

**MILITARY ACADEMY OF THE ARMED FORCES
DOCTORIAL SCHOOL "MILITARY AND SECURITY SCIENCES"**

With manuscript title
CZU:314.15:351.86(478)(043.2)=111

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**ILLEGAL MIGRATION – THREAT TO THE NATIONAL
SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

SPECIALTY: 582.01 SECURITY AND DEFENSE

Summary of the doctoral thesis in Security sciences

CHIȘINĂU, 2025

The thesis was developed within the Doctoral School "Military and National Security Sciences", Military Academy of the Armed Forces "Alexandru cel Bun"

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The defense will take place on march 27, 2025, at 2:00 PM, in the Senate Hall, during the meeting of the Doctoral Commission of the "Alexandru cel Bun" Armed Forces Military Academy (23 Haltei Street, Chisinau, MD-2000).

The doctoral thesis and the abstract can be consulted at the library of the "Alexandru cel Bun" Military Academy of the Armed Forces and on the website of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (www.cnaa.md, www.anacec.md).

The abstract was sent on february 24, 2025.

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CONCEPTUAL LANDMARKS OF RESEARCH

The topicality and importance of the researched topic is determined by the transformations taking place at the global and regional levels, characterized by the presence of uncontrolled movements of significant masses of people generated by various reasons. Migration is undoubtedly influenced by evolving global events, but also on the processes taking place in the international arena. Mass migration is driven by wars, conflicts, and political transformations in the international arena, by political transformations generated by revolutions, persecutions or expropriations, as well as by economic and health crises at the global level.

Annually, millions migrate in search of safety and improved living conditions. Most are motivated by economic factors and better opportunities, but some are forced to leave their homes due to poverty, natural disasters, environmental degradation, persecution or violent conflicts. Migration mainly takes place between states with common borders, but also between states that are further away. Access to information and cheap means of transport remove barriers to movement both globally and regionally. The conditions of travel from one part of the world to the other in less than 24 hours are undoubtedly an impetus to migrate. Rapid advancements in travel technology do not guarantee lawful migration. Illegal migration is both a cross-border crime and a human rights violation. Most countries are now directly involved in migration processes either as a state of origin, a state of destination or a state of transit.

Illegal migration flows pose significant risks and challenges to international security, but also to national security. In the last twenty years, internal and, especially, external migration have become characteristic phenomena not only for the international community, but also for the Republic of Moldova, with multiple demographic, social, cultural and economic consequences [44].

In the international context, the Republic of Moldova is included in the Eastern European route of illegal migration towards the European Union. The general trend of illegal migration on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is present at the exit and entry into the country, having as destination the states of Western Europe, as well as the states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), especially until the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict. At the same time, both the Republic of Moldova and its neighbors, Ukraine and Romania, continue to remain transit countries for most of the migrants detected at the common border.

The crises generated by the flows of illegal migration in 2015 in the Balkans, those in 2021 in Belarus, as well as those in 2022, caused by the war in Ukraine, have demonstrated that measures to combat illegal migration are possible only under the conditions of joint activities, promoted by each state both at the common borders and in third countries. At the same time, countering this type of cross-border crime must be based on the permanent assessment of the existing situation both at national, regional and international levels. National experts contribute to planning and executing joint missions at the EU external border, the interoperability of information and analysis systems have further emphasized the joint efforts to reduce the risks of illegal migration and the development of common security platforms.

Starting from this premise, first of all, the relevance of the research topic is

determined by a series of factors, especially the illegal migration flows in recent years. These flows are characterized by complexity and dynamism, being influenced not only by internal sources, but also by external sources. Migration has become a globally significant phenomenon, including in the Republic of Moldova, with demographic, social, cultural, political, economic and security repercussions.

Secondly, new studies are currently needed in the field of illegal migration, since the multitude of scientific research abroad and the insufficiency of studies of illegal migration in the country do not provide a complete picture of the phenomenon of illegal migration. In the specialized scientific literature, the insufficiency of studies dedicated to illegal migration at the national level has been noted. The lack of a solid theoretical and methodological framework in addressing the risks and threats represented by illegal migration, the political, economic and social instability, the limited financial resources of the Republic of Moldova and the current geopolitical context condition the emergence of new visions with reference to the researched problem. Also, the researched field requires the need for new approaches to the issue that includes both illegal migration and its impact on national security.

Thirdly, the orientation towards the development of a synthesis, triadic research, less studied in the international literature and in the literature of the Republic of Moldova, conditions the need to develop such a work. From this perspective, studying the impact of illegal migration on national security has oriented our research towards a multidimensional format - "illegal migration-threat-risk-impact-national security" both from a theoretical and a practical point of view. Examined from such a point of view, the respective problem allows us to better understand the impact of the phenomenon of illegal migration, being conditioned by internal and external factors.

Analysis of the situation in the field of illegal migration as a threat to national security. Being a phenomenon present on the international arena since ancient times, illegal migration is a multifaceted reality. The study of the phenomenon of illegal migration develops a keen interest on the part of state and political institutions, the media, and civil society. The topic of illegal migration is often present in public debates and political speeches, as well as in the debates of representatives of the academic community. Although the study of the phenomenon of illegal migration intersects the bordering interests of several disciplines, such as: political science, theory of international relations, legal sciences, history, economic sciences, etc., to date it has not found sufficient reflection in the specialized literature. The reflected theme has been subjected to scientific research in the works and articles of political scientists, sociologists, jurists, and economists in the international specialized literature and in the specialized literature of the Republic of Moldova.

This thesis is developed in the spirit of the Copenhagen School and the approaches to national security formulated by its representatives. Theoretical and methodological approaches to illegal migration as a threat to national security are contained in the works of researchers B. Buzan [9], E. Ravenstein [42], E. Lee [29], D. Massey [30, 31, 32], A. Schloenhardt [43] etc. At the national level, the first studies on the phenomenon of illegal migration and its repercussions on national security are highlighted. Among the local authors we mention V. Moșneaga [36, 37], D. Vaculovschi [47], O. Casiadi [17, 18, 19], V. Juc [27, 28], S. Cebotari [20, 21], A.

Roșca [39, 41], N. Albu [1, 2, 3, 4], V. Moraru [33, 34, 35], D. Benchechi [5, 6, 7]. The analysis of the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security [10, 13, 16] and the mechanisms for combating or reducing this phenomenon [11, 12, 14, 15] is the area of research for A. Buzev and S. Cebotari.

In recent times, the approach to the phenomenon of illegal migration is represented only among political statements and some minor regulatory initiatives at the national level. The interest in analyzing the phenomenon has been a priority for few researches, most of which summarize them in the context of human trafficking, usually covering only general issues, with a brief presentation of international norms on the subject. Given the topicality and importance of this issue, there is a need for comprehensive studies, which will encompass the entire range of existing problems in countering and reducing illegal migration.

The purpose of the work is to conduct a large-scale and detailed scientific research on illegal migration at the national level in order to identify threats to the national security of the Republic of Moldova, as well as to propose concrete solutions to counteract and reduce illegal migration at the national level.

In order to achieve the proposed goal, the following **objectives** were formulated:

- To determine the main historiographical sources with reference to the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security;
- To identify the conceptual-theoretical approaches to the correlation "*illegal migration - threat - risk - national security*";
- To determine the research methodology of illegal migration as a threat to national security;
- To analyze the regulatory framework at the international and national levels regarding the identification of mechanisms to combat illegal migration;
- To establish risks, threats and vulnerabilities, as well as assessing the impact of illegal migration on the national security of the Republic of Moldova;
- To argue the mechanisms for streamlining the counteraction of illegal migration at the national level as an opportunity for inclusion in the European border security system;
- To formulate original conclusions and practical recommendations to address illegal migration.

The hypothesis posits that regional instability amplifies illegal migration that generate threats to the national security of the Republic of Moldova. This hypothesis will guide research in the direction of assessing and improving mechanisms for strengthening national security, while at the same time providing a basis for developing more effective policies for managing illegal migration.

Synthesis of the research methodology and justification of the chosen research methods. The epistemic and pragmatic significance of the investigation derives from the results and conclusions obtained as a result of researching the problem of illegal migration as a threat to national security. The basis for the development of this work was theoretical research, publications and empirical data of researchers in the field from Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, the USA, Australia, the Russian Federation, Romania and the Republic of Moldova. This research involved the application and combination of several investigation methods, which elucidated the

aspects of national security in the context of illegal migration flows. Thus, for the purpose of developing this research, the author resorted to the use of a set of methods such as: empirical, deductive, inductive, analysis and synthesis, normative-axiological, historical, comparative method, webographic method.

