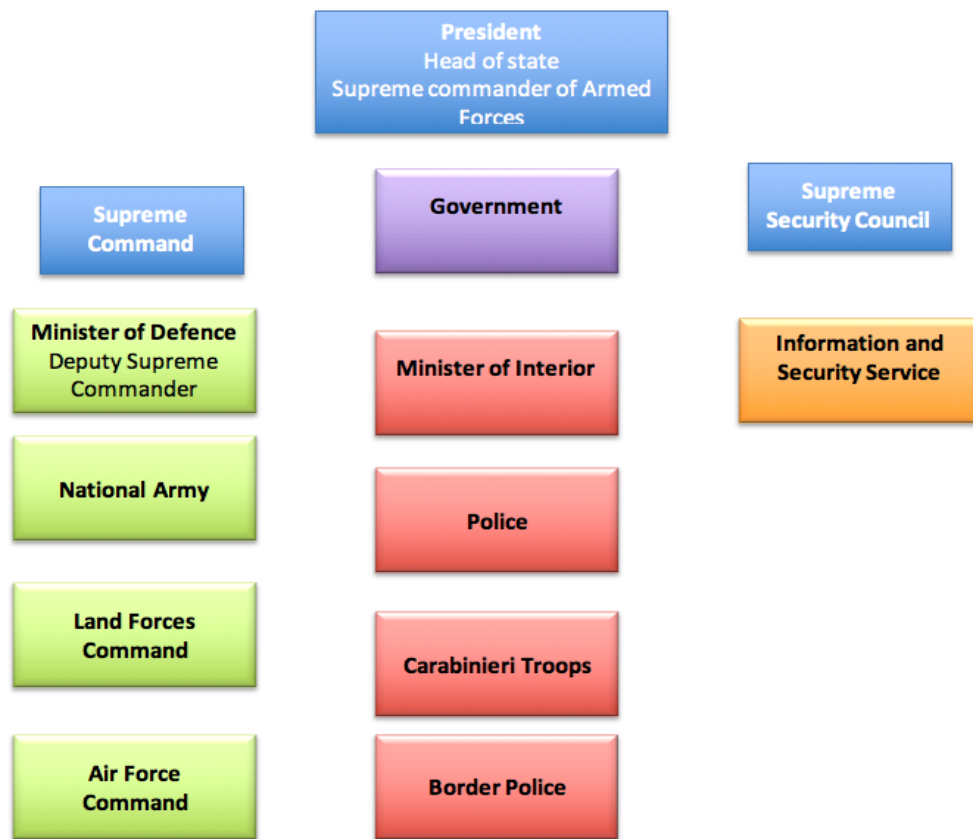
According to the national legal framework the main institutions responsible for SSR in Moldova are the Parliament, Government and President. The principle of separation of powers should ensure a good division and share of responsibilities in the security sector. Although, all parties and actors should not behave as adversaries, the ground reality shows a conflict between the state institutions especially between Parliament, Government and President. The multi-party system has led to different perspectives and approaches towards security, thus, currently the President has a pro-Russian agenda, against EU and NATO cooperation and is promoting the idea of federalization of Moldova. On the other side, the Parliamentarian opposition is a strong supporter of an enhanced cooperation with the Western partners and have a vision of a unitary state. Moreover, the state capture phenomenon is present in dictating the security

policies and interests, which are government by the interests of small group of people. In the following paragraphs I will provide a brief overview of the main state institutions that are having attributions in security sector.

Parliament

The main objective of the Parliament is to draft and adopt legislation which define, regulate and establish the budget of the activity of all institutions that are under the auspices of SSR (Vanhoutte 2006). The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova invested the Parliament with traditional powers including adopting laws, decisions and motions. Moreover, the Parliament has specific prerogatives that refers exclusively to national security policy. Thus, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova approves the main directions of the domestic and foreign policy of the state, approves the military doctrine, and exercises parliamentary control over the executive power. The Parliament has a high ranking in the hierarchy of the state institutions and a key role in the oversight of the security sector. One of the main challenges of the Parliament is weakened capacity of MPs to treat efficiently and correctly security related issues as risks assessment, arms control, border security and thus ensuring the sustainability of SSR. Moreover, the international assistance is usually too focused on Government programmes and the Parliament is left in the shadow. Thus, international cooperation might affect the transparency and democratic legitimacy (DCAF 2003). The support should be ensured to the parliamentarians in order to build their capacities to oversight the security sector and contribute with better laws that will ensure a sustainable reform.

Figure 4. State institution from the security sector



Another challenge represents the quality of the parliamentarians, as the institution of parliamentary immunity is attracting individuals with lack of integrity or those that were involved in criminal activities. “Immunity is widely exploited by corrupt politicians” (Hoppe 2011). According to a recent investigation, 52 MP’s from the current Parliament (Total number of MPs is 101) had “serious problems with integrity in the exercise of their public functions, thus, they distributed in an incorrect manner public funds, management poorly the public function allocating resources to their relatives, or individuals connected to their party” (Sandu 2019).

