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Our neighbors the Moldovans



Up until sometime after the Velvet Revolution, the Vltava River was generally referred to in English by its German name, the Moldau. Still today there are admirers of Smetana who don't realize that the Vltava and Moldau parts of My Fatherland are one and the same piece of music. There's another connection that isn't all that obvious either.

Republik Moldau is the official name in German for Moldawien (Moldova, in English) so linguistically at least, Bohemia is connected to Moldova by way of the Vltava/Moldau. This is appropriate, because Czechs and Moldovans were neighbors for two decades in the 20th century. Bohemia was part of Czechoslovakia, which possessed Carpathian Ruthenia from 1919 to 1939. It bordered on Romania, of which present-day Moldova was part. With the signing of the EU association agreement with Chisinau last week, Czechs can celebrate their reassociation with Moldova after so many years.

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