A special role belongs to the sociological method that complemented the empirical data collected in the qualitative research. This method allowed studying aspects regarding the phenomenon of illegal migration, the evolution of the phenomenon of illegal migration, the difficulties they face on the illegal migration route, the solutions they adopt to reach the destination country, all these benefits of the sociological method with the implementation of field surveys, together with the entire spectrum of methods applied to analyze the phenomenon of illegal migration, determine the correlation "illegal migration - threat - risk - national security" and define the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security, thus establishing the specific characteristics of illegal migration routes in the Republic of Moldova.

All these methods constituted the methodological apparatus and allowed us to carry out the research, which included the most modern research procedures and techniques.

The novelty and scientific originality of the thesis derives from the implementation of a complex analysis of the phenomenon of illegal migration in the Republic of Moldova in order to identify the problem facing the national security system, which is currently unresolved in a systemic form at the national level, and the scientific approach is distinguished by elucidating the specific aspects of the phenomenon of illegal migration in order to combat this type of cross-border crime by applying viable solutions in the field.

Thus, the scientific novelty of the work is found in the following main theses:

- conducting a comprehensive study of the main aspects of illegal migration as a threat to state security;
- developing for the first time in the scientific literature of the Republic of Moldova a work of this kind, the content of which is focused on identifying the correlation "national security - illegal migration";
- determining threats to national security in the context of illegal migration of citizens of the Republic of Moldova and foreigners;
- identifying new mechanisms for preventing and combating illegal migration at the national level.

The major scientific problem solved in the paper is to highlight the impact of illegal migration as a threat to national security. The paper also aims to identify ways and formulate solutions to ensure national security and combat the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to the security of the Republic of Moldova.

The theoretical significance of the work. It resides in the development of theoretical and methodological approaches to the phenomenon of illegal migration, contributing to the determination of the specific characteristics of the phenomenon of illegal migration, aspects that target current national security processes and the impact of illegal migration on the dimensions of insecurity at the national and international level. The doctoral thesis serves as a basis for the relevant authorities in the development and adaptation of national policies in the field of national and regional

security. The work highlights and complements the theoretical and factual information from existing research in the field. The research material could serve to develop the thematic content of special courses in higher education institutions dedicated to the field of national security, such as: "Security and Defense Studies", "International Security", "National Security", "Security Theory", "International Migration".

The applied value of the work. The research results (including tables, figures, empirical data) can represent a tool for analyzing the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security, including, they can be used to update, develop and report on national policy documents such as: the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova, the National Defense Strategy, the Integrated State Border Management Program, the Program on the management of migration flows, asylum and integration of foreigners, the National Strategy "Diaspora-2025", etc. The research represents a bibliographic and methodological-didactic source in the process of professional training of doctoral, master's and undergraduate students from the Faculties of Military Sciences; Public Administration, International Relations, Political Sciences; History, Economics, Law and Psychology; Public Order and Security, etc.

Approval of scientific results. The research was carried out based on doctoral grants for the academic year 2019-2020. The thesis is developed within the Doctoral School "Military and Security Sciences" of the Military Academy of the Armed Forces "Alexandru cel Bun" and was examined and defended at the meeting of the Scientific Council. The topics discussed, the main sections, the conclusions and recommendations formulated in the thesis were presented at the following national and international scientific forums: *International Scientific Conference Political and Administrative Science: Global Challenges, Local Solutions* (State University of Moldova, November 13, 2020); Scientific Conference with International Participation *Development of the National Army in the Context of Deepening Democratic Reforms*, 6th Edition (Military Academy of the Armed Forces "Alexandru cel Bun", February 25, 2021); International scientific conference *The 1992 Dniester War: 30 years after...* (National Association of Young Historians of Moldova, Center for Security Studies and Crisis Management, Memoria Cultural Foundation, March 4-5, 2022); Scientific conference with international participation *The Development of the National Army in the Context of Deepening Democratic Reforms*, 7th Edition (Military Academy of the Armed Forces "Alexandru cel Bun", February 24, 2022); Scientific conference with international participation *The Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms in the Process of Ensuring Public Order and Security*, 3rd Edition (Ministry of Internal Affairs, "Stefan cel Mare" Academy, December 7, 2023).

Publications on the research topic. The research results were presented in scientific articles and abstracts both in the Republic of Moldova and abroad. Thus, 19 scientific articles were published on the topic of the thesis, one of which in international journals and 18 in the National Register of B and C category journals.

Summary of the thesis chapters. The thesis includes: annotation, list of abbreviations, introduction, 3 chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 325 titles and 8 annexes. The content of the thesis is presented on 150 pages of basic text.

Keywords: illegal migration, migrant, migration route, national security, regional security, risks, threats, border, crime, migration management, influx, security strategy, resilience, security policies, cooperation, European Union.

THESIS CONTENT

The introduction represents the substantiation and justification of the topic chosen for research, comprising the following sections: the relevance and importance of the researched problem, the analysis of the situation in the field, the purpose and objectives of the research, the research hypothesis, the research methodology, the scientific novelty and originality of the thesis, the major scientific problem solved, the theoretical significance and the applied value of the work.

Chapter 1, "**Aspects of general analysis of Illegal Migration: A Threat to National Security.**", refers to the conceptual-theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of "illegal migration" and the outline of its derivatives. By studying a series of researches by experts in the field of security, the notion of "illegal migration" was deduced. The analysis of scientific publications in the field provides us with an overview of the history of the phenomenon of illegal migration, considered a current problem at a global level, with repercussions on the security system, which led to the development of mechanisms to counter illegal migration. The national and international institutions with responsibilities in the field of combating "illegal migration" were also determined.

The subchapter "*History of research on the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security*" is focused on the analysis of the works of authors from Germany, Austria, Italy, Great Britain, USA, Australia, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Moldova, etc., who address the issue of migration as a threat to security, the forms and methods of manifestation of illegal migration. Also, as a result of the analysis of scientific sources on the topic of the thesis, the scientific problem is formulated, research directions are determined and methods of research on illegal migration as a threat to national security are identified.

Illegal migration gained scholarly attention only in the 20th century, although it existed and was at the foundation of the formation of contemporary states, causing multiple societal remodeling throughout history. Researching the approaches to illegal migration allowed us to highlight the existence of a broad and consistent framework of works in the field. The main historiographical landmarks with reference to illegal migration are examined by V. Moşneaga, Ch. Mohammadifard, L. Corbu-Drumea in "*Population of the Republic of Moldova in the context of international migrations*" [38]. Illegal migration from the Republic of Moldova to EU countries is analyzed by V. Moşneaga in his work "*Illegal Moldovan Migration to the European Union*" [36]. Two different approaches to migration in the study "Migration: subjects and subjects" is carried out by O. Casiadi and S. Porcescu [18]. Relevant for local science remain the research conducted by V. Moraru and V. Moşneaga in the work *entitled "Migration, Diaspora, Development: new challenges and perspectives"* [35].

In the specialized literature, illegal migration is analyzed by S. Hofbauer, A. Gächter, K. Mayr and others in "*Illegally Resident Third Country Nationals in the EU Member States: State Approaches Towards Them and Their Profile and Social Situation*" [24]. Similar research is conducted by A. Schloenhardt in "*Trafficking in*

Persons in an Era of Growing Irregular Migration” [43]. Analysis of migration flows and their impact on security belongs to the Greek authors M. Vlachadi, G. Koufioti and A. Kounios in “*Migration flows and economic data analysis*” [48], S. X. Zhang in “*Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: A global review of the emerging evidence base*” [49].

Although the definitions of illegal migration mainly reflect the perceptions of researchers and specialists in the field, the variety of bibliographic sources used provides us with essential support in further research at the national level, which until now presents a vacuum in the scientific environment of the Republic of Moldova. The analysis of scientific publications in the field provides us with an overview of the history of the phenomenon of illegal migration, which is considered a security problem throughout the world and which led to the development of mechanisms to combat illegal migration.

Local bibliographic sources require research and completion on many of the topics addressed in the paper. Local specialized literature attests to a much simpler approach to the phenomenon of illegal migration, focusing especially on the subject of human trafficking and migration in the context of economic relations of the Republic of Moldova. This fact demonstrates that the subject of illegal migration and mechanisms for strengthening the national security system is of great relevance in the current geopolitical context.

