Set up of the National Commission for European Integration (NCEI) has triggered much more reactions than it could have been expected from our society, already used with establishment of commissions, working groups, elaboration of concepts, strategies, programs etc. Attitudes were in their majority skeptical and they had grounds if taking into account the following.

1. In ten years after the establishment of the relations between Moldova and the European Union (EU) there have not been made any attempts to institutionalize the relations between Moldova and the EU, unless those provided by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed by the Republic of Moldova and the EU: Cooperation Council the Republic of Moldova and the EU, Cooperation Committee the Republic of Moldova and the EU and Parliamentary Cooperation Committee the Republic of Moldova and the EU.

2. During this period of time the relation of the Republic of Moldova and the EU evolved extremely slowly. The PCA which was similar to the agreements signed by the EU with all CIS states, was signed at the end of 1994 and for this agreement to enter into force almost four years (1 July 1998) were needed.

3. Neither in the Program of the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova, nor in their electoral program any statements about the European integration as a priority were made. In the governing program of the Tarlev Government "Rebirth of the economy - rebirth of the country" among the main objectives of the foreign policy there is only one vague statement and namely "elaboration and implementation of a national strategy of integration of the Republic of Moldova into the European Community and other international communities".

4. In September 2002 President Voronin launched the initiative of establishing a structure meant to coordinate the European integration activities. The press wrote at that time about the intention "to set up a National Commission for European integration and an inter-ministerial working group for the elaboration of the National Concept of the Strategy of accession of the Republic of Moldova to European Union". Obviously, that the syntagma "Concept of the Strategy" arouses suspicions about the thorough knowledge of the subject by the initiative authors.

5. Finally, all those steps were made on the background of the Parliament Chairperson and other decision takers' declarations about the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the Russia-Byelorusia Union or to the Euro-Asian Economic Community.

Therefore, it is not surprising that when the Presidential Decree on the set up of the National Commission for the European Integration was finally adopted (13 November 2002) the public opinion received this fact with skepticism.

This attitude was even more grounded due to the fact that this Commission where almost all ministers, deputy prime-ministers and the deputy chairman of the parliament were members had as its task the elaboration of the European integration Strategy and of the action plan of its fulfillment. From the very beginning there was a confusion, because the Commission which did not have in its subordination even a technical secretariat had, according to the press, to elaborate in extremely short terms either the Strategy of European integration of the country, or the Concept of the strategy of European integration of the Republic of Moldova, or, according to those declared by the President in front of the diplomatic corps (31 January 2003) to elaborate the Republic of Moldova conception of accession to European Union. Subsequently, the Commission
has the task to coordinate the implementation of the above mentioned action plan, while concrete fulfillment of the European integration policy is the task of a public administration body, yet to be established.

The above mentioned show that the society has not comprehended yet the following:

· our tasks, or what has to be done at the present moment for approaching to the European Union;

· how do we see our approach to the EU - is this a process of association, integration, accession, or something else;

· what are the structures that have to coordinate and implement the actions meant to ensure our approach to the EU in the light of our future accession to the EU;

· what is the program document that has to be elaborated at this stage - conception, strategy, national plan etc.

Below we will focus on every of the moments mentioned above. Tasks regarding the future integration. Until now our path to the EU has been perceived, both by the state administration and by the society in general as an unilateral process where only the EU has obligations.

Thus, all program documents - foreign policy conception, governing programs etc. that have been adopted from the declaration of independence until now contain appeals to the EU to accept Moldova as a future member-state, or declarations that has no internal or external support, let alone a support of the EU. The notion of European integration is a recent one in the Moldovan politicians' vocabulary, many of whom do not make a great difference between European integration as a process of accession of the Republic of Moldova to European structures in general or only to those of the European Union. The situation in this regard, though being characterized by a high level of confusion, is nonetheless evolving [1]. If the 1994 - 98 governments did not know or neglected these problems, at the present moment confusion is partially due to the fact that the necessity of integration into the EU cannot be further neglected. Events on the international arena overwhelm the political life in the Republic of Moldova making the political elite of the country to react more promptly. A special moment in the adoption of the countries' orientation towards the EU, at lest on the declarations level, is the permanent balance between the EU and the CIS. This fact denotes not the authorities' belief that there is a possibility of a simultaneous integration and collaboration in framework of both structures, but rather the fact that the relations with the CIS as it functions now have no future perspectives. If collaboration in the CIS framework offered at least something similar with the EU in increasing the population's well-being, previous governments would long ago pleaded decisively for CIS, at least, only due to the fact that integration into the EU is a much longer process.

