The exodus – the problem of depopulation in the emblematic documentary photo essay signed by Dorin Goian

PhD Valeria BARBAS,
Institute of Cultural Heritage

_Exodus_ is a central artistic project in the creation of the Moldovan-Canadian photographer Dorin Goian, who deals with the demographic crisis in the Republic of Moldova, addressing the pressing issue of depopulation. The significant long-term photo-investigation, for about two decades (2004–2018), reveals the phenomenon of the mass exodus of the population from the Moldovan space, specific de facto, for the time segment of 30 years of the country’s independence (after 1991).

During three decades of (post-Soviet) existence, a mass exodus took place. Facing an extensive depopulation process, the Republic of Moldova became a country generating emigrants. For many Moldovans, migration has become a modus vivendi.

In 1991, the population of the Republic of Moldova reached 4.3 million, including the population on the left bank of the Dniester. Currently there are 2.9 million Moldovans, including those on the left bank.

The photographic essay _Exodus_ presents a series of selected images from mainly the Northern geographical area of the country, but also from the capital, visually mapping the regions: Duruitoarea, Rogojeni, Horodiște, Griorievca, Țipova, Căușeni, Mingir, Costești, Tănțareni, Ribnița, Chișinău etc.

In a complex laconic manner, the visual investigation of the “exodus” suggestively outlines the migration process, the fate of the people who remained, but also of those who returned to the Republic of Moldova.

In “Exodus”, remnants of three periods are overlapping, a legacy of the Soviet imperialist collapse, the ruins of the USSR, also built on the impact of the later transitional period, in which low living standards, a precarious labor market and high inflation forced people to leave home in search of a job, a better life.

The ideational essence of the exodus also left its mark on the author’s destiny; Dorin Goian sharing the fate of an immigrant.