

MOLDOVA-GUAM

Svetlana PINZAR

*M.A. (Political Science),
senior lecturer at the International Relations Department,
State Institute of International Relations, Moldova
(Chisinau, Moldova)*

In today's world, where regional cooperation is an inalienable part of interstate relations, associative diplomacy is becoming an increasingly popular and high-priority focus of attention. This phenomenon took root in the system of international relations during the postwar era, but it was not until transnational regional organizations underwent further multifunctional development that the concept "associative or group diplomacy" was introduced into scientific circulation in the mid-1990s.

This definition can be found in the works of well-known researcher of diplomacy R. Barston, who believes that a special place is occupied in today's diplomacy system by relations both among states within the framework of international regional organizations and among various regional groups and associations, as well as between states, on the one hand, and transnational regional organizations, on the other. In so doing, in the second case, the states should not be members of the international regional organization in question.¹

R. Barston singles out four traits that make it possible for us to talk about associative diplomacy as a separate form of multilateralization:

¹ See: R.P. Barston, *Modern Diplomacy*, New York, 1995, p. 108.

- (1) written arrangements (agreements, contracts, cooperation programs);
- (2) periodical meetings between the leaders of partner states (consultations, summits, negotiations, and so on);
- (3) coordinated policy and joint activities;
- (4) drawn-up and officially approved systems and mechanisms of interaction between the sides (granting loans, carrying out commercial exchanges, rendering technical assistance, implementing joint projects, and others).²

All of these traits feature in diplomacy within the framework of GUAM, which makes it possible for us to describe this cooperation as group, or associative diplomacy.

In this article, we will look at issues relating to Moldova's participation in the establishment and development of GUAM as a regional association; we will try to show Moldova's role and place in this process; and we will analyze its associative diplomacy from the viewpoint of methods, means, and specific actions. Special attention will be given to the goals and tasks the country sets while cooperating within the framework of the regional organization GUAM.

Today, GUAM is a regional union which was institutionally registered as an international organization in May 2006. This took place at the summit in Kiev, where the structure acquired its official name—Organization for Democracy and Economic Development—GUAM. We will also note that prior to this meeting, Moldova chaired in GUAM and was extremely instrumental in helping this organization to transform into a full-fledged international transnational organization.

It is also important to note that Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin was the first to suggest a name for this structure. He proposed calling it the Commonwealth of European Choice for Democracy and Economic Development, but this proposal was not adequately supported by those gathered at the summit. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Organization members rejected or reject the idea of European integration, which the Moldovan leadership has been focusing great attention on in the past few years.

The meeting held in May 2006 in Kiev, where the official name of GUAM was assigned, also adopted this Organization's Charter, which is a founding document and sets forth the goals, governing bodies, and cooperation principles of the association. For example, GUAM declares that its main goals are promoting democratic values, ensuring sustainable development, **deepening European integration** for creating a common security sphere, developing the socioeconomic, transport, energy, scientific and technical, and humanitarian potential of the Parties, and others.³

According to the Charter, GUAM's main bodies are the Council, which gathers at the level of heads of state, foreign ministers, national coordinators, and permanent representatives, and the Secretariat, which is located in Kiev. The Charter sets forth the operational procedure of these bodies as well as the decision-making regulations in GUAM, and also establishes how the Organization's cooperation with other international structures and states which are not GUAM members will be carried out. Art 13 is devoted to questions of membership in this organization.⁴

Several other documents were also adopted at the meeting—the Protocol on Implementation of the Resolution on a Free Trade Area and the Joint Declaration of the Organization's Heads of State on the Issue of Conflict Settlement.

Valery Chechelashvili—Secretary General of GUAM—notes in his article called “Reciprocal Cooperation:” “GUAM has been created to consolidate the potential of the ‘positive’ influence of

² Ibidem.

³ See: Charter of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development—GUAM. Art. 1, available at [<http://www.guam.org.ua/267.0.0.1.0.0.phtml>].

⁴ Ibidem.

interdependency among the states in the Black Sea-Caspian Region, strengthen the states' position on the international arena, and, finally, acquire an additional tool for implementing their own diplomatic agenda."⁵

Although the GUAM Charter was not signed until 2006, this regional organization was founded in October 1997 at a meeting within the framework of the Council of Europe, when the leaders of Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Georgia signed a communiqué on cooperation. They declared their willingness to exert every effort to develop economic and political interaction among their countries and support cooperation with respect to integration into the structures of the European Union.⁶ A consultative forum was created, the goals of which were mutually beneficial economic and political partnership and promotion of European integration of the member states. In this way, we can talk about the consistency and succession of the idea of interaction among countries in the political and economic spheres, as well as in European integration.

