

**RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA ON
„ODNOKLASSNIKI”.
THE CASE OF REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA.**



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Abbreviations:

AA – Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union

GPW – the Great Patriotic War

MASSR/MSSR – Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic / Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic

NATO – North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation

PSRM – Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova

RM – the Republic of Moldova

EU – the European Union

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

ATU Gagauzia – Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia

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INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW: ODNOKLASSNIKI AND RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA

In the last two years, the quality and dissemination of news has attracted considerable attention. One question, in this context, is how social media can be used to actively promote particular political viewpoints. A recent dimension, on social media, is the question of Russian influence. This issue is of particular interest in Russia's neighbourhood, yet also in established democracies that previously were thought immune from such meddling.

The Republic of Moldova has its own experience to contribute, to this broader debate. In Moldova, Russia has a special hold on the public conversation through Odnoklassniki, a Russia-based social network. Odnoklassniki is one of the most popular social networks in Moldova, with over 1 million unique visitors per month, and multiple high-profile groups that promote Russian points of view.

A closer quantitative and qualitative analysis of these pro-Russian groups, suggests several conclusions:

1. Pro-Russian Odnoklassniki groups are powerful, with tens of thousands of supporters, and considerable active engagement.
2. These groups are broadly on message, and push out a clearly identifiable pro-Russian line. Key messages, often originally put out by Russia-based outlets, are repeated over and over again.
3. In this messaging, there is a consistent narrative that emphasizes the great Soviet past, the current strength of Russia, and dismisses and denigrates political alternatives to such a narrative.
4. Specifically, there are ten core themes to this messaging: the Great Patriotic War, the Ribbon of St. George, Victory Day, Compatriots, a Russophile ATU Gagauzia, as well as anti-Romanian sentiment, anti-Ukraine, anti-Americanism, anti-NATO, and anti-EU & pro-Customs Union. These ten themes can be traced extensively, in the pro-Russian Odnoklassniki groups.
5. Implicit in this messaging is a narrative of respecting and submitting to authority. Moreover, one core idea seems

to be that there is a degree of inevitability of siding with Russia.

6. There is little, in the messaging, that is constructive on policy, on how to organize civic matters, and on how citizens of the Republic of Moldova can develop their own country. It is thus fair to characterize the overall messaging as propaganda, in the pursuit geopolitical aims.
7. The share of propaganda messages is significant and generally represents 57% of the total number of analyzed messages.
8. A closer look at Odnoklassniki will continue to allow insights into how Russian propaganda operates, which themes it emphasizes, and which of its messages resonate and draw engagement.

This research thus is of relevance both within the Republic of Moldova, but also beyond, for people who are interested in understanding how Russian propaganda works. A thorough understanding of these mechanisms of propaganda seems necessary in order to develop counter-strategies. At this point, no such strategies are yet in place in the Republic of Moldova itself.

THE ORIGINS AND THE ESSENCE OF THE RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Following its independence, the Republic of Moldova has had a complicated relationship with Russia. As many Moldovans see it, their statehood was undermined, from the very beginning, by the armed conflict in the eastern region of the country, the Transnistrian region. Many independent observers agree that Russia carries the overwhelming responsibility for originally triggering this conflict. Subsequently, Russia has continued to undercut the territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, by supporting the breakaway Transnistrian region, maintaining a military presence and geopolitical control.¹

Yet Russia does not only interfere with the territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. It also targets the internal politics of the country, in a variety of ways. One key aspect of this is Russian propaganda. Propaganda here is understood as consistent and comprehensive political messaging, that regularly disseminates false information and/or has a distorted content with a view to influencing opinions, emotions and attitudes. Such propaganda generally, and Russia propaganda specifically, promotes the geopolitical goals of a strong-man government; plays up ethnic tension and resentment; emphasizes enemies; and has a very limited constructive policy agenda.

The purpose of Russian propaganda appears to be to maintain the Republic of Moldova within the sphere of the Russian Federation's exclusive interests, as a docile satellite. In order to achieve this goal, Russian propaganda promotes a sense of affiliation with Russia, and discredits the EU and the West in general in the eyes of the Moldovan citizens. In this, the propaganda supports revanchist² and nostalgic "left-wing"³ political narratives inside Moldova, while aligning neat-

¹ „Case of Catan and others v. Moldova and Russia”, Grand Chamber, European Court of Human Rights, Judgement, Strasbourg, 19 October 2012.

² Referring to the supporters of the Russian chauvinism – the hostile attitude towards other ethnicities (especially, Ukrainians); homophobia; anti –USA; etc.

³ In the context of Republic of Moldova, the `left-wing` and the `right-wing` concepts have nothing in common with the European political doctrines. The left –wing parties strongly identify themselves with: Moldovenism, Eurasian Customs Union, the anti-Romanian sentiment, `Ruskii Mir`. Meanwhile, the right-wing parties insist on “Moldova being the second Romanian state”, and plead, to a certain extent, for “Moldova’s unification with Romania”.

ly with the Kremlin's mythology of its own legitimacy, and of the legitimacy of its expansion in the ex-Soviet area.

The Republic of Moldova, though comparatively small in geographical size and population, in this context seems to receive significant attention from Russia, as it serves as a geopolitical wedge between Ukraine and Romania. With regards to Ukraine, the impression among Moldovan observers is that their country often serves as a testing ground for policies that subsequently are applied to Ukraine.⁴ Moldova's negotiators have repeatedly noticed that Russia tried to force them into a series of unilateral concessions to the Transnistrian region. A federalisation of the Republic of Moldova would allow Russia to use Moldova as a "positive precedent" for Ukraine, and its client territories in Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

From Russia's perspective, Moldova also serves as a bridgehead against Romania, a NATO member state since March 29th, 2004. In particular, Russia shows concerns about the deployment of the American anti-missile base in Deveselu. An instance that illustrates the Russian approach is that the "historic" visit of Igor Dodon to Moscow coincided with a series of aggressive statements against Romania not only in the Russian press, but also by Russian officials.⁵ At the same time, Vladimir Putin giving a map of Moldova in the XVII century to Igor Dodon implies a threatening message to Romania, which is based on the Stalinist "Moldovenism".⁶

It appears that this Russian propaganda already has had significant impact. Though arguably there is little of a constructive agenda in what Russia offers, it does seem to attract sizeable support. Vladimir Putin enjoys the highest level of trust (55%) among the citizens of Republic of Moldova compared to other global leaders.⁷

One of the main effects of Russian propaganda is people's mistrust in the statehood of Republic of Moldova and

⁴ [Statement of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Support Group for Ukraine], available, in Russian, at: mid.ru/ru/maps/ua/-/asset_publisher/ktn0ZLTvbbS3/content/id/70394.

⁵ [The Press Conference with the president of Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon], text available at: kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53744.

⁶ [Putin offered Dodon, as a gift, the map of Moldova, the borders of which extend on Romania and Ukraine], video available at: youtube.com/watch?v=dK5zRuEIAZ8.

⁷ Barometer of Public Opinion, November 2017, available at: bop.ipp.md.

its current foreign-policy orientation. Although, the Republic of Moldova signed the Association Agreement with the European Union on June 27th, 2014, the percentage of citizens that see the future of Moldova as part of Russian Federation (33%) or Romania (22%) is significant.⁸

In addition, on November 13th, 2016, Igor Dodon - a candidate with a strong anti-European and pro-Russian messaging and who publicly supported Crimean annexation to the Russian Federation, won the presidential election in Republic of Moldova.^{9,10} The efficiency of the Russian propaganda was emphasized by the massive support of Igor Dodon by the Russian-speaking population – on November 13th, 2016, in ATU Gagauzia, 98,89% voted for Igor Dodon.¹¹ Consequently, Igor Dodon actively engages in promoting Russian interests in the Republic of Moldova, such as the termination of the Association Agreement with the European Union and of contacts with NATO.

At the same time, it also appears that Igor Dodon and the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova are aligned with the Russian goals of federalizing the Republic of Moldova and subsequently, extending this scenario to Ukraine.¹²

⁸ Barometer of Public Opinion, November 2017, available at: bop.ipp.md.

⁹ [Ukraine recalled its ambassador from Moldova because Igor Dodon acknowledged the annexation of Crimea], revista22.ro/70257610/kiev-ul-si-a-rechemat-ambasadorul-din-moldova-pentru-c-dodon-a-recunoscut-anexarea-crimeei.html.

¹⁰ Results of the 2016 presidential election:
cec.md/r/procese-verbale/prezidentiale-t2-2016/.

¹¹ Presidential election results of 2016 by regions:
cec.md/r/procese-verbale/prezidentiale-t2-2016/.

¹² [Tamara Guzenkova – a political analyst, about the results of the Igor Dodon visit to Moscow and the perspectives of the bilateral relations], available, in Russian, at: iz.ru/news/658471.

THE MAIN MESSAGES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S PROPAGANDA – THE CASE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

There are two main messages of Russian propaganda in Republic of Moldova: one of the opportunities of associating with Russia's greatness and timeless power, and a second one of there not being any viable and desirable alternative in another orientation for the country.

Applied to the Moldovan context, this general approach is sometimes referred to as Moldovenism¹³, and builds on political concepts that had been fine-tuned under Stalin. Moldovenism, in its Stalinist version, has two main components. The first component plays up the metropolis, Russia, to emphasize it as the centre of power, decision-making and of value. Moldova, in this first component, can gain respect and value as a vassal to this great power. Propaganda thus reinforces the sentimental ties with the Soviet past (*pride, nostalgia, etc.*) among different segments of the Moldovan society, and fuels a chauvinistic mindset (*Russkii Mir*; disdain for Ukraine, liberalism and democracy).

The second component of Moldovenism, in this version, seeks to undercut local sources of identity and dignity. This aspect plays on the absence of national/civic dignity, emphasizes Anti-Romanian sentiment, and implicitly suggests that it will be impossible for the Republic of Moldova to chart its own political course. To further invalidate the idea of alternatives, Russian propaganda amplifies the inferiority complexes related to the failures of the Moldovan statehood project, feeds separatist spirits in different regions, and enhances the ethno-linguistic cleavages in the society.

Moldovenism, in this way wants people to think of their own identity through the perspective of the Russian (and former Soviet) propaganda clichés.

The Anti-Romanian sentiment

Anti-Romanian sentiment remains a major factor in the political processes in Republic of Moldova. Anti-Romanian sentiment had already been mobilized in 1990, to initiate the regional separatism in Transnistria and in the Southern part

¹³ "Moldovenism: The state ideology of Republic of Moldova", article available at: moldova.org/en/moldovenism-the-state-ideology-of-the-republic-of-moldova-21091-eng/.

of the RM ("the Gagauz Republic"). The issue remains relevant, as politicians capitalize on the ethno-linguistic cleavages and on the Anti-Romanian sentiment to garner public support. Politicians do this in part by insinuating that recognising Romanian as the official language of the country is a step towards the inevitable unification of Republic of Moldova to Romania. Some such rhetoric is visible on the official Internet websites of the President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon, of the Government and of the Parliament.¹⁴¹⁵¹⁶

The Great Patriotic War

The glorification of the Soviet past plays a special role in Russian propaganda. On the one hand, these policies aim at enhancing the inferiority complex in relation with the "Great Russia" among those "compatriots" who are not ethnic Russians and who live outside the Russian Federation. At the same time, a broad, aggressive and emotional campaign was launched in Russia to venerate the role of the USSR in World War II. This campaign only allowed for a single official narrative of a complex past, blending out a number of controversial aspects. Among other aspects, the official narrative only accepted the term "the Great Patriotic War" (GPW), and only began its account on 22nd of June 1941, when Nazi Germany attacked the USSR. In meantime, Russian propaganda glosses over the mutual support between USSR and Germany's resurgence, starting with April 16th, 1922, when the Treaty of Rapallo¹⁷ was signed and which culminated with the 1939 Soviet-Nazi pact meant to subjugate much of Eastern Europe. The Russian propaganda presents the USSR as the key-winner in the fight with fascism, due to "Soviet people's heroism" and their willingness to endure huge human loss for a greater good.

The Ribbon of Saint George

The cult of the GPW works with symbols and rituals, such as the "ribbon of Saint George" and the "Victory Day" celebrated on 9th of May.

The ribbon of Saint George was revived by Kremlin ideologists to counteract the orange ribbon of the "Orange Rev-

¹⁴ Official page of the President of Republic of Moldova: presedinte.md.

¹⁵ Official page of the Government of Republic of Moldova: gov.md.

¹⁶ Official page of the Parliament of Republic of Moldova: parlament.md.

¹⁷ „A German – Russian secret agreement: the Treaty of Rapallo”, text available at: historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/a-german-russian-secret-agreement-the-treaty-of-rapallo.

olution" in Ukraine. After that, the ribbon of Saint George became a prominent pro-Russian symbol in "Victory Day" campaigns. As a result, this ribbon turned into a symbol that connects Vladimir Putin and the representatives of the separatist regimes in Crimea, in the Transnistrian region, in Donetsk and Lugansk, all the way to proto-fascist organizations and ideologues. In the Republic of Moldova, organisations like the Russian Federation Youth League each year conduct prominent – and arguably provocative – actions using the ribbon of Saint George, in public places in Chişinău and in other localities of the RM.¹⁸

Victory Day

Victory Day, the day on which Nazi Germany signed its surrender, has become another pillar of the Russian propaganda in the former Soviet area (though the Soviet Union did not celebrate it for 20 years after the war). Next to legitimate and understandable remembrance, in Republic of Moldova this celebration is also used to show disdain for the attempts to celebrate Europe Day on the same date. The massive marches of the inhabitants of Chişinău (mostly Russian-speakers) to the Memorial of Military Glory have a component of contemporary politics, in that regard, among at least some participants.

Anti-Ukraine

In this historical context, Ukraine is also cast in a negative light. The westward course of the current Ukrainian government is described dismissively. The opponents of the Yanukovych regime (and of the Russian policy) in Ukraine are characterized as "followers of Stepan Bandera", "accomplices of the fascists" and even as "fascists". At this point, this is a dominant characterization of Ukraine, which neglects that according to the official historiography of the USSR, about 16% of the soldiers fallen in the Great Patriotic War were ethnic Ukrainians – i.e. about 1 800 000 people.