Subchapter 1.2 “*Conceptual-theoretical approaches to the correlation “national security-threat-illegal migration”*”, is dedicated to examining the conceptual-theoretical identifications of the presented interaction between the phenomena of illegal migration - national security, achieved by highlighting the main characteristics of their manifestation. In this subchapter, the notion of “*illegal migration*” is analyzed and clarified. Accepted multilaterally at international and national level, the notion of “*illegal migration*” reflects, in its broadest sense, an act of migration “that is not legal” or an act of migration that is carried out against the laws of entry and residence in a country. In a narrow sense, the notion of “*illegal migration*” designates the act of entering a country in violation of the laws on migration and refers mainly to the procedure of crossing a border without the appropriate authorization. In this context, we can see that the three terms (1) irregular, (2) undocumented and (3) unauthorized constitute a periphrasis, which essentially represents the same *illegal* action, which attacks the security of the state and is sanctioned accordingly. In the work *Migration and the links between social and societal security* the authors M. O. Heisler and Z. Layton-Henry mention that, above all, migration is a security issue [26].

Analyzed through the lens of the Copenhagen School, illegal migration represents a multidimensional challenge, often securitized in political and social discourses. Thus, illegal migration becomes not only a practical problem, but also one constructed as an existential threat in various dimensions.

The impact of illegal migration on the *social dimension* of security is reflected both in terms of changing demographic coordinates and the issue of national identities. Increased international migration has led to greater ethnocultural and religious diversity within societies, which determines the emergence of tense situations between the local population and migrants, perceived as a direct threat to public order and

security [7, p.322]. In the opinion of researchers A. Roşca and N. Albu, the problems of illegal migration and human trafficking are assessed by experts as serious threats to security in the social sphere of the Republic of Moldova [41, p.214]. On the same social level, host states are faced with the challenge of promoting subversive concepts and ideologies that incite to the violation of laws. It is also possible that locals, especially those in the vicinity of borders, are drawn into cross-border criminal activities, thus increasing the actions specific to organized crime. Migrants' contact with already radicalized individuals and/or frustrations due to the failure to meet expectations from the host state are potential factors for joining extremist movements.

From the *military perspective*, mass illegal migration can destabilize border regions, attracting military interventions to manage humanitarian crises. The threat that illegal migration poses to a state's military security is represented by tensions between the country of origin and the country of destination, as well as the actions of terrorist networks that can take on typically military features [44]. Subsequently, armed conflicts constitute a major cause of the emergence of migrant flows in particular, but also the infiltration of active members or sympathizers to achieve the goal. At the same time, undermining the state's capacity to control its borders represents another threat that the phenomenon of illegal migration can generate by imposing forced migration, with the aim of diminishing the resources of the parties involved in a conflict. Large-scale illegal migration strains institutional resources, including military ones, which would require a mobilization to have a proportionate response to the challenges. Allocating military resources to national crisis management may reduce or redirect their ability to focus on other, less specific tasks. An example of this is the situation in autumn 2021 [8], when the Republic of Belarus artificially created an illegal migration route by taking over people from the Middle East who were being transported by air to Belarus, with the sole purpose of responding to sanctions and creating pressure on the EU's external border.

For the same purpose and with the same methods of hybrid warfare, the Russian Federation uses migration flows as part of hybrid threats to destabilize Finland's national security. In November 2023, the Finnish government closed the land border with Russia in response to an unusual wave of migrants, most of whom came from the Middle East and Africa. Through its actions, Russia facilitated the passage of these migrants across the common border in an organized effort to influence and destabilize, especially after Finland's accession to NATO in 2023.

The threats of illegal migration to *the political dimension* of security represent a major political challenge, being perceived by states as a threat to sovereignty [46]. Governments adopt strict border control policies, or large-scale naturalization measures through the granting of citizenship. The sovereignty of a state is threatened by questioning the recognition, legitimacy or authority of the government, and at the international level, international structures are threatened by situations that undermine the rules, norms and institutions that constitute them. Large flows of illegal migrants can provoke tensions and reactions within various political elites. This can fuel political hate speech, intensifying ill feelings towards migrants and creating uncertainty in public opinion. Last but not least, illegal migration can affect a country's external relations, especially with the migrants' countries of origin or with other neighboring states or international partners. Diplomatic tensions are inevitable in such

circumstances when there is no adequate coordination in managing this phenomenon or in the case of tolerating the transit of illegal migrant flows through the territory of a state.

The threats of illegal migration to *the economic dimension* are difficult to identify, being constituted by factors that undermine its rules, norms and institutions, and their reference objects are represented, as in the previous case, by a wide range of entities - from specific economic regimes to the global market. At the same time, national economies are, in a certain way, part of the state structure and constitute its foundation. Poor management of migration flows can limit the economic growth potential of a country by creating uncertainties due to the migration of qualified personnel, which generates dysfunctions in the labor market and in other sectors of the economy. In turn, illegal migrants can compete with the local labor force, especially in sectors where qualified personnel are not needed, such as in agriculture, which can lead to pressures on unincreased wages and an increase in the unemployment rate [50, p.133]. Subsequently, an illegal migrant cannot be legally employed, thus they can contribute to the development of a shadow economy and do not contribute to the payment of taxes and duties, which directly affects fiscal revenues in the state budget. Finally, the instability generated by the presence and perpetuation of illegal presence on the territory of a state can discourage foreign direct investment and affect the general business climate of a country, influencing economic competitiveness on an international level. Overwhelmed by the dynamics of these economic trends, attempts by states to control migration have proven ineffective, when they tried to limit the usual channels of entry, migrants switched to illegal ones [22, p.49].

When examining the threats of illegal migration to *the environmental dimension*, the range of reference objects varies from relatively concrete entities to general problems of the planet and humanity. In order to create roads and temporary housing, illegal migrants may resort to illegal deforestation of forests or other lands, thus contributing to the loss of natural habitats and the destruction of biodiversity. Improvised housing and temporary camps can lead to uncontrolled accumulation of waste and pollution of soil and water in the places of displacement.

Researcher V. Juc [27] states that globalization in its various forms (political, economic, informational, social, religious, cultural) has led the ruling elites to recognize the spread of new types of challenges to individual, national, regional and international security. Political classes and academic communities from different states began to look for new methods and tools to safeguard against new threats, risks and vulnerabilities. With the disappearance of traditional threats to security after the end of the Cold War, other dangers were identified, much more difficult to combat, such as: international terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons, regional conflicts, illegal migration, cross-border crime, religious fundamentalism, failure of good governance, trafficking in human beings, weapons and drugs, economic dependence.

In the opinion of the author N. Albu, presented in the monograph *National Security: Theoretical and Practical Aspects* [4], the attacks of September 11, 2001, constituted the basis for the reconfiguration of migration and border control policies, a mandatory requirement that was established by UN Security Council Resolution 1373, which can also be considered an example of securitization, transforming migration from an "*economic and social problem*" into a "*national security problem*", linked to terrorism.

Subchapter 1.3, "*Conclusions chapter 1*", represents the result of the research on the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to the security of the Republic of Moldova and contemporary scientific approaches to the concepts of "illegal migration", "threat", "risk" and "national security", where we can configure the following important conclusions that mark the theoretical contribution to understanding the phenomenon of illegal migration:

1. The analysis of the historiography with reference to illegal migration allowed us to highlight the existence of a broad and consistent framework of works in the field. Although the definitions of illegal migration mainly reflect the perceptions of researchers and experts in the given issue, the variety of bibliographical sources used provides us with essential support for further research at the national level, which until now has not been researched multilaterally in the scientific environment of the Republic of Moldova. The analysis of scientific publications in the field provides us with an overview of the history of the phenomenon of illegal migration, which is considered a security problem throughout the world and which led to the development of mechanisms to combat illegal migration.

2. The theoretical aspect of research on the phenomenon of illegal migration, as well as the subject dedicated to countering policies, are subject to research by authors from both the West and the East, including by researchers from the Republic of Moldova. Unlike the multitude of research dedicated to migration processes, the phenomenon of illegal migration remains a subject little examined at the national level. The reason for the insufficient presence of publications that elucidate the problem of illegal migration as a threat to the security of the Republic of Moldova in particular, but also to international security in general, is explained by the lack of statistical data or data that cannot be verified and have a certain degree of distrust, the reduced interest of the authorities of the Republic of Moldova in researching the phenomenon of illegal migration.