Six weeks after the mentioned statement, representatives of the foreign ministries of the four sides signed a protocol in Baku on 24-25 November, 1997, in which the creation of GUAM was officially announced.

Let us turn to the reasons leading to the appearance of this structure, which is important both for understanding Moldova's position within the framework of this association and for understanding the goals it is pursuing during its participation in GUAM.

Political and economic reasons can be singled out. The former are comprised of the desire and need to coordinate and unify the positions of the member states in political cooperation (both among themselves and within the OSCE) with respect to NATO, and later with respect to the EU too. The political reasons include the desire to establish cooperation regarding issues relating to fighting separatism, as well as to the settlement of regional conflicts.

The economic reasons include the desire to establish economic and trade interaction, the need to pool efforts and coordination practice when implementing projects to build Eurasian and trans-Caucasian transportation corridors, and several others.

Between 1999 and 2002 (2005), the Organization was called GUUAM. This was because from the time of the Washington meeting of the heads of the GUAM member states, at which Uzbekistan joined the Organization, and until 2002, this republic took direct part in GUAM's activity.⁷

The meeting of 7 June, 2001, which was held in Yalta, is considered the first summit of the GUUAM states. As President Vladimir Voronin stated before he flew to the mentioned meeting, "The Republic of Moldova hopes that GUUAM will become an effective mechanism of economic cooperation among our countries."⁸ During the summit, the Yalta GUUAM Charter, the Agreement on the Establishment of the GUUAM Free Trade Area, and the Convention on Rendering Mutual Assistance in Consular Matters in Emergencies were signed. The Moldovan side evaluated this meeting and the Yalta Charter as very important with respect to institutionalizing this group of states into a regional organization.⁹

The second summit was held in Yalta on 20 July, 2002. At this meeting, Moldova's position underwent certain changes.

⁵ V. Chechelashvili, "Sotrudnichestvo na vstrechnom kurse," *Kievskiy telegraf*, No. 33, 17-23 August, 2007.

⁶ See: Joint Communiqué. Meeting of the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, available at [<http://www.guam.org/doc/browse.html>].

⁷ The thing is that Uzbekistan did not officially withdraw from the GUUAM forum until 2005, although it ceased its active participation in the Organization's activity in 2002.

⁸ "Tsel' GUUAM—ukreplit' i razvit' SNG," *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 7 June, 2001.

⁹ See: *Final Communiqué of the Yalta GUUAM Summit*, available at [<http://www.guam.org.ua/226.640.0.0.1.0.phtml>].

At this time, as was noted in the Moldovan press, Moldova had reasons for being apprehensive both about the viability of GUUAM as a structure, and about its own place and role in this organization. In his speech at the plenary session of the GUUAM summit, the Moldovan president emphasized that “the time has come to learn lessons from the first stage of our cooperation and direct our organization’s activity into a more subject-oriented and mutually advantageous channel.”¹⁰

The proposals of the Moldovan side concerned Moldova’s involvement in GUUAM’s energy projects. As Vladimir Voronin noted, Moldova was essentially excluded from the subsequent stages of these energy projects because the routes of the energy corridors had changed directions. The Moldovan side reminded everyone that when this cooperation began, the republic was part of the mentioned plans, but subsequently it was removed even from the dialog on these issues. According to the president, this attitude placed Moldova “in the position of an observer in GUUAM rather than of a full-fledged and involved participant.”¹¹

This question was not raised at the 2002 summit by accident. The thing is that Moldova always put the stakes not only on political and economic cooperation, but also on the energy component of this kind of partnership.

The country’s leadership repeatedly emphasized that GUAM was not created in opposition to any state (as is frequently noted by the forces that oppose the Organization), but as an international organization with historical assignments.

Moldova’s leaders refer to the idea of the Great Silk Road and believe that the GUAM member states should put this idea into practice, but with present-day reality in mind. In other words, they should restore energy corridors, ensure the delivery of energy resources, and create certain energy reserves. What is more, the GUAM members should make arrangements for the free movement of people, goods, and finances across the borders of their states. This, in the opinion of the Moldovan side, is one of GUAM’s main tasks.