President

Pursuant to the Constitution, the President of the Republic of Moldova, in his capacity as the head of the State is "the guarantor of sovereignty, national independence, unity and territorial integrity of the country". At the same time, the President is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, the President may declare the partial or general mobilization of the armed forces; in case of armed aggression, can take measures against an aggression and declare a state of war. On the other hand, in comparison with the defence sector, the President's public order, police and internal security attributions are much more limited. Thus, the Government being the main institutions responsible for internal security of the state. The current President, Igor Dodon is a strong opponent of an enhanced cooperation with Western actors, moreover, he has forbidden the participation of Moldovan soldiers in a few military exercises with Western Allies as Romania and the US.

Government

The Government of the Republic of Moldova attributions in the field of security are not laid down in a single legislative act. These can be analysed only through the analysis of sectoral legislation in the field of security. At the same time, the Government has no important attributions concerning the activity of several institutions with security responsibilities as the Intelligence and Security Service, the Security Service State Protection, Border Police, as an institution subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Customs Service, as an institution subordinated to the Ministry of Finance. In this situation, the responsibilities of the Government appear to be fragmented, and its role in security sector is not comprehensive, focusing only on some aspects of it. The Minister of Internal Affairs is responsible for drafting

and implementing state programs in the area of responsibility of the MIA and, in this respect, is the main responsible internal security and public order in the Republic of Moldova. These attributions confer on the Government major responsibilities in internal security policy, border protection/control, and police activity.

Figure 5. Stakeholders of the Security Sector Reform Process



Source: DCAF ISSAF

The national understanding of the security sector is narrow focusing on state institutions responsible for the governance, thus, ignoring non-state actors, paramilitary forces, civil society, academia and it is not emphasized the importance of the local public administration have a better grasp on the local needs of the society. DCAF states the need to have a comprehensive list of stakeholders involved in SSR, focusing on human security not just on the military or defence aspect of it. According to Figure 5, the actors involved in SSR should include 4 dimensions security and justice providers; governance, oversight and management;

state and non-state. The SSR should be inclusive and not limit to core security actors, as OECD DAC, EU, Sweden and DCAF definition of SSR are comprehensive including also management and oversight bodies, justice actors, non-statutory security forces, as well as, individuals, media and civil society (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Understanding of SSR stakeholders (OECD DAC/EU/Sweden and DCAF definitions and reality in Moldova)

Actor	OECD DAC/EU/Sweden definition	DCAF definition	Republic of Moldova
1	Core security actors	State security providers	State security providers
2	Management and oversight bodies	The Executive; Government; Ministries; Parliament; Individuals, media and civil society; Special statutory institutions.	The Executive; Parliament; Ministries; Supreme Security Council.
3	Justice and rule of law	Justice Authorities	-
4	Non-statutory security forces	-	-

The necessity to develop a task force that would include different stakeholders aimed at having a coordinated approach towards Security Sector Reform, having an understanding about the objectives of the reform, the need to develop a democratic oversight and ensuring human rights. The lack of coordination leads to overlap of projects and the ownership of the reform is not taken into consideration.

The impact of international assistance is blocked by the politization of security institutions in favour of certain political parties, as stated by Vitalie Marinuta, ex-Minister of Defence of the Republic of Moldova. Moreover, the security sector institutions are militarized, and the reform did not ensure the real shift from the "supremacy of order or command" to the "rule of law", as well as culture is rooted in military ranks. The risk concerning the politization of security institutions fuel the uncertainties surrounding the qualitative achievement of SSR, as well as, raises questions about its sustainability. The political dependence of General Prosecutor's Office, Internal Protection Service, National Anti-Corruption Centre, Ministries lead to biased evaluation system of the reform and professional performance of officers.

2.4 Local Ownership of the Security Sector Reform in the Republic of Moldova

The principle of local ownership in SSR in Moldova has in some cases been understood in a different way that there must be a high level of domestic political support for donor activities. While in reality this logic should be reversed: instead, programs and projects should be initiated by Moldovan state or local community actors, that in aftermath would be supported by the international community. This means that donor governments should facilitate Moldova's capacity building and supporting the leadership in defining programs that will be developed, managed and implemented by domestic actors.

For a mature democracy that understand the importance of the local ownership of the reform, donors would adopt advisory or mentoring roles and drive our country efforts to address the organizational change and political challenges central to SSR. Embracing the policy imperative to support democratic security system governance within SSR programming can help to ensure that security provision is properly linked to civil oversight and accountability.

There are certain challenges in ensuring the principle of local ownership including the partial legitimacy of state institutions, the lack of capacities, resources, political and financial commitment of the elites and a vacuum of institutionalising local ownership in Moldova.

Local ownership means that reform is being designed, carried out by local actors rather than external. But the practice of SSR programming in Moldova shows that external actors are driving the reform process, having an assertion that their experiences are universally applicable and replicable, without taking into account the context, traditions and specific of the region, especially the context of the frozen conflict and elements of captured states. Each activity and programme under auspices of SSR should be tailored to the local context and need of the people, emphasising the role of the local communities.

An inclusive and community engaged SSR could ensure that the public trust in state institutions will increase and thus, will bring legitimacy to the reform and will not leave the state vulnerable. It can result in neglected institutions that are not serving its purpose. In this sense, a good example is the failed justice reform in Moldova that took place in 2017, by decreasing the number of law courts in the country it created an impediment for the people to have access to justice. While the abolition of the military court without building capacities of the judges to examine the military cases lead to low quality of justice. Another example is the police reform that did not achieve its objective to become closer to people as it is still governed by political interests.