3. Starting from the reasoning that illegal migration flows play a critical role both from the perspective of national security and the security of the European community space, there is a need to expand the area of research dedicated to the phenomenon of illegal migration in the Republic of Moldova, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine, but also in the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian war. The existing scientific works in the Republic of Moldova do not provide a complete picture of illegal migration, suggesting that we should decide on the need to further expand the area of research both in the country and abroad with reference to the given subject. In this context, in future research it is important to study not only the causes of the manifestation of the phenomenon of illegal migration, but also its impact on the security of the Republic of Moldova. Thus, the lack of reference studies on the phenomenon of illegal migration in the context of ensuring national security becomes an objective of the present research.

4. Currently, the concepts of "illegal migration", "threat", "risk" and "national security" attract considerable attention, being discussed both in the scientific community and in the press. During the research, it was concluded that, although these concepts have different connotations, there is a direct correlation between them, in that illegal migration acts as a triggering factor of threats, characterized by the proliferation of crime and increased political tensions between states, respectively, it is necessary to implement security measures that directly strengthen national and international security.

5. In the context of ensuring national security, states collaborate with each other in establishing relations on the political, economic or socio-cultural dimension. Illegal migration is considered to be a direct threat to state security, including international security.

Chapter two, entitled "**The phenomenon of illegal migration at the national level: theoretical and methodological aspects**", is dedicated to the methodology of researching illegal migration as a threat to national security, the methods and analysis techniques used to achieve the objective - the research problem. The second part focuses on the analysis of regulations at the national and international levels that allow authorities to manage, depending on internal and external developments, national security policy.

Subchapter 2.1 "*Methodology of research on illegal migration as a threat to national security*" focuses on the set of methods: general-logical and general-scientific, particular and specific that allowed the research on illegal migration, its forms of manifestation, specific characteristics and implications for national security.

The use and combination of a set of empirical and interdisciplinary methods contributed to the research on illegal migration as a threat to the national security of the Republic of Moldova. The use of a set of scientific methods and the application of a set of scientific research techniques contributed to the development of a comprehensive vision of the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to the security of the state; to the study of the processes of formation of flows and stocks of illegal migrants, conditioning the redefinition of the security policies of states.

These research methods represent the way in which aspects of the phenomenon of illegal migration have been studied, the evolution over the years of the methods applied in the process of illegal migration, the risks faced on the illegal migration route, the solutions they adopt to reach the destination country - all these benefits of the sociological method with field surveys, together with the entire spectrum of methods applied to analyze the phenomenon of illegal migration, lead not only to an objective finding of the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security, but also to the determination of specific characteristics of illegal migration routes in the Republic of Moldova.

A special role was given to the sociological method by conducting surveys (applying the questionnaire) in the field. The object of study was illegal migrants, having an important role in researching the phenomenon of illegal migration in the Republic of Moldova. This represents the way to study aspects of the phenomenon of illegal migration, the evolution over the years of the methods applied in the processes of illegal migration, the risks they face on the illegal migration route, the solutions they adopt to reach the destination country, all these benefits of the sociological method with conducting surveys in the field, together with the entire spectrum of methods applied to analyze the phenomenon of illegal migration, lead not only to an objective finding of the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security, but also to the determination of specific characteristics of illegal migration routes in the Republic of Moldova.

Among the principles of sample selection applicable to the research topic of illegal migration, one can mention the "snowball" sampling (where a respondent is asked to identify another possible respondent to complete the questionnaire). In qualitative research on illegal migration, social networks also play a significant role, thus, by publishing and disseminating the questionnaire in various groups and

communities formed on social networks, it was possible to complete the questionnaire by different people, ensuring a larger and more diverse sample, including by respecting the principle of confidentiality of the person and data. The statistical data presented are prepared by the author during the period 2017 - 2024, based on the survey of illegal migrants both at the state border, in the process of documenting cases of illegal border crossing, and inside the country, in the Foreigners Accommodation Center under the General Inspectorate for Migration.

Subchapter 2.2 "*Managing illegal migration: regulations at international and national level*", the regulatory framework is analyzed, which is aimed at reducing illegal migration flows at European and national level, developing and implementing countermeasures, disseminating and channeling legal forms of migration. In response to the challenges of illegal migration, the EU has embarked on a broader reform process, aimed at rebuilding the Union's policies related to discouraging illegal migration and regulating asylum procedures based on four pillars: reducing incentives for illegal migration by addressing its root causes, improving return processes and dismantling illegal migration and human trafficking networks; securing external borders; establishing a solid EU asylum policy and offering more legal pathways for asylum seekers and legal migration channels. While in the 1960s and 1970s migration was an individual problem of the member states, from the 1980s there was a shift towards controlling migration within the community. In the early 1990s, the issue of migration became sufficiently politicised to require common measures. In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty included regulations on migration in all three groups of problems defined as common.

The policy of a state in the field of migration is carried out through migration legislation and any change in the policy inevitably leads to operational legislative changes in the migration sphere. Often, a period of time passes between the change in the vector of migration policy and the introduction of the corresponding changes in the legislation. In order to assess the compliance of domestic legislation with international norms, in our understanding, it is more important to highlight that the concepts existing in the legislation allow the political power to intervene directly in the regulation of the phenomenon of illegal migration by adopting concrete legislative norms. At the same time, the adoption of the National Security Strategy adjusted to the new trends, both benign and malignant, in the field of security, the document is the basis for the development, completion and amendment of laws and other normative acts in the field of national security and defense. The new Strategy identifies threats, risks and vulnerabilities that affect or may affect national security, in order to develop effective policies to combat or prevent their manifestation [25].

To understand the diversity of perceptions on the effects of illegal migration, the author analyzes how illegal migration influences public opinions and political decisions in the USA, the EU and the Republic of Moldova. The USA and the EU, as the main destinations for illegal migration flows, offer valuable experiences on the impact of illegal migration on the economy, security and social cohesion, which can be analyzed and adapted in the context of the Republic of Moldova. Illegal migration in the USA and the EU is perceived ambivalently, on the one hand, there are concerns about competition for jobs, especially among unskilled workers, on the other hand, illegal migrants are seen as an essential workforce in industries such as agriculture,

construction and transport. The population's concerns are related to social integration and the increase in crime. Perceptions are also polarized along political party lines, with some candidates advancing strong positions against illegal migration, promising strict border control measures, thus gaining significant support by promoting anti-immigration views.

Unlike other countries, the Republic of Moldova is not a primary destination for illegal migration, as highlighted by the situations in the US and the EU, being more of a transit country. Economic and political factors limit the country's attractiveness for illegal migrants. The public perceives illegal migration as having a minimal economic impact, but there are concerns about competition on the labor market in low-paid sectors. The population expresses fears about security and insufficient infrastructure to cope with crises related to managing refugee flows.

Issues related to illegal migration are less present in the political discourse, while improving border control is the concern that the EU expresses to the authorities of the Republic of Moldova.

The national regulatory framework in the field of migration covers multiple aspects: preventing and combating illegal migration and human trafficking; labor migration; the rights and interests of refugees and migrants; control of migration processes; cooperation with the diaspora; integrated management of the state border, etc.

The Republic of Moldova has had to accelerate its efforts to regulate migration. Thus, in the field of migration, we distinguish several stages of the regulatory process, initiated with the declaration of independence of the Republic of Moldova, the start of the processes of management and control of international migration by signing agreements on the takeover and return of persons, the reform of national institutions responsible for managing migration. Intensification of collaboration with the EU in the field of countering illegal migration defines the period of liberalization of the visa regime with the EU, where several institutional reforms are taking place. In the current context in which the Republic of Moldova has obtained the status of a candidate country for accession to the EU, the national security system is undergoing a series of changes generated by the alignment of national legislation with the provisions of European legislation due to the negotiation process for European integration, including the adjustment of national legislation due to the national security challenges faced by our country from 2022 to the present.

Subchapter 2.3, "*Conclusions of Chapter 2*", reflects the main conclusions that contributed to obtaining important information regarding illegal migration routes and the specific characteristics of the illegal migration phenomenon.

