

## EUROPEAN IDENTITY CHALLENGED ROMANIAN POLITICIANS DISCUSSING FREE MOVEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF KINSHIP-BASED MORALITY

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### ABSTRACT

In this article, I will analyse how Romanian Presidents and Prime Ministers from 2004 to 2014 discussed the right to free movement in terms of the Romanian state and identity. The Romanian statements were collected from the official website of the President of Romania, from the Prime Minister's website as well from the archives of the Romanian Government. I have divided the arguments into duty-based and result-based moral approaches to free movement, while focusing especially on identity-related questions of free movement. The analysis reveals that the right to free movement was discussed in connection with the Romanian community, and the same right should apply to Moldovan citizens, who are of the same ethnic origin and have the same official language. Romania has also granted Romanian citizenship for many Moldovans, thus granting them the right to free movement in the European Union. I will first introduce the material and the theoretical framework used in the analysis, and present the background of my doctoral dissertation from which the results have been drawn. The empirical part of the article will be divided in two parts, the former considering the duty-based community feelings between Romanians and Moldovans in terms of free movement, while the latter discusses solidarity-related comments about free movement. Finally, I will draw my conclusions relying on the sections concerning kinship-based questions related to free movement in the Romanian discourse. I will argue that there was not much kinship felt towards the European Union in the free movement discourse, but Romania and Moldova were considered to consist of the same people, and free movement should thus be granted to Moldovans, too. To a certain extent, this has also occurred in granting the citizenship to many Moldovan citizens.

### KEYWORDS

Romania, free movement, European Union, Moldova, identity

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to analyse how Romanian political leaders discuss the relation between free movement and kinship-related morality. Since Romania has a semi-presidential political system, the analysed statements include both those made by the Romanian Presidents and the Prime ministers from 2005 to 2015. The President of Romania officially represents Romania in the European Council. However, the previous Prime Minister Victor Ponta questioned this practice, and although it had been decided in the Romanian Constitutional Court that the President should attend, Ponta participated in the Council meetings anyway, and at the end of 2012 when there was a constitutional crisis involving protests, they signed an agreement of cohabitation.

The Romanian Prime Minister at the end of 2004 was Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu, appointed by the president of the time, Traian Băsescu, who served two terms until 2014. Băsescu represented the Democratic Party (*Partidul Democrat*, PD), while Popescu-Tăriceanu represented the National Liberal Party (*Partidul Național Liberal*, PNL), which together constituted a centre-right electoral alliance called Justice and Truth Alliance (*Alianța Dreptate și Adevăr*). In 2008, Emil Boc was appointed as Prime Minister, representing the Democratic Liberal Party (*Partidul Democrat-Liberal*, PDL), which was merged from Băsescu's Democratic Party (PD) and the Liberal Democratic Party (*Partidul Liberal Democrat*, PLD). After Boc, Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu held the post of Prime Minister for a few months, but his term would be ignored for its short duration, and ended due to a lack of confidence.

In addition, the statements of the previous Prime Minister, Victor Ponta, who entered the office in May 2012 and resigned in November 2015, will be analysed. He represented the Social Democratic Party (*Partidul Social Democrat*, PSD), and had been the opposition leader until he was appointed as Prime Minister. Taken into account the confusion of the Romanian political parties, Ponta could be considered the only leftist Prime Minister during the period covered in this article.<sup>1</sup> In the presidential elections of 2014, Klaus Iohannis was elected as the new President, and he represents the Christian Liberal Alliance consisting of the National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Liberal Democratic Party (PLD), which was later merged into the PNL.

Although the party system appears rather confusing, PSD (PM Ponta), PDL (President Băsescu and PM Boc) and PNL (PM Popescu-Tăriceanu and President Iohannis) have dominated the political system during the last decades, although the names of the parties have changed. During the post-communist era, PSD has been

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Ponta has been accused for corruption and will stand trial for fraud, tax evasion and money laundering. He resigned in November 2015 after an accident in a Romanian nightclub, in which tens of people were killed.

the largest party and a successor communist party, PDL has been the second-largest party, and PNL the third largest, which formed a winning alliance in the 2012 parliamentary elections with the PSD (Gherghina; Volintiru, 2015: 11). Although the PSD usually receives approximately third of the votes, the period analysed in this article is dominated by the second largest party, represented for ten years by President Băsescu and four years by PM Boc.

The question of free movement in the Romanian political discourse is significant, Romania being the EU Member State with most citizens residing in other states. The number of Romanians abroad is noteworthy, and already in 2010, the number of Romanian migrants outside Romania was 2.77 million, which represents 13 % of the total population (Stan; Erne, 2014). This illustrates that it is not a question of a minor phenomenon. In 2014, the number of Romanian citizens in Italy was almost 1.1 million, and in Spain 728,000, according to Eurostat. To compare with, in Germany the number was only 245,000 and 136,000 in the UK. Moreover, the average wage in Romania at the time of the European Union accession was about one tenth of the European average, which has also provided them an incentive to move elsewhere (Recchi, 2013: 142). The rise of the wage level and living standards in the new Member States may, however, result in Eastern Europe becoming more powerful in the EU. For example, Spain had much lower wages than rest of the community, and was thus subject to transitional restrictions when it joined the European Community in 1986. However, it has been able to rise to the European elite, and has much power in the Union matters today.