The Compatriots

The concept of "compatriots", widely used by the Russian propaganda, is a notion that strengthens the mental and nostalgic connections between the former Soviet citizens and their descendants with the "Homeland". The concept of homeland is associated with the "glorious" past of the USSR,

¹⁸ Official Page of the Russian Federation Youth League: ligarus.org.

but at present it also involves identification with Russia. Despite the fact that the concept of “compatriot” is confusing from the legal viewpoint and is based on the “free self-identification of the person”, a number of laws were adopted in the Russian Federation that attempt to define this concept and proclaim the commitment of Russia “to defend the civic, cultural, linguistic rights” of the “compatriots”.¹⁹

Anti-Americanism

In the Republic of Moldova, a network of journalists, bloggers and media outlets accuse the “American masters” of straining the relations between the Republic of Moldova and Russian Federation (for example, by expelling Russian diplomats).²⁰ Through this network, the Moldovan politicians with pro-European visions are labelled as being “American agents” and as serving the anti-Russian policies of Washington. For example, the pro-European politician, Maia Sandu, was accused of being “an American agent” solely based on her work experience at World Bank.²¹

The network also disseminates the idea that the USA intend to re-ignite the conflict on the Dniester River. Moreover, the network is used to intensely promote the idea that the “masters in Washington” tolerate the corruption of the Chişinău leadership in exchange for the “attacks” against Russia.

The North Atlantic Alliance – an aggressive/offensive bloc

In the context of such messaging, the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) is portrayed as an aggressive organization that seeks to expand its reach. In part, this messaging exploits the absence of constructive debate within Moldovan society on how to ensure national security, also in the context of the serious security challenge of not having control over the Transnistrian region which is *de facto* occupied by Russian Federation.

Anti-EU and pro-Customs Union

Anti-EU and pro-Customs Union messaging falls on fertile ground in Moldova, as there is a major division within the country. Moldova is formally governed by “pro-European”

¹⁹ One of them: [Federal Law of the Russian Federation on the State Policy concerning compatriots abroad No. 99-FZ of May 24, 1999], available at: sevkrimrus.narod.ru/ZAKON/sootech.htm.

²⁰ Such as, media outlets: sputnik.md, a-tv.md; opinion makers/journalists: izborsk.md, moldovenii.md; bloggers: bogdantsirdea.eu, bukarski.md

²¹ LinkedIn Profile of Maia Sandu: [linkedin.com/in/maia-sandu-1016a38](https://www.linkedin.com/in/maia-sandu-1016a38).

coalitions and governments since 2009, with a mixed track record of success for ordinary people. The Eurasian project, in turn, is largely supported by “Russians”, “Ukrainians” and “Gagauz people”. As for the “Moldovans/Romanians”, they do not demonstrate any civic coherence either, making this an attractive issue for propaganda to target. Asked how they would vote on Moldova joining the Eurasian Customs Union, about 41% of “Moldovans/Romanians” said they would vote “for” and 42% - „against”.²²

The ATU Gagauzia - a Russophile element

The formation of ATU Gagauzia was mainly determined by the mistrust towards both the Republic of Moldova statehood and by the fear of Moldova’s unification with Romania.

Throughout the existence of the ATU Gagauzia, no system for the consolidation of the Gagauz language was built up. Moreover, intellectuals, as well as members of the People’s Assembly of the ATU Gagauzia consider that the Gagauz language is in decline and is on the brink of extinction.²³²⁴ Even some individuals who were activists in 1989-1990 admit that there is a “hideous form of *mankurtisation*” in the ATU Gagauzia.²⁵ The website of the Comrat administration contains solely information in Russian.²⁶ The local regulatory framework also exists and can be accessed only in Russian.

The opinion survey, conducted in the southern region of Republic of Moldova, within the timeframe of November 21st – December 2nd, 2015, shows that 82,1% of ATU Gagauzia population supports the incorporation of Crimea into Russia, while 70,6% think that as “a result of the Euromaidan, fascists came to power in Ukraine”.²⁷

In addition, 64,3% of respondents think that Republic of Moldova belongs to the „Russkii Mir”; 91,1% prefer to watch

²² Barometer of Public Opinion, April 2017, bop.ipp.md.

²³ [Three members of the Gagauz General Assembly propose the development of a draft law „On saving the Gagaguz language”], video available at: <http://old.gagauzmedia.md/index.php?newsid=11438>.

²⁴ [A project meant to preserve the Gagauz language and culture was launched in ATU Gagauzia], video available at: <http://old.gagauzmedia.md/index.php?newsid=9142>.

²⁵ [Fiodor Marinoglu: Gagauzia loses its language], video at: old.gagauzmedia.md/index.php?newsid=12012.

²⁶ Official page of the Bashkan of Gagauzia: an autonomous territorial unit in Moldova: gagauzia.md, Official page of the General Assembly of Gagauzia], at: halktoplushu.md.

²⁷ [Moldova between West and East: Opinions about Gagauzia and Taraclia], <http://ipp.md/2016-09/moldova-intre-est-si-vest-viziuni-din-gagauzia-si-taraclia-2/>

TV shows in Russian Language and subsequently, the TV Channels from the Russian Federation enjoy the highest level of trust (83,2%) among the Gagauz people, even compared to the Moldovan ones (43,2%).

Thus, the ATU Gagauzia is an unsuccessful example, with negative consequences for Republic of Moldova as a whole, of incorporating an ethnic minority into the Moldovan society and state.

Significant Propaganda, No Policy Response

As for responses to Russian propaganda in the Republic of Moldova, so far there is no coherent policy. This in part may be because the Moldovan state itself has not formulated a clear line in its foreign policy, and in how to respond to Russian activity. Depending on the “colour” of the governments in Chişinău, the attitudes, at the declarative level, oscillate from one extreme to another. However, the coherent attitudes, based on the national interest of the Republic of Moldova, are lacking.

As a result, there is no State policy for securing the internal information space. Even worse is that the Moldovan State does not realise the importance of the competition within the information space and, by promoting anti-democratic policies domestically, it is unable to compete with Russia and unable to counteract the Russian propaganda.

MAPPING THE ODNOKLASSNIKI NETWORK IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

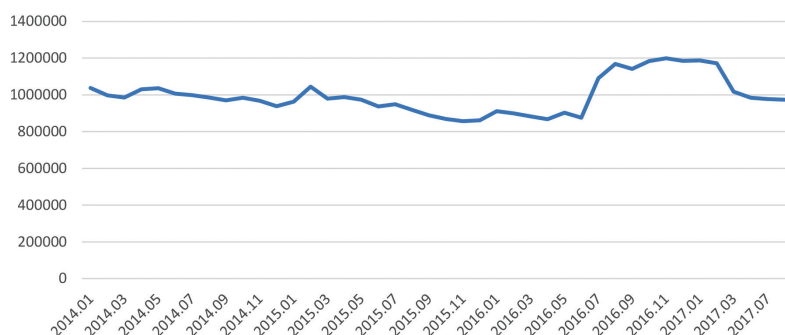
The *Odnoklassniki* social network, launched in 2006 in the Russian Federation, is based on the concept of restoring the relationship and communicating with former school mates and friends through the Internet (*Odnoklassniki* is literally translated from Russian as *classmates*). *Odnoklassniki* is the second most widely used social network in the Russian Federation, after *Vkontakte*, and it enjoys popularity in the post-Soviet area. In January 2017, the network had 290 million registered profiles and a monthly audience of 73 million unique users.²⁸ Today, the social network belongs to Mail.Ru Group Company, whose majority shareholder is the billionaire Alisher Usmanov.²⁹

According to online audience measurements, in August 2017, *Odnoklassniki* was the most popular website in the Republic of Moldova, with more than 1 million unique visitors per month.³⁰ For comparison, Facebook had about 760 000 users, *Vkontakte* – 250 000 active users, Twitter – 25 000 users.³¹

Although the number of *Odnoklassniki* users overall declined over the past years, decreasing from 1 million in January 2014 to 875 000 in June 2016, it started to sharply increase between July and August 2016. Thus, by November 2016, the network registered nearly 325 000 new users in the Republic of Moldova.

Source:
Audit Bureau
of Circulation
and Internet

Number of users



²⁸ In 2016, the number of *Odnoklassniki* users increased by 10%" (ru). Interfax, January 2017 - <http://interfax.com.ua/news/economic/396363.html>.

²⁹ The same company also controls the most popular social network in the Russian Federation – *Vkontakte*.

³⁰ Report of the Audit Bureau of Circulation and Internet, August 2017 - http://www.bati.md/download/moldova_report_2014-2016.xls.

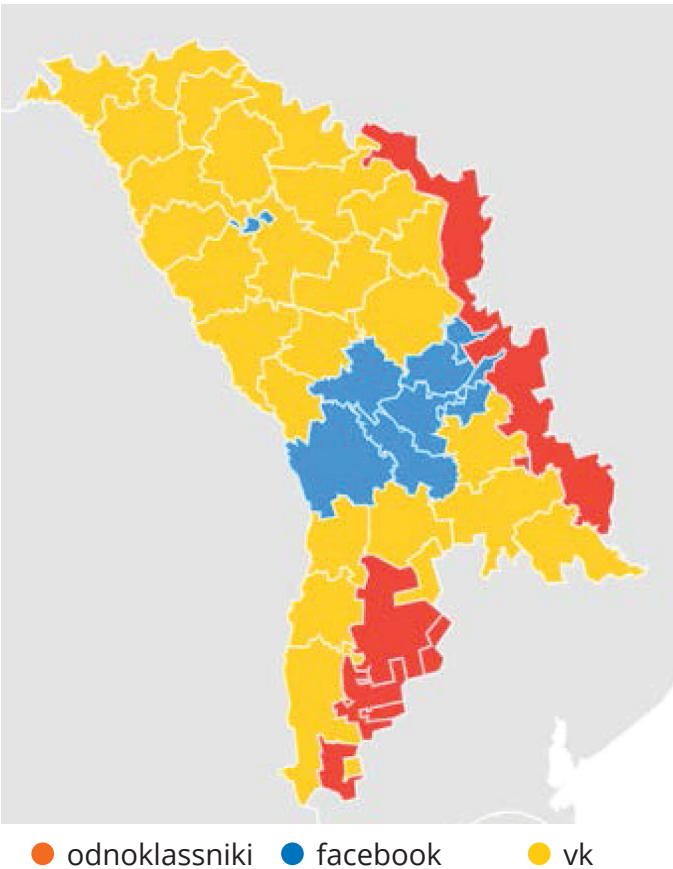
³¹ Gramatic Social Media Report, January 2017 – www.gramatic.md.

According to the data of the Audit Bureau of Circulation and Internet, 16% of *Odnoklassniki* users in the Republic of Moldova are aged over 50, 16% of them are between 40-49 years old, 19% - between 30-39 years old, 31% - between 20-29 years old, and 18% are aged under 20.

Only 28% of *Odnoklassniki* users in the Republic of Moldova stated they have a higher education background. 37% of *Odnoklassniki* users said they have a lyceum education background and 33% - a primary and / or professional education background. 2% of them have no educational background.

Approximately 54% of *Odnoklassniki* users in the Republic of Moldova live in Centre region of the country, 28% in the North region (including in Bălți), 18% in the South region (including in Gagauzia).³²

**Search of social media websites by region
(over the past 12 months)**



Source:
Google Trends

³² Gramatic Social Media Report, January 2017 – www.gramatic.md.

IDENTIFICATION, CLASSIFICATION AND GROUPING OF ODNOKLASSNIKI COMMUNITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Odnoklassniki communities in the RoM represent diverse interests, and often seem to serve as a means of connecting with a home that people have left behind. Media outlets enjoy a large following, as do communities with various political orientations. Within these political groups, pro-Russian groups are both prominent and numerous. By size, one pro-Russian community arguably is one of the largest primarily political groupings (fourth overall). Moreover, among the 170 communities with an informative or social-political character, 24 were pro-Russian, as compared with 10 pro-Western groups.

Pro-Russian voices therefore clearly play a major role in Odnoklassniki. In what follows, we give an overview on Odnoklassniki in the Republic of Moldova, as it relates to news, politics, and social development.

In total, the Moldovan segment of *Odnoklassniki* seems to have about 170 substantial and active communities that focus on news and politics. This number includes groups with more than 1 000 participants that have been active in the previous six months, and excludes groups with other emphases (such as sport, shopping, and other socializing or entertainment), and also excludes groups in which spam messages prevail, or which are closed.

Only 35 of these communities have over 10 000 participants, and only 3 of them over 100 000 participants. 48 of the identified communities focus on local topics, although content related to national events is also disseminated. There are 25 pages belonging to the mass-media of the Republic of Moldova. 24 out of these groups disseminate content with pronounced pro-Russia features, and 14 communities disseminate content that presents the European Union and Romania in a favourable light. The *Odnoklassniki* communities in the Transnistrian region - 10 and the ones in the Gagauz autonomy - 8 were grouped separately.

Number of members	Number of groups
1.000 – 5.000	103
5.000 – 10.000	32
10.000 – 25.000	25
25.000 – 50.000	5
50.000 – 100.000	2
100.000 – 200.000	1
200.000 – 300.000	1
300.000 – 400.000	0
400.000 – 500.000	1

Topic of the group	Number of groups
Local level	48
Mass-media	25
Socialisation: pro-Russia	24
Diaspora	14
Political party/ Politician	12
Socialisation: pro-West	10
transnistrian region	10
ATU Gagauzia	8
Socialisation: pro-Romania	4
Other	15

Informative and social-political socialisation pages and groups, by number of members.

Informative and social-political socialisation pages and groups, by topics.

In what follows, we give an overview on these groups, which is useful for understanding how Odnoklassniki works in a Moldovan context, which outlets receive significant attention, and how discussions of Russia are embedded within that context.

Ultimele știri din Moldova (The last news from Moldova) (about 487 700 members) and Descoperă Moldova (Discover Moldova) (about 239 000 members) are the most popular *Odnoklassniki* communities in the Republic of Moldova.^{33 34}

They disseminate almost exclusively the news from the websites www.moldova.org and www.stirilocale.md. www.moldova.org is a website launched in 1997 that belongs to the Moldova Foundation from the USA. Starting with 2010, the website is financially supported by grants from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).³⁵

The site publishes news from and about the Republic of Moldova. [Stirilocale.md](http://www.stirilocale.md) is a news website launched in 2011.

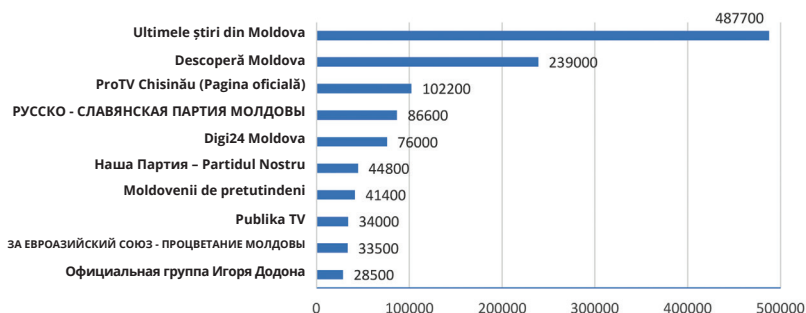
³³ The last news from Moldova page: <https://ok.ru/ultimele.stiri.din.moldova>.