During the mentioned summit in 2002, the Moldovan president also drew attention to other spheres of cooperation by indicating the problems and offering several successful and realistic, in our opinion, ways to resolve them. For example, a certain slump has been noted in economic cooperation among the GUAM member states, and proposals were made to develop economic relations to improve the situation (primarily at the bilateral level) by applying legal and diplomatic principles, in so doing passing over the special nature of relations among the states with direct membership in GUUAM.¹²

On the whole, Moldova’s position was defined at that time by its desire to establish full-fledged cooperation in the economic, trade, energy, political, and other spheres. The Moldovan leader called upon his associates to shift from declarations to new forms of specific, equal, and long-term cooperation.¹³

Based on the charter documents, both those that existed during the time of Uzbekistan’s participation and the current ones, as well as on the official statements of the Moldovan leadership (from 1997 until the present), we will try to analyze the republic’s position and achievements in associative/group diplomacy within the framework of GUAM.

We mentioned above that the main goals of Moldova’s participation in GUAM were and are political and economic partnership (including in the energy sphere) and European integration.

Let us look at the political aspects of GUAM’s cooperation, which form some of the fundamental vectors in the Organization’s activity, and designate Moldova’s role and place in this context.

¹⁰ “Vystuplenie Prezidenta Respubliki Moldova na plenarnom zasedanii Sammita GUUAM,” *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 23 July, 2002.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ See: “Rol’ Moldovy v GUUAM dolzhna byt’ proiasnena,” *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 23 July, 2002.

Political cooperation in GUAM has several dimensions—discussion of political questions at meetings of different levels, mutual support in political development and democracy, and coordination of positions and actions within the framework of transnational structures (the U.N., OSCE, and CE).

In his speeches to the diplomatic corps accredited in Moldova, President Vladimir Voronin repeatedly noted that one of the priority vectors in the republic's foreign policy is raising the efficiency of activity in international organizations, including GUAM, the U.N., OSCE, CE, and the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe.¹⁴

In December 2003, GUAM, as a regional association, acquired the status of observer in the U.N. General Assembly. The GUAM states have begun using this forum recently too in order to demonstrate their coordinated political position. For example, due to the assistance and activity¹⁵ shown by the GUAM members in 2006, an item on the protracted conflicts in the GUAM region and their consequences for international peace, security, and development was included on the agenda of the 61st session of the U.N. General Assembly. The official letter of the Organization's countries addressed to the U.N. General Assembly notes: "The protracted conflicts in the GUAM area, namely in the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and the Republic of Azerbaijan, for more than 15 years have continued to affect the lives of over 16 million people, and for more than 15 years have remained a threat to international peace and security, endangering the sovereignty and territorial integrity of three States Members of the United Nations."¹⁶

This letter also mentions that the current situation is leading to a loss of control over significant areas of territory of the mentioned independent countries and continuing occupation, thus causing an outpouring of many millions of refugees and forced migrants and preventing economic and social development of the people in the region.¹⁷

The representatives of the GUAM states in the U.N. moderated the draft of the proposed resolution. This is what Alexei Tulbure, the Moldovan representative to the U.N., has to say about it: "We moved away from issues that certain countries could have put forward at an individual level, for example, unconditional withdrawal of troops from their territories. We are not demanding U.N. peacekeepers. We limited ourselves to declarations that maintain our territorial integrity."¹⁸

Another important goal Moldova set within the framework of GUAM was coordination of a common political stance and development of institutional cooperation with other countries which are either GUAM's partners, or express the desire or are planning to become such. The last summits of the Organization demonstrate that this structure is open to cooperation with other entities and states.

As early as 2002 (at the summit in Yalta), "attraction of other countries and organizations to various spheres of the GUUAM cooperation"¹⁹ was mentioned as one of the main tasks for the future. For example, representatives from another nine states and four international organizations took part in this meeting.²⁰

¹⁴ See, for example: Vladimir Voronin: "Moldova nakhoditsia na etape konkretnykh rezul'tatov." Speech by President of the Republic of Moldova Vladimir Voronin at a meeting with the diplomatic corps accredited in the Republic of Moldova, *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 21 January, 2005.