In contrast, the study by Stan and Erne shows that the question of Romanian migration cannot be accounted for by the sheer difference in the development level in Romania and other European Union countries. Instead, they argue that the growing level of Romanians emigrating from the country is largely due to the privatization of social and health care services, flexibilisation of labour market and the resulting low-cost employment, which inclines people to move west (Stan; Erne, 2014). Therefore, although the Romanian politicians reiterate the need to make educated people stay in Romania, as we will later observe, that might not always be even the real target if the country has enough people willing to work on the wage level they can afford.

Although Romania is not a country of immigration, it is also interesting that Romania has rather strict requirements for obtaining the Romanian citizenship. For example, requirements include 8 years of residence in Romania, complemented with the availability of means of subsistence, but the residence period is halved for internationally famous personalities, citizens of EU Member States and persons who have invested at least EUR 1,000,000 in Romania (Strumia, 2013: 77). Therefore, although Romanian politicians talk about equal rights, as evidenced later, the conditions for naturalization imply that citizenship is easier to acquire not only by EU citizens but by rich or famous people.

As can be observed, all four attitudes of Table 3 can be used in arguments both for and against the right to free movement. In addition to justificatory arguments, free movement can also be considered a threat to the society (e.g. Huysmans, 2000; Huysmans, 2006: 115-117). However, the application of this four-fold categorization of moral attitudes provides a novel and systematic framework for analysing moral approaches.

Table 1. Methodological framework.

	Duty	
	AGREEMENT Duty to maintain the agreed right to free movement vs. Duty to protect the security of the citizens	COMMUNITY Duty to maintain free movement as central to the community vs. Duty to maintain the exclusive community
Rationality	-----	
	UTILITY Freedom of movement employed instrumentally for more integration vs. Welfare threat	SOLIDARITY Free movement creates solidarity in our enlarging Union vs. Threat of segregation
	Result	Kinship

Whereas normative ethical discussion in philosophy is generally divided into duty-based and consequence-based theories (see e.g. Mackie, 1984), this division is also central in this article. I will focus on the right-hand cells of the table, where ‘kinship’ refers to an attitude based on shared we-feeling. On the normative ethical vertical axis of Table 1, ‘duty’ refers to morality based on pre-existing duties, while ‘result’ requires that morals are grounded on assessing the expected consequences. The methodological framework can be employed to study different types of institutional arguments, but in this article, my focus is on how the Romanian politicians argue about the right to free movement and kinship-based morality. While the discussion on duty versus result is part of normative ethics, the debate on rationality is a meta-ethical approach. This approach revolves around the method of finding the right moral principles and originates from Immanuel Kant (morality as a matter of reason) and David Hume (morality as a matter of sentiment) (Hume, 1896: 470-476; Kant, 1999; cf. Rorty, 1999). Simply put, kinship here refers to separating between ‘us’ and ‘others’, while rationality refers to impartial rational deliberation and will be ignored for the purposes of this article.

As can be observed, all four attitudes of Table 1 can be used in arguments both for and against the right to free movement, as there are several threats involved (see also Huysmans, 2006: 69). Each aspect depicts a different moral stance and provides a fresh perspective to the study of the right to free movement. The community dimension, as seen in the top-right cell, is based on the right to free movement either as a communal duty or as a duty to protect the community from others. In the bottom-right cell, solidary identification is the basis for solidarity, which aims at creating solidarity by extending the sense of ‘us’ and identifying with others. However, solidarity can be viewed as both the solidarity of the entire European community or of a smaller community. In this article, I will thus concentrate on the kinship-based dimensions, that is, the attitudes related to community and solidarity.

In the Romanian case, there is little divergence between the political parties, as visible in the table below. There appears to be a strong consensus on the freedom of movement as worth pursuing, since the Romanian politicians refer mostly to EU agreements. Although community and solidarity dimensions were less visible in the argumentation, the arguments provide interesting insights, as we will later observe. While the small number of such statements reveals that free movement is connected to kinship-based morality in approximately every third statement, the arguments are important in illustrating the relation between free movement and European and national identities.

Table 2. Romanian attitudes to free movement. N=46.