³⁴ Discover Moldova page: <https://ok.ru/moldova2014>.

³⁵ Website of [moldova.org](http://www.moldova.org): <http://www.moldova.org/despre/>.

Odnoklassniki communities in Moldova. Number of members

According to the information available on the site, it reports on events in Moldovan villages and towns, and half of the website's visitors are Moldovans residing in other countries.³⁶



ProTV Chisinau (Pagina oficială) (about 101 700 members) is the official website of ProTV Chisinau news department.³⁷

It disseminates news from www.protv.md website, part of the international trust Central European Media Enterprises.

РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA)³⁸ (about 86 600 members) is the largest pro-Russian community on *Odnoklassniki* in the Republic of Moldova. In the description of the group, the indicated goal is „to defend the interests of the Russian-speaking population of the Republic of Moldova”.³⁹

Digi24 Moldova (about 75 000 members) is not the official Digi24 website.⁴⁰

This is a group that shares informative content, combined with entertainment, in Romanian language. Large shares of the group's posts are Digi24 news that are relevant for the Republic of Moldova. The group also disseminates news from other information sources that present Romania in a positive light. The most popular post in this group, shared in August 2017, makes fun of Igor Dodon.⁴¹ **Digi24 Moldova group** was

³⁶ News website: <http://stirilocale.md/despre-noi>.

³⁷ Official page of ProTV Channel: <https://ok.ru/protv.md>.

³⁸ Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova group: <https://www.ok.ru/vybormoldovy>.

³⁹ „Мы отстаиваем права Русскоязычного населения Республики Молдова. Наш лидер Топольницкий Олег”. (“We advocate for the rights of the Russian-speaking population of the Republic of Moldova. Our leader is Topolnitsky Oleg”).

⁴⁰ Digi24Moldova group: <https://ok.ru/digi24.moldova>.

⁴¹ Most popular post in Digi24Moldova group: <https://ok.ru/digi24.moldova/album/54339267723382/859012063862>.

classified by the authors of the survey as part of a network of the pro-Romania groups on *Odnoklassniki* in the Republic of Moldova, a network that includes the following groups: **Românii din Odnoklassniki (Romanians on Odnoklassniki)** (about 8 900 members), **Tinerii Moldovei ONG (Youth of Moldova NGO)** (about 8 100 members), **Basarabia e România! (Bessarabia is Romania!)** (about 3 900 members).^{42 43 44}

Наша Партия - Partidul Nostru (Our Party) (about 44 800 members) is the official *Odnoklassniki* page of Our Party led by the politician Renato Usatîi, the mayor “in exile” of the Bălţi municipality.⁴⁵

This page mostly shares information from www.ru1.md (the official site of Renato Usatîi) and the party news from www.pnru.md (the official website of **Our Party**).⁴⁶

The page also links to another page of the politician - Ренато Усатый Генеральный примар мун. Бельц (Renato Usatîi – the General Mayor of Bălţi municipality) (about 10 500 members).

Moldovenii de pretutindeni (Moldovans from all over the world) (about 41 400 members) is a group whose members post diverse informative content.⁴⁷

Publika TV (about 33 700 members) is the official *Odnoklassniki* page of Publika TV that is controlled by the Democratic Party of Moldova.⁴⁸

ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТЕНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (FOR THE EURASIAN UNION - PROSPERITY FOR MOLDOVA) (about 33 500 members) is a group intended for the „citizens of the Republic of Moldova and of other countries who support the idea of joining the Eurasian Union by the Republic of Moldova”.⁴⁹

⁴² Romanians on Odnoklassniki group: <https://ok.ru/romanism>.

⁴³ Youth of Moldova NGO group: <https://ok.ru/tineriimd>.

⁴⁴ Bessarabia is Romania group: <https://ok.ru/romaniamare>.

⁴⁵ Our Party group: ok.ru/novayapartia.

⁴⁶ News are also shared from the website www.1news.md, which belongs to West Media Ltd, founded by Ion Cilibii. A person with the same name donated 27 000 Lei for the election campaign of D. Ciubaşenco, the candidate of Our Party to the position of President of the Republic of Moldova.

⁴⁷ Moldovans from all over the world group: ok.ru/moldovenii.de.pretutindeni.

⁴⁸ Publika TV page: ok.ru/tvpublika.

⁴⁹ For the Eurasian Union – Prosperity for Moldova group: <https://ok.ru/referendum>.

Официальная группа Игоря Додона (The official group of Igor Dodon) (about 28 500 members) is the official *Odnoklassniki* page of the President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon.⁵⁰

The group posts press-releases of the Presidency, as well as relevant news about Igor Dodon's work as a President. The most popular post in this group is the message of thanks for the support provided by Renato Usatîi in the presidential campaign held in autumn 2016.⁵¹

In August 2017, the most popular post on the page was the congratulatory message on the occasion of the 26th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Moldova.⁵²

The largest Odnoklassniki communities in the transnistrian region

Name	Link	Members
TCB	https://ok.ru/tsvtiraspol	26000
Приднестровский портал	https://ok.ru/pridnestrov.portal	16000
Мы -Тираспольчане! Ми Тираспольці! Ам Тирасполений	https://ok.ru/mytiraspol	14000
Новые Города Приднестровья	https://ok.ru/group54831854845959	9500
Приднестровцы ЗА справедливость	https://ok.ru/pmr1online	9300

TCB (about 26 000 members) is the official website of TSV media group in the Transnistrian region, owned by Sheriff. This is the page with the largest number of members in the Transnistrian region. The editorial policy of TSV channel appears to follow the commercial interests of Sheriff company, which aims to perpetuate its business model by promoting the independence of the Transnistrian region.

Golos.md (about 20.000 members) contains posts from www.golos.md website, which is described as an "objective Russian-speaking news website in the Republic of Moldova"⁵³. It is part of "Realitatea" online press group owned by Dumitru Țîra. Realitatea.md page has about 19 200 members.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Official group of Igor Dodon: ok.ru/igordodoni.

⁵¹ The most popular post in Igor Dodon's group: ok.ru/igordodoni/topic/65992843247784.

⁵² The most popular post in August 2017 on the official group of Igor Dodon: ok.ru/igordodoni/topic/67167572115624.

⁵³ Golos.md page: ok.ru/golosmd.

⁵⁴ Realitatea.md page: ok.ru/realitatea.

Гагаузский Угол-Gagauz Köşesi (The Gagauz corner) (about 19 800 members) is a public page that shares videos, pictures and news about the Gagauz ethnic group and about “Gagauzia” autonomy. Alongside with apolitical posts about the cultural and everyday life of the inhabitants of the ATU Gagauzia, the posts about the prosperity of the former Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic and of the Gagauz people under the Soviet Union enjoy a special popularity, generating nostalgic comments about that period of time.

Name	Link	Members
Гагаузский Угол-Gagauz Köşesi	https://ok.ru/gagauzskiiugol	19800
Гагаузы, Все Сюда!!!	https://ok.ru/gagauztoplusu	17400
ГаГаУзы	https://ok.ru/gagauzy	12000
Новости АТО Гагаузия (Гагауз Ери)	https://ok.ru/gagauznews	7200
Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!!	https://ok.ru/gagauziyaz	5500

The largest Gagauz Odnoklassniki communities

	102.2K	1.2K	88.4K	1.7K	2.4K	0.073%
	76.0K	1.0K	32.5K	922	1.5K	0.045%
	34.0K	906	10.1K	181	82	0.034%
	20.0K	310	780	6	4	0.013%
	19.2K	1.5K	4.0K	89	126	0.015%
	19.0K	721	4.2K	725	578	0.040%
	15.6K	193	2.6K	90	14	0.091%
	8.4K	145	632	89	56	0.064%
	6.9K	232	6.6K	178	256	0.438%
	6.1K	1.3K	1.2K	37	53	0.016%
	4.2K	283	1.8K	154	119	0.173%

The mass-media on Odnoklassniki

The *Odnoklassniki* pages of the Moldovan media with the largest number of participants are, as follows: **ProTV Chişinău (the official website)**, **Digi24 Moldova**, **Publika TV**, **Golos.md**, **Realitatea.md**, **Комсомольская правда - Молдова - KP.MD**, **stirilocale.md**, **Point.md**, **ALFA NEWS - свежие новости Молдовы (ALFA NEWS – fresh news from Moldova)**, **UNIMEDIA - Ştiri din Moldova (UNIMEDIA- News from Moldova)** and **Sputnik Молдова**.

Realitatea.md (about 19 200 members) shares content from www.realitate.md, part of „Realitatea” online press group.

Комсомольская правда - Молдова - KP.MD (about 19 000) shares content from www.kp.md, a website owned by Комсомольская правда – BASARABIA Ltd.

Ştirilocale.md (about 15 600 members) shares content from www.stirilocale.md, a website owned by IM NEWS MEDIA ONLINE Ltd.

Point.md (about 8 400 members) shares content from www.point.md, a website owned by SIMPALS Ltd.

ALFA NEWS - свежие новости Молдовы (ALFA NEWS – fresh news from Moldova) (about 6 900 members) shares content from www.alfanews.md, a website owned by the News Agency MEDIA PRES GRUP Ltd.

UNIMEDIA - Ştiri din Moldova (UNIMEDIA- News from Moldova) (about 6 100 members) shares content from www.unimedia.md, a website owned by MIRAZA Ltd.

Sputnik Молдова (about 4 300 members) shares content from www.sputnik.md, part of Rossiya Segodnya media conglomerate, set up and operated by the authorities of the Russian Federation.

A network of online communities shares almost exclusively content from www.independent.md. In addition to the official page **Independent.md** (about 3 200 members)⁵⁵, it also includes the groups: **DE TOATE (EVERYTHING): Ştiri, muzică, poze, divertisment, bancuri! (News, music, pictures, entertainment, jokes!)** (about 19 700 members)⁵⁶, **Gustă din puterea informaţiei: Ştiri, divertisment (Taste**

⁵⁵ Independent.md official page: ok.ru/group/52064399196369

⁵⁶ So-called Everything group: ok.ru/statushd.

the power of information: News, entertainment) (about 4 900 members)⁵⁷, **Moldova cu de toate, cu bune și cu rele! (Moldova as it is, with good and bad points!)** (about 3 600 members)⁵⁸. The 4 communities are inter-connected and contain links redirecting the users among the communities.

Renato Usatîi, the president of Our Party and Igor Dodon, President of the Republic of Moldova, former president of the Party of Socialists, are prominent leaders in the top of the politicians who are present on *Odnoklassniki* network.

4 out of the 5 top political communities belong to Our Party and Renato Usatîi - Наша Партия - Partidul Nostru (Our Party) (about 44 800 members)⁵⁹, Ренато Усатый Генеральный примар мун. Бельц (**Renato Usatîi – the General Mayor of Bălți municipality**) (about 10 600 members)⁶⁰, **Partidul NOSTRU cu Renato Usatii! Soroca (Our Party with Renato Usatîi! Soroca)** (about 6 300 members)⁶¹ and Мы идем дальше! Сила в Правде! (We go ahead! **The Power is in the truth!**) (about 4 300 members)⁶². Moreover, Our Party has developed a network of groups supporting Our Party and Renato Usatîi at the level of the districts of the Republic of Moldova, but this network is less followed.

The official page of Igor Dodon (about 28 500 members), although it has fewer members than the one of Renato Usatîi, has a clearly higher level of interaction, having generated 205 100 appreciations, 13 000 shares and 122 000 comments between January 1st - August 31st 2017.⁶³ In addition to it, the personal page of Igor Dodon is followed by about 48 600 *Odnoklassniki* users.⁶⁴ The group of the Party of Socialists on *Odnoklassniki* has about 1 900 members.⁶⁵

Compared to the number of *Odnoklassniki* communities of Renato Usatîi and Igor Dodon, the pages of Andrei Năstase (about 4 300 members)⁶⁶, Vlad Plahotniuc⁶⁷ (about 3 500 mem-

⁵⁷ Taste the power of information group: ok.ru/group/54866453987344

⁵⁸ Moldova as it is ... group: ok.ru/moldovatre.

⁵⁹ Our Party page: ok.ru/novayapartia.

⁶⁰ Renato Usatîi – the General Mayor of Bălți municipality page: ok.ru/renatousatii.

⁶¹ Our Party with Renato Usatîi group: ok.ru/partidulno.

⁶² We go ahead! The Power is in the truth! Group: ok.ru/myidemdals.

⁶³ Official page of Igor Dodon: ok.ru/igordodoni.

⁶⁴ Personal page of Igor Dodon: ok.ru/igor.dodon1.

⁶⁵ The Socialists' Party Group: ok.ru/socialistii.

⁶⁶ Andrei Nastase page: ok.ru/andreinastase.

⁶⁷ Vladimir Plahotniuc page: ok.ru/plahotniuc.

The political parties on Odnoklassniki

						ERpost
	44.8K	200	16.6K	1.7K	2.4K	0.231%
	28.5K	650	205.1K	13.0K	122.0K	1.833%
	10.6K	946	52.7K	4.9K	2.0K	0.596%
	6.3K	27	403	34	18	0.267%
	4.3K	459	9.5K	1.2K	919	0.591%
	3.9K	6	616	28	41	2.962%
	3.5K	31	2.6K	302	229	2.873%
	2.0K	76	2.0K	159	126	1.536%
	1.9K	417	6.3K	651	504	0.936%

bers) and Maia Sandu (about 2 000 members)⁶⁸ have a limited following. There is also a huge difference between the frequency of posts on the pages of Renato Usatîi and Igor Dodon and on the ones of Andrei Năstase, Vlad Plahotniuc and Maia Sandu. Throughout the period January 1st - August 31st 2017, the official page of Renato Usatîi had 946 posts, the official page of Igor Dodon - 650 posts, while the page of Andrei Năstase had only 6 posts, the one of Vlad Plahotniuc – 31 posts, and the one of Maia Sandu – 76 posts. Taking into account the low number of posts, the high level of interaction on the 3 pages is irrelevant.

The largest local *Odnoklassniki* communities in the Republic of Moldova are listed in Annex no. 1. The group **КИШИНЕВ - город детства! (Chisinau – the city of my childhood!)** has approximately 14 000 members, the group **БЕЛЬЦЫ (Bălți)** - about 8 500 members, and **Окница - Осніța - capitala nordului! (Ocnița – the capital of the Northern region!)** – 5 000 members. As far as the diaspora is concerned, the citizens of the Republic of Moldova living now in the Russian Federation, in France, Israel and Italy have established online communities with over 10 000 members (Annex no. 2).