The SSR programmes failed due to the inability and lack of flexibility of donors to adapt their programmes to the needs of the beneficiary state, as Moldova does not have the administrative and financial capacities to lead the institutional reform (Easterly 2002) in the aftermath of donor programmes. But there are limitations in implementing the local ownership of SSR from the perspective of local actors that use the reform for their own interests to achieve their

political agenda. As local actors are asking for more external involvement and lead in the SSR processes, due to various reasons including the lack of responsibility for certain reforms or desire to receive more financial assistance (Gordon 2014).

The lack of coordination and limit of translation of the principle of local ownership into practice should be carefully assessed to ensure the shift of paradigm in Moldova. The future processes of SSR in Moldova should gradually switch to a broader concept, which includes security control and management bodies, judicial institutions, non-state security forces, to an extent which includes civil society organizations, local authorities and other non-state actors (Jackson 2018).

But there are limitations in implementing the local ownership of SSR, as local actors can tergiversate the reform process or they can use it in their own interests to achieve their own political agenda. Or in some countries can be the case that local actors are asking for more external involvement and lead in the SSR processes, due to various reasons including the lack of responsibility for certain reforms or desire to receive more financial assistance (Gordon 2014).

Chapter 3. International assistance to the Security Sector Reform

The security sector reform in the Republic of Moldova was mainly driven by the international actors through their assistance. International community and policy-makers agree that a coordinated SSR that respects the local ownership and context of the country is paramount in ensuring the holistic approach of the reform. Notwithstanding, the ground reality depicts another picture in which the SSR efforts being led in isolation have resulted in coordination failures and lack of sustainability. The complex nature of SSR encourages a “whole of government approach” by dividing the responsibilities and priorities between donors and in the same time achieving a good coordination (Detzner 2017). Therefore, this chapter is organized as follows. Firstly, an overview of the main donors of SSR is being assessed. Secondly, this chapter delves in the coordination aspect of the international assistance, examining the main challenges between donors and beneficiaries, as well as, their convergence and divergence. Finally, this chapter assesses the impact of the international assistance on security sector reform from the perspective of society’s perception towards the reform.

3.1. Profile of Donors

In the Republic of Moldova, Security Sector Reform has gained international attention and it is being supported through the international security and development cooperation. In the following paragraphs I will make an overview of the main donors that are supporting projects and programmes in the security sector reform.

European Union

The European Union represents the leader of the assistance to the security sector reform in Moldova. The first projects and programmes supported by the EU started to be implemented

in 1994. The assistance offered is part of the Support framework which follows the implementation of the Association Agreement. The total assistance offered by the European union consists of 1.4 billion euro. The police, justice, anti-corruption and border reforms were implemented with the financial, technical assistance and expertise offered by the EU. The following state institutions received support Government, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Justice, National Anticorruption Centre and Customs Service. Despite, the fact that Moldova was seen as a “success story” during 2010-2014, the EU imposed a set of conditionalities due to the corruption schemes and the banking fraud that damages the relations with international actors and curbed the legitimacy of the reforms.

NATO

NATO represents a pioneer of the security sector reform in Moldova as the first discussions about SSR started in the aftermath Partnership and Review Process under the aegis of NATO’s Partnership for Peace Programme. Despite the permanent neutrality status, Moldova seemingly understands the value of having a good relationship with NATO and it received support in order to improve its security and defence institutions, using allied standards and programmes. NATO’s support for the country’s reform efforts and for capacity building in the defence and security sector has been intensified at the NATO Summit in Wales, where Moldova received the support package Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative (DCBI). The main beneficiaries of the support are Government, including the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, National Anticorruption Center, Military Academy and Customs Service.

Elena Marzac, Executive Director of the NATO Information and Documentation Centre stated the following: *“The partnership between Moldova and NATO and, therefore, the assistance, is based on the request that derives from Moldova. It is the responsibility of the Government of*

Moldova to ask for an advanced support on security sector reform. Other options besides a direct support from NATO, is the bilateral cooperation and assistance received from Alliance's Member States that are committed to support the reform in Moldova,"

United States of America

The cooperation framework is prescribed in the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the United States of America on Technical Cooperation signed on 21 March 1994. The assistance offered by the USA supports the acquisition of modern defense equipment by the Republic of Moldova. It is focused in the defence, besides defence acquisition it supports the participation in military trainings and exercises.

In addition, the assistance aims to consolidate capabilities in key areas and develop civil - military relations. The USA supports Republic of Moldova through programs in the field of international military education and training, international narcotics control and law enforcement, non-proliferation and anti-terrorism. It should be noted that the assistance decreased in the last years as a tendency to shift the support to countries from Central Asia.

UN Agencies

The United Nations in Moldova promotes a comprehensive and holistic approach towards SSR through the human rights, transparency and accountability perspective. The implementation of SSR is taking place through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDP) for the period 2018-2022 (UNDAF) that contains the following areas democratic governance, justice, equality, human rights, social inclusion and disaster risk management. The estimated value of the UN programs planned and implemented between 2013 and 2017 reached EUR 153 million, of which a good part was devoted to the defence and security sector.

UN Women is being actively involved in the implementation of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Figure 7. International assistance (SSR) in Moldova. Support type

Donors (bilateral and multilateral assistance)	Support	Areas
	Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict management; - Arms control; - Human rights and democratization; - Combating human being trafficking and violence; - Gender equality and non-discrimination.
	Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prison reform; - Judiciary reform; - Police reform;
	Institutional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anti-corruption; - Human rights and democratization; - Combating human being trafficking and violence;
	Legislative support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender equality and non-discrimination.

3.2. Coordination of assistance

The coordination of assistance refers to concrete mechanisms and arrangements, agreed within the donor community, to ensure the effectiveness of the development process at national or sectoral level. It can take place through a proactive involvement of different stakeholders and

setting up a platform of accounting forecast systems that would lead to sustainable management of the assistance.

National government should develop systems that would integrate the coordination of assistance. The efforts of donors will not achieve significant results unless they are effectively integrated into national development planning and governance structures. In other words, the aim of coordination is to ensure not only the "effectiveness of the assistance" but also the "effectiveness of development and security" (State Chancellery 2017). All these dimensions are very important to the Republic of Moldova, especially in the process of SSR coordination.

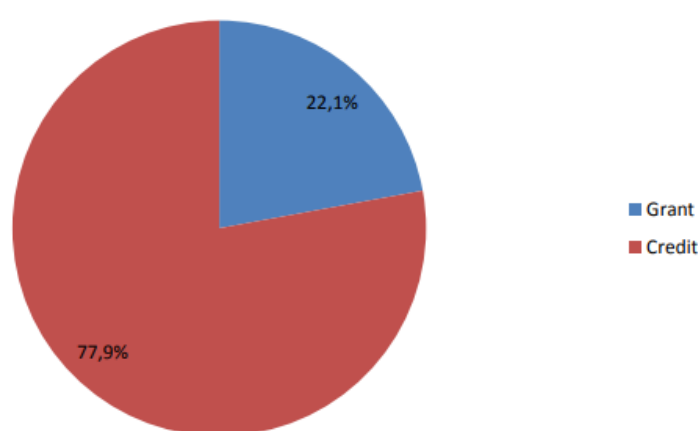
Although the national legal framework adopted a law on the coordination of the assistance, it remained inefficient as the platform between donors and beneficiaries was not developed and put into practice. The international practice, in particular the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries presents the establishment of an Agency for the Coordination of External Assistance, the same institution should be developed in Moldova, having an emphasis on SSR and including a wide range of stakeholders.

There are international obligations concerning an efficient coordination of external assistance that the Republic of Moldova ratified including the Paris Declaration (2005), the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), the Busan Commitments (2011) and the Communiqué from Mexico (2014). The international commitment stipulates the necessity empower the donors and beneficiaries and make external assistance more effective through the exchange of views on the implementation of national development priorities.

The beneficiary state should have consolidated capacities to absorb the assistance, according to the data from State Chancellery the 22.1% of support is in the form of grant (Figure 8). Moreover, the state, especially the Ministry of Finance should develop a Reserve Fund to co-

finance external assistance projects, in case of necessity and/or urgency. As the Security Sector Reform can be implemented if there is a long-term plan that consists of 2 major elements the budgeting and human resources. The commitment to undertake the SSR should be manifested through real actions as ensuring financial resources for the implementation of the reform and have the necessary quantity and quality of human resources.

Figure 8. Ratio of international assistance received by the Republic of Moldova



Source: State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova

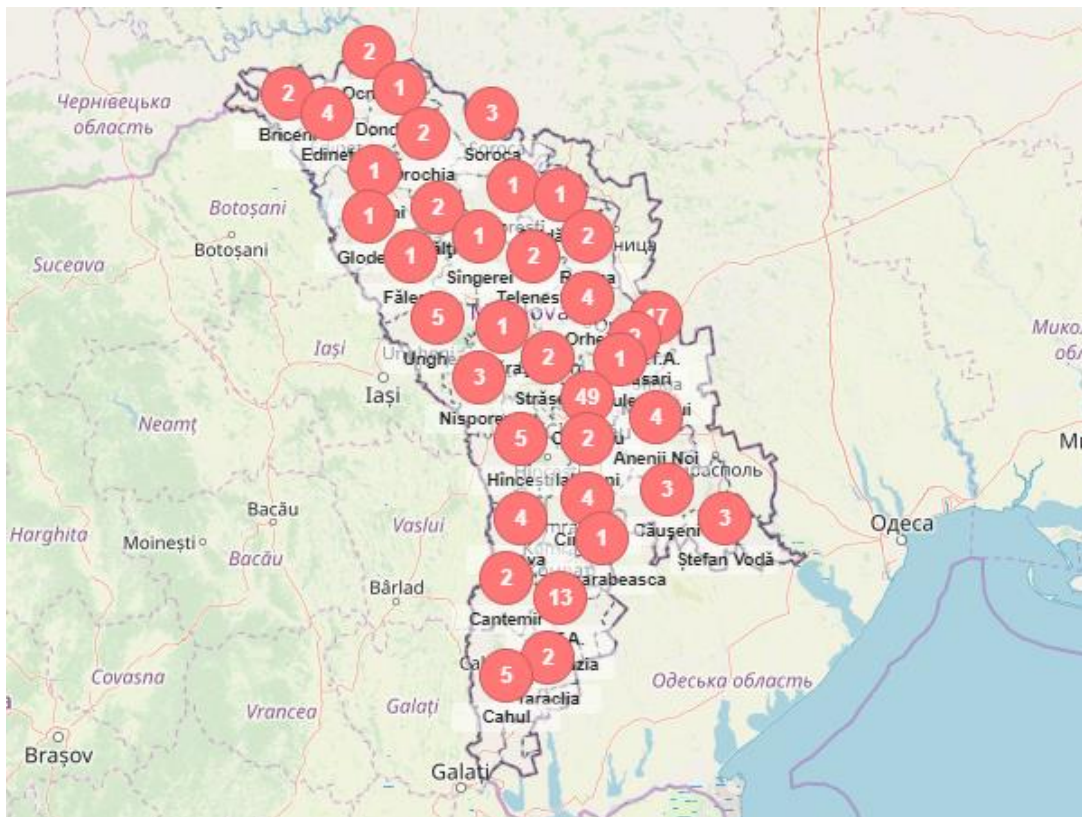
Currently, the assistance provided by development partners to the Republic of Moldova is a catalyst for security, justice and human rights, it also an important source for the implementation of priority infrastructure projects, policy support in all areas in the context of alignment with the EU acquis and not in last but not least, an opportunity to strengthen the institutional capacities of public authorities. However, there are a set of shortcomings in the process of coordination of external assistance which includes the limits in predictability of SSR external assistance, as well as complementarity to exclude donor duplication. Is very important for Moldova to develop an efficient mechanism for programming, implementing, monitoring and assimilating external assistance.