Speaker	Term	Agreement	Utility	Community	Solidarity	Analysed N	Total N
PM Popescu-Tăriceanu (PNL)	2004–2008	3	0	1	0	<b>4</b>	185
President Băsescu (PDL)	2004–2014	10	8	6	4	<b>28</b>	1467
PM Boc (PDL)	2008–2012	1	1	1	0	<b>3</b>	115
PM Ponta (PSD)	2012–	6	1	1	0	<b>8</b>	322
President Iohannis (PNL)	2014–	2	1	0	0	<b>3</b>	15
Sum		<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>46</b>	2104

Romanian President Băseșcu is the politician that discussed free movement the most, which is understandable given his ten-year presidential term, and therefore most of the comments reflected his approach to the issue. An interesting issue to note is that the politicians insisted on having equal right to free movement (the transitional restrictions ended only in January 2014), even though they were equally worried that the educated Romanian workers would go to work to other Member States. However, they considered the problem to be something the state was supposed to solve, and were not willing to compromise the right to free movement. Still, it is interesting that references to free movement as part of the European community were rare, while the politicians were more concerned about ethnic Romanians in Moldova and those residing in other EU states.

#### MORAL IMPERATIVES IN THE COMMUNITY DIMENSION: WE SHOULD GET WHAT THE CITIZENS NEED

In this section, arguments that present free movement in terms of duties towards the community will be examined, and the Romanian approach could be depicted with a moral imperative directed at the Romanians themselves: get what the citizens need. Therefore, community arguments were mainly targeted at the community of Romanian and Moldovan citizens who should be entitled to the right to free movement. This article will thus analyse the question of free movement as us-them division, originating from the discussion on communitarianism, where morality is always particular to a certain community (see e.g. Taylor, 1999). Often, the tone of different politicians is different or even the same politicians might employ different rhetoric in different times. Communitarian theory can also be used as a pretext for exclusion, since some communitarians have argued that immigrants may threaten the distinctiveness of communities (Walzer, 1983: 39). Therefore, what we can observe in this analysis is moral argumentation between the European right to free movement and the common values of the Romanian society. While in the subsequent solidarity section, free movement is connected to creating a European community, here the view is that the community already exists and has created the duty to uphold free movement for all members of the community.

In this section, I will trace the existence of community-related comments on free movement, and analyse them. The categorization is based on discussing free movement in a duty-based manner that focuses on common identities rather than formal agreements. For example, discourse on the necessity of free movement in terms of future generations, European heritage or identity-related national duties are categorized in this group.

Romania joined the European Union only in 2007, and the access of Romanian workers to other Member States was limited until 2014, when the restrictions had

to be ended. Moreover, Romania has still not been accepted in the Schengen Area as corruption at the external borders remains a serious concern (Papadimitriou; Phinnemore, 2008: 140), which may contribute to the grudge held against the other Member States. This may be one of the reasons why the references to the European community were few, and the sense of unity presented by the politicians focused on ethnic Romanians at home and abroad, as I am about to show. Romania is often connected to Roma people and it is thought that Roma people coming from other Member States are Romanians, which may further deteriorate the attitudes toward the country and vice versa. For example, in the UK, the Eastern European migrants often suffer from the negative othering, ‘surrounding perceived economic worth and contribution’ (Tonkiss, 2013b: 151). Although the Romanian state was eager to join the Union, the discourse was not always very pro-European in statements concerning free movement.

Instead, national interest was emphasized, and a special attention was paid to the community of Romanians and Moldovans, which President Băsescu even wanted to unite. It is understandable that the Romanian politicians feel closer to a country with the same official language and common roots, while they do not feel that much unity with the European Union, with some countries that do not even welcome Romanian people. The unification of Romania and Moldova was already on the political agenda after Moldova declared its independence in 1991; although Romania was the first to recognize the country’s independence, Romanian leaders hoped for eventual unification similar to the German model. Still, the Romanian public did not have the same objective, and it did not remain an important policy goal (Roper, 2000: 126-127).

The ‘Romania-Moldova’ case is interesting when considered in community terms. Moldova consists of two parts: an autonomous Transnistria region, which is Russian-speaking, and the rest of Moldova, which is Romanian-speaking (although the language is called Moldovan, but regarded by the Constitutional Court of Moldova to be the same as the Romanian language, see Curtea Constituțională 2013). Therefore, the country is divided into two very different parts with different political ambitions. Whereas Transnistria would like to join Russia, the rest of Moldova is not very eager in joining Romania, although Moldovan citizens have been keen in applying for the Romanian passports based on Romanian ethnicity, which provides them access to the entire European Union. Moldova is not likely to join the European Union any time soon, but many of them already have the right to free movement, and perhaps that is the most important issue to pursue. Still, even the Romanian politicians do not regard Moldovans as part of the European community as the country is not part of the European Union.

The Romanian politicians appeared to fear that they were not in the same position as the other EU Member States, while they would prefer to be treated as a fully-fledged Member State with free movement and open borders. It is also interesting that Romania focuses on Moldova in the community arguments, while discussion

on Roma is rarer, and non-existent with regard to ethnic Hungarians, also numerous in the country.

