

The territorial-administrative division of the Republic of Moldova: between the Soviet past and European aspirations

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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Konferenzbeitrag / conference paper

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Cornea, S. (2010). The territorial-administrative division of the Republic of Moldova: between the Soviet past and European aspirations. In *International conference "Exploration, Education and Progress in the Third Millennium": Proceedings, Vol. II, No. 2* (pp. 87-99). Galați: Galați University Press. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-65332-8>

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**„DUNĂREA DE JOS” UNIVERSITY OF GALAȚI
FACULTY OF JURIDICAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES**

*Member of the Network of Institutes and Schools and Public
Administration in the Central and Eastern Europe*

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**„EXPLORATION, EDUCATION AND PROGRESS IN
THE THIRD MILLENNIUM”
Galați, 23rd-24th of April 2010**

- Proceedings -

Vol. II, No. 2



Galati University Press

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Galati University Press – Cod CNCIS 281

Editura Universității "Dunărea de Jos", Str. Domnească, nr. 47, 800008 – Galați, ROMANIA

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ISSN 2066 - 7019

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THE TERRITORIAL-ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: BETWEEN THE SOVIET PAST AND
EUROPEAN ASPIRATIONS

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Abstract

The judicial delimitation of the territory of the state is meant to increase the efficiency of the public authorities' activity, to enhance their initiative and promptness, to improve the links between the central and local authorities, to provide necessary conditions for people's participation in and access to local decision making and local public life.

In 1998, a territorial-administrative reform was carried out in Moldova. This reform reduced the number of territorial-administrative units of level II from 40 to 10.

When the Communist Party of Moldova gained power in 2001, a counter-territorial-administrative reform was prepared and implemented, and through this reform the country returned to the Soviet system of administrative-territorial organization.

Returning to territorial delimitation by territorial administrative units of small size by area, economic potential and population, one does not meet the criteria of efficiency and is contrary to European developments in the field. Moldova's European option requires moving the focus to developing local initiative and strengthening regional centers. The existing administrative-territorial structure should be changed. It is clear that the current territorial fragmentation does not contribute to local economic development and does not favor the development of collaborative relationships between central and local authorities.

General considerations. The administrative organization of a State's territory signifies its division in territorial-administrative units, and the aim of this division is to fairly carry out the power of the state, and to fully meet the needs of the population. For unitary states, their territorial administrative units are their organic cells, the binder which ensures indestructibility and individuality and which keeps their monolithic character.¹

The administrative organization of Moldova's territory, according to the Constitutional Court's interpretation, means its division in territorial-administrative units. The division is intended to place the local public administration authorities of the first and second level within a territorial, legal and administrative framework in order to perform an efficient

¹ Preda, Mircea Criteriile ce trebuiesc avute în vedere pentru îmbunătățirea organizării administrative a teritoriului României. În: Dreptul, 1995, nr. 8, p.46.

administration of the locality, and to achieve the principles of local autonomy and the decentralization of public services.¹

The division of the State's territory in territorial-administrative units has to ensure: an increase of the efficiency of the public authorities' activity, growth of its initiative and operability, and the improvement of the links between local and central authorities.

A logical division of the territory is of particular importance for the functional existence of the local community because the territorial dimension of the territorial collectivity determines directly:

- a) the development and functioning of the self-administration mechanisms,
- b) the amount of powers given to local public authorities,
- c) the size and structure of the local administrative apparatus and costs of its maintenance,
- d) local public authorities' opportunities to influence positively the local economic development,
- e) procedures and quality of public services,
- f) rhythms of implementing the reforms at the local level.²

An adequate territorial-administrative division provides the necessary conditions for people's access and participation in public authorities' activities. Public participation is an important tool in local development activities, thus influencing the quality of the decision making process and strengthening the authority of the decisions through the support provided by the public in their implementation.

It is necessary to mention that the phrase "territorial-administrative unit" has two distinct meanings: the territorial-administrative division and the local territorial community. In the first meaning, the territorial-administrative units signify administrative districts of the state's territory, i.e. the area of the territorial competence of the state's disconsentrated bodies. In the second meaning, the local territorial collectivities, i.e. the people who live on a certain portion of the state's territory, who possess administrative and legal organization, and have their own local public interests distinct from the national ones. The first meaning refers to the administrative disconcentration, and the second one refers to the administrative decentralization, which are entirely different judicial regimes applicable to the administrative relations between the center and the territory. The territorial-administrative unit is a matter of law only

¹ Hotărârea Curții Constituționale pentru controlul constituționalității Legii nr. 764-XV din 27 decembrie 2001 „Privind organizarea administrativ- teritoriala a Republicii Moldova” nr.12 din 05.03.2002. În: Monitorul Oficial al R.Moldova nr.40-42 din 21.03.2002.

² Cornea Sergiu, Regimul juridic al delimitării teritoriilor colectivităților locale. În: Administrarea publică, nr.4, 2006, p.23.

when it has the meaning of local territorial collectivity, but not when it represents a territorial-administrative division, a simple portion of a state's territory.¹ In this sense, the territory is one of the key elements of a local collectivity's identification. The local collectivities' territories together form the national territory.

The determination of the territorial limits of the local collectivities is a very complex opera depending on many factors. That is why in order to make judicious divisions of the territorial limits of the local community, it is important to take into account the following criteria:

1. Being by its nature a matter of national interest, changing the way one pictures the administrative organization of the State's territory should be the result of some public debates, decided by the broad participation of citizens and local authorities of both levels.

2. The territorial-administrative division must be made in light of the overall development of society as well as the tasks and functions that will be given to the administrative system in the future.

3. The option for a particular model of the territorial-administrative organization must be the result of deep scientific investigation. It is necessary to provide political, economic, social and financial standing of such actions. Insufficient preparation can lead to some unexpected consequences or even to compromising the territorial-administrative reform.

4. The territorial-administrative reform does not consist only in changing laws, but also in changing the mentality and methods of solving the local territorial collectivities' problems.

5. When the division of the territorial-administrative units (by number, structure, size, etc.) is made, the social, material and financial costs can't be neglected even for short, medium or long period. The activities that the society faces must not be mistreated.

6. The study of various models of the territorial organization of the local autonomy is of great importance. The analysis of the international practice in terms of territorial division, i.e. the consequences of implementing various versions of local structures as well as the study of the *for* and *against* arguments of these structures in different states, allows us to ascertain that the process of territorial division is determined not only by objective factors, but also by subjective ones.

The current state of the territorial-administrative division. Under administrative aspect, according to the Constitutional provisions stipulated in art.110, Moldova's territory is organized in villages, towns, districts and

¹ Popescu, Corneliu-Liviu. *Autonomia locală și integrarea europeană*. București, 1999, pp. 32-35.

the autonomous territorial unit of Găgăuzia. The localities on the left bank of the river Nistru, according to the constitutional text, have special forms and conditions of autonomy in accordance with the special status adopted by an organic law.

The territorial-administrative organization of the Republic of Moldova, according to the provisions of the *Law on the administrative-territorial organization of the Republic of Moldova* no.764-XV of 27.12.2001, in force, is carried out on two levels: villages (communities) and towns (municipalities) are the first level, and the districts are the second level. Under the provisions of the above mentioned Law, 32 districts were formed, and the autonomous territorial unit of Găgăuzia with 32 localities was maintained and 147 localities from the left bank of the river Nistru were assigned special forms and conditions of autonomy.

Under the law cited above, the village is an administrative-territorial unit comprising a rural population united by territory, geographic conditions, economic, social and cultural relations, customs and traditions.

The commune (community) is an administrative-territorial unit comprising rural population united by common interests and traditions. The commune can be formed by joining two or more villages, depending on the economic, social, cultural, geographic and demographic conditions.

The town is an administrative-territorial unit that is more developed than the village economically, socially and culturally. It includes the urban population, with proper commercial, industrial and urban-household structures. The population is largely framed in industry, in the sphere of public services and in different fields of intellectual activity, cultural and political life. The municipality is an urban-type locality with a particular role in the economic, social, cultural, scientific, political and administrative life of the country. It has important industrial and commercial structures and institutions for education, health and cultural domains. The status of municipality was awarded to such cities as Chisinau, Bălți, Bender, Comrat and Tiraspol.¹

The district is defined as an administrative-territorial unit made up of villages (communes) and towns, joined by territory, economic and socio-cultural relations. The administrative boundaries of the district represent the perimeter of the localities' area included in its structure, and which coincides with the boundaries between the localities of the given district and the localities of the neighboring district.

¹ The municipalities and the administrative-territorial units of their composition are included in Appendix 2 of Law no. 764-XV of 27.12.2001.

The review of the territorial-administrative structure for the purpose of replacing the 10 districts with 32 districts, and the creation of 252 new administrative-territorial units of the first level was, to a certain extent, a return to the old administrative organization of the Soviet period.

The administrative Soviet system was characterized by an excessive fragmentation of the territory. In the postwar period, the number of the districts ranged from 18 to 60 units. In May 1948, the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR liquidated the counties and formed 60 districts on the Republic's territory. In the '50s the number of districts was reduced, initially to 46 in 1950 and then to 35 in 1959. In the same period, the districts were grouped into four localities (Bălți, Chișinău, Tiraspol and Cahul), which existed for a very short period. In 1963, the 4 localities were liquidated and the districts were merged to 18 units. The following year, the reverse process of demerging began: the number of districts in 1964 was made up of 26 units, in 1969 - 31, in 1972 - 33, reaching 40 in the 80's of the last century. This division is maintained till the proclamation of the sovereignty of Moldova.¹

By the end of 1991, on the ruins of the MSSR, the Republic of Moldova was formed. This country on a 33.7 thousand km² territory and with a population of 4.3 million had 40 districts and 10 towns of republican subordination. Certain districts had, on average, 76,000 inhabitants, while other districts had much below the overall average: Căinari - 42.7 thousand, Taraclia - 44.3 thousand, Șoldănești - 45.8 thousand and Leova - 52.8 thousand. Each district had an average area of 800 km², and each of them was nowhere near ready to move to self-administration. The territorial-administrative reconstruction was at that time one of the new state's major emergencies.²

The system of the Soviet administrative-territorial organization did not meet the requirements of democratic society and market economic relations. This system was an administrative system based on the principles of excessive centralization, established under the conditions of a totalitarian society, and became a brake in the economic and social development of the Republic. This system, as mentioned, was characterized by an excessive fragmentation of the territory, and this fact did not allow to create certain efficient administrative structures and a more economically sustainable base. When the reform was adopted in 1999, there were numerous discrepancies between districts in different areas. The Hîncești district was 2.6 times bigger than the Ialoveni district. The Orhei district's population

¹ Gudîm, Anatol Raioanele și economia. În: Săptămîna, 20.06.2003.

² Osoianu, Ion Federalizare sau regionalizare? Experiența europeană, perspectivele Republicii Moldova.- Chișinău, IPP, 2003.

<http://www.ipp.md/lib.php?l=ro&idc=162&year=2003> (vizitat 14.03.10), p.8.

(136 thousand) was 4.3 times larger than Basarabeasca's population (32 thousand).¹

The anti-reform in 2003: "arguments" versus reality. The elaboration and adoption of an anti-reform law (Law no.764-XV of 27.12.2001 on the basis of which an anti-reform was made in 2003) would have to include very serious and substantiated reasons.

The anti-reform of 2003 is a concluding example that in many cases, the option for another way of administrative-territorial organization was not caused by the factors related to the science of administration, but by political considerations, traditions and mentalities. The anti-reform promoters operated with a set of pro and anti-reform arguments which can be summarized in the following:

- Electoral promises fixed in the electoral program of the Communist Party of RM;
- "Citizens Requests" (at the time of adoption of Law no.764-XV there would have achieved a fabulous figure of 650 thousand);²
- Administrative-territorial division would contravene the Constitution, which provides for the division of the Republic of Moldova in "districts, towns and villages";
- The counties, as territorial-administrative structures, did not justify the existence and the return to districts would facilitate the citizens' access to regional public authorities by reducing the distance between towns and district centers;
- The need to strengthen the vertical power;
- Ceasing the degradation of the former district centers;
- Reducing the number of officials in local public administration;

The presented unfounded arguments show the fact that the only reasoning that was taken into account was the political one.³ In drafting the

¹ Reforma administrației publice: controversele problemelor care bat la ușă. În: *Administrarea publică*, nr.3, 1998, p.17.

² Депутаты встали к конвейеру // *Экономическое обозрение*, 28.12.01.

³ Simboteanu, Aurel Probleme ale organizării teritoriului în procesul de instituționalizare și evoluție statală a Moldovei. În: *Moldoscopia (Probleme de analiză politică)*. Partea XLIII.- Chișinău, 2008, p.19.

new law, as T. Osoianu said, the legislator used a study on the dynamics of any kind of elections in the last 11 years for each locality.

According to the results of these studies, the localities were divided into "ours", i.e. in which the communists had real chances of success and the "others". In other words, the inclusion of a locality within a district was not based on economic criteria, but political ones.¹ The administrative organization of the territory was conducted in accordance with the territorial structures of the ruling party, which were created on the basis of the principle of the administrative organization of the territory up to the reform of 1999. It was a method to calm down those who worked for the Communists in the election campaign but ran out of posts. The Soviet idea and practices of establishing the local party secretaries at the forefront of the local administrative structures were reactivated. The ideological purpose of discrediting everything that was done before the arrival of the Communist Party power also was applied.

The situation created after the implementation of the anti-reform in 2003 showed the inconsistency of the cited arguments and confirmed the governors' intentions, "to strengthen the verticality of power", i.e. to suppress the local autonomy and to subordinate the local authorities to the central ones.

The governors' arguments that the review of the administrative-territorial organization existed to keep electoral promises did not fully justify its implementation, even if the campaign to collect citizens' signatures in support of this initiative was launched. A survey conducted in November 2001 by the Public Policy Institute shows that among the series of problems that people would like to see solved first, the problem of revising the system of local public administration was not included.²

It is necessary to mention that in October 1999, the Constitutional Court pronounced upon the anti-reform followers' claim that the administrative-territorial division in counties and communes would contradict the Constitution, which supports Moldova's division in "districts, towns and villages". A group of deputies of the Communist Party faction referred this matter to the Constitutional Court that found out that the Parliament adopted Law no.191-XIV of 12.11.1998, and used it in parallel to identify the notions of village, town, district, commune, city, municipality and county. The use of notions of commune, municipality and county did not interfere with the principles of the local autonomy,

¹ Osoianu, Tudor Reforma judiciară și de drept în Republica Moldova - condiție necesară în vederea integrării ei europene.

<http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=167&id=495>

² Boțan, Igor Revizuirea organizării administrative a teritoriului Republicii Moldova. <http://www.e-democracy.md/comments/political/200304081/> (vizitat: 14.05.03)

decentralization, the constitutional principles of territory planning, stipulated by Article 109 of the Constitution. For these reasons, the Court recognized as constitutional the notions of commune, city, and county that were written in the text of Law no.191-XIV of 12.11.1998.¹

The Anti-reform effects. Firstly, it is essential to note the fact that the anti-reform was a financial luxury for the poorest country in Europe. The official cited number was 54 mln. lei. Meanwhile, according to the Finance Ministry's calculations, only the restoration of the regional institutions' residents required 260 million lei.² A group of independent experts estimated that the costs of the anti-reform reached 740 million lei, and this fact constituted over 6% of revenues planned in the state budget for 2003.³

