# INNOVATION-DRIVEN POLICIES AND STRATEGIC MECHANISMS FOR SUSTAINABLE EXPORT GROWTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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***Abstract:*** *This paper examines the role of innovation-driven policies and strategic mechanisms in ensuring sustainable export growth of the Republic of Moldova in the context of European Integration. The objective is to assess whether export growth is supported by structural competitiveness factors or remains dependent on external demand conditions. The study applies a mixed-method approach combining quantitative analysis of export dynamics with qualitative evaluation of policy frameworks. A comparative perspective is employed, analyzing Moldova alongside Estonia, Lithuania, Romania and Georgia, using indicators related to export performance, innovation capacity and economic complexity. The results indicate that although Republic of Moldova experienced export expansion following the implementation of the DCFTA Agreement, this growth remains structurally fragile. Export performance is characterized by volatility, limited diversification and low technological intensity. In contrast, countries with stronger innovation systems demonstrate more stable and resilient export trajectories, supported by higher export complexity and integration into global value chains. The paper contributes to the literature by integrating export dynamics, innovation performance and policy analysis within a unified framework applied to a small open economy. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening innovation capacity and policy coherence to support sustainable export growth and enhance long-term economic resilience.*

***Keywords:*** *innovation-driven policies, export competitiveness, sustainable export growth, structural transformation, European integration, Republic of Moldova.*

***Classification JEL:*** *F14, O31, O47.*

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# 1. Introduction

Sustainability has become a central objective of modern economic development strategies and programs. In the context of globalization, economic resilience and sustainable growth increasingly depend on the ability of countries to strengthen their export performance while maintaining long term competitiveness. For small open economies, exports represent a key driver of economic growth, structural transformation and integration into global value chains (European Commission, 2017).

In recent years, the concept of sustainable export growth has gained increasing attention in economic research and policy debates. Sustainable export growth refers not only to the expansion of export volumes but also to the capacity of economies to maintain long term competitiveness through innovation, technological upgrading and effective economic policies (Ji et al, 2022).

Innovation plays a crucial role in this process, as it enhances productivity, supports the diversification of export structures and enables firms to adapt to rapidly changing global markets, as demonstrated by Hsu et al. (2019) and Filatotchev et al. (2009). According to Aghion and Howitt (1998), innovation is a fundamental driver of productivity and long term economic growth, as it supports structural transformation and enhances the capacity of

economies to remain competitive in international markets. Empirical evidence provided by Hsu et al. (2019) and Filatotchev et al. (2009) shows that innovation and export activities are mutually reinforcing, as firms engaged in international markets benefit from knowledge spillovers that enhance their innovation capacity, while innovation increases their competitiveness in export markets.

For the Republic of Moldova, the issue of export sustainability is particularly relevant in the context of its European Integration process and the need to strengthen economic resilience and competitiveness. Despite significant progress in expanding trade relations and accessing external markets, Moldova exports remain characterized by structural vulnerabilities, including a relatively limited diversification of products and markets, as well as a modest level of technological intensity (European Commission, 2025).

In this context, the research problem addressed in this paper concerns the role of policy mechanisms and innovation in ensuring the sustainability of export growth. Understanding how strategic economic policies and innovation systems contribute to strengthening export competitiveness is essential for designing effective development strategies.

The objective of this study is to analyze the role of innovation as a driver of sustainable export growth and to examine the policy mechanisms that can support this process, with particular reference to the Republic of Moldova. The research explores how innovation capacity, together with appropriate economic policies, can enhance export competitiveness and support long term economic resilience.

Methodologically, the study relies on qualitative analysis of economic policies, conceptual analysis of sustainability and innovation in international trade, and structural assessment of export dynamics. The findings contribute to the broader academic and policy discussion on sustainable economic development and export competitiveness in the context of global systemic transformations.

# 2. Literature Review

The concept of sustainable export growth has been widely discussed in the economic literature, particularly in the context of globalization and structural transformation. Traditional trade theories, including comparative advantage (Ricardo) and factor endowment theory (Heckscher-Ohlin), explain export performance based on resource availability and cost advantages (OECD, 2015). However, more recent approaches emphasize the role of innovation, technological capabilities and institutional quality as key determinants of long-term competitiveness.