In Romania, there has only been a small political fraction emphasizing nationalistic policy, while the Romanian leading politicians have considered EU accession as their priority since the beginning of 1990s. In 1995, a survey about whether Romanians would vote yes or no in a referendum on EU membership showed the highest figure in Eastern Europe, 97% (Roper, 2000: 117-119). In a manner, the approach of Romanians seem to be based on practical cooperation and the idea of minimum convergence on common norms, while there is not much unity felt with the rest of the EU. It has also been argued that the Romanian elite and public want to be recognized as good Europeans (Sedelmeier, 2014: 115). In the Romanian discourse, there is more antagonism than sense of community towards other European countries, although in the solidarity dimension, some kinship -type statements were also found.

For example, in 2006 the President revealed that he had proposed the Moldovan Prime Minister that Moldova could join the EU already in 2007 as part of Romania. According to him, ‘Este însă opțiunea autorităților de la Chișinău și a poporului Republicii Moldova ce vor dori să facă.’ (Băsescu, 2006)<sup>2</sup> In the same speech, he emphasized the common history and language of the two countries, which also came up in many other statements of the Romanian political leaders. In 2013, President Băsescu declared in a television programme that: ‘Sunt convins că, dacă în Republica Moldova va exista un curent unionist, România va spune ‘da’ fără să ezite. Proiectul de țară pentru România, următorul proiect de țară este ‘Vrem să ne întregim țara!’ (Băsescu, 2013)<sup>3</sup> This project appears to have existed in the country’s agenda at least until the end of Băsescu’s term. The President thus thought that these countries should belong to the same state, but apparently such unionist tendency has been lacking in Moldova, since the state project has not progressed. This illustrates the feeling of community between Romania and Moldova, which, however, was not considered rival to the European integration, but it is interesting that the community relations with Moldova were much more emphasized also in the context of free movement. Whereas Moldovans were thus considered the same as Romanians, Europe was rather presented as something where Romanians can go and work, but it is not felt as a community Romania belongs to.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘It is, however, an option of the leaders of Chișinău and of the people of the Republic of Moldova, if they want to do that’ (our translation).

<sup>3</sup> ‘I am convinced that, if there is a unionist tendency in Moldova, Romania will say ‘yes’ without hesitation. State project for Romania, the next state project is ‘We want to make the country whole again!’ (our translation).



However, a different type of argumentation was present at a meeting in 2006 with MEP Emma Nicholson, who co-chaired the High Level Group for Romania's Children with the Romanian Prime Minister. Instead, Premier Popescu-Tăriceanu stated that the adoption of the free movement shall not be made at the expense of children: 'Nu putem să ne prevalăm de libertatea de circulație a mărfurilor, bunurilor, mașinilor sau angajaților, să facem o paralelă cu copiii și să spunem, pe baza aceluiași principiu de liberă circulație, că reluăm adopțiile'. (Popescu-Tăriceanu, 2006)<sup>4</sup> The comment was made before Romania joined the European Union, and although the venue of the speech affects the contents, he did not specify how these rights contradict. Is it against children's rights to take them to another country? This is the only voice towards free movement where the principle was subordinated by another right, and not very strongly. However, since the commitment to Romanian children was presented prevailing with regard to the right to free movement, the community of Romanians was presented as the primary point of reference. The importance of community was thus visible before the accession in the Prime Minister's discourse, directed at the national level.

There were also some arguments that presented free movement as a duty stemming from the European integration. In 2007, President Traian Băsescu declared that: 'În primul rând specificul construcției Uniunii Europene generează o nevoie sporită de mobilitate transcontinentală și de relocalizare a cetățenilor și a activităților, cu deosebire datorată celor patru libertăți referitoare la circulația persoanelor, bunurilor, serviciilor și capitalului pe piața internă a Uniunii.' (Băsescu, 2007)<sup>5</sup> The argument was not a very strong appeal to the European community, and it was not specified where the need for such mobility originates. The statement implied that mobility is an important part of the European community and of the European Union construction, since there is need for it.

Although Moldova was often present in the Romanian discourse, the Moldovan politicians have not been that eager in uniting with Romania, and they only allowed dual citizenship in 2003, but banned the entry of dual citizenship holders in public offices, which the European Court of Human Rights later judged as disproportionate<sup>6</sup> (Roper, 2005). In 2009, President Băsescu stated that Romania would continue to acknowledge the ethnic Romanians in Moldova: 'Vom continua

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<sup>4</sup> 'We cannot allow the free movement of goods, properties, cars or workers prevail, and consider it all parallel to children, and say, relying on the same principle of free movement, that we will allow adoptions to be made again.' (our translation).

<sup>5</sup> 'In the first place, the specific construction of the European Union creates an increased need for transcontinental mobility and the relocation of citizens and activities, with the difference made between the four liberties referred to as the movement of persons, goods, services and capital in the internal market of the Union' (our translation).