Coming back to the present governance position there have to be mentioned a positive moment in addressing the EU integration issue. Thus, all previous leaderships saw the process of integration into the EU only on a foreign level and as such was exclusively a task of the MFA. Even the ADR government which so far is considered to be most pro-European in its program "Law supremacy, economic revitalization, European integration" stipulated that "? country's integration into the European Union is the main strategic objective of the Republic of Moldova foreign policy". Whereas the current governance speaking about the process of the Republic of Moldova integration into the EU put the main stress on domestic level activities - approximation of national legislation to the community one, establishment of a proper institutional framework, promotion of trade with the EU and the South-Eastern Europe countries on the basis of
EU and WTO regulations, increase of economic development level. As a matter of fact these mean promotion of reforms, which in certain fields are stopped by the same governance and on intensification of which insist so much the EU, the World Bank and other international structures.

As regarding the society here it has to be mentioned that our tasks in the process of future accession of Moldova to the EU are not understood correctly. Massive exodus of population mainly to the EU labor market and not to the CIS one, clearly shows what is our population's, even if intuitive, option. The problem is that we want to be accepted in the EU without offering something instead, but the problems we create to Europeans. Also it is quite relevant the attitude of our business operators, for instance in wine producing and agricultural fields. They are often dissatisfied that they are not accepted on the EU market. But let us ask ourselves a question: what will happen if today Moldova becomes an EU member and our goods penetrate the European market and the other way round - the community goods are present on our market? In this regard we have to accept that the economic criterion of accession imposed by the EU which provides iter alia that the candidate country economy must be able to face the competitiveness pressure of the EU market is only in our favor. Those above mentioned are as a matter of fact the answer to the second question - how do we see our approach to the EU. Yet, we have to ask ourselves what is for us our inclusion into the EU - integration, accession or something else.

Integration implies that the country that wishes to join an already formed club can influence despite its political importance, economic power, strategic placement the rules that govern the club in a manner favorable to itself. In case of accession the new member does not have any reformative claims and accepts the functioning rules in power before its accession. Moreover, the club members can impose certain conditions what have to be accepted by the candidate even before joining. In the case of current extension of the EU we speak about accession of countries, which in order to be accepted have to meet the conditions adopted by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 [2].

Thus, it is becoming obvious that Moldova has to get prepared namely for accession to the EU and subsequently all actions, strategies etc. have to target accession. In this regard it has to be mentioned that the modification and adaptation of the new constitution proposed by President Voronin, according to his declarations aimed to settle the transnistrian conflict, is also a proper moment for future integration of the Republic of Moldova into the EU. As it is well know the EU is concerned with its future structure and functioning and is at the stage of elaboration of a new European constitution. Thus, our specialists in constitutional law should carefully analyze present and future evolutions within the EU and to propose such modifications to our constitution that would made easier future process of adaptation of our legislation to the community one. Structures of coordination and implementation of the process of accession to the EU.

Process of accession of any country to the EU needs set up of certain special national structures. Taking into account that European integration is and will be for a long time a continuous process it is not surprising that such institutions exist not only in candidate countries but even in the founder states, what have great experience in this field. Due to the fact that the governments of member-states, candidates countries and those that just aspire to accession are different in is normal to expect that the institutional framework of accession of the Republic of Moldova to the EU will be different for instance from the framework of the Great Britain accession.
The Republic of Moldova already has experience in this regard. To be more specific we have in mind the institutionalization of relations of the Republic of Moldova with the Office of the Stability Pact after our admission to this structure.