Endogenous growth theory provides an important theoretical foundation for understanding the relationship between innovation and export performance. According to Romer (1990) and Grossman and Helpman (1991), technological progress and knowledge accumulation are central drivers of productivity and economic growth (Dieppe, 2021). In this framework, innovation enhances firms' ability to compete in international markets by improving product quality, reducing costs and enabling diversification. Empirical studies confirm that countries with higher innovation capacity tend to exhibit more sophisticated export structures and greater resilience to external shocks.

The literature on export competitiveness increasingly highlights the importance of export complexity and diversification. Thus, the structure of exports plays a crucial role in

determining economic growth, as not all goods contribute equally to productivity and development. Hausmann, Hwang and Rodrik (2005) argue that countries specializing in higher productivity goods tend to achieve faster economic growth, as these products embody higher levels of knowledge, technology and value added. Their analysis shows that the composition of exports can predict future growth, highlighting the importance of moving toward more sophisticated export structures. The Economic Complexity Index (ECI) has been widely used to assess the knowledge intensity embedded in export structures (OEC, 2025). Studies show that economies with higher ECI values are better integrated into global value chains and demonstrate stronger long-term growth performance.

Another important strand of literature focuses on the relationship between innovation systems and trade performance. The concept of National Innovation Systems, developed by (Fagerberg et al., 2011) and grounded in the foundational contributions of Freeman (1987) and Lundvall (1992), emphasizes that innovation emerges from interactive processes between firms, research institutions and public authorities. In this framework, learning, knowledge accumulation and institutional structures play a central role in shaping economic performance and international competitiveness (Lundvall, 2007).

From this perspective, policy coherence and institutional capacity are essential for transforming innovation into export competitiveness. National innovation systems operate through coordinated interactions between economic structure and institutions, where the effectiveness of policies depends on their alignment with national capabilities and learning processes (Lundvall, 2007). Empirical and policy-oriented studies, including those developed under the OECD framework, show that countries with well-integrated innovation policies in research, industrial development and technological upgrading tend to achieve stronger export performance, especially in knowledge-intensive and high value-added sectors (OECD, 1999; Nelson, 1993).

Recent studies also examine the role of policy frameworks in supporting sustainable export growth, especially in small open economies. Research on Central and Eastern European countries shows that access to external markets, such as the European Union, can stimulate export growth, but does not automatically lead to structural transformation. According to the World Bank (2025), while trade integration supports economic expansion, it does not guarantee productivity gains or diversification without strong domestic capabilities.

Without sufficient investment in innovation, technological upgrading and institutional quality, export growth remains vulnerable to external shocks and tends to be concentrated in low value-added sectors (Dieppe, 2021; OECD, 2015). These findings suggest that sustainable export performance depends not only on market access, but also on the development of national innovation systems and the capacity to absorb and generate knowledge.

In the case of the Republic of Moldova, existing studies primarily focus on trade liberalization, export potential and sectoral competitiveness. The implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) has been widely analyzed as a key driver of export expansion and market reorientation towards the European Union. However, the literature also highlights persistent structural challenges, including limited diversification, low technological intensity and weak integration into global value chains.

Empirical evidence shows that Moldovan exports remain concentrated in a relatively narrow range of products, with a strong focus on agri-food goods and labor-intensive industries, and only gradual progress in improving export quality and complexity (International Monetary

Fund, 2026). These findings indicate that, despite improved access to external markets, the structural transformation of exports remains constrained by limited diversification and insufficient technological upgrading.

Despite these contributions, several gaps remain in the literature. First, there is limited integration between the analysis of innovation performance and export sustainability in the context of Moldova. Most studies treat these dimensions separately, without examining their interaction. Second, there is a lack of comparative analysis that positions Moldova alongside countries with different levels of innovation and export complexity. Third, insufficient attention is given to the role of policy coherence and institutional mechanisms in linking innovation systems with export performance.

This study addresses these gaps by integrating the analysis of export dynamics, innovation performance and policy frameworks within a unified analytical approach. By combining comparative analysis, international rankings and policy evaluation, the research contributes to a better understanding of the mechanisms through which innovation-driven policies can support sustainable export growth in small open economies, with particular reference to the Republic of Moldova.

# 3. Methodology

This study applies a mixed-method research design combining quantitative analysis of export performance with qualitative assessment of policy frameworks. The approach allows for an integrated examination of the relationship between export dynamics, innovation capacity and policy mechanisms.