<sup>6</sup> ECHR *Tănase vs. Moldova* 27.4.2010: 'In the light of these considerations, the Court found the provisions preventing elected MPs with multiple nationalities from taking seats in Parliament to be disproportionate and unanimously held that there had been a violation of Article 3 of Protocol No. 1.'

să acordăm sprijin persoanelor din Republica Moldova care se consideră români și simt românește, pentru a-și păstra identitatea. Nu putem accepta ca românii de peste Prut să fie izolați de restul Europei. Nu putem accepta ca, în special generația tânără, să nu aibă șansa de a circula liber și de a-și face studiile în țara noastră sau în restul țărilor europene'. (Băsescu, 2009)<sup>7</sup> He referred to the fact that Romania grants citizenships for ethnic Romanians in Moldova, which also allows them to move freely in the EU. This community argument refers to ethnic Romanians, who should all have the right to free movement.

In 2009, Romanian associations in Italy illustrated that there were dysfunctions with the legal rights of Romanian citizens with regard to the free movement of labour. Italy provided free movement for Romanian workers only in 2012, and the associations had reported some problems with regard to that, as informed by the Prime Minister's office: 'Reprezentanții asociațiilor de români din Italia au semnalat, de asemenea, unele disfuncționalități în ceea ce privește asigurarea serviciilor consulare de calitate și obținerea cardului european de sănătate, precum și aspecte legate de drepturile cetățenilor români în ceea ce privește libertatea circulației muncii. Primul-ministru a precizat că aceste probleme vor fi analizate pentru a fi identificate soluțiile care se impun și a transmis românilor care trăiesc în străinătate că „mai devreme sau mai târziu locul fiecăruia dintre noi este acasă în România'. (Boc, 2009)<sup>8</sup>

Prime Minister Boc's statement was the only comment that directly disapproved of Romanians' moving permanently abroad, or at least illustrated a hope that they might return home. This community argument retains that Romanians create a community and they should and not leave for other countries. This shows that although the premier wanted to solve the problems related to the free movement of people, he did not consider it a duty of the European community but mainly a right of the Romanian citizens to visit and work in other countries.

An interesting dimension in the Romanian discussion is thus the level of unity towards Moldovans. Although close kinship was not observed towards other European countries, – instead, it was frustrating for Romanians not to have the

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<sup>7</sup> 'We will continue to provide our support for persons from the Republic of Moldova who consider themselves Romanians and are Romanians, for them to maintain their identity. We cannot accept that Romanians on the other side of the river Prut be isolated from the rest of Europe. We cannot accept that especially the young generation would not have the chance to move freely and study in our country and in the rest of Europe' (our translation).

<sup>8</sup> 'The representatives of the Romanian associations in Italy have also signalled certain dysfunctions as regards good consular services and obtaining European health insurance cards, and in aspects related to the rights of Romanian citizens as regards the free movement of workers. The Prime Minister specified that these problems would be analysed in order to identify solutions to enforce these, and he informed the Romanians who lived abroad that 'sooner or later, the place of each of us is at home in Romania' (our translation).

same rights – there was a strong feeling of unity with the Moldovans. For example, in 2010, President Băsescu stated that: ‘Oamenii din Republica Moldova sunt la fel de îndreptățiți, consider eu, ca și oamenii din România, să circule liber în Europa, să circule liber în România, să circule liber acolo unde poate circula orice european.’ (Băsescu, 2010a)<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Moldovans were considered morally equal in the sense of being entitled to similar rights. In addition, Papadimitrou and Phinnemore have argued that Romania would not even have strengthened the border with Moldova before EU accession ‘without the external leverage of the EU’ (Papadimitriou; Phinnemore, 2008: 141).

In addition to the commitment towards Moldovans, the duty towards Romanians abroad was also visible in several comments. In 2011, Băsescu mentioned free movement and the free access to the European labour market as the most important issue in the diplomacy of Romania, positioned first in the list. According to him, ‘Libera circulație, liberalizarea accesului pe piața europeană a muncii, consolidarea identității etnice, culturale, lingvistice și spirituale și, în general, întărirea legăturii cu țara a românilor, oriunde s-ar afla ei, vor fi liniile de forță ale diplomației române în 2011.’ (Băsescu, 2011)<sup>10</sup> The duty of the president towards the Romanian community is evident already in that connections to Romanians abroad should be maintained. In addition, the reinforcement of such relations underlines the significance of national commitments in terms of European integration.

A marked tendency in the Romanian argumentation was thus the emphasis on Romanians abroad. Indeed, the worry about the Romanians abroad was visible in the above comment and in the following statement made by President Băsescu in 2014: ‘Și, în sfârșit, aș aborda o ultimă problemă, legată de diaspora, încă facem prea puțin pentru românii din diaspora, nu mă refer la cei din jurul frontierelor, problemă pe care am abordat-o, ci la românii care, după liberalizarea circulației și pentru noi, după liberalizarea pieței forței de muncă, se află în Italia, în Spania, în Franța, în Germania, în Marea Britanie, în Irlanda, în Statele Unite chiar.’ (Băsescu 2014)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> ‘The people of the Republic of Moldova are equally entitled, in my opinion, as the Romanian people are, to move freely in Europe, to move freely in Romania and to move freely wherever any European can’ (our translation).