⁶⁸ Maia Sandu page: ok.ru/group/5494175950438.

THE NETWORK OF COMMUNITIES WITH A PRO-RUSSIAN AFFINITY

A closer look at the communities with a clearly pro-Russian affinity shows that pages and groups promoting the traditional Russian messaging are widespread and prominent on Moldovan *Odnoklassniki*. The pro-Russian groups include, in addition to the pro-Russian socialising groups, the pages of the pro-Russian parties and their affiliated media, and the pages of the Russian media in the Republic of Moldova. Generally, these groups often appear to focus on disseminating pro-Russian information by various online outlets, several of which are part of the Russian propagandistic machine. Many of these communities also seem to operate as a network.

Five pro-Russian groups on Odnoklassniki stand out, for their size and activity.

РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA) (about 86 600 members) is the largest pro-Russian *Odnoklassniki* community in the Republic of Moldova. In the description of the group, the indicated goal is “to defend the interests of the Russian-speaking population of the Republic of Moldova”.⁶⁹⁷⁰

Mișcarea Populară pentru Uniunea Vamală (the People’s Movement for the Customs Union), registered with the Ministry of Justice on 19th of September 2014, changed its name to the Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova (RSPM) in February 2016. The President of the Russian-Slavic Party, Oleg Topolnitsky, was on the second position in the list of candidates of the Electoral Bloc “The Customs Union – the choice of Moldova” in 2014 legislative election. Although the party does not actively participate in the political life of the Republic of Moldova, its page on *Odnoklassniki* network is very active, sharing mainly information from the websites www.vybor.md (an informative website associated with the RSPM),

⁶⁹ The group of Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova: ok.ru/vybormoldovy.

⁷⁰ Мы отстаиваем права Русскоязычного населения Республики Молдова. Наш лидер Топольницкий Олег. (“We advocate for the rights of the Russian-speaking population of the Republic of Moldova. Our leader is Topolnitsky Oleg”)

www.prsm.md (the website of the RSPM, president: Oleg Topolnitsky), www.slavyane.md (the website of the public association The Slavic Community of the Republic of Moldova, President: Oleg Topolnitsky), www.votat.md (Oleg Topolnitsky's personal blog).

The page also pushes out content from Russian news aggregators which are either false, or present certain foreign policy events in a way that is favourable to the Russian Federation: www.u-point.ru, www.slu4ai.ru, www.greazy.net, www.liferus.info, www.politoff.ru, www.rusnovosti24.ru, www.smotrym.ru, www.dumai.ru, www.liferus.info. It is noteworthy that some of these websites have been registered (and are most likely managed) by citizens of the Republic of Moldova.⁷¹ Nearly 20% out of 24 000 posts and of 12 communities with pro-Russian affinities on *Odnoklassniki* Moldova selected for the analysis have posted links to these sites.

On the walls of these pages is posted, in particular, content (pictures, videos and links to articles) containing the main leitmotifs of the Russian propaganda. Often, such content is produced by the Russian media, the pro-Russian media and the pro-Russian organisations of the Republic of Moldova, and the members of the pages/ groups only have the role to share this content on their networks of virtual friends.

ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТЕНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (FOR THE EURASIAN UNION-PROSPERITY FOR MOLDOVA) (about 33 500 members) is a group of "citizens of the Republic of Moldova and of other countries, who support the idea of joining the Eurasian Union by the Republic of Moldova."⁷² This group posts news from the websites: www.aif.md⁷³, www.kompromat.md⁷⁴, www.vybor.md, www.prsm.md, www.votat.md,

⁷¹ The e-mail of Victor Shtchepanovsky (Bălți, 1987, IT technician, temporarily unemployed), who was on the 79th position in the list of candidates of BeA-MUV for the legislative election in 2014, served as a basis for the registration of liferus.info and greazy.net. His wife, Anna Shtchepanovskaya (Tcherevatova) insistently shares content from the websites slu4ai.ru and u-point.ru on a number of pro-Russian Odnoklassniki communities in the Republic of Moldova.

⁷² *This group is intended for adult citizens of the Republic of Moldova and of other countries, who support the idea of joining the Eurasian Union by the Republic of Moldova.*

⁷³ The website aif.md is owned by Exclusiv Media Ltd, founded by Corneliu Furculiță, deputy in the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, representing the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova.

⁷⁴ The website kompromat.md was registered by Vladimir Guneavoy.

www.slavyane.md, www.rusnovosti24.ru, www.slu4ai.ru, www.u-point.ru, www.greazy.net, www.politoff.ru, www.liferus.info, www.news-front.info⁷⁵, www.rossaprimavera.ru⁷⁶.

One of the most popular posts in this group was a August 2017 piece “Will the war in Transnistria begin in 2017?”, along with a photograph of the Russian general Aleksandr Lebedev, accompanied by his words: *“Tomorrow, I will have breakfast in Tiraspol, and if only one bullet is fired in Transnistria, I will have lunch in Chisinau, and dinner - in Bucharest”*.⁷⁷⁷⁸

Name	Link	Members
РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA)	https://www.Odnoklassniki.ru/vybormoldovy	86600
ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (FOR THE EURASIAN UNION –PROSPERITY FOR MOLDOVA)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/referendum	33500
Лига русской молодёжи Республики Молдова (The Russian Youth League of the Republic of Moldova)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/ligarusmoldova	18000
МОЛДОВА ОНЛАЙН (новости, события, мнения) (Moldova online (news, events, opinions))	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/moldovao	17000
MOLDOVA	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/moldovaunita	14500

⁷⁵ The news agency NewsFront is a project of „South-East Front” Information Centre, which started its activity in March 2014 (in the context of the annexation of Crimea). This agency reports events from Russia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine from the perspective of the Russian Federation’s policies. The agency presents its goal as follows: “to defend the interests of the Russian civilisation, unveil the enemies of the Russian world”.

⁷⁶ Informative website of the movement Суть времени / Esența timpului (The Essence of Time) – a patriotic left-wing movement in the Russian Federation, whose leader is the Russian political scientist Sergey Kurghinean, an ideologist and promoter of Novorossia concept.

⁷⁷ Will the war in Transnistria begin in 2017?.

⁷⁸ Tomorrow, I will have breakfast in Tiraspol, and if only one bullet is fired in Transnistria... I will have lunch in Chisinau, and dinner - in Bucharest, ok.ru/referendum/topic/67203530943437.

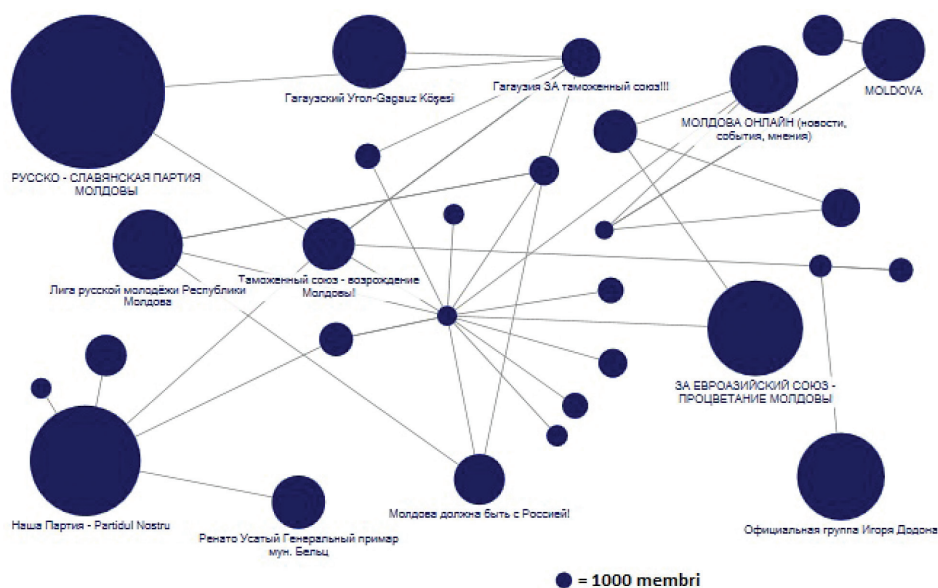
Таможенный союз - возрождение Молдовы! (The Customs Union - the revival of Moldova!)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/tamozhen	10000
Молдова должна быть с Россией! (Moldova should be with Russia!)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/moldovadol	9500
Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/minamoscovei	9400
MOLDOVA	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/patriotismmoldova	6100
vesteMD (News MD)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/vestemd	4600
Родина - Евразийский Союз (Our homeland - the Eurasian Union)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/rodinayev	3200
Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldavia-Our Homeland is the USSR!)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/moldaviavtm	3100
R. Moldova-Noua Generație (The Republic of Moldova - the New Generation)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/r.moldovan.tineret.ngeneratie	2900
Молдавское Сопротивление! Rezistenta Moldoveneasca!(The Moldovan Resistance)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/moldavskoe	2500
ЗА ТАМОЖЕННЫЙ СОЮЗ!!! (FOR THE CUSTOMS UNION !!!)	https://Odnoklassniki.ru/zatamozhen	2400

Лига русской молодёжи Республики Молдова (The Russian Youth League in the Republic of Moldova) (about 18 000 members) is a group of the public association The Russian Youth League in the Republic of Moldova (www.ligarus.org).⁷⁹ According to the information on the organisation's website, "the Russian Youth League in the Republic of Moldova is an apolitical and independent public organisation, established on the basis of the freely expressed will of the Russian youth". "Defending the sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova" and "stopping the dissemination of fascist ideas, of the aggressive nationalism and of the religious intolerance in

⁷⁹ The Group of Russian League Youth from Republic of Moldova: ok.ru/ligarusmoldova.

the Republic of Moldova” are among the stated goals of the organisation. In December 2012, the Russian Youth League became the youth wing of the Social Movement “Родина - Евразийский Союз” (Our Homeland – the Eurasian Union).

This group shares content from the websites: www.aif.md (Argumenty i Fakty Moldova), www.basarabia.md⁸⁰, www.kompromat.md, www.rodina.md, www.slavyane.md, www.vkurse.md⁸¹, www.vybor.md.



МОЛДОВА ОНЛАЙН (новости, события, мнения) (**MOLDOVA ONLINE (news, events, opinions)**) (about 17 000 members) is a closed group that shares pro-Russian content, especially from www.sputnik.md.⁸²

⁸⁰ The reporters of anticoruptie.md website analysed basarabia.md and pointed out that, although „the authors who publish opinion articles under the “Blog” column seem to have different points of view, however, the pro-Russian visions prevail” anticoruptie.md/ro/investigatii/social/proprietary-site-urilor-de-stiri-si-interesele-pe-care-le-promoveaza. Moreover, the articles on basarabia.md are actively disseminated on almost all pro-Russian groups, as well as on many local groups. The profile picture on Odnoklassniki of the disseminator of such news shows a man wearing the uniform of the so-called “Transnistrian army” (a false profile?).

⁸¹ The website was registered by the public association The Youth Organisation *We Together* from Bălți municipality. The website aims to “Prevent the brainwashing of citizens of the Republic of Moldova by the venal (unscrupulous) media financed from the West”.

⁸² The Group *Moldova Online*: ok.ru/moldovao.

According to its description, the group **MOLDOVA** (about 14 500 members) was set up to “fight the dirty games imposed by Romania and NATO”.⁸³ One of the most popular posts in August 2017 was information from www.basarabia.md which criticized the Moldovan and Romanian authorities for declaring Dmitri Rogozin, the special representative of the Russian Federation for the transnistrian region, a persona non-grata in the Republic of Moldova.

Almost all communities with a pro-Russian affinity refer to each other through the “links” section of their profile. As a result, it is possible to establish the interconnections between them and to map their virtual network. The map highlights the importance of each community within the network, as well as the indirect links between different communities, giving a better understanding of how pro-Russian content is being promoted.

⁸³ *Moldova Group*: ok.ru/moldovaunita.

THE TOPICS OF THE RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA ON ODNOKLASSNIKI

The frequency of the Russian propaganda messages

The content analysis of the messages posted on *Odnoklassniki* social network pursued **the goal** to identify the main Russian propaganda topics / issues and to estimate the share of propaganda messages disseminated within the social groups subjected to the survey. In addition, the format for the expression of the content / topics and the user's feedback were analysed.

About 57% of the total number of 1139 analysed messages (100%) are propaganda messages, of which 38% are overt propaganda messages, and 19% of messages present the propaganda content in a covert way. Messages with a general content, with no propaganda elements, make up 43% out of the total. Among the social groups that disseminate and promote to a larger extent the propaganda messages are: Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation), Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!), РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA), ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (FOR THE EURASIAN UNION –PROSPERITY FOR MOLDOVA), Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova – Our Homeland is the USSR!), Таможенный союз - возрождение Молдовы! (The Customs Union- the revival of Moldova!), etc. (See *Chart 2*). Most of the posts are published by the administrators of the social groups.

- overt propaganda
- covert propaganda
- messages with a general content

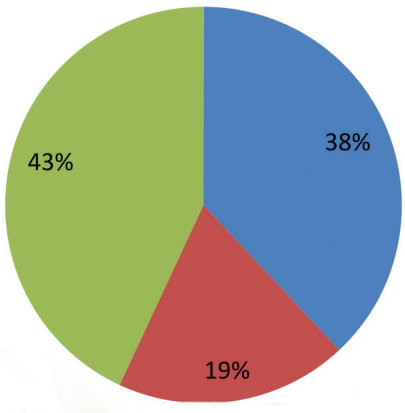


Chart 1.
The share of propagandistic messages disseminated on Odnoklassniki

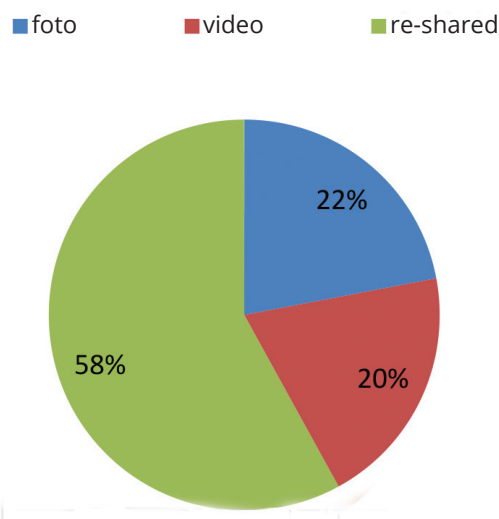
Chart 2.
Distribution of
the posts with
a propagan-
distic content,
by groups
subjected to
the survey, %



The content analysis of *Odnoklassniki* posts pointed out that the surveyed groups are actively involved in sharing of a variety of propaganda messages with various topics. For example, the social group „РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ” (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA) posts propaganda messages on most of the identified topics (see Annex 1).

The largest parts of posted messages are re-shared from other pages / groups / websites. Every fifth message has a photo and video format (See Chart 3).

Chart 3.
The distri-
bution of
the posts, by
format of the
message



The graphical representation of the frequency of the words used by the surveyed online communities confirms the same thematic propaganda directions, as the ones identified by the analysis (See Table 1). The quantification was done based on 1 200 000 words selected among the sample of 1 139 messages. The graphical representation of the word frequency ("word clouds") highlights the central words which are most commonly used within the surveyed communities and the communication language used by them. Thus, the longer a word and the more it is pronounced, the oftener it is found in the sample.

The analysis of word frequency shows that there is a heavy emphasis on Russia as a topic. The word *Russian Federation* is found in multiple forms of conjugations (n=2560⁸⁴): *Rossia* (Россия), *Rossiiskoy* (Российской), *Rossiei* (Россией), *Rossiiskih* (Российских) and refers not only to messages which are explicitly in favour of the Russian Federation, but also to the other propaganda topics identified within the study (See Chart 5). The concept “Moldova” (*Moldova, Moldovî, Respubliki, Moldove, Gosudarstvo*)⁸⁵ is also used to a large extent, characterising a number of propaganda topics (in favour of the Russian Federation, ethnic Moldovenism, federalisation, anti-European Union, etc.) (See Chart 4).

Other commonly used words in *Odnoklassniki* social network include *USA*, *Ukraine*, *countries*, *President*, and *Dodon*. Igor Dodon is the most frequently cited political figure in the messages we analysed (See Chart 4).

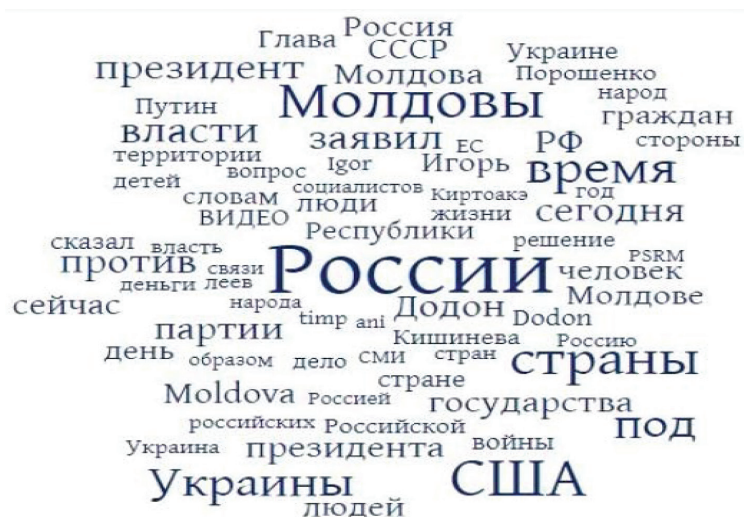


Chart 4.
*Frequency of
the words used
on Odnoklass-
niki social
network*

⁸⁴ Frequency of using the term, concept in the analysed posts / Total number of uses of the concept.

⁸⁵ Молдова, Молдовы, Республики, Молдове, Государство.

THE MAIN TOPICS OF THE OVERT PROPAGANDA

The main topics on these social groups are *anti-Ukraine* (21.1%), *in favour of the Russian Federation* (20%), *anti-European Union* (13.1%), etc. The least common topics / issues are anti-local leaders propaganda messages, ethnic chauvinistic Moldovenism, and anti-NATO. (See Table 1).

Table 1.
Distribution of the topics/ issues of overt propaganda identified in the framework of the study (multiple response)

	Topics posted	Number of messages	The share (%) in the total number of messages containing elements of overt propaganda (435)	The share (%) in the total sample (1139)
	TOTAL including:	435	100	38,1%
1.	Anti-Ukraine	92	21,1	8
2.	In favour of the Russian Federation	87	20	7,6
3.	Anti-EU	57	13,1	5
4.	Anti-USA	53	12,1	4,6
5.	Soviet nostalgia	34	7,8	2,9
6.	The Great Patriotic War	26	5,9	2,3
7.	In favour of Igor Dodon	26	5,9	2,2
8.	Federalisation/ separatism	25	5,7	2,2
9.	anti-Romanian sentiment	24	5,5	2,1
10.	Anti-NATO	17	3,9	1,4
11.	Ethnic Moldovenism	15	3,4	1,3
12.	Anti-local leaders	4	0,9	0,3
13.	Other issues	59	13,5	5,2

The messages in this category are related to a variety of topics and subtopics, among which:

• **Anti-Ukraine.** The posts on this topic cast Ukraine, and its government, as ineffective, discriminatory and illegitimate. Most of these posts combine several propaganda topics: presenting the Euromaidan protests as destabilisation actions instigated by the Western secret services (mainly from the USA); showing Ukraine's economic and political instability as

resulting directly from its association with the EU; categorising the Ukrainian government as fascist, illegal, unpopular; presenting the Ukrainian army's actions as being directed against its own brothers, against the citizens of Ukraine; legitimising the separatism in Donetsk and Lugansk regions and promoting the Malorossia project or the federalisation of Ukraine; showing the Ukrainian government as anti-Russian ("*Ukraine is against the Russian language*"), and accusing Ukraine of having imposed the visa requirement for the Russian citizens; and, overall, emphasizing the incapacity of the Ukrainian government to ensure the country's economic, energy and territorial integrity.

- **The posts in favour of the Russian Federation** highlight the advantages of Moldova's integration into the Eurasian Economic Union, including: the economic and political stability, the military security due to the "Russian military power", the economic growth as a result of the "humanitarian aid provided by the Federation Russian", and the cultural similarities due to "the identification with the Russian Empire and the Soviet past". In addition to the economic and political benefits, the messages also highlight cultural arguments such as promoting the Russian language and the "civilising mission of the Russian Federation", promoting the links with the ex-Soviet area by invoking the common history, and the Orthodox Christian traditions. They also promote Russia's military superiority and its capacity to cope with the EU / USA sanctions. Moreover, the Russian Federation is seen as a defender of the Russians in the former Soviet area, as well as of other Russian-speaking minorities. The sanctions imposed by the Russian Federation are not criticised; on the contrary, they are perceived as a legitimate reaction to the actions of the pro-European government.

The visits of Igor Dodon to the Russian Federation and the amnesty for the Moldovan workers have been widely publicised. The insulting statements of Dmitri Rogozin about the Republic of Moldova after being banned from visiting the Transnistrian region have also received attention. But these statements were interpreted as an attempt of the Moldovan government to destabilise the situation in the area, a view supported by Igor Dodon.

- **The propaganda messages against the European Union** are critical both of the principles of the EU, as well as of specific policies. The European policy for free movement and for

integration of the refugees is a particular point of emphasis. Other subtopics in this category of messages include homophobia, accusation of the Baltic countries of anti-Russian sentiment and fascism, anti-economic cooperation with the West, anti-diaspora, recommendations on how to counteract the European propaganda, and anti-Association Agreement. Certain messages in this category are also related to other topics, including: anti-Maia Sandu, anti-NATO, in favour of Igor Dodon, anti-Romania, anti-USA, and German fascism.

- **Anti-USA** propaganda messages focus on US military interventions in Syria and in other countries of the world. The USA are characterised as a state that violates the sovereignty and the independence of countries under the pretext of promoting democracy, and of causing the death of thousands of people under such pretexts. The anti-USA component is also found in anti-NATO, anti-West, and anti-capitalism messages. The USA are blamed for ISIS, for artificial wars, and any intervention, whether military or civil, is described negatively. As in the case of anti-NATO messages, videos or pictures are presented to call into question the military training and the physical stamina of American soldiers.

- **The Soviet nostalgia** is promoted through messages that emphasise the sense of belonging in the former Soviet era and the existence of a common identity created throughout the existence of the USSR. The messages evoke the advantages of socialism, and the Soviet military power, while associating the Russian Federation with the positive aspects of this tradition. The Soviet nostalgic propaganda messages also are often combined with anti-European Union rhetoric.

- **The topic of the Great Patriotic War** is directly associated with USSR liberating the Republic of Moldova from (Romanian) fascism. Such posts use the largest number of symbolic elements (the ribbon of Saint George, the red flag, the Soviet uniform) and encourage the identification of the Moldovan citizens with the Soviet values. Igor Dodon is the central character of such posts, because he is a bearer of the symbolic elements during public events (ex., the ribbon of Saint George), but also because he is the main promoter of celebrating the National Victory Day on the 9th of May, seen as contradictory to Europe Day. The topic of the Great Patriotic War is used as a tool for promoting the military and strategic superiority of the Russian Federation as the successor of the USSR, the political

and cultural unity of the Soviet peoples, “the political AND cultural unity”, and the social welfare in the Soviet period.

- **The federalisation.** There is a tendency on *Odnoklassniki* to report on the events occurred in the Transnistrian region or in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (ATU) only from the perspective of the statements of these regions’ leaders. Moreover, as far as the Transnistrian region and the events in this region are concerned, they are seen from the perspective of the Russian stakeholders: Dmitri Rogozin; of the Transnistrian region separatist stakeholders: Krasnoselskii; or, in the last instance, of Igor Dodon. A number of arguments are disseminated on *Odnoklassniki* network in favour of strengthening the autonomy of the ATU Gagauzia through the “anti-involvement of the central authorities in the ATU Gagauzia”. As for the Transnistrian separatism is concerned, messages are shared to support the Russian military presence in the Transnistrian region.

- **The anti-Romanian sentiment.** Most messages in this category promote negative attitudes towards Romania, and many of them are combined with anti-EU, anti-USA, anti-Mihai Ghimpu or anti-Dorin Chirtoacă rhetoric. In these *Odnoklassniki* messages, Romania is categorised as *fascist*, and consequently all movements that promote closer integration as having a fascist essence. Romania’s fascism is emphasized by invoking Ion Antonescu’s actions during the Second World War, including Romania’s alliance with Nazi Germany, and the deportation of Jews and Roma people, as well as other fascist crimes.

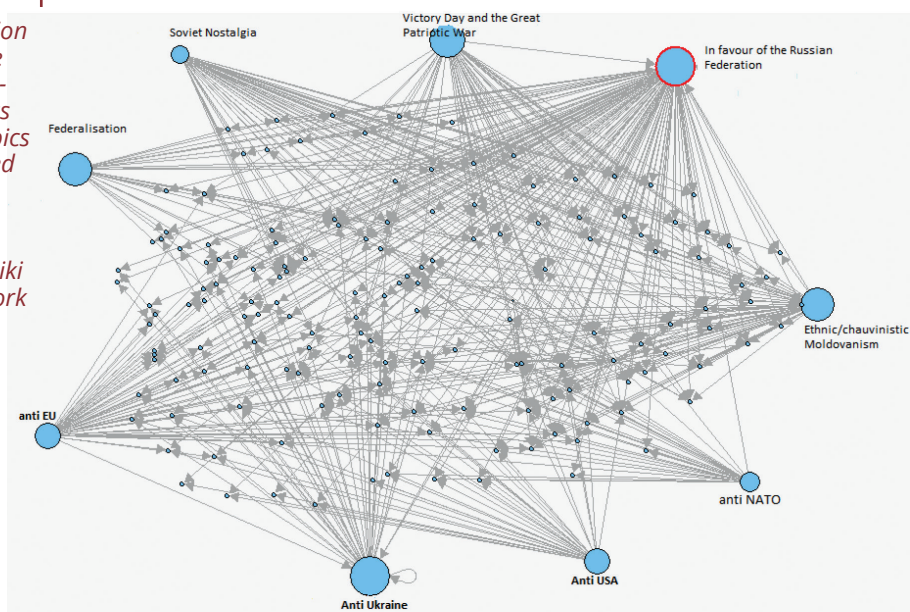
In addition, attempts are made to create and prove the existence of a Moldovan ethnic identity, superior to the Romanian identity, emphasising the primacy of Moldova and of the Moldovan language over the Romanian language, and the necessity to restore the borders of the Principality of Moldova.

- **The anti-NATO** topic shows the same general trends, as the trends identified in anti-USA, anti-EU, anti-West messages. The North Atlantic Alliance is portrayed as an aggressive bloc, as an enemy, with expansionist tendencies. NATO is seen as a threat to the Republic of Moldova and its neutral status. The anti-NATO rhetoric is supported through the dissemination of the statements of Igor Dodon and Vladimir Putin. The threat coming from this bloc is associated with the military exercises in Romania and in the Baltic countries. In

parallel and paradoxically, attempts are made to discredit NATO by showing the poor military training of the member states' armed forces, especially of the ones of the USA.

• **59 out of the overt propaganda messages** contain a variety of topics, including: anti-refugees, anti-Germany, Islamophobia, anti-Turkey, anti-(pro-European)-diaspora, against the march supporting the sexual minorities, incitement to hatred, anti-Lithuania, anti-Israel, anti-China, etc. (See Chart 5).

Chart 5.
The inter-correlation between the overt propaganda topics and sub-topics disseminated within the pro-Russian segment of Odnoklassniki social network



There is a close interconnection between topics and sub-topics, as a closer analysis shows, with a particular interconnection between the messages in favour of the Russian Federation, the Great Patriotic War and anti-European Union (See Chart 5).

THE COVERT PROPAGANDA MESSAGES

The covert propaganda messages, which account for 19% out of the 1139 messages focus on discrediting the local right-wing, centre-right politicians and the government policies in general. The largest shares of messages are anti-Ghimpu, anti-Dorin Chirtoacă, anti-Maia Sandu, anti-Plahotniuc, and anti-Vlad Filat. Most of these messages can be categorised as having Russian propaganda elements, because discrediting of the pro-European politicians helps to legitimize Igor Dodon, who is in favour of the Russian Federation. Thus, every fifth message of covert propaganda promotes the personality of Igor Dodon.

One out of seven covert propaganda messages is anti-government. The messaging here is not so much focused on policy or even politics, but at generating antipathy or even revulsion towards the government, arguably with the purpose of destabilizing the domestic situation within the country, which appears to be one of the interests of the Russian Federation.