The research follows a comparative analytical framework, focusing on the Republic of Moldova in relation to selected benchmark countries, namely Estonia, Lithuania, Romania and Georgia. These countries were selected based on their relevance in terms of regional context and varying levels of innovation performance and export complexity. The analysis covers the period 2014-2025, capturing key developments following the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area and the recent EU candidate status.

The study relies on secondary data obtained from national and international sources, including the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, Eurostat, UN Comtrade and international reports. The main indicators used in the analysis include export values and structure, exports as a share of GDP, the Global Innovation Index and the Economic Complexity Index. In parallel, national policy documents and strategic frameworks related to innovation, digitalization and economic development were examined.

The analytical approach combines descriptive statistical analysis of export trends with comparative assessment across countries. Structural analysis is applied to evaluate the technological intensity and diversification of exports, while indicator-based analysis is used to assess competitiveness and innovation capacity. In addition, a qualitative policy analysis is conducted to examine the coherence and effectiveness of national strategies in supporting export performance.

The selected methodology ensures comparability and allows for the identification of structural patterns linking innovation, policy frameworks and export sustainability.

However, the study is limited by the use of aggregated data and partial availability of recent statistics for 2025. Despite these constraints, the approach provides a consistent basis for assessing the determinants of sustainable export growth.

# 4. Results and Discussion

**Export trends and comparative trade performance.** In recent years, the evolution of export performance in the Republic of Moldova reflects both progress in market integration and persistent structural vulnerabilities. Between 2014 and 2022, Moldova's exports increased significantly, from approximately 2.34 billion USD to around 4.0 billion USD, driven largely by the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and improved access to the European Union market. However, starting from 2023, export dynamics became unstable. Exports declined by 9.0 percent in 2023 and further decreased by 12.3 percent in 2024, reaching approximately 3.55 billion USD. Preliminary data for 2025 indicate only a modest recovery, with an estimated increase of about 1.6 percent, corresponding to a total export value of approximately 3.6–3.65 billion USD.

This pattern suggests a stabilization rather than a strong recovery and confirms the fragility of export growth. At the same time, the geographical structure of exports has undergone a significant transformation. The share of exports to the European Union increased steadily from 63.0 percent in 2020 to approximately 68.0 percent in 2025, while the share of CIS countries declined sharply from 15.0 percent to around 6.5 percent. The share of other countries remained relatively stable, with a slight increase over the period. This reorientation reflects Moldova's ongoing economic integration into the European market but does not eliminate structural constraints related to low export complexity and limited technological intensity. Overall, the data confirm that export growth in Moldova remains volatile and insufficiently supported by internal competitiveness factors, highlighting the need for innovation-driven structural transformation. Also, these trends suggest that existing policy frameworks have not generated sufficient structural transformation to sustain export growth.

**Table 1. Export dynamics and geographical structure of Moldova's exports (2020–2025, %)**

| *Year* | *Total exports (bn USD)* | *YoY* | *EU share* | *CIS share* | *Other countries* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2020 | 2.50 | –13.0 | 63.0 | 15.0 | 22.0 |
| 2021 | 3.15 | +23.6 | 62.5 | 14.0 | 23.5 |
| 2022 | 4.00 | +54.1 | 64.0 | 12.0 | 24.0 |
| 2023 | 4.05 | –9.0 | 65.4 | 9.0 | 25.6 |
| 2024 | 3.55 | –12.3 | 67.3 | 6.8 | 25.9 |
| 2025* | ~3.60–3.65 (est.) | +1.6 | ≈68.0 | ≈6.5 | ≈25.5 |

***Source***. *Author's elaboration based on BNS Moldova (StatBank).*

To ensure a meaningful comparative framework, further the analysis focuses on a set of countries selected based on their relevance to the Republic of Moldova in terms of economic structure, development trajectory, and integration into international markets. Georgia is included as a structurally comparable economy with a similar initial export level, allowing for the assessment of alternative development paths. Estonia and Lithuania represent small open economies that have successfully leveraged innovation and European integration to

achieve stable and sustainable export growth. Romania is considered a regional benchmark, reflecting a larger economy with strong industrial capabilities and deep integration into European value chains.

In this vein, the comparative analysis of export performance over the period 2014–2024 reveals significant differences in both the scale and sustainability of export growth across the selected countries.