1. National legislation enables the Government to adapt national security policies to internal and external developments, to identify specific or vulnerable segments of the national security system that require reform, and to determine a realistic implementation plan. Also, normative acts, especially the Sectoral Strategies, highlight the directions of action that must be reassessed in the context of the national objectives of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova, which are: defending the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the country; protecting constitutional democracy; guaranteeing fundamental human rights; socio-economic development of the country; maintaining peace; combating corruption; accession to the EU; peaceful

reintegration of the Transnistrian region; contributing to the restoration of peace and stability in the Black Sea basin; protecting the environment.

2. The Republic of Moldova has carried out essential reforms in order to regulate the migration processes it has faced during its development as an independent state. However, if we refer to the European integration of the Republic of Moldova, to the alignment of national legislation with the provisions of European legislation in the field of combating illegal migration, we must mention that our authorities are going to pay special attention to this element, where consolidation actions are needed in the field of border management, countering illegal migration and cross-border crime.

3. The use of a complex of scientific methods and the application of a set of empirical research techniques contributed, firstly, to the development of a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of illegal migration in the Republic of Moldova and its impact on national security. Secondly, it facilitated the study of the national security system, as well as the systemic transformations that influence the transformation and security of the national territory against external threats.

4. Following the survey by applying the questionnaire, it was possible to identify the hidden aspects of the phenomenon of illegal migration, the evolution over the years of the methods applied in the process of illegal migration, the risks faced on the illegal migration route, the solutions they adopt to reach the destination country. All these benefits of the sociological method with the implementation of field surveys, together with the entire spectrum of methods applied to analyze the phenomenon of illegal migration, lead not only to an objective finding of the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security, but also to the determination of specific characteristics of illegal migration routes in the Republic of Moldova. These justify the need to develop balanced policies in the context of managing migrant flows, thus strengthening the national security of the Republic of Moldova.

5. In response to the challenges of managing irregular migration flows, the EU has embarked on a broad reform process aimed at rebuilding EU policies. This has focused on measures to reduce the incentives for irregular migration by addressing its root causes, improving return processes and dismantling migrant smuggling networks, securing external borders, changing asylum policies and providing more legal pathways for asylum seekers and more efficient legal channels for legal migrants.

6. In the context of the Association Agreement of the Republic of Moldova with the EU, the authorities of the Republic of Moldova are invited to actively engage in EU policies until accession, especially in the areas of migration, border management and all aspects related to the fight against organized crime, with particular emphasis on the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum approved in May 2024.

Chapter three, "**The Republic of Moldova in the context of the processes of combating illegal migration**", is dedicated to an in-depth investigation of the risks and threats to the national security of the Republic of Moldova through the lens of the phenomenon of illegal migration. The applicative and integrative value of the study is due to the detailed description of the risk of the phenomenon of illegal migration, which is based on the results obtained from the assessment of the threat, vulnerability and impact of illegal migration on the national security of the Republic of Moldova.

Subchapter 3.1 *"The phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national*

security", is dedicated to the research of illegal migration as a threat to national security, a phenomenon that requires special attention from the responsible authorities, in order to counteract the phenomenon that manifests itself through various disguised forms and methods. Thus, the research of the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security is evaluated from the perspective of the characteristic factors and the numerical representation of the incidents, events and activities that have taken place and are recorded in the operational records and the probabilities of the possible materialization of the threat in a given period of time.

Population migration in the last 30 years, internal and, especially, external migration, have become characteristic phenomena for the Republic of Moldova, with multiple demographic, social, cultural and economic consequences.

According to the Frontex Risk Analysis Report for 2021, the risk of illegal migration to Europe remains high from regions with low living standards, especially those experiencing armed conflicts. Developed EU countries will continue to be the preferred destinations for illegal migrants.

In the European context, the Republic of Moldova is included on the Eastern European route of illegal migration to the EU [23]. The general trend of illegal migration on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is exit/entry, with destinations both in Western Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In addition, both the Republic of Moldova and its neighbors, Ukraine and Romania, remain transit countries for most of the migrants detected at the common border. Detections of illegal migrants, registered at the borders on the Eastern European route, have long been insignificant, lower than on any other migration route in the EU.

The research on illegal migration as a threat to the national security of the Republic of Moldova has allowed us to identify the trends recorded in recent years. Thus, we note several illegal migration routes transiting the national territory, as follows: from Ukraine (illegal on the "green" sector of the border) - to the Republic of Moldova (illegal on the "green" sector of the border) - to Romania; from Turkey (transit through the Airport) - to the Republic of Moldova (illegal on the "green" sector of the border) - to Romania; from Turkey (entry with valid documents) - to the Republic of Moldova (exit with false or falsified documents) - to the EU.

In the context of integrated state border management, the risk posed by illegal migration can be considered to have three components: (1) *threat* - the pressure exerted by illegal migration flows on border security, illegal activities in which illegal migrants are often involved in order to obtain easy income, events destabilizing public order and security in host countries. The threat is assessed from the perspective of magnitude (numerical representation of incidents, events and activities that have occurred and are recorded in operational records) and probability (the degree of possible materialization of the threat in a given period of time); (2) *vulnerability* - determining the capacity to respond to threats, i.e. identifying factors that can increase or decrease the magnitude and probability of materialization of threats; (3) *impact* - analysis of data and information on similar threats (incidents/events/criminal activities), which have been previously recorded, including in other countries. Identified vulnerabilities and response capacity are also taken into account. The more numerous the vulnerabilities and the weaker the response capacity, the greater the impact.

From the point of view of the security of the Republic of Moldova, illegal migration can be characterized through the prism of specific criteria, different in manner, time and space, through which *threats* to national security are manifested and determined. Thus, we can mention: the population involved in the illegal migration process; the direction of movement of illegal migrants; the mode of operation; the flow of illegal migrants; the stock of illegal migrants in a certain area and the impact of illegal migration for the subjects.

Currently, the system of state security bodies is faced with numerous *vulnerabilities* that will certainly be exploited by both illegal migrants and cross-border criminal groups. Vulnerability does not mean the vulnerability of criminal groups, which is a definition often used in the specialized literature, but a description of the level of capacity of the established systems to detect or prevent a threat. Among the main factors influencing vulnerability are the geographical characteristics of the border areas, which can vary from plains to densely populated urban areas or forested areas. It is also very important to note that a vulnerability can also be the number of employees available for surveillance along a particular section of the border.

Illegal migration *impacts* Moldova's demographics, society, economy, and politics. Apart from the fact that illegal migration is often connected with other activities of organized crime (drug trafficking, arms, terrorism), this phenomenon can have an impact on the socio-economic stability of the state and even its security by: disturbing the ethnic and/or cultural balance; incapability of social protection mechanisms or public health; exceeding the absorption capacity of the legal labor market and, implicitly, by upsetting the balance of power between the security and public order structures and the part of the population oriented towards criminal activities.

The risk represented by the phenomenon of illegal migration can also be approached as a danger or hazard that can endanger border security, public order and security or social coexistence in a country, the eventuality of which can be more or less predictable, and the relationship between threat and vulnerability allows us to evaluate it and assess the level of risk.

Illegal migration is a multifaceted social process. It encompasses migration flows, stocks, forms, motivations, and economic, political, social, and cultural impacts. Currently, our globalized society is the result of countless migrations. The state has the primary responsibility to control and manage migration processes at the border. The migration phenomenon is highly dynamic, influenced by the continuous change of illegal migration routes and the armed conflicts registered in the region that determine a continuous displacement of the population.

The de facto situation faced by most people prone to illegal migration is, in fact, the vulnerability of the state/region they live in. The risk of illegal migration for the Republic of Moldova will remain high, even after the end of the war in Ukraine, as cross-border crime will be marked by the abundance of weapons left in the hands of civilians after the conflict, attempts by people to evade responsibility for war crimes committed, the return to Ukraine of people who evaded mobilization, increased cross-border crime, etc.

Subchapter 3.2, "*Mechanisms of the Republic of Moldova to prevent and combat illegal migration*", reflects the results of research on the methods and means of countering illegal migration, adjusted to international standards, resulting from the progress at the

European level in strengthening the regulatory framework and establishing new procedures in the field of migration. At the same time, the rapid development of innovative technologies and tricks applied in the process of preparing and crossing illegal migration routes requires state authorities to apply new methods with regard to securing and exposing illegal migrant flows. It is also worth mentioning that from the proclamation of independence until the liberalization of the visa regime with the EU, the Republic of Moldova did not have a clearly defined strategy with regard to combating illegal migration. A mechanism that ensures national security is represented by the Integrated State Border Management Program, which is primarily aimed at ensuring the security of the borders of the Republic of Moldova, combating illegal migration and cross-border crimes. Therefore, the need to secure the borders of the Republic of Moldova is a condition dictated at the European level, as part of the EU accession negotiations and a commitment of the national authorities to create a stable security environment.