Moreover, the majority of reform programs are concentrated in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova (see Figure 9), but not on the regions or rural areas and the Transnistrian region is left aside, thus creating bigger gap between the 2 regions of Moldova, as stated by the representative of the Ministry of Interior.

According to the public data from the External Assistance Platform, 49 SSR programs were implemented in Chisinau, as the main state institutions are having their headquarters, while the local administration is becoming more independent on the central authorities and political parties that are ensuring the budget for the reform. Representatives of civil society, as well as, local public administration state that their position are not taken in consideration, moreover, despite the fact that the legal norms are able to ensure the transparency of the decision-making process and the involvement of the society in the decision-making process, it can be noticed a cooling of cooperative relations between society on one hand and the executive and legislative power, on the other.

According to Tatiana Seredenco, advisor in the local public administration of city Cahul and representative of a local NGO *“There are frequent situations in which activists waste their efforts, because ultimately their expertise is not taken into account. The recent and relevant example is how the justice system has been modified. These issues were debated in the absence of civil society. This is why the legitimate conclusion has emerged that civil participation in political decision-making is rather mimicked and not transparent.”*

Figure 9. Total projects on Security Sector Reform in Moldova, period 2000-2018



Source: State Chancellery, External Assistance Platform

The implementation of the security sector reform by the international community is taking place in field of justice, home affairs, police, army, etc., mainly working directly with officials from the Moldovan governmental structures. Although this has expanded the range of cooperation between development agencies and Moldova, it has not necessarily increased state's responsibility and local ownership for the security sector reform processes.

According to Viorel Cibotaru, security expert and ex-Minister of Defence, *“in order to mobilize a higher level of financial support and political commitment from partner countries and donors towards the security sector reform, Moldova needs to address more the challenges related to local ownership and coordination of the reform. This will require a paradigm shift.”*

Figure 10. Mapping the international assistance to SSR in Moldova

No	Organization/Country	Democracy and HR	Gender equality	Conflict Resolution	Border Security	Anti-corruption	Judicial Reform	Defence	Ecological Security	Cyber Security
1	European Union									
2	United Nations									
3	International Organization for Migration									
4	Council of Europe									
5	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe									
6	Amnesty International									
7	GUAM									
8	NATO									
9	United States of America									
10	Romania									

Source: Personal compilation based on public data and reports.

The paradigm shift means focus on the challenges specific to the local ownership and target local community security needs. Moreover, the principles of good governance, transparency, accountability should be included in a democratic framework. International assistance encompasses a set of challenges concerning the coordinating, harmonizing and aligning the support in the fragile context of Moldova, which is also affected by the frozen conflict (Transnistria). Local ownership should be institutionalized in donor and beneficiary governments, the same should be done with the coordination and alignment of assistance, thus, addressing the financial challenges associated with international support received.

Figure 10 maps the international assistance received by the Republic of Moldova, presenting the main areas of SSR. It can be noticed that the judicial reform receive support from various international actors including EU, UN, Council of Europe, Romania and USA. The public data

(Foreign Assistance Platform) concerning SSR programmes illustrate overlapping of certain areas of the judicial reform including capacity building initiative which are focused on the capital, technical assistance and the law courts reform.

It is noticed that international donors work closely with separate state institutions or agencies, thus, the assistance is not centralized and channelled according to priorities, it is rather an ad-hoc cooperation between the donor (international organization or a state) and a state institutions or department (as Ministry of Interior, Carabinieri Troops). There is paramount for a coordinated assistance that respects the local ownership to establish partnerships and mechanisms for efficient inter-institutional cooperation and communication to ensure a sustainable SSR.

Public data records highlight that the Ministry of Defence received support in form of capacity building and institutions such as the Ministry of Interior, the General Inspectorate of the Border Police and the Customs Service received technical assistance from international actors. As Moldova is a neutral state, the answer is that many states are afraid to ensure technical support for the defence, exception being the US as the main donor that supports the defence infrastructure and procurement.