Initially, for collaboration with the Stability Pact the position of National Coordinator of the Republic of Moldova at the Stability Pact (NCSP) was established, whose duties were exercised by a deputy minister for foreign affairs. Next step was designation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for this job, a fact that increased the authority of the Pact activities coordination unit, but at the same time reduced the efficiency, because the minister of foreign affairs due to an extremely busy schedule and without a proper logistical structure could not directly coordinate Moldova cooperation within the Pact. Finally, the last step was set up of a National Bureau for cooperation within the Pact. The Bureau where only a couple of people are employed functions within the MFA and is directed by the NCSP at the ambassadorial level, but again the situation is opposite: on one hand there are more actions undertaken within the Bureau, but the coordination authority has decreased.

Coming back to the NCEI, as it has been already mentioned, in the present situation this commission cannot function due to objective reasons. Thus, the majority of the Commission members (especially the Vice-chairman of the Parliament, other members of the parliament, vice-prime ministers and ministers) have a number of daily duties that do not allow them to efficiently participate in the commission's activities as they are currently stipulated (for instance, elaboration of a strategy). In order to function the Commission has to have a secretariat, while at the present moment secretariat functions are attributed to the NCSP and one of deputy minister of economy, who have enough duties besides the NCEI. Finally, it is intended to establish 31 inter-ministerial groups in accordance with the number of chapters to be negotiated for accession to the EU and the NCEI has to direct and coordinate these groups activities, which have to solve concrete technical and not strategic problems. As this issue is touched upon it is not very clear how this groups will be created because, on one hand, different problems have to be grouped as there are close interconnections between them, and on other hand, at the present moment in the government there are only 16 ministries and a few departments, much less than the number of chapters to be negotiated.

Thus, it is clear that the present moment the institutional framework for promotion of accession activities of the Republic of Moldova to the EU is not sufficiently developed. Below we present a number of proposals elaborated after examining the experience of establishment and functioning of similar structures in countries with different levels of proximity to the EU and namely: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary. This experience shows that in order to ensure an efficient evolution of the accession process after the president and the parliament the institutional framework of the decision taking process has to have the following three levels:

1. Upper level (1) on which a structure (national council, national commission, national committee) usually subordinated to the country's Prime minister, decides on main directions of activity, adopts conceptual documents, carries out vertical coordination and general supervision and evaluation of integration process. In most cases members of this upper level structures are minister of branches that have the most to deal with the processes of European integration.

2. Middle level (2) where a structure of horizontal coordination operates, which deals with assignment of responsibilities to ministries, elaboration of conceptual and program documents, monitoring and periodical evaluation of the process of
implementation of integration programs. Members of this structure (committee or council of high officials) are high level employees of ministries, who are directly responsible for promotion of integration activities in certain fields. The second level structure can be created as a ministry for European integration.

3. Lower level (3) where a number of structures operate meant to ensure proper functioning of first and second level structures. Among those can be:

- Bureaus or offices for European integration that perform secretariat activities for the first and second level structures, monitor the process of adaptation of legislation, provide assistance to ministries and inter-ministerial working groups;
- Ministry of foreign affairs with its department for European integration which is responsible for the negotiation process, develops the relations with the EU and candidate countries in order to ensure their support for integration;
- Ministry of justice which monitors the compliance of new draft law with Acquis Communautaire;
- Translation, documentation and information centers.