According to the provisions of Article 8 of Law no.764-XV of 27.12.2001, the number of municipalities was reduced three times (from 15 to 5). The cities of Cahul, Căușeni, Dubăsari, Edineț, Hîncești, Orhei, Rîbnita, Soroca, Taraclia and Ungheni lost their status as municipalities. The reduction of the number of municipalities resulted in the amplification of the deurbanization process of the Republic of Moldova which is on the last place in Europe on the level of urbanization and the urban population share is only 46.1%. In this context, it is indispensable to mention that for Ukraine that index is 68.0%, Romania - 56.2%, Belarus - 71.2%, Bulgaria - 69.6%, Russia - 77.7%, Poland - 65.6%, Slovakia - 57.4%, Hungary - 64.0%, and Czech Republic - 74.7%.⁴ The deurbanization in the Republic of Moldova is manifested by a "ruralization" of the way of life and the types of employment, especially in small towns, whose activity was determined by the existence of a single enterprise.

This process is manifested through a low level of revenues, a decline in the main branches of production, a decrease in population and in migration, an imbalance in population structures in terms of age, jobs and a deplorable situation in services, etc.⁵

By locating the administrations level II and the decentralized state services, they wanted to revive the former district centers. Many of the district centers were created with ideological motives derived from a hyper Soviet logic without economic fundamentals or reasons. The wasting of public money for reviving some anachronistic structures lacked logic.

¹ Hotărârea Curții Constituționale cu privire la controlul constituționalității unor prevederi din Legea nr.191-XIV din 12 noiembrie 1998 "Privind organizarea administrativ-teritorială a Republicii Moldova" nr.50 din 05.10.99. Publicată în: Monitorul Oficial nr. 112-114/59 din 14.10.1999.

² Jurnal de Chișinău, 28.12.01.

³ Reforma teritorială din Moldova: costurile unui experiment. În: Forum, nr.10, 2003, p. 20.

⁴ Экономическое обозрение, nr.44, 2004, p.34.

⁵ Forum, nr.9, 2004, p.3.

Smaller cities could be reanimated through mechanisms and programs of economic and social character and not through pulverizing resources and means.

One can say with certainty that the anti-reform was oriented toward the destruction of local financial autonomy and the whole public finance system. After returning to districts, the local existing discrepancies intensified. On the basis of economic, social and infrastructure development data, L. Galer and M. Roșcovan made a classification of districts by the level of socio-economic development, and identified 3 types of zones: the restructuring potential zones, the assisted zones and the disadvantaged zones. The restructuring potential zones included only six districts: Anenii Noi, Edineț, Glodeni, Ocnița, Orhei and Taraclia. These territories had good potential for dynamic development and are attractive for investment. The assisted zones included 20 districts. These districts required the implementation of development programs to facilitate economic growth. The disadvantaged zones included the following districts: in the North - Sângerei, Fălești and Șoldănești, in the Centre - Telenești and Dubăsari, in the South - Leova and Cantemir.¹

Law no.764-XV of 27.12.2001 in Article 2 states that the country's territorial division into administrative-territorial units is required to assure: the implementation of the local autonomy's principles, the decentralization of public services, the eligibility of the local public authorities, citizens' access to bodies of power and their consulting regarding local problems of special interest. It is easy to see that besides the basic principles of the local public administration listed in Article 109 of the Constitution, the legislator introduced a new one: the principle of providing access for citizens to bodies of power. This principle was only mentioned in the text of law, but it was not explained. Studying the law's content, one can conclude that it dealt not so much with facilitating the access for citizens to the bodies of power i.e. to the local governing bodies, but with reducing the territorial size of the administrative-territorial units level 2 in order to decrease the distance between the residences of the districts and the territorial-administrative units level 1. I think that in this regard there was a misinterpretation of the principle of subsidiarity. More appropriate, in terms of the science of contemporary administration, one would have stipulated the principle of people's access to qualitative public services.

¹ Roșcovan, Mihai, Galer, Lilian Rating-ul de dezvoltare a unităților administrativ-teritoriale ale Republicii Moldova.

<http://www.habitatmoldova.org/publications/71/ro/4.%20Roscovan%20raiting.doc>
(vizitat 0712.07).