Combating illegal migration is part of joint activities promoted together with European states, neighboring countries, and countries of origin and destination for migrants in/from the Republic of Moldova. The European Commission's Agenda on Migration focuses on an immediate response to the crisis situation at the external borders and establishes long-term measures to control migration in all its aspects. In order to deal with emergency situations arising along migration routes, the European Union, together with the affected countries and those in the path of migrants, have established a joint action plan that includes the following measures: permanent exchange of information; limiting secondary movements; supporting refugees and providing them with food and shelter; joint control of migrant flows; border control; combating human trafficking and smuggling.

The outcome of EU migration policies is to ensure a future that guarantees stability, prosperity and security for all. It aims to assess success in the medium and long term based on various criteria, such as: the level of migration flows from outside; the ability to protect the EU's borders; the positive contribution of migration to economic growth; the success of efforts to promote integration and prevent isolationism; the success of efforts to combat the problems of refugee crises at source; respect for obligations derived from international humanitarian law.

The Republic of Moldova's aspirations to join the EU required the introduction of appropriate policies aligned with EU policies and the unification of efforts to implement them. Given the dynamics of policies for managing migration flows and asylum seekers and in the context of the "New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum", the implementation of innovative technologies in the field of migration and asylum will contribute to the digitalization of citizenship identification processes, asylum procedures and border control. In June 2022, the European Council granted candidate country status to the Republic of Moldova and invited the Commission to report on the implementation of the nine steps. Thus, in order to align with the EU acquis, the Republic of Moldova will closely follow the developments in EU legislation in the field of migration, in particular the New Pact on Migration, which will need to be implemented by the Republic of Moldova.

In the subchapter 3.3 "*Conclusions of Chapter 3*" includes the main conclusions drawn in Chapter 3:

1. Migration results from the interplay of individual decisions and societal constraints. For the migrant, the decision to migrate may have one or more reasons: professional (long-term mission abroad) and studies; political (political refugee due to persecution in his country); security, especially in the event of a war in the country of origin; economic (resident of poor countries seeking a better standard of living in rich countries); personal (the desire to settle in a desired country, for example if he recognizes its values); family (family reunion); fiscal (settling in a country that offers a lower level of taxation).

2. The Republic of Moldova, a state that shares a border with the EU, has its own policy regulating migration. In the context of the European Union's initiatives to manage illegal migrant flows, the Republic of Moldova will be forced to amend its regulatory framework in the field of migration, especially in the context of alignment with the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

3. The risk posed by illegal migration, in the context of integrated state border management, consists of three components: *the threat* is defined as the pressure exerted by illegal migration flows on border security. The threat is measured by the numerical representation of illegal migrants, incidents, events and activities that have occurred and are recorded in operational records, and cross-border crime groups; *the vulnerability* of security at national borders is determined by: the infrastructure and equipment of border control systems, the number of available personnel, corruption among employees, the characteristics of the relief in the border area, the weak security culture of the population, interethnic conflicts; *the impact* is measured by analyzing data and information on similar threats in which incidents and victims were recorded, terrorist attacks, violations of public order, established cross-border criminal routes that were also in other countries.

4. Intensifying cooperation with the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) and establishing joint missions on the territory of the country carried out with Frontex, INTERPOL and EUROPOL are of particular importance in ensuring security at the state border and developing mechanisms to combat illegal migration and cross-border crime.

5. The authorities of the Republic of Moldova are implementing reforms in the national security system, in particular the gradual achievements of the Republic of Moldova in the field of effective migration management and combating illegal migration, such as: the implementation of the National Strategy for Integrated State Border Management, which is an essential condition for ensuring border security, as well as security at the national and regional levels; the widespread application of the European risk analysis model with the use of analytical products in planning subsequent border control activities; the improvement and development of the national legislative framework in the field of collaboration with border institutions from the neighboring state in the field of joint border control; the technical arrangement of the border with fixed and mobile surveillance systems, electronic signaling devices, ground-guided aerial vehicles, in order to create the necessary conditions for ensuring border security and reducing the risks of illegal migration and cross-border crime.

6. The international community, and in particular the European Union, is interested in securing its eastern borders, ensuring stability and good governance in its neighbourhood. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that illegal migration cannot be countered unless means and channels for legal migration are created at the same time, as these two phenomena are closely correlated.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the research consist of the scientific and methodological analysis of the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security, of its essence and forms of manifestation that allowed the assessment of the risk and threat that illegal migration represents.

Due to the exhaustive examination of **the research object, a scientific problem of major importance** was solved, which consists of the following: scientific substantiation of various approaches to the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to the national security of the Republic of Moldova, elucidation of the specific characteristics of the phenomenon of illegal migration based on field research with the involvement of illegal migrants, risk assessment based on the results obtained from the assessment of the threat, vulnerability and impact of illegal migration, design of mechanisms and formulation of proactive solutions aimed at reducing the phenomenon of illegal migration in the Republic of Moldova with repercussions on the consolidation of national security. As a result of research on illegal migration as a threat to the national security of the Republic of Moldova, the following **conclusions** were drawn:

1. The analysis of the specialized literature and theoretical approaches in the field allowed to deepen the research of illegal migration as a threat to security, the identification of operating methods on migration routes allowed to identify the current gaps and deficiencies in the field of countering the threats of illegal migration. In the Republic of Moldova, the subject of illegal migration is insufficiently analyzed in the scientific environment. The specialized literature needs to be supplemented with new updated information, defining the theoretical and methodological framework in addressing the risks and threats that illegal migration represents. In this context, the study in question will contribute to changing the perception of illegal migration and will put forward pertinent proposals for combating the phenomenon at the national level.

2. At the interdisciplinary level, the notions of "illegal migration - threat - risk - national security" are different in meaning, however, systematizing the scientific approaches and theories, we conclude that these opinions and theories complement each other. In the context of ensuring national security, some studies are highlighted with reference to these phenomena, the argumentation being focused on highlighting the main risks and threats specific to illegal migration. Illegal migration is considered to be a direct threat to state security, including international security.

3. Illegal migration persists because migration management systems are bureaucratically managed and operate with difficulty. In these circumstances, such a situation represents a vulnerability that is easily exploited by cross-border criminal groups. Following the analysis of data on illegal migrant flows, we can conclude that the situation of the phenomenon at the national level, until 2022, remains constant without essential differentiations. The year 2022, based on the military conflict in Ukraine, was a turning point, with massive flows of illegal migrants being recorded. This period is marked by the illegal migration of people who cannot use the legal route to enter the Republic of Moldova due to the introduction of martial law, which restricts the departure of Ukrainian citizens eligible for incorporation.

4. The results of the research on illegal migration as a threat to the national security of the Republic of Moldova have allowed us to identify the trends recorded in

recent years. Thus, we identify several illegal migration routes transiting the national territory, as follows:

- 1) From Ukraine (illegally on the "green" sector of the border) – to the Republic of Moldova (illegally on the "green" sector of the border) – to Romania;
- 2) From Turkey (transit through the Airport) – to the Republic of Moldova (illegally on the "green" sector of the border) – to Romania;
- 3) From Turkey (entry with valid documents) – to the Republic of Moldova (exit with false or falsified documents) – to the EU.

5. Illegal migrants are constantly developing new routes and methods in response to changes in legislation, visa regulations and measures implemented by the authorities responsible for combating illegal migration. Today, there is a combination of the modus operandi of illegal migrants, with both small groups of migrants at the "green" border and large groups; the same situation is also observed at border crossing points, with migrants hiding in vehicles or using false or forged documents to achieve their goal.

6. Following the research on illegal migration, it was possible to identify the threats of illegal migration to national security, the vulnerabilities faced by the national security system and especially the border security system, establish the impact and assess the risk of illegal migration.

7. Integrated border management represents a new approach in the field of border management, aimed at strengthening national security. Thus, cooperation between states in the field of border management, interconnection of information systems, creation of joint analysis, intervention and documentation teams represent success in combating illegal migration. An essential contribution is represented by institutions such as Frontex, EUROPOL, INTERPOL, EUBAM and the EUROSUR, EURODAC mechanisms, created for the purpose of combating illegal migration and cross-border crime, which represent a combination of the efforts of European states in countering illegal migration.

Description of personal contributions, emphasizing their theoretical significance and practical value. Personal contributions result from thorough research into the phenomenon of illegal migration aimed at establishing predictability and clarity of the manifestation of illegal migration at the national level and defining measures to counteract and mitigate the impact of illegal migration on national security. It is important to mention that the author of the doctoral thesis actively participated in the efficient management of the influx of refugees from Ukraine during February and March 2022, monitoring and verification activities acting in a management position within the Border Police, and based on the recommendations and suggestions described in the article "The "HOTSPOT" concept in the unitary and coherent management of a possible influx of foreigners" (In: *Moldoscopie*. 2020, no. 3(90), pp. 75-82. ISSN 1812-2566), taken as a theoretical and informative basis, the authorities ensured the location and equipment of the temporary Centers for managing the influx of foreigners in the localities of Palanca and Giurgiulesti. Thus, the infrastructure was adjusted within the Centers, and the necessary procedures were established to authorize the access of refugees to the national territory.

Based on the results obtained from the study on illegal migration as a threat to the national security of the Republic of Moldova, we propose the following **recommendations**, which can contribute to improving the situation on the research topic and can bring added value to the development of policies in the field:

1. *To institutions within the system of state security bodies:* We recommend reviewing and adapting legislation, procedures and sectoral programs to the new National Security Strategy to achieve national security objectives focused on directions of action in the field of public order and security.

2. *To the Government of the Republic of Moldova:* We recommend the development and implementation of a national mechanism for efficient management and response to potential crisis and force majeure situations in the field of migration and asylum. Crisis situations managed in an integrated manner, following a well-defined concept, have demonstrated efficiency in ensuring security at the state border.

3. *To the Ministry of Internal Affairs:* We recommend reviewing and supplementing the national legal framework in the field of migration and asylum with new provisions such as:

- 1) establishing the procedure for examining asylum applications at the border;
- 2) regulating the asylum procedure in a situation of extraordinary massive influx;
- 3) implementing screening and fingerprinting procedures for illegal migrants, asylum seekers, guides, facilitators to form the situational picture and profiles of persons at risk of illegal migration;

- 4) digitalizing the asylum procedure and implementing an interoperable information system at national level.

4. *To the Ministry of Internal Affairs:* We recommend strengthening practical cooperation in the field of preventing illegal migration and managing crisis situations by facilitating the participation of employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in civilian operations and special crisis management missions under the leadership of EU institutions.

5. *To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Joint Commission for the Demarcation of the State Border:* We recommend advancing the negotiation process on the problematic sectors on the Moldovan-Ukrainian border and signing the Treaty with Ukraine on the state border regime, including the implementation of the Agreements on the organization of joint control at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border crossing points.

6. *To the General Inspectorate of Border Police:* We recommend the development of the Border Security Coordination System according to the principles set out in EUROSUR.

7. *To the National Council for Integrated State Border Management:* We recommend the development and adoption of a new regulation of activity adjusted to the new provisions of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova and the National Defense Strategy.

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LISTA PUBLICAȚIILOR AUTORULUI LA TEMA TEZEI

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1. **BUZEV, A., CEBOTARI S.** Migrația ilegală pe segmentul central (transnistrean) al frontierei de stat a Republicii Moldova. În: *Anuarul Laboratorului pentru Analiza Conflictului Transnistrean*, Vol. IV, Nr. 1, 2020, 11-22 p. ISSN: 2601-1174 <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=926090>

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2. **CEBOTARI, S., BUZEV, A.** Conceptul de tip „hotspot” în gestionarea unitară și coerentă a unui eventual aflux de străini. În: *Moldoscopie*, 2020, nr. 3(90), pp. 75-82. ISSN 1812-2566. (Categorie B).
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12. **BUZEV, A., CEBOTARI, S.** Integrarea sistemului de coordonare a securității frontaliere a Republicii Moldova în sistemul european de supraveghere a frontierelor (EUROSUR). În: *Studii Naționale de Securitate, Revistă științifico-practică*, Nr.2 (2) 2020. p.116. ISSN: 2587-3822. (Categorie C).
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14. **CEBOTARI, S., BUZEV, A.** Identificări conceptual – teoretice ale corelației „migrație ilegală-amenințare-securitate”. În: *Revista științifico-practică studii naționale de securitate*, 5 (2022). p. 162. ISSN 2587-3822. (Categorie C).

În lucrările conferințelor științifice internaționale (în Republica Moldova)

15. **BUZEV, A.** Rolul strategiei naționale de management integrat al frontierei de stat în soluționarea conflictului transnistrean: realizări și perspective. În: *Războiul de pe Nistru din 1992: 30 de ani după... Materialele conferinței științifice internaționale, 4-5 martie 2022*, Chișinău, Republica Moldova. ISBN 978-9975-72-713-6.

16. **BUZEV, A.** Integrarea sistemului de coordonare a securității frontaliere a Republicii Moldova în sistemul european de supraveghere a frontierelor (EUROSUR). În: *Materialele conferinței științifice internaționale „Știința Politică și Administrativă: Provocări Globale, Soluții Locale”*, 13 noiembrie 2020. ISBN 978-9975-3459-7-2.

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17. **BUZEV, A.** Abordări conceptuale privind migrația ilegală în contextul sistemului de securitate națională. În: *Dezvoltarea Armatei Naționale în contextul aprofundării reformelor democratice: Materialele conferinței științifice cu participare internațională*, Ediția 6-a, 25 februarie 2021, Chișinău. pp. 229-236. ISBN 978-9975-3346-8-6.
18. **BUZEV, A.** Fenomenul migrației ilegale în Republica Moldova: Evoluții și Tendințe. În: *Dezvoltarea Armatei Naționale în contextul aprofundării reformelor democratice: Materialele conferinței științifice cu participare internațională*, Ediția a 7-a, 24 februarie 2022. pp. 317-325. ISBN 978-9975-84-164-1.
19. **BUZEV, A.** Protecția internațională a persoanelor la frontiera de stat a Republicii Moldova: realități și perspective. În: *Protecția drepturilor și libertăților fundamentale ale omului în procesul asigurării ordinii și securității publice, Materialele conferinței științifice cu participare internațională*, 7 decembrie 2023, Chișinău. pp. 57-64. ISBN 978-9975-135-84-9.

ADNOTARE

BUZEV Anatoli, „Migrația ilegală – amenințare la adresa securității naționale a Republicii Moldova”, teză de doctor în Științe ale securității, Chișinău, 2025.

Structura tezei: introducere, 3 capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 325 titluri și 8 anexe, 150 pagini text de bază. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 19 publicații științifice.

Cuvinte-cheie: migrație ilegală, migrant, securitate națională, securitate regională, riscuri, amenințări, frontieră, gestionarea migrației, aflux, Uniunea Europeană, Republica Moldova.

Scopul lucrării: constă în efectuarea unei cercetări științifice de amploare și detaliate a migrației ilegale la nivel național, în vederea identificării amenințărilor asupra securității naționale a Republicii Moldova, precum și propunerea de soluții concrete în contracararea și diminuarea migrației ilegale la nivel național.

Obiectivele cercetării: determinarea principalelor surse istoriografice cu referire la fenomenul migrației ilegale ca amenințare la adresa securității naționale; identificarea abordărilor conceptual-teoretice ale corelației „migrație ilegală – amenințare – risc – securitate națională”; determinarea metodologiei de cercetare a migrației ilegale ca amenințare la adresa securității naționale; analiza cadrului de reglementare la nivel internațional și național cu privire la identificarea mecanismelor de combatere a migrației ilegale; stabilirea riscurilor, amenințărilor și vulnerabilităților, cât și evaluarea impactului migrației ilegale asupra securității naționale a Republicii Moldova; argumentarea mecanismelor de eficientizare a contracarării migrației ilegale la nivel național ca oportunitate de încadrare în sistemul european de securizare a frontierei; elaborarea propriilor concluzii și recomandări la tema de cercetare.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică a lucrării: derivă din realizarea unei analize complexe a fenomenului migrației ilegale în Republica Moldova, în vederea identificării problemei cu care se confruntă sistemul de securitate națională, deocamdată, nesoluționată într-o formă sistemică la nivel național, iar demersul științific se distinge prin elucidarea aspectelor specifice fenomenului migrației ilegale în scopul combaterii acestui tip de infrafracțiune transfrontalieră prin aplicarea unor soluții viabile în domeniu.

Rezultatele obținute care contribuie la soluționarea problemei științifice importante: constă în reliefaarea impactului migrației ilegale ca amenințare la adresa securității naționale. De asemenea lucrarea are drept scop identificarea căilor și formularea unor soluții cu privire la asigurarea securității naționale și combaterea fenomenului migrației ilegale ca amenințare la adresa securității Republicii Moldova.

Semnificația teoretică: rezidă în dezvoltarea abordărilor teoretico-metodologice privind fenomenul migrației ilegale; contribuția la determinarea caracteristicilor specifice fenomenului migrației ilegale, aspecte care vizează procesele actuale de securitate națională și impactul migrației ilegale asupra dimensiunilor de securitate la nivel național și internațional. Cercetarea prezentată completează insuficiența de informații teoretice și factologice ale cercetărilor în domeniul migrației ilegale.

Valoarea aplicativă: rezultatele cercetării (inclusiv tabele, figuri, date empirice) reprezintă un instrument de analiză a fenomenului migrației ilegale ca amenințare la adresa securității naționale, inclusiv pot fi utilizate la actualizarea, elaborarea și raportarea pe documentele de politici naționale, sursă bibliografică și metodologico-didactică în procesul pregătirii profesionale a studenților.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice: cercetarea a fost realizată în baza granturilor doctorale pentru anul academic 2019-2020. Teza este elaborată în cadrul Școlii doctorale „Științe militare și de securitate” a Academiei Militare a Forțelor Armate „Alexandru cel Bun”. Subiectele principale puse în discuție, concluziile și recomandările formulate în teză au fost prezentate la 19 foruri științifice naționale și internaționale.

АННОТАЦИЯ

БУЗЕВ Анатолий, „Нелегальная миграция – угроза национальной безопасности Республики Молдова”, диссертация на соискание ученой степени доктора в Области безопасности. Кишинев, 2025 г.

Структура диссертации: Введение, 3 главы, общие выводы и рекомендации, список литературы из 325 источников, 8 приложений, 150 страниц основного текста. Результаты исследования опубликованы в 19 научных работах.

Ключевые слова: Нелегальная миграция, мигрант, национальная безопасность, региональная безопасность, риски, угрозы, граница, управление миграцией, приток мигрантов, Европейский Союз, Республика Молдова.

Цель работы: Проведение масштабного и детального научного исследования незаконной миграции на национальном уровне с целью выявления угроз для национальной безопасности Республики Молдова, а также предложения конкретных решений по противодействию и снижению уровня незаконной миграции на национальном уровне.

Задачи исследования: Определение основных историографических источников, касающихся явления незаконной миграции как угрозы национальной безопасности; выявление концептуально-теоретических подходов к взаимозависимости „незаконная миграция – угроза – риск – национальная безопасность”; определение методологии исследования незаконной миграции как угрозы национальной безопасности; анализ международной и национальной нормативной базы для выявления механизмов борьбы с незаконной миграцией; установление рисков, угроз и уязвимостей, а также оценка воздействия незаконной миграции на национальную безопасность Республики Молдова; обоснование механизмов повышения эффективности противодействия незаконной миграции на национальном уровне как возможности интеграции в европейскую систему обеспечения безопасности границ; разработка собственных выводов и рекомендаций по теме исследования.

Новизна и научная оригинальность статьи заключаются: В выявлении воздействия незаконной миграции, как угрозы национальной безопасности. Наряду с этим, работа направлена на определение путей и формулировку решений по обеспечению национальной безопасности и борьбе с явлением незаконной миграции как угрозой безопасности Республики Молдова.

Полученные результаты способствуют решению важной научной проблемы: Акцентировании воздействия незаконной миграции, как угрозы национальной безопасности. В довершение всего, целью работы является определение путей и формулировка решений по обеспечению национальной безопасности и противодействию феномену незаконной миграции, как угрозе безопасности Республики Молдова.

Теоретическая значимость: Заключается в развитии теоретико-методологических подходов к феномену незаконная миграция; внесении вклада в определение специфических характеристик незаконной миграции, затрагивающих современные процессы национальной безопасности и влияние незаконной миграции на аспекты безопасности на национальном и международном уровнях. Представленное исследование дополняет недостаток теоретической и фактической информации в области исследований незаконной миграции.

Прикладное значение: Результаты исследования (включая таблицы, рисунки, эмпирические данные) представляют собой инструмент анализа феномена незаконной миграции как угрозы национальной безопасности. Они могут быть использованы для актуализации, разработки и составления отчетов по национальным политическим документам, а также в качестве библиографического и методико-дидактического источника в процессе профессиональной подготовки студентов.

Внедрение научных результатов: Исследование было проведено на основе докторских грантов для академического года 2019-2020. Диссертация разработана в рамках Докторской школы "Военные и безопасность" Военной академии Вооруженных сил "Alexandru cel Bun". Основные темы, обсуждаемые в диссертации, а также сформулированные выводы и рекомендации были представлены на 19 научных форумах национального и международного уровня.

ANNOTATION

BUZEV Anatoli, „Illegal migration – a threat to the national security of the Republic of Moldova”, doctoral thesis in Security sciences, Chisinau, 2025.

PhD thesis structure: introduction, 3 chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 325 titles, 8 annexes, 150 pages of basic text. The obtained results are published in 19 scientific papers.

Keywords: illegal migration, migrant, national security, regional security, risks, threats, border, management of the migration, influx, European Union, Republic of Moldova.

The purpose of the thesis: Is to conduct a comprehensive and detailed scientific research on illegal migration at the national level, with the aim of identifying threats to the national security of the Republic of Moldova, as well as proposing concrete solutions for counteracting and reducing illegal migration at the national level.

Research objectives: To determine the main historiographical sources regarding the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security; to identify the conceptual-theoretical approaches to the correlation "illegal migration – threat – risk – national security"; to determine the research methodology of illegal migration as a threat to national security; to analyze the regulatory framework at the international and national levels regarding the identification of mechanisms for combating illegal migration; to establish the risks, threats, and vulnerabilities, as well as to evaluate the impact of illegal migration on the national security of the Republic of Moldova; to argue for the mechanisms for improving the counteraction of illegal migration at the national level as an opportunity to integrate into the European border security system; to formulate personal conclusions and recommendations on the research topic.

Scientific novelty and originality of the thesis: Stem from conducting a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of illegal migration in the Republic of Moldova, with the aim of identifying the issue faced by the national security system, which, as of now, has not been resolved in a systemic manner at the national level. The scientific approach is distinguished by clarifying the specific aspects of the illegal migration phenomenon in order to combat this type of transnational crime through the application of viable solutions in the field.

The results obtained that contribute to the solution of the important scientific problem: Consist in highlighting the impact of illegal migration as a threat to national security. Furthermore, the work aims to identify pathways and formulate solutions regarding the assurance of national security and combating the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to the security of the Republic of Moldova.

The theoretical significance: Lies in the development of theoretical-methodological approaches to the phenomenon of illegal migration; the contribution to determining the specific characteristics of the illegal migration phenomenon, aspects that address current national security processes and the impact of illegal migration on the dimensions of security at both the national and international levels. The presented research fills the gap in theoretical and factual information in the field of illegal migration studies.

Applied value: The results of the research (including tables, figures, and empirical data) serve as an analytical tool for examining the phenomenon of illegal migration as a threat to national security. They can also be used for updating, developing, and reporting on national policy documents, as well as as a bibliographic and methodological-didactic source in the professional training of students.

Implementation of the scientific results: The research was conducted based on doctoral grants for the academic year 2019-2020. The thesis was developed within the Doctoral School of "Military and Security Sciences" of the Military Academy of the Armed Forces "Alexandru cel Bun." The main topics discussed, as well as the conclusions and recommendations formulated in the thesis, were presented at 19 national and international scientific forums.

BUZEV ANATOLI

**ILLEGAL MIGRATION – THREAT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF
THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

SPECIALTY: 582.01 SECURITY AND DEFENSE

Summary of the doctoral thesis in Security sciences

Aprobat spre tipar: 18.02.2025
Hârtie ofset. Tipar digital
Coli de tipar: 2,4

Formatul hârtiei: A4
Tiraj: 50 ex.
Comanda nr. 17

Tipografia PRINT-CARO
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