Taking into account the above mentioned and the fact that the NCEI created by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova is in its essence a structure of superior level within the decision taking institutional framework this commission has to have the following duties:

a) coordination, monitoring, initiation and evaluation of activities connected with preparation for the Republic of Moldova accession to the European Union;

b) analysis of problems and disputes between state institutions in the field of the Republic of Moldova preparation for the accession to the European Union, which were not solved through negotiations by competent members of the Government and suggestion of solutions;

c) periodical participation in the process of foreign and internal communication of the Republic of Moldova previous to accession to the European Union;

d) coordination and initiation of any presentation of Government members in public debates on problems of preparation of accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union, connected to the state's activities in this field;

e) cooperation with the Parliament and the President's Office of the Republic of Moldova and to offer consultations in main issues of accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union;

f) organization of seminars and promotion of other activities with involvement of the Government members, managers of governmental institutions, members of the foreign policy and the European integration commissions of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova.

As it is provided at the present moment the chairman of the Commission is the Prime minister of the Republic of Moldova and members of the Commission are ministers and directors of departments who have to deal with European issues, also the National Coordinator for the Stability Pact of the Republic of Moldova, a deputy minister of foreign affairs, responsible for the relations with the EU, member and candidate countries.

Probably it is not reasonable that the deputy chairman of the Parliament and other parliamentarians to be members of the commission, because according to the
Constitution they are placed on a higher level of the decision taking process. On the other hand, members of the Commission could be employees of the President's, Parliament Chairman and Prime minister's staffs.

The Commission in case of necessity can establish permanent committees formed of its members or temporary working groups what would work in order to settle certain problems that appear in the Commission's activities. Besides the Commission structures of 2-nd and 3-rd level should be established. On the second level it could be created a Council of High Officials (CHO), which would include superiors employees of each ministry, responsible for integration activities in certain fields. The CHO is a structure of horizontal coordination and has to be responsible for settlement of concrete coordination problems: separation of responsibilities regarding implementing various concrete tasks, elaboration and approval of concrete coordination plans, periodical monitoring and evaluation of integration programs implementation.

An other solution could be establishment of a ministry for European integration as it was done in a number of countries (for instance in Ukraine there is a ministry of economy and European integration). On the third level usually function the European integration department of the MFA, respective departments of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Economy, working groups, documentation and translation centers etc. Also, at this level could function an Office of European integration, which has to be responsible for preparation and carrying out of NCEI and CHO activities, monitoring and implementation of the national program of integration, presentation of objective and independent information about the evolution of the process of integration within the involved institutions.

Program documents

As it was already stated the main task of the Commission for 2003 is elaboration of the Strategy, a document of a paramount importance from implementation of which will depend the process of preparation of accession of the Republic of Moldova to the EU. Therefore, it is extremely important that at the elaboration of the Strategy and other program documents - conceptions, programs etc. - the targeted task is clearly defined. Thus, conception is a general document that stipulates only in broad notions some objectives for medium and long terms. A strategy mostly represents a document in which ways and modalities of implementation of the conception are detailed. Usually, this is a voluminous document in which by compartments the situation in each field is presented and what is needed to be done in short (1 year) and medium (2-3 years) terms is specified. Both the conception and the strategy are elaborated starting from a good knowledge of the objectives of activities, as well as based on a profound analysis of the current situation in the field. Respectively the program represents a detailed plan of actions for each field, branch etc. In light of the above mentioned we can state that although as a separate document an officially adopted conception of accession of the Republic of Moldova to the EU was not adopted nevertheless a number of the concept elements were incorporated into the governing programs, the MFA acting plans and reflected in speeches of country's officials. Also, as a version of the conception can be viewed the document "Strategy of the Republic of Moldova of association to the EU", elaborated by the MFA. This Strategy in which a special stress is put on foreign policy was taken over and signed by leaders of 23 political parties and handed over to Petru Lucinschi, President of the Republic of Moldova on 19 June 2000. But a proper strategy where all necessary actions are detailed has never been elaborated.

Due to these reasons the document that has to be elaborated at the present moment needs to be in its essence a strategy of pre-accession which would guide subsequently elaboration of very concrete acting plans. This strategy has to be based on the fact that
integration of the Republic of Moldova into the EU is a fundamental national interest, as well as on recognition and acceptance of the EU fundamental principles:

- principle of the rule of law, creation of an uniform law system and guaranteeing protection of human rights in the basis of communitarian regulations;
- principle of respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- principle of a social state;
- principle of cultural pluralism;
- principle of subsidiarity.