At the initial stage of the DCFTA implementation in 2014, the Republic of Moldova recorded exports of approximately 2.34 billion USD, a level comparable to Georgia, which reported exports of around 2.86 billion USD. In contrast, EU member states already demonstrated substantially higher export capacities, with Estonia reaching 17.47 billion USD, Lithuania 32.39 billion USD, and Romania nearly 69.88 billion USD. This initial gap reflects differences in industrial structure, productivity, and integration into international markets.

Over the following decade, all countries experienced export growth, but with markedly different trajectories. By 2024, Moldova's exports increased to approximately 3.56 billion USD, representing a cumulative growth of around 52 percent. However, this expansion remains modest both in absolute and relative terms. In comparison, Georgia achieved a significantly higher growth rate of approximately 129 percent, reaching 6.56 billion USD in 2024. This suggests a stronger capacity for export expansion and adaptation to external market conditions.

At the same time, Estonia and Lithuania maintained relatively stable export performance, with moderate but consistent growth. Estonia's exports increased to approximately 19.77 billion USD, while Lithuania reached around 39.82 billion USD in 2024. Romania demonstrated the strongest absolute performance, exceeding 100 billion USD in exports, supported by its integration into European industrial value chains and sustained inflows of foreign direct investment.

The comparative evidence highlights not only differences in growth rates but also in the stability and resilience of export performance. Moldova's export trajectory is characterized by higher volatility, with fluctuations observed particularly after 2022. This contrasts with the more stable patterns observed in EU member states, where export performance reflects stronger internal drivers such as innovation capacity, industrial diversification, and higher technological intensity.

These differences suggest that export growth in Moldova has been driven primarily by external factors, including market access and demand conditions, rather than by structural improvements in competitiveness. The relatively limited diversification of exports and lower levels of technological sophistication constrain the country's ability to sustain long-term growth. At the same time, cross-country differences point to the role of innovation capacity and industrial policy effectiveness in shaping more resilient and sustainable export trajectories.

In contrast, countries with stronger innovation systems and more advanced economic structures demonstrate not only higher export volumes but also greater resilience to external shocks. This confirms that innovation, productivity, and structural transformation are critical determinants of sustainable export growth, rather than export expansion alone.

**Table 2. Comparative export performance of selected countries (2014–2024, USD billion)**

| | 2014 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | Growth 2014–2024 (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Republic of Moldova | 2.34 | 2.47 | 3.14 | 4.33 | 4.05 | 3.56 | +52% |
| Estonia | 17.47 | 16.90 | 22.30 | 23.60 | 20.11 | 19.77 | +13% |
| Lithuania | 32.39 | 32.79 | 40.70 | 46.50 | 42.63 | 39.82 | +23% |
| Romania | 69.88 | 71.05 | 88.39 | 96.83 | 100.64 | 100.37 | +44% |
| Georgia | 2.86 | 3.34 | 4.24 | 5.58 | 6.09 | 6.56 | +129% |

***Source:*** *Author's calculations based on UN Comtrade Database, available at: https://comtrade.un.org/*

An additional perspective on export performance is provided by the share of exports in GDP, which reflects the degree of economic openness and dependence on external markets. As illustrated in Figure below, the Republic of Moldova maintains a relatively low export-to-GDP ratio compared to peer economies, fluctuating between approximately 28 percent and 41 percent over the period 2014-2024. In contrast, Estonia and Lithuania demonstrate significantly higher levels of export intensity, consistently exceeding 70 percent of GDP. This indicates a strong integration into international markets and a higher capacity to sustain export-led growth. Romania exhibits a moderate but stable level, around 38-43 percent, reflecting its balanced economic structure and diversified industrial base. Georgia shows a more volatile but generally increasing trend, reaching over 50 percent in peak years, suggesting a growing reliance on external demand.

The comparison highlights that Moldova's export sector remains relatively underdeveloped in terms of its contribution to the overall economy. Moreover, fluctuations in the export-to-GDP ratio suggest vulnerability to external shocks and limited capacity to maintain stable export growth.