¹⁵ In 2005, the GUAM countries suggested putting this particular question on the agenda of the 60th session, but their suggestion was not supported by the members of the General Committee which submits recommendations to the General Assembly concerning confirmation of the agenda. Out of the 28 members of the General Committee, only Azerbaijan, Great Britain, and the U.S. voted for this suggestion, five members of the committee (Russia, Armenia, Angola, Myanmar, and Venezuela) voted against, and the other members abstained.

¹⁶ Document of the U.N. General Assembly No. A/61/195 of 14 August, 2006, available at [<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/466/35/PDF/N0646635.pdf?OpenElement>].

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ See: "Initsiativa GUAM v miagkom variante," *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 2 March, 2007.

¹⁹ *Final Communiqué of the GUUAM Summit*, available at [<http://www.guam.org.ua/226.485.0.0.1.0.phtml>].

²⁰ See: "Rol' Moldovy v GUUAM dolzhna byt proiasnena."

Representatives from the U.S., the leaders of Lithuania and Rumania, delegation head of the EU Commission in Moldova, and the OSCE Secretary General took part in the summit of the GUAM states held in April 2005 in Chisinau as specially invited guests.²¹

In addition to the official GUAM members, representatives of Lithuania, Rumania, and Poland attended the summit in 2006 in Kiev, and about 30 official delegations participated in the Baku summit in 2007, among which representatives of the U.S., Japan, Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, Kazakhstan, and others were present.

Parliamentary cooperation of the GUAM member states is another vector of political interaction. In September 2004, the parliament heads of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine signed a declaration on the creation of a GUUAM Parliamentary Assembly. At this session, the Rules of Procedure of this formation were adopted.

In May 2005, its structures were formed at the Second Session of the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly. The Assembly approved the members of the committees on political and legal affairs, trade and economic, education, cultural and scientific issues for 2005-2006. The parliamentarians of the member states assumed the obligation to support the decisions of the heads of state aimed at strengthening democracy, stability, and security in the region. They also announced the need to draw up measures for combating international terrorism, aggressive separatism, organized crime, and the unsettled conflicts in the GUAM countries.²²

The parliamentary speakers of the member states spoke in favor of strengthening cooperation among the GUAM members in the Parliamentary Assemblies of other international and regional organizations (the CE, NATO, OSCE, and others). Chairman of the Moldovan parliament Marian Lupu noted at this session: "...the Moldovan parliamentarians are in favor of further organized and structured strengthening of the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly, of turning it into an efficient mechanism for holding a permanent interparliamentary dialog, of strengthening ties among the executive bodies of our countries, and of promoting rapprochement and mutual understanding among the GUAM member states."²³

European integration is one of Moldova's foreign policy priorities and it coincides with the priorities and strivings of the Organization's other members. Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin repeatedly states at various summits that the GUAM countries have chosen European integration, or, at least, rapprochement with the European Union, as a priority in their activity. In his opinion, the communities of these states should become a kind of nursery of European standards.²⁴ During the Kiev summit in 2006, Vladimir Voronin noted that work with the EU countries to create mutually beneficial projects, particularly in energy, transport, and infrastructure should be a very important component of the GUAM Secretariat's activity.

GUAM-EU relations are quite strong, which shows that intensive associative diplomacy is being carried out by members of both regional organizations. For example, Moldova will receive 209 million Euros from the European Union in 2007-2010 for implementing various projects, while the GUAM states as a whole can count on 915 million Euros from the EU (around 1.2 billion dollars).²⁵ These funds should be used to promote European integration in energy, infrastructure, and

²¹ Evaluation of the participation of the Republic of Moldova in GUAM, 2004-2005. Information presented on the official web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova [<http://www.mfa.gov.md/politica-externa/evaluarea-RM-in-guam-2004-2005/>] (in Moldovan).

²² See: "Moldavskie parlamentarii—za dal'neyshee ukreplenie PA GUAM," *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 31 May, 2005.

²³ "Vystuplenie predsedatelia Parlamenta Respubliki Moldova Mariana Lupu na vtorom Zasedanii stran-uchastnits PA GUAM (Yalta, 28 May, 2005)," *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 31 May, 2005.

²⁴ See: "Za demokratiu i ekonomicheskoe razvitiie" (Based on the documents of the press service of the head of state and information agencies), *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 24 May, 2006.

²⁵ Strany GUAM v 2007-2010 godakh poluchat ot Evrosoiuzia EUR 915.000.000. Internet publication of the South Caucasian countries "Region. Iuzhnyy Kavkaz," available at [<http://newregion.org/news.php?i=13932>].

transport. The EU intends to finance the drawing up of feasibility reports for oil and gas pipelines and projects for producing biodiesel fuel.

Political questions are closely related to the economy, which is given immense significance and just as much attention within the framework of GUAM. The Organization's members have coordinated and are trying to establish contacts and promote projects in the trade and economic and energy spheres, although these relations are primarily bilateral.

It should be noted that 2002 was a significant year for the GUAM countries with respect to defining and specifying economic cooperation. For example, at the summit in Yalta, an agreement was signed on forming a free trade area, which the heads of state pledged themselves to do everything possible and impossible to ratify.²⁶ In addition, terms were reached on the creation of sectoral working groups, including in transport and energy.²⁷

In 2002, a Project on Trade and Transport in GUAM aimed primarily at modernizing the customs services of the Organization's countries was initiated with the support of the U.S. Its main tasks were to bring border and customs legislation into harmony, introduce information systems and technology, develop the infrastructure of check points, simplify border and customs clearance, draw up measures for combating terrorism, smuggling, and customs legislation violations, protect rights to intellectual property, and discuss issues relating to the development of GUAM's transit system.

Implementation of this project was expected to result in an increase in the transit speed of export-import cargo, acceleration of its processing, improvement of transport services, and simplification of customs procedures among the GUAM states.

During the implementation of this project, the member states acted unilaterally (by changing their legislation and taking certain steps to modernize their own customs services), bilaterally (by entering into various agreements with each other and holding mutual consultations), and multilaterally (by holding four-way joint meetings and consultations, involving specialists from third countries, and so on).

For example, on 15 February, 2005, a National Plan for Implementing the Project to Assist Trade and Transportation within GUAM was approved by a resolution of the government of Moldova.²⁸ According to Deputy Director General of the Moldovan Customs Service Nicolae Batrynca, efforts to implement this plan concentrated on harmonizing legislation and bilateral cooperation with GUAM partners. For example, during this period, an interdepartmental protocol was signed with Ukraine, an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation and mutual assistance in customs affairs with Azerbaijan, and talks were begun with Georgia on these issues.

The development and activity of Moldova and Ukraine with assistance from the EU (the EUBAM mission)²⁹ occupy a special place in this cooperation. For example, in 2006, three joint operations were carried out with the participation of the Moldovan and Ukrainian law-enforcement and control bodies. As Head of EUBAM Ferenc Banfi stated, the main tasks for 2007 included improving the standards of the customs and border services, supporting the strategy for fighting corruption, improving the structure of risk analysis, and increasing integrated border control.

²⁶ See: *Final Communiqué of the GUAM Summit*.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ See: Resolution of the Government of Moldova No. 178 of 15 February, 2005 "Ob utverzhenii Natsional'nogo plana meropriiatii po realizatsii proekta po sodeistviu torgovle i transportirovke v ramkakh GUAM," *Monitorul Oficial*, 25 February, 2005.

²⁹ The EUBAM Mission, which was planned for approximately two years, began its activity in November 2005. The mission's budget, which was envisaged until November 2007, amounted to 20.2 million Euros (according to the MOLDPRES Information Agency). For more information about the mission and its activity, see the official site of this mission at [<http://www.eubam.org/>].

According to Mr. Banfi, during the last year, the greatest progress on the Moldovan-Ukrainian border was achieved in the fight against illegal crossing of the border, development of a risk analysis system, and improvement of cooperation between the services of the two states.³⁰

In February 2006, a meeting was held in Tbilisi to discuss energy issues. The Moldovan delegation spoke in favor of continuing GUAM's participation in the projects and programs already being implemented (for example, the project to lay gas pipelines and partnership in transporting petroleum products).

In the context of developing economic trade cooperation, we will note Moldova's repeated initiatives to create trade houses. For example, during the 2007 Baku summit, Vasile Tarlev stated that Moldova was ready to open its trade houses in Tbilisi, Baku, and Kiev.³¹

Creating the Organization's peacekeeping contingent, the idea for which was discussed at the summit of GUAM states in Baku, was another vector of cooperation. The goals announced at the summit were "to participate in peacekeeping operations not only in the military, but also in the law-enforcement sphere and to increase our contribution to strengthening global energy security."