The structure and main elements of any strategy of pre-accession are generally defined by the EU regulations which refer to the enlargement process. This process, according to the decision of the European Council of Luxembourg (December 1997) involves the following stages:

- European Conference, which is a consultative fora at the level of ministers of foreign affairs of candidate countries;
- Accession process, with is an evolutionary one and includes: a) elaboration and implementation of an enhanced pre-accession strategy; b) accession negotiation; c) screening of the EU legislation (Acquis Communautaire - AC) on the national one and identification of problematic areas; c) review procedure;
- process of accession negotiation, the last stage of succession when for each candidate country are established conditions on which accession will take place.

As it was mentioned until 2003 the relations of the Republic of Moldova with the EU were carried in the framework of the PCA. Although this agreement does not open the perspective of accession to the EU in 2001 the Republic of Moldova was invited (along with Russia and Ukraine) to take part in the European Conference activities to which until then only candidate countries were admitted to participate. A special importance for future accession has the fact that the Republic of Moldova is a member of the Stability Pact for the South-Eastern Europe.

The enhanced strategy of pre-accession is generally adopted by the European Commission for each candidate country after signing and entering into force of the Agreement of association to the EU. The Republic of Moldova which has not signed yet such an agreement with the EU can elaborate this strategy on its own. In this regard it is necessary to take into account the following moments:

1. Elaboration of the strategy has to be done based on a deep and objective analysis of the evolution of the Republic of Moldova - the EU relations. First of all this analysis has to refer to the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Also, it has to be done a separate analysis of the results of the Republic of Moldova activities within the Council of Europe, the Stability Pact for the South-Eastern Europe, the Central Europe Initiative and other European cooperation structures.

2. At the elaboration of the strategy of the Republic of Moldova accession to the EU, the EU position expressed in the Country Strategy Paper for Moldova for 2002 - 2006 should be taken into account. This document adopted by the European Commission on 27 December 2001 defines the objectives of cooperation
of the EU with the Republic of Moldova and represents in its essence a program of support of reformator forces of the country.

3. The strategy structure has to be elaborated starting from the criteria to which each candidate country to accession to the EU has to correspond. These criteria known as Copenhagen criteria (adopted in June 1993 by the European Council) are the following:

1. Political criterion –
   - stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy;
   - the rule of law;
   - human rights;
   - respect for and protection of minorities rights.

2. Economic criterion –
   - existence of a functioning market economy;
   - the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU.

3. Capacity to assume the obligations of the EU member-state –
   - by adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union;
   - by ensuring the free movement of persons, services and capital;
   - by ensuring and respect for the rights of commercial society;
   - by promoting proper competition policies;
   - by proper promotion of agricultural, industrial, energy and transport policies;
   - by promoting community social and employment policies;
   - by cooperating in justice and internal affairs matters.

Later, the Madrid European Council (December 1995) decided that candidate countries have to create adequate conditions for their integration by adapting their administrative and judiciary structures, meant to transport the EU legislation into the national ones. In 1997 Luxembourg European Council decided that functioning of these institutions needed to be strengthened and ameliorated taking into account the provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty. All these let us formulate the forth criterion as following:

4. Public administration reform.

All activities of SPRM implementation are inseparably linked with adaptation of the national legislation to the community one. This activity is especially important and has to be correlated with creation of national administrative capacities which would ensure the application in practice of Acquis communautaire (AC). In this regard the Croatian example is a rather interesting one, which intends to implement the AC (over 1200 laws) only in two years.

In order to implement the AC they need to be translated (this is also a request of the EU). The Republic of Moldova can benefit from the fact that this translation is done
partially from the EU PHARE funds and at the present moment over 60000 of the total of 90000 pages of legislative texts are already translated into Romanian.