Analysis of the top 50 messages with a maximum level of interaction

To identify the mostly discussed topics / issues of Russian propaganda, the posts with a maximum level of interaction were analysed. Every second message in the small sample was shared by the following social groups: "РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ" ("The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA"), "Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз" ("Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!")⁸⁶ To a smaller extent, messages with a major impact on the users are posted by: Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand), Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova), Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation), Moldova Unită (The united Moldova) (See Chart 7).

Overall, 11 messages raised a high / very high level of interaction (the sum of the variables of appreciation (the *Klass*

⁸⁶ 50 messages from the top of the most viewed messages posted within the 12 pro-Russian communities (groups and pages) were reviewed. In addition to it, within the small sample (top 50), the users' responses were assessed, depending on the format for expression the content / topic and the way how the group's members react to propaganda issues.

The analysis of the 50 messages pointed out that the level of interaction varies depending on the message, and the distribution of messages based on this indicator allows to evaluate the share of messages with a major impact on the users' perception.

ratings), share and comments ranges from 5 000 to 60 000). More than half of the posted messages had a satisfactory impact on the users (the sum of the variables of appreciation (*Klass*), share and comments ranges from 2 000 to 4 000), and 12 messages had an average and low impact (the sum of the variables of appreciation (*Klass*), share and comments being under 2 000) (See Chart 6).

Chart 6.
Distribution of the posts, by level of Odnoklassniki users' interaction

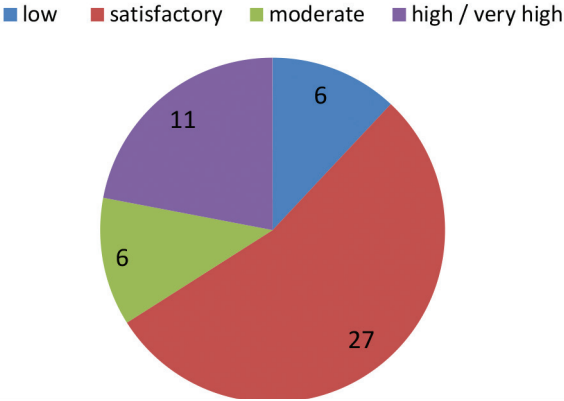


Chart 7.
Distribution of the posts, by groups subjected to the study



A closer analysis shows that across the communities, a good number of the 50 most popular postings are *in favour of Igor Dodon and of Victory Day and against Maia Sandu* (See Table 2). About 20%, i.e. one message in five, of the most popular postings is aimed at promoting the current President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon. The following groups actively promote Igor Dodon's personality: Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova), Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!), Moldova

Unită (The united Moldova), Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand) and РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA).

Igor Dodon is characterised as a President who “will achieve economic stability and will balance the country’s domestic policy priorities”. A number of posts show the President’s pro-Russian orientation and the actions he undertook to improve (re-launch) the relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova: his participation in the military parade in Moscow, wearing the ribbon of Saint George during public events. Moreover, the trust relationship between Vladimir Putin and Igor Dodon and the support that Igor Dodon enjoys from the President of the Russian Federation are also emphasised.



Picture 1. A photo posted in the social group Mîna Moscovei⁸⁷

Another topic frequently evoked in the top postings is related to Victory Day and to the Great Patriotic War. The posts in this category latently urge the users to identify themselves with the values promoted by „Marea Patrie” (“The Great Homeland”): the former USSR. Such posts also evoke the common historical past of the ex-Soviet peoples and the victorious struggle against Nazi Germany. This topic is also shared by *Odnoklassniki* groupsthat glorify Igor Dodon’s personali-

⁸⁷ https://i.mycdn.me/image?id=854552535301&t=20&plc=API&a id=335037952&tkn=*7wSRkHjiYiBwysJj2oyG5vMS98

ty, including Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!), РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA), Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand).

The defamation messages / posts against the centre-right politician, Maia Sandu, are among the top topics with a major impact on the users. The following groups actively involved in posting such messages: Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation), Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand).

Table 2.
Distribution of the topics/ messages posted in the social groups subjected to the survey

	Posted topics	Total number of posts	Odnoklassniki groups in which the topics were posted
1.	In favour of Igor Dodon	12	Интересная Молдова (InterestingMoldova) Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!), Moldova Unită (The united Moldova) Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand) РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA)
2.	Victory Day and the Great Patriotic War	9	Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA) Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand)
3.	Anti - Maia Sandu	6	Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation) Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand)
4.	Messages with a general/social topic	5	Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova) РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA) Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) Moldova Unită (The united Moldova)
5.	Anti - European Union	5	Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation) Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand)
6.	Anti-Romanian sentiment	4	Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation)
7.	Anti - Vlad Plahotniuc	3	Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation)
8.	Federalisation of the Republic of Moldova	3	Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!)

9.	Anti-Dorin Chirtoacă, Anti- Mihai Ghimpu	2	Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation) Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova)
10.	Anti-Vlad Filat	2	Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation)
11.	In favour of the Russian Federation	2	Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!)
12.	Anti-USA	1	Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!)
13.	In favour of Renato Usatîi	1	Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation)
14.	Ethnic/chauvinistic Moldovenism	1	Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation)

To a lesser extent, the sample (top 50) also includes a discussion of the risks of joining the EU. Thus, the image of the European Union is strongly associated with public disorder and mess caused by the refugees / immigrants hosted by the EU countries. For example, this picture is shown as being representative of the situation in France. The rhetorical question asked in the film - “Is this the Europe we covet?” – is intended to further deepen the feelings of fear, rejection and denial.



Picture 2.
A video posted in Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation) social group2

Moreover, the EU is accused of supporting and funding corrupt governments claiming to be pro-European. The groups posting anti-EU propaganda messages are the same, as those posting defamation messages against the politician Maia Sandu.

⁸⁸<https://vdp.mycdn.me/getImage?id=12671911421&idx=30&thumbType=47&f=1&i=1>.

Other postings with major engagement include Anti-Romanian sentiment, defamation messages against the right-wing and centre-right politicians, promoting the federalisation of the Republic of Moldova and anti-USA propaganda messages. Most of the messages that defame the right-wing and centre-right politicians are posted by „Federația Moldova” (“Moldova Federation”) group. Consequently, the groups included in the sample (top 50) can be classified according to the topic they promote (See Table 3).

Table 3.
Distribution of the topics / messages posted, by socialisation groups surveyed

No.	Name of <i>Odnoklassniki</i> socialisation group	Topics/issues posted
1.	Federația Moldova (Moldova Federation)	Anti- Maia Sandu Anti- Mihai Ghimpu Anti -Dorin Chirtoacă Anti- Vlad Plahotniuc Anti- Vlad Filat Anti- Romanian sentiment Ethnic Moldovenism
2.	Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!)	In favour of the Russian Federation In favour of Igor Dodon Victory Day and the Great Patriotic War Federalisation of the Republic of Moldova Anti -USA
3.	Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova)	Anti -Mihai Ghimpu Anti -Maia Sandu In favour of Igor Dodon
4.	Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand)	Anti -Maia Sandu Anti - European Union Victory Day and the Great Patriotic War In favour of Igor Dodon
5.	Moldova Unită (The united Moldova)	Anti- Maia Sandu In favour of Igor Dodon
6.	РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA)	Victory Day and the Great Patriotic War In favour of Igor Dodon Anti - European Union

About half of the postings with a high level of engagement contain propaganda elements (24 out of 50). Most propaganda elements are found in the posts that promote the

pro-Russian political orientation of President Igor Dodon and his participation in the military parade on the Victory Day in honour of the Great Patriotic War. The main symbols used in this respect are the ribbon of Saint George, Red Army's military uniform, and the USSR flag.

Most of the defaming posts against the centre-right politician, Maia Sandu, contain propaganda elements (See Table 4). Maia Sandu's activity is described as pro-European (with a negative connotation) and it is automatically associated with social, educational and internal security risks.

The posts containing topics / issues related to the *ethnic Moldovenism* are combined with elements of *Anti-Romanian sentiment* and *anti-unionism*.




Title of the message	The level of interaction (LI)= the sum of the variables: appreciation (like), share and comments	Picture/Video
Author's translation: "Băieți... Haideti să fim prieteni. Trei frați adevărați." ("Guys... Let's be friends. Three true brothers".)	LI=62.393 Photo	
	Description of the message	<p>The picture shows the brotherly relations between citizens of the Republic of Moldova, of the Russian Federation and of Ukraine. The message urges the users to establish friendly relations with the citizens of neighbouring countries and highlights their interest / intent to set up a union.</p> <p>Indirectly, it can be assumed that the role of this picture is to urge the citizens of the former Soviet republics to maintain such a relationship within a common customs and economic area.</p> <p>This picture is part of the Russian propaganda focussed on promoting the Eurasian Union.</p>

Table 4.
The sample's posts with the highest level of interaction among the Odnoklassniki users

	<p>LI=21.673</p> <p>video</p>	
<p><i>Author's translation: Moldova, district of Anenii Noi, village of Serpeni. „On the nameless height”.</i></p>	<p>Description of the message</p>	<p>This music video commemorates the soldiers fallen in the Great Patriotic War and highlights the common values and goals shared by the citizens of the USSR during that era. The message calls for a historical continuity, alongside with the Russian Federation, through the verse: “<i>common dreams, common difficulties, and common goals</i>”.</p> <p>This video is part of the Russian propaganda, as it uses elements of subjective interpretation/distortion of the historical past in order to create, promote and protect a common identity which is characteristic to the ex-Soviet area. Moreover, the repetitive and on-going invocation of the Great Patriotic War and the glorification of the role played by the USSR create the impression of a continuous struggle with the West. The aim is to create an element of self-identification of the youngsters with the set of clichés promoted by the Russian propaganda, such as the Soviet uniforms, the ribbon of Saint George, and the Soviet heroism.</p>
<p><i>Author's translation: Maia Sandu, împuşcă-te! (Maia Sandu, shoot up yourself!)</i></p>	<p>LI=12.654</p> <p>photo</p>	
	<p>Description of the message</p>	<p>The picture reveals the discontentment with Maia Sandu and the request for her to withdraw from political life. Although the message is anti-governmental, the analysis of the comments points out the existence of propaganda elements and it associates the pro-European orientation of this political leader with “<i>the pride parade and the immigration of the Syrian immigrants to the Republic of Moldova</i>”.</p>

<i>"Maia Sandu has liquidated the schools and she will also liquidate Moldova!"</i>	LI=10698 photo	
	Description of the message	<p>The message calls the users' attention to the negative consequences of the reforms implemented by the political leader Maia Sandu when she held the position of minister of education. The content analysis of the comments reveals the users' fear of the pro-European reforms: "supporting the immigrants, non-discrimination and promoting the equality".</p> <p>Although the picture itself cannot be considered as a Russian propaganda element, as it strictly concerns the internal political activity of Maia Sandu, the comments focus on her association with the European Union. More specifically, the reform of the education system is seen as a pro-European one and therefore it raises an anti-European reaction among the users.</p>

The symbolic association of propaganda

The symbols used in propaganda messages differ depending on the topic. The messages that promote the President Igor Dodon primarily use *the ribbon of Saint George, the military uniform, the flag of Moldova*. These symbols are also partly found in the posts related to the Victory Day and the Great Patriotic War.

No.	Topics/Issues posted	Symbols used
	In favour of Igor Dodon	The ribbon of Saint George, the military uniform of the Red Army, the flag of Moldova
	The Victory Day and the Great Patriotic War	The ribbon of Saint George, the Red Army's military uniform, the flag of the USSR
	Anti-Maia Sandu	A lock at the school door
	Anti-European Union	Rubbish, dirt, pride parade, unskilled / black labour

Table 5.
Symbols used while disseminating propaganda on Odnoklassniki

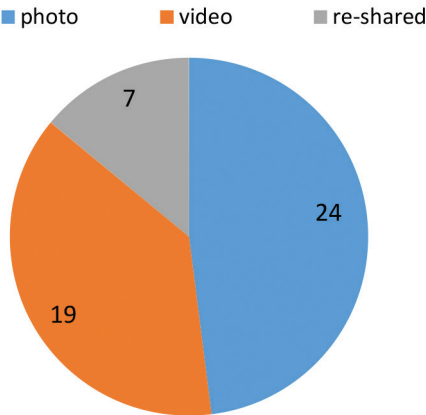
	Anti-Romanian sentiment	The Nazi flag associated with Romania
	Anti-Vlad Plahotniuc	Protests, „impalement”
	Federalisation	The flag of the ATU Gagauz, the Town Hall building, official talks with the representatives of Transnistria

Formats for the expression of the messages with a maximum level of interaction

Most of the messages with high levels of engagement have pictures / photos and use a comic / sarcastic style. One message in three has a video format and only 7 messages, out of 50, link to external or other media sources. Depending on the message’s topic, we found out that the picture / photo messages are more used in the *posts intended to promote the politician Igor Dodon and to defame the politician Maia Sandu*. Video messages are more frequently found in the posts that are *Pro Igor Dodon, Victory Day and the Great Patriotic War, and Federalisation of the Republic of Moldova* (See Chart 9).

The absolute majority of messages in the category of the highly interactive are posted by the group’s administrator (48 posts). Only two messages in the sample were posted at the initiative of the group’s members. This suggests a low level of member involvement in formulating and disseminating the salient propaganda messages. Thus, most of the propaganda messages from the top 50 posts with a high level of user interaction are part of the group’s policy and are used as tools to influence the user perceptions in terms of political orientation to be followed.

Chart 8.
Distribution of the posts, by message format



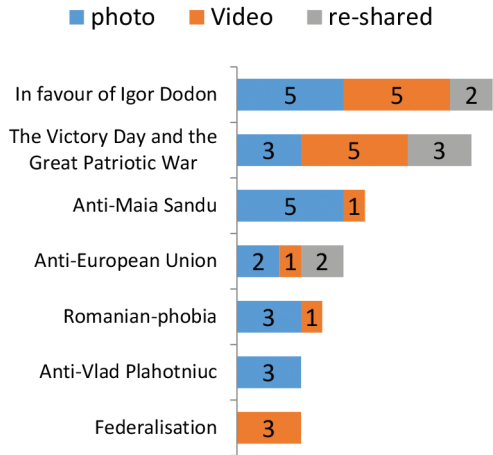


Chart 9.
Distribution of the posts, by message format and topics of the posts

The level of user interaction within the sample of top 50

The user opinions and perceptions of *Odnoklassniki* propaganda messages have been assessed based on their level of interaction with the content (appreciation and debating on the generated topics).⁸⁹ A systematic assessment of engagement highlighted that users usually reacted positively to posts showing a positive image of the Russian Federation and of the Soviet past. About 12 000 users appreciated the defamation messages against Maia Sandu and the messages containing anti-EU propaganda elements (See Table 4). In the top of the posts appreciated by more than 10 000 *Odnoklassniki* users are the defamation messages against Dorin Chirtoacă who is perceived as an advocate for the pro-European orientation and the unionism.