Let us take a closer look at Moldova's chairmanship in GUAM from April 2005 to May 2006. During this time, Moldova was able to raise the Organization's development to a qualitatively new level.

During this period, Moldova made arrangements for the first time to hold the Session of secretaries of the highest security councils and leaders of information and security services and initiated the holding of an Assembly of Deputy Foreign Ministers in Chisinau and the signing of a joint treaty of the GUAM countries on a witness defense program.³² Special attention was paid to new areas of cooperation. For example, the second summit of GUAM youth was held in Chisinau, at which a GUAM International Youth Forum was created with its center in Chisinau.³³

In this context, I would like to recommend that not only the Moldovan side, but the Organization's other participants too, develop specific projects in the future and not worry so much about participating in these kinds of programs in cooperation with other countries and international structures.

As GUAM Secretary General noted at the above-mentioned Baku summit, in 2008 the Organization's activity will be aimed at full-fledged operation of free trade areas within its framework, toughening up the fight against organized crime (including transnational), activating cultural and humanitarian cooperation, implementing regional energy and transport projects, and stepping up working contacts in this respect with partners (primarily with the U.S., Poland, Japan, and the European Union), as well as settling frozen conflicts in the region.³⁴

The Moldovan leadership has recently been accused of not giving serious significance to the country's participation in GUAM, and so the Moldovan president did not attend the summit of GUAM in June 2007, and the country was represented by Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev instead. Mention was also made of Moldova's failure to participate in the meetings in Vilnius in October 2007, which was evaluated as a show of disrespect toward the other members of the Organization.

The official Moldovan leadership repeatedly refuted such insinuations: "Moldova is an active participant in GUAM and is not thinking about withdrawing from this organization. Moldova was

³⁰ See: "Konsul'tativniy sovet Pogranichnoi missii ES utverdil Plan deiatel'notsti na 2007 god," Internet newspaper *Press-obozrenie*, 20 March, 2007, available at [<http://press.try.md/view.php?id=82656&iddb=Polit>].

³¹ See: "GUAM: ob'ediniiaia kontinenty," *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 20 June, 2007.

³² See: GUAM Summit (Chisinau, 22 April, 2005). Information presented on the official web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova at [<http://www.mfa.gov.md/politica-externa/summit-guam-chisinau-2005/>] (in Moldovan).

³³ See: "Za demokratiu i ekonomicheskoe razvitiie" (Based on documents of the press service of the head of state and information agencies), *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 24 May, 2006.

³⁴ See: "GUAM: ob'ediniiaia kontinenty."

one of the originators of GUAM and is interested in strengthening and developing this organization.”³⁵

It is no secret that Moldova is a small state that finds it difficult to play an important role in international relations. In order to defend its national interests and take real part in interstate exchanges and contacts, it must create coalitions and put forward initiatives and proposals jointly with its allies.

Regional associations, including GUAM, are exceptional arenas for coordinating the positions of their member states. The Moldovan leadership understands this very well, knows about this possibility, and is trying to use regional organizations in order to carry its own message to world public opinion.

On the other hand, a distinguishing trait of Moldovan foreign policy in recent years is the authorities’ attempt to figure out in advance the benefits and dividends from bilateral and multilateral partnership, including regional, as well as within the framework of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development—GUAM. And when, after summing up the results of its foreign policy activity, it transpires that there are few results, a domestic conflict ensues because expectations did not meet reality. Moldova’s vacillation in foreign policy practice is a direct result of this, as well as the loud statements about what is beneficial for us. We develop cooperation with a particular partner and then it suddenly turns out that it does not suit us, and we refuse to cooperate, do not participate in projects, and withdraw from associations or organizations. But this all happens at the level of declarations.

According to the latest statements by the Moldovan side, Moldova has a serious attitude toward its participation in GUAM and wishes to continue developing specific projects in such spheres as the economy, trade, settling frozen conflicts, European integration, energy (TRACECA), and others.³⁶

³⁵ See: D. Valeriev, “Sammit bez Prezidenta. Pochemu vmesto Vladimira Voronina v Baku otravilsia Vasile Tarlev,” Daily newspaper *Pul’s. Politika. Ekonomika. Obshchestvo*, No. 23 (197), 22 June, 2007, available at [<http://www.puls.md/article.php?id=162>].

³⁶ See: “GUAM: ob’ediniia kontinenty.”