<sup>10</sup> ‘Free movement, free access to the European labour market, consolidation of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and spiritual identities, and in general, reinforcement of the relation of Romanians to the country, wherever they are, will be the focal points of Romanian diplomacy in 2011’ (our translation).

<sup>11</sup> ‘And finally, I would like to address the last problem related to diaspora, at the moment we do too little for the Romanians in diaspora, I am not only referring to those around our borders, a problem that I have already addressed, but the Romanians who, after our freedom of movement, after the free labour market, are located in Italy, Spain, France, Germany, the UK, Ireland and even the United States’ (our translation).

This community argument is addressed exclusively towards Romanians in other EU countries. While Romanian politicians insist on having free movement, they are also worried over people leaving the country. The above comment does not question free movement, but it shows that there are problems when so many Romanians live abroad. In this regard, there is some perplexity in the argumentation. Perhaps the Romanian leaders would want Romanian citizens to have full rights to move freely, but they would like to have more control over who actually leaves the country.

The emphasis on Moldovans in the free movement discourse is peculiar in the sense that Romanian leaders considered accession in the European Union more important than maintaining an open border with Moldova. Instead, half a million Romanian citizenship applications were made by Moldovans in 2007 as Romania joined the Union, which gave them the right to free movement in the Union (Papadimitriou; Phinnemore, 2008: 138). The incumbent Prime Minister Victor Ponta is the only one representing a left-wing (social democratic) party in this article, but the differences in statements related to free movement are not observed. Like the other political leaders, Ponta also lent his support for Moldova for its integration into the European Union. In 2012, he stated that ‘Vom continua să pledăm pentru o perspectivă europeană clară și vom promova cu prioritate toate proiectele care vizează dezvoltarea societății din Republica Moldova în spiritul valorilor democratice, creșterea bunăstării și libera circulație a cetățenilor în spațiul Uniunii Europene.’ (Ponta, 2012)<sup>12</sup> This again shows the community approach towards Moldovans, where promoting the Moldovans’ free movement is considered a duty to the community. Still, free movement was only one issue in a list of several duties, but it is revealing in terms that free movement is not always encouraged for (educated) Romanians, but the Romanian politicians want to provide free movement for Moldovans, in the communitarian vein.

Overall, duty-based approach towards the European Union in terms of free movement is not very strong in the Romanian discourse, but Romanian politicians mainly argued that the Romanian state had duties towards both Romanian citizens abroad and towards Moldovans. The Romanian comments may also reflect a subordinate position in the Union, where the country is mainly considered having rights to be claimed from the Union, not duties towards it. For Romania, free movement is something that should be enlarged to cover the entire Romanian community, i.e. also the Moldovans. To put it simply, these views support the idea of the European Union consisting of several communities that do not have

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<sup>12</sup> ‘We will promote with priority all the projects that aim at the development of the society of the Republic of Moldova in the spirit of democratic values, increasing well-being and the free movement of the citizens in the area of the European Union’ (our translation).

identical values. Instead, the imminent community is the most important one, and the Union is farther.

In the following section, I will focus on solidarity arguments on free movement made by the Romanian politicians. Those are more result-oriented than the community arguments analysed in this section. However, they reveal how the political leaders utter that solidarity within the European Union could be enhanced with free movement. Still, as argued in this section, the sense of community inside the European Union is lacking.

#### MORAL IMPERATIVES WITH REGARD TO SOLIDARITY: EU, ENHANCE SOLIDARITY BY REMOVING BORDERS

In this section, the focus will be on arguments that frame present movement as a symbol strengthening European unification and integration. The Romanian approach could be depicted with an imperative addressed at the EU: enhance solidarity by removing borders. More specifically, the European Union should be a borderless area where everyone could participate in the construction of the European future and minorities were integrated.

The solidarity dimension is based on Richard Rorty's ideas about enlarging solidarity and by trying to make people previously thought of as 'them' becoming part of 'us' (Rorty, 1989). However, this may be too thick a demand, since people should be able to feel kinship with everyone, instead of e.g. the unity being created with legal rights. An example of a pursuit for European solidarity could be considered the European citizenship, a measure with which to socialize Europeans to the same identity, but this excludes the people who do not have the citizenship (Strumia, 2013: 133). The idea of citizenship is of course also a legal concept, but one that is much more sentiment-based than other supranational agreements. In a similar manner, free movement, constituting the core of European citizenship, could serve as a symbol of European unification.

While the community dimension discussed in the previous section was more based on a stable community identity, in this section, the focus is on constructing the Union and deeper integration through solidarity. For example, when solidarity is employed in explaining European enlargement, the result is important, as the 'Other' becomes part of 'us' (Fierke; Wiener, 2001). In addition, while the European Union has been already created, the task of the politicians and other elites would be to construct a European sense of 'us'. Therefore, the view of solidarity in this section is precisely on the aspect of how free movement as a European Union institutional norm could be able to change identities and approaches in Europe in order to make the 'Others', disappear, both with regard to European citizens and non-European citizens.

