

THE ROLE GEOPOLITICAL FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF GAGAUZIAN AUTONOMY WITHIN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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Abstract. *The aim of our research is to reflect the geopolitical factor implication in the ethno-political process within the Republic of Moldova. The eastern and southern regions of this state represent a big concentration and diversity of national/ethnic minorities. The existence of minorities' Patron states in addition of geopolitical background degrades some impacts in the territorial structure and ethnic politics of the Moldovan state.*

This paper will begin with the outlining of some general and historical aspects of geopolitical background of this region. Also, it will analyze the formation of Moldova's Gagauzian Autonomy in the context of geopolitical strategies of Patron-states or states interested in having an influence in the Republic of Moldova. Understanding the specific of the ethno-political context of the institutionalization of Gagauzian territorial autonomy is essential in order to identify the principal external vectors of influence: Comrat-Tiraspol-Moscow and Comrat-Ankara, and the nature of their relations.

Keywords: *geopolitics, geopolitical vectors, ethno-political conflict, territorial autonomy, the Gagauz.*

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