Projects and programmes that concern the local administration, civil society and media is reduced, including the accountability and oversight of security sector, as there are few profile organizations that evaluate and monitor the reform.

Areas such as the Armed Forces, Security and Border Management, Justice and Police Reform have received increased attention and direct support, some programmes were overlapping and thus leading to a reduces coordination between donors. Moreover, the lack of capacities in

terms of the local ownership of the reform and ensuring coordination is leading to a failure of SSR in Moldova.

• Justice Reform	led by the European Union, UN;
• Security and Defence Reform	led by NATO, USA and Romania;
• Anticorruption Reform	led by UNDP and OECD;
• Law enforcement Reform	led by the European Union, USA, UN;
• Gender Reform	NATO and UN Women.

It could be noticed a decrease in the assistance in year 2016, from 13,405,068.59 USD to 6,445,899 USD (see Figure 11). It can be explained by a shift of foreign assistance to Ukraine, taking into consideration the ongoing conflict in Crimea, Donbass and Donetsk, the majority donors interested in Moldova changed their priorities to the SSR processes in Ukraine, as well as, the banking fraud that took place in Moldova in 2015 lead to suspension of a few major programmes from the EU, US, World Bank and IMF.

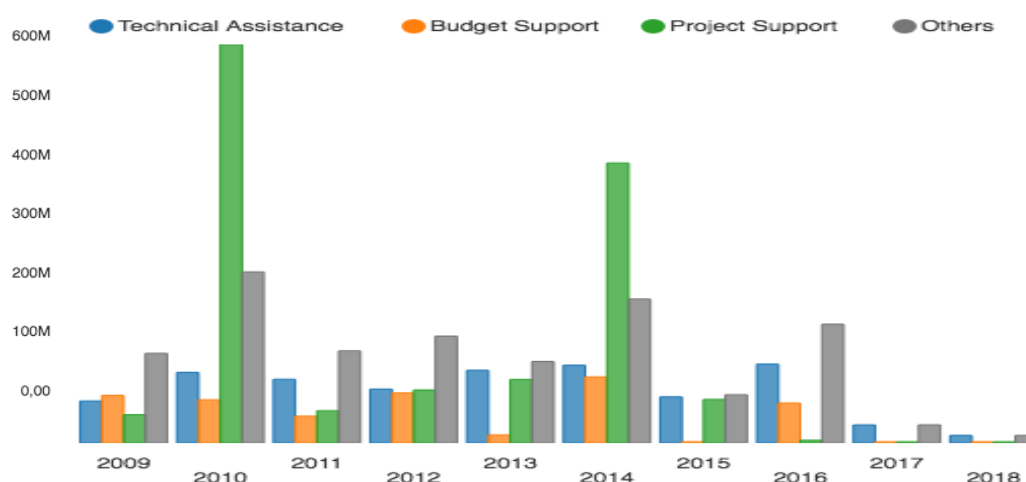
Figure 11. International Assistance for Security Sector Reform, period 2013-2017

Year	Foreign Aid (total amount USD)	Organization/Country
2013	73,140,824.56	NATO, European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Council of Europe and The Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO), Amnesty International, The GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, United Nations and it's agencies (UNDP, UN WOMEN, and UNHCR); Romania, USA, and UK.
2014	41,921,914	
2015	13,405,068.59	
2016	6,445,899	
2017	489,962	

Source: Data gathered from the Aid Management Platform of the Republic of Moldova

The lack of coordination or cooperation between different national stakeholders and bilateral and multilateral actors can be described due to different operating procedures, including timeline, application procedures, founding type, mandated in terms of SSR, as well, foreign policy or donor priorities, Analysing Figure 12 on Funding type can be observed the irregularities of donor flows, as the assistance is not predictable. The MoD official pointed out that *“exists a rivalry between different interests at the national, regional and international level. It can be noticed at the level of internal affairs and politics, as well, at the international level. The Ukrainian crisis was a lesson that donors will focus in SSR in Ukraine and will abandon some of the activities implemented in Moldova.”*

Figure 12. Funding type (total foreign aid) received by the Republic of Moldova



Source: Data gathered from the Aid Management Platform of the Republic of Moldova

International actors and elite capture

The state capture in the Republic of Moldova is systemic, thus, it is present in the security sector. The developments since 2009 lead to the situation that international actors are sustaining the phenomenon of elite capture. It can be noticed the tendency that international actors want

to have a dialogue only with high-ranking officials (Hansen 2008). Thus, the decisions made by the international actors regarding interaction with national or local actors are strategic but not inclusive.

Moreover, the geopolitical considerations fostered and consolidated the elite capture, as international actors including EU, NATO, US, UK were cooperating with high ranking government officials such as Prime-Minister, Vlad Filat, which declared himself as pro-Western or other recent prime-ministers as Chiril Gaburici, Iurie Leanca and Pavel Filip. International Western actors being fuelled by the fear that Moldova will become a Russian satellite supported corrupt political leaders or political parties that presenting themselves as the promoters of the European Vector, mimicking the implementation of the SSR in Moldova and other provisions of the Association Agreement between EU and Moldova. (Chifu 2019)

3.3. Quantitative assessment of the international assistance and Security Sector Reform in Moldova

As Hebert Wulf stated SSR represents “the security of every single being within society”. One of the main objectives of the security sector reform was to increase trust of population in state institutions, strengthen the capacities of the state in responding to society’s needs. Security sector reform is a complex and multidimensional process.

The main elements of SSR in Moldova represent the transformations that took place in justice, police, army and anti-corruption. From these considerations, the quantitative analysis of the international assistance to SSR will consist of correlating the support received by Moldova during the last 5 years and society’s perception towards the justice, police, army and anti-corruption area. These areas were considered because represent the main reforms implemented

in Moldova during the period 2013-2017. For the purpose of correlations was used democracy score developed by Freedom House (Nations in Transit Ratings and Averaged Scores).

The data on perception of society regarding justice, police, army and anti-corruption was took from the National Barometer of Public Opinion, developed by the Institute of Public Policy of the Republic of Moldova, for the period 2013-2017. Data regarding the amount of foreign aid received by the Republic of Moldova in the field of security sector reform was taken from the Aid Management Platform public portal of the Government of Moldova. Data regarding the Democracy Score was analysed from the Freedom House in their assessment on Nations in Transit Ratings and Averaged Scores.

Figure 13. Correlation between international assistance and perception of society

	ForeignAid~D	Trustin~y	Trustin~lice	Trustin~tice
ForeignAid~D	1.0000			
Trustinarmy	0.7019	1.0000		
Trustinpol~e	0.4944	0.5829	1.0000	
Trustinjus~e	0.5427	0.6160	0.9704	1.0000

Figure 13 elaborates on the correlation between variables of interest, it should be emphasized that the amount of international assistance decreased during the period 2013-2017, due to various reasons, including the lack of capacities of state institutions to effectively implement the reform, as well as, the Ukrainian conflict that shifted the priorities of the donors towards the neighbour state.

The correlation between the international assistance and the society's trust in police illustrates a moderate positive relationship (see Figure 13) of 0,4944. The same relationship can be

noticed in the correlation between the donor's assistance and the society's trust in the justice system. The justice and police reform in Moldova were mainly led by the EU, UN and the USA. The answer to the existing moderate positive relationship consists in various reasons that derive from both donors and beneficiaries. The lack of coordinated support towards the police and justice reform has led to an unsustainable process, moreover, the lack of political will to fully transform security institutions and ensure SSR in a democratic framework.

On the other side, the correlation between international assistance and citizens' trust in the army, portrays a strong positive relationship of 0,7019. The military and defence reform that took place in Moldova has led to an increased positive perception of society in the armed forces. Moreover, it should be noticed that army being considered non-political has always had high level of trust. In the last years, Moldova consolidated its participation in international peacekeeping missions which contributed to the narrative of being a regional or international security provider.

The challenges to implement SSR and answer society's needs in Moldova can be addressed by respecting the normative agenda of the reform and focusing on the local context. If all stakeholders involved, including on the one hand, donor states and organizations and on the other, local institutions and actors will ensure the coordination and local ownership of the reform, the results would be different. As donors offer generous amount of financial, expertise and technical assistance to implement SSR, but the effectiveness of all activities depends on the local capacities of the state and the level of inclusion, as well as on the political commitment to transform the security sector in an accountable and democratic framework.

Conclusion

Security sector reform in Moldova evolved as an effort by the international actors to strengthen state institutions and ensure security, development, rule of law and good governance. SSR represents a critical tool and a key element in setting the Republic of Moldova towards an accountable, transparent and inclusive security sector that is responsive to society's needs if implemented correctly taking into consideration the local context and ownership of the reform. In Moldova SSR is undertaken by state institution in cooperation with bilateral or multilateral actors that are trying to bridge the gap between normative theory and practice on the ground. The objective of the thesis was to examine challenges to implement SSR in Moldova looking at the coordination of the international assistance, local ownership of the reform, as well as, the fragile context of the country.

The research explored the theoretical background through the literature review, bridging the gap between theory and practice on SSR. Then, was provided an overview of the local ownership, models of hybrid security governance, coordination of assistance, challenges related to state capture in security sector, and finally, mapping the international assistance received by Moldova on SSR and assessing the impact of the reform.

This research has shown that the sustainability of the SSR depends on several elements including the political commitment that comprises institutional, leadership level, civil society, budgetary and human resources. The case study of Moldova emphasizes the importance of the local ownership and coordination of the reform in order to smooth the rivalry between different interests. A change of culture is necessary so that the catalyst of the reform to represent the final-end a better security and society, not the financial means.

The first hypothesis is that the international assistance in security sector reform is not coordinated effectively and it's leading to an overlap of programmes, thus, diminishing the effectiveness of reform. This hypothesis seems to hold, it was analysed that exists an overlap of activities and reform, thus, major donors as EU, NATO, UN and USA are supported justice and police reform in Moldova. Moreover, the reform did not achieve its main objective, as the level of trust in state institutions did not increase considerably. Principle of local ownership of the reform is not respected and fully understood by domestic and international stakeholders represents the second hypothesis. The findings suggest that the lack of holistic approach towards SSR, that would include a wide range of stakeholders in order to answer the needs of the society, represents an obstacle, being on the main narrative during interviews.

Moldova being at the geopolitical crossroad between West and East is felt at the level of domestic affairs and is affecting direction of SSR. Moreover, international assistance follows the donor priorities and political agenda, as it was stated by Marenin it “does not come for free, nor is it silent” (1999).