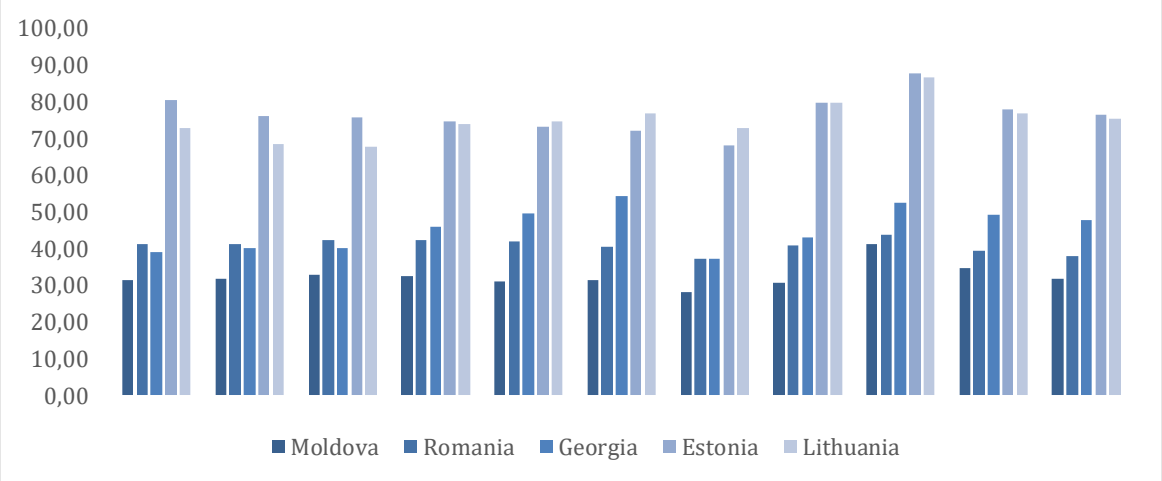


**Figure 1. Exports of goods and services (% of GDP), selected countries (2014–2024)**

***Source:*** *World Bank, World Development Indicators(https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.EXP.GNFS.ZS)*

When combined with the previous analysis of export volumes, these findings reinforce the conclusion that Moldova's export performance is constrained not only by scale but also by structural factors. In economies such as Estonia and Lithuania, high export intensity is supported by innovation, productivity, and integration into value chains. In contrast,

Moldova's lower export share reflects weaker structural foundations and limited transformation of the domestic economy toward export-oriented sectors.

From a structural perspective, Moldovan exports remain concentrated in low and medium value added sectors, including agri food products, textiles and basic manufacturing. The share of high technology exports remains limited, typically below 5 percent of total exports. By contrast, Estonia and Lithuania have significantly higher shares of medium and high technology exports, supported by strong innovation ecosystems and industrial policies.