Fulfillment of accession criteria needs a significant human capital, thus usually all candidate countries strategies incorporate an important compartment - personnel training. Accomplishment of all objectives also needs an important financial input, therefore the strategy has to come with an assessment of the financial needs for the implementation of the strategy.

There also is necessary to pay a special attention to the regional cooperation of the Republic of Moldova, which is part to a various structures such as Council of Europe, OSCE, Central European Initiative (CEI), South-Eastern Cooperation Initiative (SECI), Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), Danube Commission etc. The advantages of cooperation are also motivated by the fact that members of all these structures are not only candidate countries, but also members of the EU and collaboration with them contributes to a faster adaptation to the EU standards and norms.

It is also important the cooperation with structure with universal vocation, not only with the European ones. When taking the decisions the European Union authorities take into account not only the opinion of the Council of Europe, but also of the international financial institutions - World Bank, International Monetary Fund, International Financial Corporation, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Along with the chapters that are in the strategies of other countries, the strategy has to include a part dedicated to the settlement of the transnistrian conflict and post-conflict rehabilitation of the country. Thus, in general lines, the strategy structure can be presented in the following way:

1. PROCESS OF PREPARATION FOR ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION
   1.1 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND COORDINATION SYSTEM OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES
   1.2 STAGE OF PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION
   1.3 FULFILLMENT OF PROVISIONS OF COUNTRY STRATEGY FOR MOLDOVA
   1.4 PROCESS OF COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA WITHIN THE STABILITY PACT
   1.5 SETTLEMENT OF THE TRANSNISTRIAN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT REHABILITATION

2. POLITICAL CRITERIA FOR ACCESSION
   2.1 DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW
   2.2 HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

3. ECONOMIC CRITERIA FOR ACCESSION
   3.1 MACROECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS
   3.2 MACROECONOMIC POLICIES SYNTHESIS
3.3 FUNCTIONAL MARKET ECONOMY
3.4 CAPACITY TO COPE WITH COMPETITIVE PRESSURE AND MARKET FORCES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION.
3.5 MACROECONOMIC FORECAST FOR 2003 - 2004 PERIOD
4. CAPACITY TO ASSUME THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE EU MEMBER-STATE
4.1 FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS
4.2 FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS
4.3 FREE MOVEMENT OF SERVICES
4.4 FREE MOVEMENT OF CAPITAL
4.5 COMMERCIAL SOCIETY RIGHTS
4.6 COMPETITION POLICY
4.7 AGRICULTURE
4.8 TRANSPORT POLICY
4.9 TAXATION
4.10 ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION
4.11 STATISTICS
4.12 SOCIAL POLICIES AND LABOR FORCE EMPLOYMENT
4.13 ENERGY
4.14 INDUSTRIAL POLICY
4.15 SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE ENTERPRISES
4.16 SCIENCE AND RESEARCH
4.17 EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND YOUTH
4.18 TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES
4.19 CULTURE AND TELEVISION AND RADIO POLICIES
4.20 REGIONAL POLICY AND COORDINATION OF STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS
4.21 ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
4.22 CONSUMERS PROTECTION AND HEALTH
4.23 COOPERATION IN JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS ISSUES
4.24 CUSTOMS UNION
4.25 INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS
Each of those 41 paragraphs, in their turn, have subparagraphs referring to a specific problem in a short way (3 - 5 pages). Thus, only the texts of first 5 chapters can have several hundreds of pages. Also, the program of legislative harmonization is a rather voluminous document.

The process of accession of the Republic of Moldova is a long-term one. During this period of time there will happen many changes both on the international arena and internal situation in Moldova. Due to this reason SPRM will need up-to-date revisions and adjustments with reformulation of short and medium terms objectives.

Only after the strategy is elaborated the ministries and departments have to elaborate concrete plans in each field of activity. Thus, the task of creating the institutional framework for elaborating the strategy of accession to the EU is a rather complicated one and needs time, but the future evolution of the process of accession of the Republic of Moldova to the EU will depend of the fact how it is elaborated.

Bibliography:
