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**History of EU competition policy (1950-2022) and its influence on the
European integration process of Romania and the Republic of Moldova**
- ABSTRACT -

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This thesis aims to present a historical perspective of the competition policy of the European Union, focusing on the evolution over time of the policy, from 1950 to 2022, and its impact on the historical process of European integration. The paper analyzes, from a historical perspective, the impact of politics on society in the process of Romania's accession and European integration of the Republic of Moldova.

Our scientific approach uses a historical analysis of the evolution of European public policy, centered on political, institutional, and social changes that have shaped the European Union over the years, and it is not based solely on economic or legal analysis.

From 1950 to 2022, competition policy became a catalyst for economic integration by gradually removing barriers to trade between EU member states, contributing to trade liberalization. The European Union's political elite succeeded in establishing a functional internal market in 1992, which was then followed by the Economic and Monetary Union. The EU competition policy has had a substantial impact on achieving the objectives of European integration, as a positive instance of supranational governance in action, the deepening of the European integration process, and the enlargement of the EU to the East.

In specialized historiography, some historians have written about the history of Europe, the European elites, and the process of integration of Romania and the Republic of Moldova, but they have not addressed the EU competition policy in their works. While many authors have discussed the EU competition policy, they have not considered how this fundamental policy affects the European path of Romania and the Republic of Moldova from a multidisciplinary and historical perspective. These considerations have been the motivation to pursue research on the subject.

The research is based on relevant primary sources, such as EU treaties, European Commission decisions and historical documents of European institutions, reflecting rigorous research of institutional historical documents. By studying the history of elites and following the transition from communist nomenclature to new European elites, we were able to analyze the impact of the political and economic elites on Romania and the Republic of Moldova, providing a comprehensive historical perspective.

This paper makes an original contribution to the field of history by analyzing an essential historical process. The historical study of competition policy has helped us understand the mechanisms by which the EU has strengthened its position as a global player, and it is one of the most important European policies. Furthermore, the research provides insight into the history of elites through the study of the transition from communism to democracy and the role of elites in

the implementation of European policies, which is a fundamental theme of recent history. At the same time, a new perspective on the history of European integration was revealed because the thesis explores how competition policy influenced the integration of some states from the former communist bloc, such as Romania and the Republic of Moldova (1989-2022), thus contributing to the field of economic and political history.

The historical development of the EU competition policy has been instrumental for the structure of the Member States' competition policies, as well as for the legislative framework in the field of competition of a large number of countries beyond EU borders. This paper analysis how the provisions of the EU's competition policy have been gradually adopted into national competition systems, either by voluntary convergence, or by preconditioning the access to the internal market of the Central and Eastern European countries pursuing EU accession to the alignment of the national legislation on competition to the EU competition provisions.

The thesis is constructed from a historical perspective and consists of four chapters that reflect a chronological and narrative approach. Each chapter has a theoretical foundation and demonstrates the application of competition policy through cases and decisions of EU institutions since the late 1950s. Examples are historical cases where businesses have breached EU rules on competition at the level of the common/single market. We have also analyzed cases of infringement of competition norms and related decisions by authorities in Romania and the Republic of Moldova, as well as other European countries in the European Economic Area.

Chapter 1 examines the origin and historical development of competition policy in the EC/EU, highlighting the role of political and economic factors in the development of this between 1950 – 2022.

Chapter 2 focuses on the historical actions taken by the European Commission, with a focus on analyzing anti-cartel policy developments and enforcement, the abuse of dominant position on the market by undertakings, mergers and acquisitions, and state aid policy.

Chapter 3 provides a historical perspective on Romania's european integration, analysing the role of the national elites and the transition from the planned economy to the market economy between 1989-2022.

Chapter 4 continues the historical analysis, focusing on the Republic of Moldova and its post-Soviet transition in relation to the EU. We addressed the political and economic context of the adoption and implementation of competition policy, from 1990 to 2022, the historic moment of obtaining EU candidate status.