This meant that the distance in kilometers up to the public services did not have to be shortened, but they had to be offered directly to their place of residence. The local autonomy did not require only the citizens' access to power organs but access to qualitative public services as well. The logic was the following: the administrative bodies had to diversify the methods and forms of interaction with people and to come in contact with the population as closely as possible to fully satisfy the community needs.

A regrettable consequence of the anti-reform was the territorial fragmentation of the administrative-territorial units. The UTA Gagauzia and the Cahul and Taraclia districts were divided into several territorial areas. For instance, the locality Alexandru Ioan Cuza was completely isolated from the remaining localities of Cahul, which complicated the lives of citizens and made it impossible to incorporate the village in the district infrastructure development projects.

The special status of Gagauzia was maintained, and it was given by the *Law on Special Legal Status of Gagauzia (Gagauz-eri)* no.344-XII of 23.12.1994. The composition of the territorial-administrative units included 32 localities: the Comrat municipality, 2 cities (with a settlement included) and 23 villages (communes) that included 28 localities. Article 1, line (1) of Law no.344-XII of 23.12.1994 states that Gagauzia is an autonomous territorial unit with special status. It is a form of the Gagauzians' self-determination, and it is part of Moldova.

Owing to that legal regulation, Gagauzia has a special status of autonomy that is based on ethnic criteria. In this context, the local autonomy is a general principle of democratic administrative policy, and its implementation can't be subject to ethnic criteria or other ones. Local autonomy provides services to all citizens, offers more resources and increases local administration initiative in order to improve the living standards. Using the principle of local autonomy as an opportunity to encourage the ethnic autonomy is a prerequisite for separatism and segregation, and these phenomena contravene the democratic society.

Speaking about the claims regarding the reducing of civil servants, it is necessary to mention that the triplication of the number of entities level II can not contribute to the reducing of the number of employees in local public administration. Article 4, paragraph 4 of Law no.191-XIV of 12.11.98 stated that the administrative organization of Moldova's territory was carried out on two levels: the villages (communes) and towns (municipalities) represented the first level. The counties, the autonomous territorial unit of Gagauzia and the Chisinau municipality constituted the second level. According to Annex 1 of the above mentioned law, 12 territorial-administrative entities level 2 were created: 10 districts, the

Chisinau municipality and the autonomous territorial unit of Gagauzia.¹ The County Councils apparatus, according to the Moldovan Government Decision no.680 of 22.07.99, constituted 34 units (maximum rate), except for the Taraclia county (Annex 20), which had 14.5 units.² After Law no. 764-XV of 27.12.2001³ had been adopted, the Tarlev Government reduced the personnel staff for a transitional period in the districts, and the total number was 289 units. Thus, under the provisions of Annex 2 of Moldova's Government Decision no.893 of 09.07.02, the County Councils' apparatus had the following number of personnel members: Balti - 44, Cahul - 23, Chisinau - 45, Edinet - 33, Lapusna - 29, Orhei - 28, Soroca - 28, Taraclia - 11, Bender - 20 and Ungheni - 28.⁴

According to the Moldovan Government Decision no.689 of 10.06.2003, the district President's personnel was set at the limit of 21 units,⁵ and there were not 10 districts but 32. The number of city halls reached 901, with 252 more than before the 2003 local elections. After the anti-reform implementation, the number of district councilors increased from 344 to 1284, the number of employees in the apparatus of the district Presidents was 4640 compared to 2060 in the county councils' apparatus. The number of employees in rural town halls increased from 6534 to 9306, and those from urban town halls from 989 to 1173.⁶ It is easy to see that the number of officials increased significantly, and the statements regarding the reducing of the number of local officials were in fact simply a propaganda ploy.

The return to the territorial division into territorial administrative units of small size, on the basis of economic potential and population criteria did not meet the criteria of efficiency and was contrary to the European developments. In Europe, in the second half of the last century, there was an extensive process of the local territorial collectivities' consolidation. For example, in Germany the number of municipalities was reduced from 25 thousand to 8.5 thousand; in Denmark, the number of

¹ Legea privind organizarea administrativ-teritorială a Republicii Moldova nr.191-XIV din 12.11.98. Publicată în: Monitorul Oficial nr. 116-118/705 din 30.12.98.