The research fits in the broader literature on the implementation of SSR programs and international assistance. The aim was to provide evidence on the case study of the Republic of Moldova that could contribute to more complex debates and discussions about the SSR implementation in post-Soviet countries and the agenda of international actors. Moreover, this is an invitation to discuss how SSR efforts are diminished by the lack of engagement and commitment of local actors. Taking into consideration the wide range of work on international assistance and SSR, the thesis is shaping the debates with the perspective of Moldova, a fragile state where the voice of local actors is merely unheard.

Appendix 1. SSR projects in Moldova financed by donors

ID	Title	Beneficiary	Donor	Sector	Year	Ongoing	budget
1	Equipment	Border Police	USA	peace	2013	NO	10,777 USD
2	Military program	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2013	NO	1,186,788 USD
3	Defence articles	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2013	NO	4,262 USD
4	Defence articles	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2013	NO	161,683 USD
5	Defence articles	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2013	NO	310,088 USD
6	Defence articles	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2013	NO	310,088
7	Defence articles	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2013	NO	725,500
8	TV cooperation	media in Moldova	USA	CSO	2013	NO	40,000
9	NED	CSO	USA	CSO	2013	NO	40,000
10	NED	CSO	USA	CSO	2013	NO	49,997
11	Qualitative initiative	Border Police	UN	ND	2013	NO	192,876.58
12	Disaster reduction	Civil protection	UNDP	ND	2013	NO	146,116
13	Justice Sector reform	Ministry of Justice	European Union	ND	2013	NO	2231800
14	Justice Sector reform in Moldova	Ministry of Justice	European Union	ND	2013	NO	2,231,800
15	Strategic Development Program	Ministry of Interior	European Union	ND	2013	NO	4424231.19
16	Supporting the Republic of Mold	Ministry of Interior	European Union	ND	2013	NO	1,200,000
17	Human Rights	Ministry of Justice	European Union	ND	2013	NO	138,076
18	Cross border infrastructure	Ministry of Interior	European Union	ND	2013	NO	1,410,340
19	Justice reform	Ministry of Justice	European Union	ND	2013	NO	60,000,000
20	Energy	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2014	NO	5,573,637
21	Energy	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2014	NO	8,187,680
22	NED	CSO	USA	peace	2014	NO	49,999
23	NED	CSO	USA	peace	2014	NO	47,772
24	Police reform	Police	UN	ND	2014	YES	3,058,360
25	Criminal Justice	Police	UN	ND	2014	NO	500,000
26	Enforcement	Ministry of Justice	European Union	ND	2014	NO	1,790,700
27	Spre-trial investigation, prosecution	Ministry of Interior	European Union	ND	2014	NO	1,606,000
28	Visa Liberalization	Ministry of Interior	European Union	ND	2014	NO	21,000,000
29	JUSTICE Sector reform	Ministry of Interior	European Union	ND		NO	107,766
30	Energy	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2015	NO	4,055,694
31	Energy	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2015	NO	8,187,680
32	NED	CSO	USA	peace	2015	NO	49,706
33	NED	CSO	USA	peace	2015	NO	40,103
34	Refugee	Migration Dep	UNHCR	ND	2015	NO	1,071,885.59
35	Energy	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2016	NO	2,827,000
36	Service academy	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2016	NO	157,000
37	Defence articles	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2016	NO	1,139,000
38	Service academy	Ministry of Defence	USA	peace	2016	NO	313,999
39	Civic engagement	CSO	USA	CSO	2016	NO	884,200
40	Civic engagement	CSO	USA	CSO	2016	NO	400,000
41	Media	CSO	USA	CSO	2016	NO	300,000
42	Media	CSO	USA	CSO	2016	NO	250,000
43	NED	CSO	USA	peace	2016	NO	38,050
44	NED	CSO	USA	peace	2016	NO	38,050
45	NED	CSO	USA	peace	2016	NO	49,800
46	NED	CSO	USA	peace	2016	NO	48,800
47	Border management	Ministry of Interior	European Union	ND	2017	NO	51,274
48	Border management	Border Police	IOM	ND	2017	NO	142,617
49	Justice reform	Anti-corruption centre	UNDP	ND	2017	YES	115,190
50	High level advisor	Government	UNDP	ND	2017	NO	180,881
51	Security reform	Ministry of Defence	UNDP	ND	2018	YES	770,000
52	Police reform	Ministry of Interior	UNDP	ND	2018	YES	342,000

Appendix 2. Interview Table

N	Interviewee	Status	Source	Format
1	Rosian Vasiloi, security expert, IDIS Viitorul Think Tank	Conducted	In person	Semi-structured
2	Official, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Defence	Conducted	In person	Semi-structured
3	Angela Buliga, Secretary General, Anti-Corruption Alliance	Conducted	In person	Semi-structured
4	Elena Marzac, Executive Director, NATO Centre in Moldova	Conducted	In person	Semi-structured
5	Viorel Cibotaru, ex-Minister of Defence	Conducted	In person	Semi-structured
6	Seredenco Tatiana, advisor in city Cahul, local public administration	Conducted	In person	Semi-structured
7	Head of International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Interior Affairs	Conducted	In person	Semi-structured
8	Main Consultant, Bureau of Reintegration Politics	Conducted	In person	Semi-structured

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