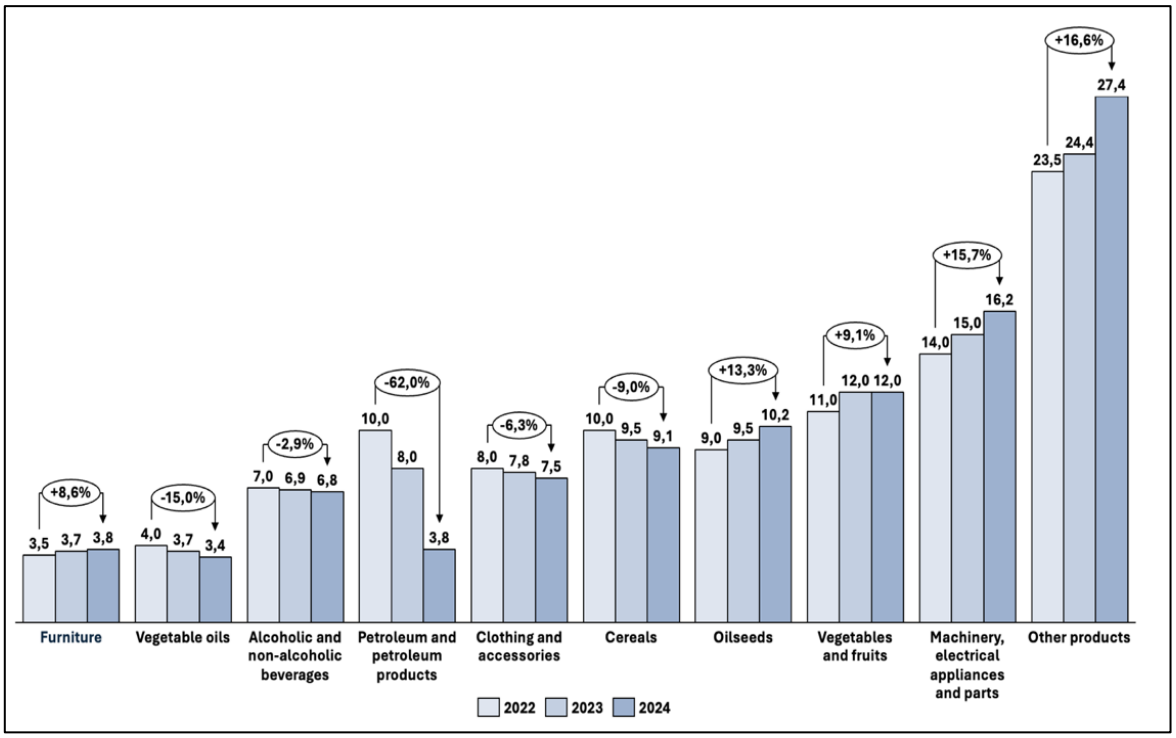


**Figure 2. Structural composition of Moldova's exports by main product groups, % from total exports (2022–2024)**

***Source:*** *National Bureau of Statistics, 2025, author's calculations*

These findings suggest that while Moldova has achieved quantitative export growth, it has not yet achieved qualitative transformation. The lack of diversification and low technological intensity reduce the capacity of exports to remain stable in the face of external shocks.

**International competitiveness rankings and innovation performance.** The analysis of international rankings further confirms the structural limitations of Moldova's export competitiveness. According to the Global Innovation Index, Moldova has experienced a significant decline in recent years, falling from around 44th position in 2015 to approximately 74th position in 2025. This represents a loss of around 30 positions and indicates a weakening of the country's innovation capacity. In contrast, Estonia improved its position from 23rd to around 16th place, while Lithuania advanced to approximately 33rd position. Romania maintained a relatively stable position around 49th place, while Georgia improved significantly, moving closer to the group of emerging innovators.

A similar pattern is observed in the Economic Complexity Index. Moldova records a negative score of approximately -0.7, indicating a low level of export sophistication and a concentration in products with limited knowledge content. Estonia and Lithuania, by

contrast, have positive scores above 1.0, reflecting advanced export structures and strong technological capabilities.

**Table 3. Comparative dynamics of innovation and export sophistication (2015–2025)**

| *Country* | *GII Rank 2015* | *GII Rank 2021* | *GII Rank 2025* | *Change 2015–2025* | *ECI Rank (latest)* | *Structural Profile* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Estonia | 23 | 21 | 16 | +7 | ~28 | High innovation, high export sophistication |
| Lithuania | 38 | 39 | 33 | +5 | ~29 | Converging innovation, strong industrial base |
| Romania | 54 | 48 | 49 | +5 | ~23 | Moderate innovation, strong industrial integration |
| Georgia | 73 | 63 | 56 | +17 | ~63 | Improving innovation, low export sophistication |
| Moldova | 44 | 64 | 74 | -30 | ~71 | Declining innovation, low export sophistication |

***Source:*** *Author's compilation based on Global Innovation Index (WIPO) and Atlas of Economic Complexity data.*

These rankings highlight a clear divergence between Moldova and more advanced economies. While Moldova has improved its market access, it has not succeeded in upgrading its productive structure or innovation system at a comparable pace.

The gap in innovation performance directly affects export competitiveness. Countries with higher innovation capacity are better able to diversify their exports, move towards higher value added sectors and maintain stable growth over time. Moldova's declining position in international rankings suggests that its export growth is not supported by strong internal drivers.

**Policy framework, strategic mechanisms and institutional priorities.** The policy framework of the Republic of Moldova reflects a clear recognition of the importance of innovation, digitalization and sustainable development. Several strategic documents outline ambitious objectives for enhancing competitiveness and supporting export growth.

The "Moldova European 2030" strategy sets the overall vision for economic development, emphasizing sustainable growth, integration into the European Union and the development of a competitive economy. Export growth is seen as a key pillar of this strategy.

The Digital Transformation Strategy for 2023-2030 aims to increase the contribution of the ICT sector to over 10 percent of GDP and to accelerate the digitalization of businesses. Targets include increasing the share of companies using digital technologies and expanding online commercial activities.

In the field of research and innovation, the National Programme for Research and Development seeks to strengthen the national innovation system and promote participation in European research initiatives such as Horizon Europe. The objective is to increase the commercialization of research results and improve collaboration between academia and industry.