² Hotărârea Guvernului R.Moldova cu privire la organigrama și statele - tip ale aparatului, direcțiilor și secțiilor Consiliului județean nr. 680 din 22.07.99. Publicată în: Monitorul Oficial nr.80-82/714 din 29.07.99.

³ Legea privind organizarea administrativ-teritorială a Republicii Moldova nr. 764-XV din 27.12.2001. Publicată în: Monitorul Oficial al R.Moldova nr.16/53 din 29.01.2002.

⁴ Hotărârea Guvernului R.Moldova cu privire la organigrama și statele - tip ale aparatului și subdiviziunilor consiliului județean nr. 893 din 09.07.02. Publicată în: Monitorul Oficial nr.103-105/1010 din 18.07.02.

⁵ Hotărârea Guvernului R.Moldova cu privire la organigrama și statele de personal ale aparatului raional, direcțiilor, secțiilor, altor subdiviziuni din subordinea Consiliului raional nr. 689 din 10.06.2003. Publicată în: Monitorul Oficial nr.116-120/711 din 13.06.2003.

⁶ Reforma teritorială din Moldova: costurile unui experiment. În: Forum, nr.10, 2003, p. 19.

communes was reduced from 993 to 275; in the Netherlands from 811 municipalities in 1980 to 504 in 2001; in Greece from 5343 in 1997 to 1033 in 2000; in Belgium from 2700 to 600; in Sweden from 2500 to 289.¹ Moldova's European option requires moving the focus to local initiative and the strengthening of regional centers, and it is necessary to reorganize the existing administrative-territorial structure.

It is clear that the current territorial fragmentation does not contribute to local economic development, and does not favor the assertion of collaborative relationships between local authorities and the central ones.

The returning to districts detracted the cross-border cooperation in the Euroregions. The agreements with the cross-border partners signed by the county authorities became meaningless, because each county was divided within 2-5 districts. Because of heterogeneity and plurality of the subjects in the dialogue, the cross-border cooperation in the Euroregions: "Lower Danube", "Siret-Prut-Nistru" and "Superior Prut" in which Moldova is a member, was difficult. If until May 2003 the Moldovan territory of the Euroregion "Siret-Prut-Nistru" included 5 counties members, (Chisinau, Lapusna, Orhei, Soroca and Ungheni), after 2003 they turned into 18 districts, which meant 18 cross-border partners with different views on the options and modalities for cooperation. Romania's territory, a component part of the same Euroregion is comparable to that of RM, but includes only three counties (Iasi, Neamt and Vaslui).

Solutions and suggestions. Democratization of the society needs to change the focus towards local initiative and the strengthening of regional centers. The improvement of the administrative-territorial structure is an effective lever to encourage local initiative and to successfully implement the functioning of the public administration.

The logical organization of a State's territory contributes to the judicious ordering of state power and administration. It meets the general interest and fully meets the local needs and requirements contained in the administrative-territorial units.

The administrative organization of the territory must meet the judicious division of the territorial limits taking into account the traditions, mentalities and the needs for good governance and democratic criteria.

The option for a particular model of administrative-territorial organization must be the result of deep scientific investigation.

¹ Ганущак, Ю. Общественный договор между государством и самоуправлением // <http://www.zn.ua/2000/2040/50835/>

The territorial-administrative reform requires a thorough preparation. It is necessary to provide substantiation of political, economic, social and financial standing of such actions. The problem of financial resources, which primarily refers to training local taxation, is a vital issue. This is because it involves financial autonomy, a central component of local autonomy, without which the decentralization can not work. Insufficient training can lead to some unexpected consequences or compromising actions.

In organization and demarcation of territorial administrative units (by number, structure, size, etc.) the social, material, financial costs and all the activities related to them can not be neglected on a short, medium or long term.