The dissemination of the content was done in relation to the same topics. The most widely disseminated topics were: Pro-Russian Federation, Victory Day and the Great Patriotic War, Pro-Igor Dodon.

Odnoklassniki users generate a significantly lower number of comments, compared to the number of appreciation or shares. The most commented posts were related to such topics, as anti- Romanian sentiment, ethnic Moldovenism, Pro-Russian Federation, anti-Maia Sandu and pro-Igor Dodon.

⁸⁹ The survey assessed three levels of interaction of *Odnoklassniki* users with the message's content: 1. Supporting the posted messages (*Klass*) - showing agreement with the disseminated message; 2. Sharing messages in other *Odnoklassniki* groups; 3. Commenting the message and elucidating the arguments that led to the user's agreement or disagreement with the disseminated topics. This analysis allowed to assess the perceptions and the concerns about the disseminated topics / issues and determined to what extent the users agree or disagree with the disseminated message.

Table 6.
Distribution of the generated topics / issues, by level of user interaction

Message category	No of appreciations/ "like"	Posted topics/issues
Top posts with more than 10 000 appreciations ("like" mentions)	Like=59293	Pro-Russian Federation
	Like=19233	Victory Day and the Great Patriotic War
	Like=12323	Anti-Maia Sandu
	Like=10834	Anti-Dorin Chirtoacă
Message category	No of shares	Posted topics/issues
Top posts with more than 300 shares	S=2860	Pro-Russian Federation
	S=2310	Victory Day and the Great Patriotic War
	S=308	Pro-Igor Dodon
Message category	No of comments	Posted topics/issues
Top posts with more than 150 comments	C=1548	Anti-Romanian sentiment / Romanian fascism
	C=384	Ethnic/chauvinistic Moldovenism
	C=240	Pro-Russian Federation
	C=151	Anti-Maia Sandu, Pro-Igor Dodon

Comment threads, under the posted messages, highlight the same emphasis on anti-Romanian sentiment and ethnic Moldovenism. The pro-Romanian values are associated with European ones and are also associated with promoting the homosexuality and "slavery/unskilled labour".

In the communities, there is little dissent once a topic is put forward. In one thread on anti-Romanian sentiment, out of the total number of 1 548 comments on the issue of anti-Romanian sentiment, only 3 expressed contradiction / disagreement.

In general, the users' dialogue on the messages of ethnic/chauvinistic Moldovenism is much more dynamic, although the number of comments is much lower, compared to the post on anti-Romanian sentiment. The number of users who have displayed disagreement with the posted topic is extremely low, only 6 individuals. They provide 33% of the total of 384 comments. The arguments provided were focused on describing the historical events that the Republic of Moldova has experienced over the past decade.

In conclusion, we mention that Russian language itself is a major factor, as almost all of the discussion is held in Russian. The users who commented in Romanian were disdained and ignored by the Russian speakers, which means that the posted messages are addressed to Russian speakers. This is to be considered one of the explanations for the selection of the topics posted and promoted on *Odnoklassniki* social network, achieving, in result, a high level of user's engagement.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The **survey** was conducted based on a qualitative approach of symbolic interactionist type,⁹⁰ using a systematic content analysis of the message posted and shared on the social networks.

The **goal of the survey** was to analyse how the Russian propaganda disseminated on one of the most popular social network in Moldova manifests itself and to identify the main topics/issues of the Russian propaganda.

The **survey's objectives** are:

1. Map the informative and social-political socialisation communities (pages and groups) within the Moldovan segment of *Odnoklassniki* social network;
2. Estimate the share of propaganda messages disseminated within the online communities subjected to the survey;
3. Analyse the main propaganda topics / issues and the thematic priorities of the online communities subjected to the survey;
4. Analyse the text and video posts with a high level of interaction;⁹¹
5. Develop recommendations on how to combat the Russian propaganda disseminated on the social networks.

To achieve the established goal, the content analysis attempted to answer the following **survey questions**:

- Which *Odnoklassniki* communities in the Republic of Moldova do disseminate Russian propaganda messages?
- What is the share of Russian propaganda messages disseminated within *Odnoklassniki* (informative and social-polit-

⁹⁰ An American theory, represented by the social psychology, which focuses on the ways of expressing the interaction-based meanings (symbols). Thus, becoming members of certain groups, the individuals internalise the group's values as their own and get competent in expressing the social symbols which are specific to each particular group. The meaning of the symbols expressed at group level is negotiated by the members of the group. Thus, in order to understand the behaviour of the social stakeholders, it is necessary to analyse the symbols and the meanings they assign in everyday life.

⁹¹ The interaction level is an aggregate indicator created by the author to assess the extent to which the users registered on Odnoklassniki.ru react to the posted messages. This indicator cumulates the sum of the variables: appreciation (klass), sharing and comments.

ical socialisation) communities in the Republic of Moldova?

- What are the most frequently encountered general topics / issues of Russian propaganda on *Odnoklassniki* in the Republic of Moldova?
- What are the forms of representation of the Russian propaganda messages?
- What is the users' attitude towards the Russian propaganda messages disseminated on *Odnoklassniki*?

The **survey's hypotheses** are:

- The Russian propaganda issues disseminated on *Odnoklassniki* are determined by the priority goals of the Russian Federation's foreign policy in relation with the Republic of Moldova or with the European Union's countries;
- The users who support the pro-Russian parties, members of the communities / social groups subjected to the survey, are active in disseminating the Russian propaganda messages and generate a higher level of interaction with the content;
- On *Odnoklassniki*, there is a network of pro-Russian communities that widely disseminate the Russian propaganda messages;
- On *Odnoklassniki*, there are individuals whose sole purpose is to distribute fake / unilateral news.

The registration and analysis unit: the *Odnoklassniki* online communities in the Republic of Moldova (and specifically online communities intended for information and socio-political socialisation); the messages posted within such communities; the users' comments and the ways how the content of such messages is assessed. The team used the NodeXL and RQDA software, to facilitate the viewing of the analysis units.

To analyse the Russian propaganda messages, the team developed a number of indicators: the content's truthfulness; the unilateral or distorted presentation of the content; capitalising on the nostalgia for the Soviet past; reinforcement of the revanchist spirits among the Russian-speaking minorities; discrediting and distorted presentation of the policies of the European Union, NATO and the USA; conscious rousing of xenophobic sentiment. In establishing these categories, the survey followed established literature on the subject. For the purposes of this survey and using the above-mentioned indicators, the Russian propaganda messages were defined as "*the messages that disseminate false information or have a distorted*

content with a view to influencing the opinions, the emotions and the attitudes of Odnoklassniki users for the broader ideological purpose of positively promoting the Russian Federation's policies, the values acquired during the Soviet times and of defaming the European Union, the USA, NATO, and overall values of liberalism."

In the framework of the survey, two types of propaganda were distinguished: overt propaganda and covert propaganda.⁹²

The overt propaganda - that can be political, commercial, religious, etc. - is characterised by "noisy" messages that openly attempt to manipulate the public opinion by controlling the individual decisions. The message is explicit and anyone who sees it can easily identify and distinguish the intended goal.

In contrast, the covert propaganda aims at manipulating the public opinion without letting the target audience be aware of this manipulation.⁹³

The population of the survey is made up of the Moldovan segment of *Odnoklassniki* social network.

Odnoklassniki gives its users the opportunity to become participants of different communities (pages and groups)⁹⁴ and to communicate within these communities through content (posting) and reacting to the content (appreciation - *klass*, sharing and comments). These communities can be distinguished by their functionality. Most communities have one or several of the following functions:

- informative functions (they tend to meet the participants' need to be informed about a particular topic);
- socialising / friendship functions (they create a sense of belonging to a group that shares similar values, provides emotional support, re-confirms or re-builds certain social identities);
- utility functions (ads, tips, shopping);
- entertainment functions.

This survey focused on *informative* and *social-political sociali-*

⁹² In the Romanian version of the survey, the translation of the English terms *overt propaganda* and *covert propaganda* was used.

⁹³ Garth S. Jowett, O' Donnell Victoria, „Readings in Propaganda and Persuasion: New and Classic Essays”, Sage Publications, 2006, pp. 10-11.

⁹⁴ Page - a type of group on social media platforms, where, implicitly, only the moderators have the right to post, and the whole content of the page is only published with their approval. This type of group resembles the way how the traditional media work, using the one-to-many communication model and having objective limitations for the development of horizontal communication (which is nevertheless possible in the comment section).

sation communities (pages and groups) within the Moldovan segment of *Odnoklassniki* social network. (Chapter III provides an overview of informative and social-political communities in the Moldovan segment of the social network *Odnoklassniki*.)

Multi-stage Sampling Process

Stage 1. Identifying the relevant online communities.

The communities were identified by 1) searching keywords representative of the socio-political situation in the Republic of Moldova, using the internal search engine of the social network and 2) the analysis of the functionality of the identified communities.

To reveal the function of a particular online community, we analysed the name of the community, and its self-description in (the *Description* section). In addition, we analysed the last posts on the community's wall, alongside with the most popular posts within a predetermined period (August 2017; in certain cases, when the method for data collection allowed it: 1st of January – 31st of August 2017). The communities with a pro-Russian affinity were identified and selected for the analysis as a distinct sub-segment of *Odnoklassniki* social network in Moldova. A thorough analysis of the content posted, shared and promoted within these communities is presented in Chapters II and III. The following main criteria were applied for group identification: the name, the goal and the keywords associated with the establishment of the group.

Stage 2. Selecting, among the total number of identified online communities, a target-group which was most relevant to the survey. Given that the identification of the content's impact on the users' reaction was one of the objectives of the analysis, we selected the groups according to three criteria: the vision they promote (pro-Russian orientation); the purpose for setting up the group; the total number of members. According to these criteria, a total of 12 groups were selected.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ – ПРОЦВЕТЕНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (FOR THE EURASIAN UNION - PROSPERITY FOR MOLDOVA); Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova); MOLDOVA, Federatia Moldova (Moldova Federation); Таможенный союз – возрождение Молдовы! (The Customs Union - the revival of Moldova!); Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand); Молдова должна быть с Россией! (Moldova should be with Russia!); Iubesc NEAMUL, Iubesc MOLDOVA... (I love my PEOPLE, I love MOLDOVA ...); Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!); Родина – Евразийский Союз (Our Homeland –the Eurasian Union); Молдавия – Наша Родина СССР! (Moldavia - Our Homeland is the USSR!); РУССКО – СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA).

Stage 3. Extracting the content posted within the selected online communities.

Data concerning the posts from different communities were collected using API-requests to the *Odnoklassniki* server. Out of the 12 selected groups, approximately 24 000 posts were extracted from the period of January 1 to August 31, 2017. For each post, the following data were obtained: the post's URL, the number of appreciations (*klass*), the number of shares (reposting), the number of comments, the content of the post or of the link to the media source. *For certain communities, information about the community members (first name, family name, age, date of birth, country, city, date of the last online activity, number of friends, link to the profile page) was collected.*

Stage 4. Determining the sample size. For sampling, a multiphase sampling procedure was used. This procedure allowed the filtering of a large amount of messages posted within the 12 groups subjected to the investigation in order to select the target-group that was directly subjected to the content analysis. Subsequently, using the random number table procedure, 1 139 messages were selected out of the total number of 24 429 posts, making up a representative sample with a maximum error of $\pm 3\%$.

To analyse the posts with a high level of interaction, another sample of 50 posts was extracted from the top messages with a maximal level of user interaction in relation with the posted messages.

The limitations of the survey are as follows:

- No socio-demographic profile: there is no demographic data on group members, nor on their socio-economic profile, as relevant information could not be accessed.
- Little processing of dialect or mixed-language: the specific dialect that allows the users to express their views in several languages (Russian, Romanian or a mix of the two) created difficulties for content processing by the means of the classical software for qualitative analysis.
- Limitations in terms of data collection: the lack of specialised software impeded the retrieval of posts by periods of time. In result, a maximum number of 2 200 posts could be retrieved from the page of each group surveyed.

ANNEXES

Annex no. 1*The most viral videos on Odnoklassniki Moldova*

No. of views	Title	Date	Link
2 029 685	ПРАВДА РАСКРЫТА! Майя Санду - масон Великой Восточной Ложы (The truth unraveled! Maia Sandu - a mason of the Great Eastern Lodge)	October, 29, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/183507289537
1 466 716	Майя Санду уходит от ответа и угрожает полицией! (Maia Sandu avoids to respond and threatens the police!)	November 8, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/200061748588
1 186 300	Elevii au ieșit la protest - (IOS MAIA SANDU) (Students are protesting - (Down with Maia Sandu))	November 17, 2013	https://ok.ru/video/3504407897
1 164 953	Обращение к Президенту России В В Путину от Молдавского Народа !!! (Moldovan people addressing to the Russian President V. V. Putin!!!)	January 28, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/10529080784
1 145 263	Игорь Додон - народный президент. Краткая биография (Igor Dodon - president of the people. Short biography)	September 3, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/12211520986
1 133 273	Молдаване с георгиевской лентой в Одессе Жестъ (Moldovans wearing the Saint George Ribbon in Odessa)	May 20, 2017	https://ok.ru/video/300304303469
1 120 178	Прямая линия с Президентом (Live streaming of the President)	July 25, 2017	https://ok.ru/live/312679341992
950 892	Додон – унионистам: Вы что, совсем страх потеряли? (Dodon - to unionists: Have you lost your fear?)	December 10, 2015	https://ok.ru/video/9946400141
919 496	Додон публично пристыдил Санду: Детей обыскивали до нитки, а сами пришли на дебаты со шпаргалкой (Dodon publicly ashamed Sandu: Children were searched to the skin, while they themselves came to the debates bringing cheat sheets)	November 4, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/189631366557
893 446	Президент Молдовы Игорь Додон - выступление на пленарном заседании ПМЭФ-2017 (President of Moldova, Igor Dodon - Speech at the Plenary Session SPIEF - 2017)	June 2, 2017	https://ok.ru/video/299112727832
883 154	Избранный президент Молдавии Игорь Додон у Соловьева (The elected president of Moldova, Igor Dodon at Solovyov TV Show)	November 15, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/198846252314