Industrial policies focus on supporting small and medium sized enterprises, improving productivity and facilitating access to international markets. At the same time, green transition policies aim to align the economy with European environmental standards, although they also introduce additional cost pressures for producers.

Despite this comprehensive policy framework, a key challenge remains the limited coherence between different policy areas. Innovation, industrial development, digitalization and export promotion are often implemented as separate policy domains, reducing their overall impact. As a result, the transmission of policy measures into tangible export performance remains weak. The gap between strategic objectives and actual outcomes continues to limit the effectiveness of public interventions.

# 5. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that export growth in the Republic of Moldova, although significant over the last decade, remains structurally fragile and insufficiently supported by internal competitiveness factors. The decline in exports in 2025 confirms that the observed expansion was not driven by sustainable mechanisms, but rather by external conditions and improved market access.

The findings highlight a clear structural constraint: Moldova's export performance is not innovation-driven. The low level of technological intensity, negative export complexity and declining position in international innovation rankings indicate limited capacity for upgrading and diversification. In contrast, comparative analysis shows that countries with stronger innovation systems achieve more stable and resilient export growth.

A key contribution of this research lies in integrating export dynamics, innovation performance and policy frameworks into a unified analytical perspective. The results demonstrate that policy ambition alone is insufficient. Without effective transmission mechanisms linking innovation, industrial development and export promotion, strategic objectives do not translate into measurable economic outcomes.

From a practical perspective, the study emphasizes the need for a shift from volume-based export growth towards structure-driven competitiveness. Policy interventions should focus on linking innovation financing to export outcomes, supporting high value-added sectors, strengthening research-business collaboration and improving coordination across policy domains.

The findings are particularly relevant in the context of European integration, where compliance with standards and increased competition require higher levels of productivity and technological capability. Strengthening these dimensions is essential for ensuring long-term export sustainability and economic resilience.

Future research should extend the analysis to firm-level data in order to better understand microeconomic determinants of export performance and the effectiveness of specific policy instruments.

Ensuring sustainable export growth requires targeted and coordinated interventions that directly address the identified structural weaknesses:

1. innovation financing should be directly linked to export outcomes. Public support schemes for innovation need to include clear performance conditions, such as the development of export-oriented products or measurable increases in export revenues.

A dedicated instrument, such as export innovation vouchers for small and medium-sized enterprises, can accelerate this process;

2. policy efforts should focus on a limited number of high value-added sectors with export potential. Priority areas include advanced agro-processing, light manufacturing components, digital services and certified ecological products. Targeted state aid, cluster development and strategic partnerships with foreign investors can support the transition towards more complex export structures;
3. a national export readiness program is needed to support firms in accessing external markets. This should include support for certification according to European standards, participation in international trade fairs and assistance in entering new markets outside the European Union. Such measures will reduce market concentration and increase resilience;
4. stronger integration between research institutions and the business sector is essential. Public funding for research and development should prioritize projects developed in partnership with private companies. Fiscal incentives can encourage firms to invest in innovation, while functional technology transfer mechanisms can facilitate the commercialization of research results;
5. digitalization should be leveraged as a tool for expanding exports. Developing national platforms for digital exports, supporting firms in accessing global online marketplaces and digitalizing logistics processes can significantly improve market access and efficiency. Sixth, targeted support is required to help exporters adapt to green transition requirements. Financial mechanisms should compensate for compliance costs related to environmental standards, including energy efficiency investments and certification processes. This will prevent a loss of competitiveness during the transition;
6. improving institutional coordination is critical. Establishing a dedicated mechanism for aligning innovation, industrial, digital and export policies will increase the effectiveness of public interventions. This should be complemented by a monitoring system based on clear performance indicators, such as the share of high-tech exports, export diversification and the number of new exporting firms.

In addition, strengthening institutional coordination and policy coherence remains essential for ensuring sustainable export development. Fragmentation of support measures, limited alignment between industrial, innovation and trade policies, and insufficient monitoring mechanisms reduce the effectiveness of existing interventions. International experience shows that countries that achieve structural transformation successfully combine export promotion with targeted industrial policies, innovation support schemes and active integration into global value chains. For the Republic of Moldova, this implies the need to move beyond passive trade liberalization and adopt a more proactive strategic approach, focused on building competitive advantages in sectors with higher technological intensity and export potential.

These interventions can transform export growth from a quantitatively driven process into a structurally sustainable one, aligned with the objectives of European integration and long-term economic resilience.

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