Solidarity and community are closely related features, but I have wanted to keep them separate in order to trace the difference between duty-oriented and result-

oriented approaches. This is an important division in moral philosophy, and reveals something about the moral thinking in general: whether the actions we do should be based on something that has been determined before or whether we should focus on what happens in the future. To some extent, they are also intertwined, since the norms we determine beforehand are also related to what is expected to occur when the norms are applied. Still, there is a difference in whether the community creates norms as communal duties or whether norms are constructively created to increase the solidarity of the community. Moreover, whereas the duty-based idea treats free movement as having intrinsic value, in result-based thinking it is rather an instrument to develop the sense of community.

The idea of creating a thick identity at the European level has also been called regional nationalism, which considers that a thick collective identity is something positive, which would mean creating a new Euro-nation to subsume national identities. However, it is a problematic concept, since it is based on the idea of immovable common values and some external other against which this identity is formed. It is also contradictory to pursue the creation of a new nation by criticizing the existence of the current national identities (Tonkiss, 2013b: 52-55).

In the previous section, I discussed Romania's community-based arguments mainly related to Moldova and Romanians abroad, which aroused more community feeling among Romanian politicians than the European Union. Still, although the Romanian politicians do not appear to maintain a sense of European unity, they are still interested in creating that, particularly through free movement, as demonstrated in this section. Indeed, the sentiment-focused approach of the Romanian leaders was mainly targeted towards ethnic Romanians, but the European unification is considered a positive matter in Romania, and something that can be brought forward with free movement.

At this point, my view is that there is no unified concept of European identity that would prevail, and the Romanian situation is peculiar in the sense that the Romanian accession to the EU has further weakened nationalist tendencies such as the nationalist Greater Romania Party (*Partidul România Mare*, PRM) that was the second largest party still in the 2000 parliamentary elections (Cinpoes, 2010: 191), but currently holds no parliamentary seats. Therefore, while the European Union may have resulted in a sort of post-national dilemma in some Member States where nationalist tendencies have risen (Tonkiss, 2013a), in Romania no similar phenomenon has been observed. However, the post-national dilemma is mainly connected to the migrants that come to a particular country, and since Romania is not a country of immigration, there is not a new internal 'Other' entering the country. For example, according to Eurostat, there were only 73,000 foreign citizens in Romania in 2014, of which only 20,000 were EU citizens, and that in a country with a population of almost 20 million.

Radu Cinpoes also argues that the question of nationalist parties in Romania has been very difficult since the country has expressed almost unanimous support for integration in the European Union, and thus the nationalist parties have been forced to immerse the idea of integrating Romania and its values in Europe (Cinpoes, 2010: 197). Therefore, although the nationalist PRM party has cooperated e.g. with the French *Front National*, due to the lack of anti-European tendencies in the country, it has not been able to influence the leading politicians' rhetoric. As stated before, Romanian public still holds a very positive image of the European Union, with the highest percentage of respondents (62 %) in the spring 2015 Eurobarometer survey reporting a positive image of the European Union (Eurobarometer 2015).

Although the discussion concerning the European Union is generally positive, some problems related to free movement were also discussed. In 2008, President Băsescu referred to Roma people, difficulties of which have been highlighted in the application of free movement: 'Aplicarea libertății de circulație a cetățenilor europeni a pus în evidență și unele dificultăți specifice cu care se confruntă anumite grupuri dezavantajate social. Mă refer cu precădere la etnia Roma, o minoritate transnațională răspândită, în proporții diferite, în toate statele Uniunii. Dimensiunea europeană a problematicii integrării sociale a romilor reclamă, pe lângă politici naționale sistematice de incluziune, și o strategie europeană pentru concertarea politicilor relevante la nivel UE – strategie care se va bucura de tot sprijinul nostru' (Băsescu, 2008a).<sup>13</sup>

Here, free movement was implied to decrease European solidarity and create the need for more coordination. Therefore, the national and the EU level were intertwined in this comment; there must be a national policy but a European strategy. In addition, President Băsescu argued being in favour of all the integration measures with regard to the Roma question, which shows commitment to European cooperation. However, if we only consider the role of free movement in this, the focus was on revealing the 'difficulties' with regard to Roma people. Depending on the perspective, this can be considered either a positive or a negative issue.

A type of solidarity attitude was also present in some other statements, and more in the pro-European tone. For example, on the European Day reception in 2008, Băsescu stated that 'Voi ați avut șansa să creșteți și să vă formați în valorile europene. Oportunitățile de care puteți beneficia sunt uriașe și nu mă refer doar la libertatea de a circula în cadrul Uniunii sau de a studia oriunde pe teritoriul acesteia.