837 661	Американский полковник предлагает покинуть центральную площадь Кишинева гражданину РМ (American colonel proposes to the citizens of Republic of Moldova to leave the central square of Chisinau)	May 11, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/11246044476
765 766	Додон – Гимпу: Хотите в Румынию – поезжайте. Но вы и там никто (Dodon – Ghimpu: Do you want to live in Romania – then, leave. But You are no one there as well)	October 20, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/12692030836
755 313	МОЛДАВИЯ И БОЛГАРИЯ ПЕРЕХОДЯТ НА СТОРОНУ ПУТИНА! (Moldova and Bulgaria gets on Putin's side)	November 22, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/198484952383
699 630	Молдова превращается в Чернобыль! (Moldova turns into Chernobyl)	July 13, 2017	https://ok.ru/live/323366493782
699 056	In Gradina Lu Dodon! (#Eroina) (In the garden of Dodon! (#Heroine))	October 31, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/181937505572
691 891	Додон: Референдум за Таможенный Союз в каждом районе! (Dodon: Referendum for the Customs Union in each district!)	February 2, 2014	https://ok.ru/video/4190700901
633 371	Такая жесткая правда впервые. И. Додон бьет США по-русски. Как нас стирали в порошок. УкроТВ молчит. (For the first time, such a hard truth. I. Dodon undermines USA in Russian. How we were washed in powder. UkroTV is silent.)	June 5, 2017	https://ok.ru/video/285116663195
624 158	Interviu cu Maia Sandu, candida la prezidențiale (Interview with Maia Sandu, a candidate for presidential election)	November 7, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/198883476882
623 795	С днем рождения Молдова! С Днем Независимости страна (Happy Birthday Moldova! Happy independent Country Day)	August 22, 2017	https://ok.ru/video/384378406244
619 956	Игорь Додон. От первого лица (Igor Dodon. From the first person)	August 19, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/12066162130
592 858	Întrevederea oficială dintre Igor Dodon și Vladimir Putin (Official meeting between Igor Dodon and Vladimir Putin)	January 17, 2017	https://ok.ru/video/234236937686
582 843	Молдавскому народу аплодировали на «Первом канале» за то, что не допустил парад техники НАТО (Moldovan people were applauded at "Pervii Kanal" for not allowing the NATO parade of military equipment to take place)	September 12, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/11301029331

568 907	Игорь Додон: С сегодняшнего дня буду президентом для всех граждан страны (Igor Dodon: starting today I will be the president of all the country citizens)	November 14, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/187101611329
562 084	Чубашенко: Молдова теряет свою землю и людей (Ciubasenco: Moldova is losing her land and people)	September 16, 2015	https://ok.ru/video/9349301757
558 026	Срочно!!!Украина и Молдавия совместно хотят удушить Приднестровье Новости Украины Сегодня (Urgent!!! Together, Ukraine and Moldova want to strangle Transnistria The news of Ukraine Today)	June 1, 2015	https://ok.ru/video/8601535845
552 868	Додон: Унионизм будет запрещен законом, а в школы вернется история Молдовы (Dodon: Unionism will be prohibited by law and in schools, the history of Moldova will be taught)	October 5, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/12518229270
544 890	Додон: Вхождение войск НАТО и солдат США в Молдову – плевок власти обществу (Dodon: Entry of NATO troops and USA soldiers in Moldova: Authorities spit on society)	May 4, 2016	https://ok.ru/video/11187193229
537 915	Dodon a fost alungat din fața Parlamentului de către protestatari (Dodon was banished by protesters away from the Parliament)	October 4, 2015	https://ok.ru/video/9354675698
507 469	Додон рассказал о решении проблемы молдавских мигрантов в России (Dodon told about the resolution of the Moldovan migrants' problems in Russia)	March 1, 2017	https://ok.ru/video/262226838957
504 048	Я категорически против марша ЛГБТ и выступаю за традиционные семьи и православную веру (I am categorically against the march of LGBT people and I stand for the traditional families and the orthodox religion)	May 19, 2017	https://ok.ru/video/276794508708
502 701	Путин и Додон пресс-конференция по итогам российско-молдавских переговоров 17.01.2017 (The Press-conference of Putin and Dodon on the results of Russian-Moldovan negotiations January 17, 2017)	January 17, 2017	https://ok.ru/video/232159511991

Annex no. 2
Distribution of
propaganda
subjects/ topics
depending
on the studied
groups

	Posted topics	Odnoklassniki groups in which the topics were posted
1.	The Great Patriotic War	<p>MOLDOVA,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA) • Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova - our homeland is USSR) • ★ Furtuna A★ • Родина - Евразийский Союз — Константин Русско-Славянская партия, (Homeland – Eurasian Customs Union – Constantin Russian Slavic Party) • Federatia Moldova (Moldova Federation) • Родина - Евразийский Союз (Homeland – Eurasian Customs Union) • Русско-Славянская партия (The Russian-Slavic Party) • Таможенный союз - возрождение Молдовы! (Customs Union – Moldova's revival)
2.	The anti-Romanian sentiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federatia Moldova (Moldova Federation) • РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The RUSSIAN-SLAVIC PARTY OF MOLDOVA) • Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova) • Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova- Our Homeland is USSR) • Таможенный союз - возрождение Молдовы! (Customs Union – Moldova's revival) • Родина - Евразийский Союз — kompromat md ничего не утаить (Homeland – Eurasian Customs Union – kompromat md nothing to hide) • Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand)
3.	Anti-Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova) • ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (For the Eurasian Customs Union – Blossoming Moldova) • Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • Federatia Moldova/ ★ Furtuna A ★ (Moldova Federation/ Furtuna A) • MOLDOVA — Янина Мальтова, Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Moldova - Ianina Malitova, Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (For the Eurasian Customs Union – Blossoming Moldova) • MOLDOVA — Анна Щепановская (Череватова), Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova – Anna Shcepanovskaia (Cerevatova), Moldova – Our Homeland is USSR!) • Родина - Евразийский Союз (Homeland – Eurasian Customs Union)

4.	In favour of the Russian Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova) • Federatia Moldova (Moldova Federation) • Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova) • Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova - Our Homeland is USSR!) • Родина - Евразийский Союз (Homeland - Eurasian Customs Union) • ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (For the Eurasian Customs Union - Blossoming Moldova) • Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand) • MOLDOVA — Raisa Rusu Bunescu • Iubesc NEAMUL, Iubesc MOLDOVA... — Vasiliî Moldovanu (I love the People, I love Moldova... - Vasiliî Moldovanu) • Молдова должна быть с Россией! — Vasiliî Moldovanu (Moldova must be with Russia! - Vasiliî Moldovanu)
5.	Anti-USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova - Our Homeland is USSR!) • Federatia Moldova — Андрей Д (Moldova Federation - Andrei D) • MOLDOVA — Владимир Нанаев (Moldova - Vladimir Nanaev) • Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova - Our Homeland is USSR!) • ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (For the Eurasian Customs Union - Blossoming Moldova) • Молдова должна быть с Россией! (Moldova must be with Russia!) • Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova) • РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova) • Iubesc NEAMUL, Iubesc MOLDOVA... (I love the People, I love Moldova...) • Родина - Евразийский Союз (Homeland - Eurasian Customs Union)
6.	Soviet Nostalgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • Federatia Moldova — Татьяна Гонцова (Moldova Federation - Tatiana Gontsova) • MOLDOVA — Vitalie Hamciuc RPM • MOLDOVA — ★ Furtuna A ★ • ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (For the Eurasian Customs Union - Blossoming Moldova) • Таможенный союз - возрождение Молдовы! (Customs Union - Moldova's revival!)

7.	Anti-EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federatia Moldova (Moldova Federation) • Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova) • РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova) • MOLDOVA • Таможенный союз - возрождение Молдовы! — Vasilii Moldovanu (Customs Union – Moldova’s revival! – Vasilii Moldovanu) • Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova – Our Homeland is USSR!) • ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (For the Eurasian Customs Union – Blossoming Moldova) • Mîna Moscovei (Moscow’s hand) • Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • Родина - Евразийский Союз (Homeland – Eurasian Customs Union) • Iubesc NEAMUL, Iubesc MOLDOVA... (I love the People, I love Moldova...)
8.	Anti-NATO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federatia Moldova — ★ Furtuna A ★ (Moldova Federation – Fortuna A) • РУССКО - СЛАВЯНСКАЯ ПАРТИЯ МОЛДОВЫ (The Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova) • Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • Таможенный союз - возрождение Молдовы! (Customs Union – Moldova’s revival!) • Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova – Our Homeland is USSR!) • Молдова должна быть с Россией! (Moldova must be with Russia!) • ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (For the Eurasian Customs Union – Blossoming Moldova)
9.	In favour of Igor Dodon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mîna Moscovei (Moscow’s hand) • Iubesc NEAMUL, Iubesc MOLDOVA... (I love the People, I love Moldova...) • Таможенный союз - возрождение Молдовы! (Customs Union – Moldova’s revival!) • Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova – Our Homeland is USSR!) • Federatia Moldova (Moldova Federation) • Молдова должна быть с Россией! (Moldova must be with Russia!)
10.	Anti-local leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova) • Federatia Moldova (Moldova Federation)

11.	Ethnic Moldovenism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Родина - Евразийский Союз (Homeland – Eurasian Customs Union) • Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand) • Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova - Our Homeland is USSR!) • ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (For the Eurasian Customs Union – Blossoming Moldova) • MOLDOVA • MOLDOVA — ★ Furtuna A ★ • Federatia Moldova (Moldova Federation) • Интересная Молдова (Interesting Moldova)
12.	Federalizare/separatismul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iubesc NEAMUL, iubesc MOLDOVA... (I love the People, I love Moldova...) • Молдова должна быть с Россией! (Moldova – Our Homeland is USSR!) • ЗА ЕВРОАЗИЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ - ПРОЦВЕТАНИЕ МОЛДОВЫ (For the Eurasian Customs Union – Blossoming Moldova) • Таможенный союз - возрождение Молдовы! (Customs Union – Moldova's revival!) • Mîna Moscovei (Moscow's hand) • Гагаузия ЗА таможенный союз!!! (Gagauzia pleads FOR the Customs Union!!!) • Молдавия - Наша Родина СССР! (Moldova – Our Homeland is USSR!) • Родина - Евразийский Союз (Homeland – Eurasian Customs Union) • MOLDOVA

Annex no. 3
Local Odnoklassniki Communities

	Title	Link	No. of members	Type
Anenii noi	Анений Ной - Anenii Noi	https://ok.ru/anenynoy	2000	Group
Bălți	БЕЛЬЦЫ (Bălți)	https://ok.ru/beltsy.eu	8500	Group
Briceni	Бричаны Briceni	https://ok.ru/brichany	1800	Group
Cahul	Моя Родина-КАГУЛ (My motherland - Cahul)	https://ok.ru/group/52993945370636	3200	Group
Călărași	Люди Кэлэраша (The people of Călărași)	https://ok.ru/group/42814368383085	1500	Group
Căușeni	Каушаны - город герой (Căușeni - a heroic city)	https://ok.ru/kaushanygo	2200	Group
Chișinău	КИШИНЕВ - город детства! (Chișinău – the city of childhood)	https://ok.ru/kishinevg	14100	Group
Cimișlia	Cimislieni din toata lumea!!! (The people of Cimișlia from all over the world)	https://ok.ru/group/43207569113339	1800	Group
Criuleni	Наши Криуляны!!! (Our people of Criuleni)	https://ok.ru/katiunicka	1600	Group
Drochia	RAIONUL DROCHIA (Дрокиевский район), MOLDOVA (Drochia Rayon)	https://ok.ru/drochia	2200	Page
Dubăsari	Raionul Dubăsari (Dubăsari Rayon)	https://ok.ru/raionuldub	2500	Group
Fălești	Orasul Falesti (Falesti City)	https://ok.ru/or.falesti	2600	Group
Florești	ФЛОРЕШТЫ-ЗНАЧИТ «ГОРОД ЦВЕТОВ.»... (Floresti means – „the City of Flowers.!...”)	https://ok.ru/group/49723681800198	3600	Group
Glodeni	ГЛОДЯНСКИЙ НАРОД (Глодяны) (The Glodeni People)	https://ok.ru/glodyansky	2100	Group

Ialoveni	Ialoveni - Oraş Iubit (Ialoveni – Beloved City)	https://ok.ru/il1436	1700	Group
Leova	Leova	https://ok.ru/group/42837579726965	2700	Group
Nisporeni	NISPORENI CITY	https://ok.ru/group/43924337524987	3800	Group
Ocnîţa	Окница - Ocnîţa - capitala nordului! (Ocnîţa – the northern capital)	https://ok.ru/ocnita.capitala.nordului	5100	Group
Orhei	Primăria oraşului Orhei (The city hall of Orhei)	https://ok.ru/orheiprimaria	2100	Page
Rezina	Rezina the best city	https://ok.ru/rezinabest	4300	Group
Rîşcani	Рышканы (Râş- cani)	https://ok.ru/ryshkany	3500	Group
Sîngerei	Toti din Singerei si din satele raio- nului (All from Sîngerei and from the rayon villages)	https://ok.ru/group/49602674032780	1200	Group
Soroca	Soroca	https://ok.ru/group/43042825044171	1300	Grup
Ştefan vodă	rn. STEFAN VODA meleag NATAL (Stefan Voda rayon – the native land)	https://ok.ru/group/44443360231673	2400	Group
Străşeni	Străşeni	https://ok.ru/strasen	2500	Group
Taraclia	Тараклия - Город детства (Taraclia – the city of child- hood)	https://ok.ru/group/51457647837230	1500	Group
Teleneşti	ТЕЛЕНЕШТСКАЯ- "13-й КИЛОМЕТР" (Teleneşti – the 13 th Kilometer)	https://ok.ru/teleheshts	3000	Group
Ungheni	Унгены!!! (Ungh- eni!!!)	https://ok.ru/group/42865854972111	2800	Group
Vulcăneşti	Вулканешты! Это город наш родной! (Vulcă- neşti! This is our native city!)	https://ok.ru/group/47200841760807	2100	Group

Annex no. 4
Odnoklassniki Communities of the citizens of Republic of
Moldova from Diaspora

Title	Link	No. of members	Type
MOLDOVENI IN FRANTA. (Moldovans in France)	https://ok.ru/group45541318262926	19900	Group
👑Moldovenii in Franta - Moldovenii din Paris👑 (Moldovans in France – Moldovans from Paris)	https://ok.ru/franta	18300	Group
Moldoveni in Israel (Moldovans in Israel)	https://ok.ru/moldoveni.in.israel	15200	Group
(((Moldoveni an Franta si Paris))) (Moldovans an France and Paris)	https://ok.ru/moldovenil	12000	Group
MOLDINIT! COMUNITATEA MOLDOVENILOR DIN ITALIA! (MOLDINIT ! the community of Moldovans from Italy)	https://ok.ru/group/50219428806676	8100	Group