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<sup>13</sup> 'Applying free movement to European citizens has also demonstrated some specific difficulties with which certain socially challenged groups are confronted. I am referring especially to the ethnic Roma, a minority that has been transnationally spread in different proportions in every Union country. The European dimension of the social integration problems of Roma people requires systematic national policy of inclusion, and a European strategy to concentrate relevant policies at the EU level – strategies that will enjoy all our support' (our translation).

Mă refer la șansa extraordinară de a participa efectiv la construcția viitorului Europei.’ (Băsescu 2008b)<sup>14</sup> This quotation highlights the importance of European solidarity and reveals a devotion based on solidarity, where freedom of movement is one part of the construction of the European project. In other words, the focus is on the results the European cooperation (including free movement) could bring forth. At the same time, free movement was presented as a result of integration and as an instrument in bringing forth more integration. In such integration discourse, free movement was employed as a symbol of European unity that may socialize people in this project. President Băsescu also discussed European values in the comment, which implies a more community-related approach to the European Union, but free movement was not presented as one of the values, but rather as a benefit derived from the membership in the Union.

The discourse on free movement and European unity is thus more related to future than pre-existing duties, which is understandable in the sense that the transitional arrangements for Romanian workers were only ended in 2014 and the country is still not part of the Schengen Area. Therefore, free movement is something to be attained and not a duty the state should guarantee, since there are few European citizens entering Romania (20,000 residing in 2014). Still, while talking to the Romanian Parliament in 2010, President Băsescu recalled that entering the Schengen area and having free movement is the wish of ‘us all’: ‘Ne-am dorit libera circulație. O putem avea pe deplin, odată cu intrarea definitivă în spațiul european fără granițe.’ (Băsescu 2010b)<sup>15</sup> In this case, entry into the European borderless area was something to be pursued, symbolizing the Romanian desire to be a full-fledged European state. Therefore, free movement can be considered a symbol of European solidarity and the dream of a borderless Europe.

Overall, the Romanian argumentation included few references to solidarity, and they were not very strong ones. Although President Băsescu discussed European future and an area without borders, they are not especially strong claims for free movement being an instrument for European solidarity and inclusion. Instead, free movement was presented as something belonging to the European project, but also revealing concerns over the integration of Roma people. In contrast, as free movement was presented as a crucial part of European integration, Romania was presented as not able to fully join this group, since it is not part of the Schengen

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<sup>14</sup> ‘You have had the chance to be raised and educated within the European values. The opportunities you can benefit from are enormous, and I am not only referring to the freedom of movement in the Union or the freedom of studying anywhere in the area. I am referring to the extraordinary chance to participate effectively to the construction of the European future.’ (our translation)

<sup>15</sup> ‘We have wanted free movement. We can have it completely, the moment we totally join the borderless European area.’ (our translation)



area. In other words, free movement is rather something that Romanian politicians want in order to be able to participate in the construction of the European future. Still, it is unclear what the political objectives of Romania in the European Union are. Even when Romania joined the Union in 2007, the only clear objectives were 'the promotion of increased engagement with the Black Sea and Moldova' (Papadimitriou; Phinnemore, 2008: 89). This is also the objective that can be observed in this article, and in the following concluding section, a summary of the arguments presented in this article will be provided.

#### CONCLUSION

The Romanian case is interesting in the sense that the Romanian community feelings seemed to be directed towards both Romanians abroad and towards Moldovans, who share the same language and history. Instead, such comments were few with regard to the European Union, but Moldovans were considered to be entitled to same rights as Romanian citizens. The Romanian Presidents, for example, have also shown great interest in uniting Moldova in Romania, but the issue has not progressed. Still, Romanian politicians emphasized that the EU free movement was something that should also be guaranteed for Moldovans, since the ethnic Romanians should not be deprived of the rights received by those living in Romania.

The Romanian argumentation thus closely relates to the Romanian state and the Moldovan people with regard to free movement. Therefore, although Romania is a member of the European Union, the discussion revolved around the regional level while the community feeling towards the European Union was lacking. Overall, this article illustrates that Romania has a closer relationship to Moldovans and a more distant one to the rest of the European Union, at least in the discussion on free movement. If the European Union is a family, it is not a very close one. The closest relative to Romania is obviously Moldova, while the other members of the European family have not accepted Romania in the area of open doors.

While Romania presented more nation-centred community argumentation, in the solidarity dimension, the politicians made EU-centred sentiment-oriented arguments, which may reveal that the Romanian leaders feel they have more duties to the imminent community, while European solidarity is something worth pursuing. The Romanian President Băsescu discussed free movement both as an opportunity for the citizens to participate in constructing the European future and as something that reveals the problems related to ethnic minorities. The analogue of the European Union as a school system could depict the context of the Romanian argumentation, at least in the sense that the Romanian President Băsescu is trying to purport to the citizens the sense of Europeanness in terms of free movement. However, there are problems with regard to the rights of Romanian pupils, since their border-crossing is controlled and Moldovan citizens are not provided with the same rights. Still, the European school system is

something that Romania wants to be part of, in order to be able to influence its future.

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