



**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA



**EU – MOLDOVA:
COOPERATION NEWS**

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2024



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MOBILITY AND PEOPLE

Running towards Europe: Moldovans join together for EU integration

On September 8, 2024, the heart of Chişinău pulsed with the energy of over 5,000 Moldovans who gathered for the Euro Marathon 2024. Participants of all ages and abilities, from children to individuals with special needs, joined this powerful event, united by a common goal: advancing

Moldova's path towards European Union integration. The event featured not just ordinary runners but also diplomats, ministers, members of parliament, and Olympic athletes, each taking a step toward a shared future.



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Stronger Together

Held under the slogan "Together we run for a European future," the marathon transformed the Great National Assembly Square into a vibrant celebration of unity and perseverance. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Dorin Recean, opened the event with a motivational message, highlighting the marathon as a symbol of Moldova's determination to join the European Union. The EU Ambassador, Jānis Mažeiks, drew parallels between the marathon and the long, yet rewarding, journey of EU integration, emphasizing the importance of collective effort.

The Minister of Education and Research, Dan Perciun, along with USAID Moldova's director, Zeinah Salahi, highlighted the significance of youth, education, and international collaboration in achieving this goal.

A dynamic flashmob, featuring massive EU and Moldovan flags performed by Euro Clubs members and students, added to the spirit of the day. The marathon wasn't just about running but also a celebration of European culture, with music, dances, and stands showcasing Moldova's diverse European aspirations.



The Euro Marathon 2024 wasn't just a race but a statement of Moldova's commitment to its European future. With children, the elderly, and people with special needs running side by side with ministers and diplomats, the

event emphasized the inclusiveness of Moldova's European journey. It showcased that everyone has a role in building a strong, united, and resilient Moldova that belongs in the European family.

Social media played a key role in amplifying the marathon's message. Thousands of participants shared their experiences through photos, videos, and live streams, turning the event into a viral sensation that extended for days. The marathon's reach went far beyond the borders of Chişinău, engaging Moldovans in the diaspora and supporters of Moldova's EU integration from around the world. Coverage by mass

media outlets further solidified the event's impact, turning the Euro Marathon into not only a sports celebration but also a powerful platform for promoting Moldova's European ambitions. As the event concluded, the lasting impression was clear: Moldova is running towards Europe, and the path is marked by determination, unity, and an unbreakable commitment to a European future.



Sport – a platform of trust

30 children from both banks of the Nistru River experienced camp life for 10 days during the first edition of “Sportforma Camp”. The Chişinău Arena hosted the tents that turned into a new vacation home for children from different regions.

The camp was organised on 22–31 July by Sport Platform, with the support of the Confidence Building Measures Programme, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP. The Platform brings together several sports associations and clubs from both banks of the Nistru River.

At the camp, the children had the opportunity to try different types of sports: swimming, tennis, volleyball, roller skating, diving, basketball, judo, pentathlon, etc.

“We wanted to get the kids out of their comfort zone. Initially we thought that the camp we were organising might not be exactly to the children’s liking, especially as we live with the perception that young people nowadays just have their noses in their phones/tablets and spend more of their time sitting at home, comfortably on the sofa. We were amazed to see the enthusiasm of the children who came here. On the first day of the event, we built a couple of hours into the schedule to set up the tent, but the kids were able to assemble and set up the tent in a quarter of an hour. We were also surprised that they adapted so easily to the camp conditions and enjoyed sleeping in the tent,”

says Timur Comlionic, member of the Sport Platform team.



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As well as finding teammates for a particular type of sport and making friends, the children also managed to overcome the language barrier. So, during the camp they played sport and also spoke Romanian, Russian and even English. Mark, a 13-year-old boy from Tighina (Bender), came to Chişinău for his first sports camp.

"This is my first experience, I have never been to a camp before. Why did I choose to come? First of all because I'm passionate about sports, I go swimming, but here every day I tried a new type of sport for 10 days. I also liked the fact that I slept in a tent and made friends. I will definitely remember this experience,"

says Mark.

Evelina is 11 years old and has been to summer camps before, but this new experience is new, she says.

"I came to this camp for good memories, for fun, to see what it's like to sleep in a tent, to see something new. I loved it here the day learning and diving. I have been to other camps before, but there I lived in small houses, here for the first time I lived in a tent,"

says Evelina, 11, from Chişinău.

"We wanted these kids in the camp to learn the difference between practising a sport and hobby. Because it often happens that the sport practised by a child is, in fact, the choice of the parents and not necessarily the desire of the child. Here they had the opportunity to try different kinds of sports and to understand not only what they like, but where they can do well, where they can grow their potential and even reach the level of competitive sport,"

Timur adds.



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During the 10 days the children were guided by four 'camp leaders', including Andriana. She has 10 years of experience in organising such events.

"In the camp the children learn discipline first of all. Some used to think that the time they spend here is to do whatever they want, but they understand that there is an agenda, where

they learn to be independent and everything is executed according to a certain schedule,"

explains Andriana Brilliant.

The European Union and UNDP also support other platforms of professionals on both banks of the Nistru: tourism, environment, culture, education, health.



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Reduction of the impact of the war on refugees and vulnerable Moldovan communities

In late 2022, four international non-governmental organisations, namely Acted, REACH (a joint programme between Acted and IMPACT Initiatives), People in Need, and the Norwegian Refugee Council, joined their forces aiming to assist refugees and local vulnerable communities in Moldova,

particularly in coping with the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the massive movement of people abroad. With the financial support of the European Union, this combination of efforts resulted in the establishment of the PLACE Consortium over a 27-month intervention, still ongoing.



As part of the PLACE Consortium, Acted provides refugees and vulnerable Moldovan households with financial support to address their immediate housing needs.

230 families - 693 individuals - have been receiving assistance in paying their rental expenses for a period of up to six months.

This cash assistance will enable families to improve their housing conditions, particularly enhancing security measures.

In addition, Acted provided 1,267 individuals with case management services, including assistance with applications for temporary protection, referrals to free legal, medical and psychological assistance, assistance with enrolment in educational and vocational

courses for adults and children, and other humanitarian services tailored to individual needs.

Acted and its partners continue to work on the improvement of living conditions on a large scale, including strengthening vulnerable people safety and promoting the social integration process of refugees.



Erasmus+ opportunities for students and youth from Moldova: information event for Young European Ambassadors

On August 6, the National Erasmus+ Office in Moldova, together with the Young European Ambassadors, organised an interactive information event, with the aim of discussing the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+

programme, as well as the [Eurydice network](#) – an online platform with comprehensive information about educational systems across Europe.



The young participants at the event, students originating from the Republic of Moldova, had the opportunity to learn in detail about how they can access the Erasmus+ scholarships and about the various study and training opportunities offered by the programme. The event also provided a framework for interactive discussions, where participants shared their accumulated Erasmus+ experiences, but also had the chance to ask questions about the application process and participation within the programme.

The Erasmus+ programme offers [mobility opportunities for Moldovan students](#), allowing them to obtain scholarships for study or traineeship mobilities up to 12 months, at prestigious universities across Europe. International mobility not only enriches students' educational journey, but also gives them the opportunity to develop

their intercultural skills, to learn foreign languages and to expand their network of professional contacts.

Moreover, thanks to the Erasmus+ programme, young people from Moldova can participate in informal education activities within workshops and seminars organised in various countries worldwide. During the [Erasmus+ youth exchanges](#), participants study topics such as cultural diversity, human rights, gender equality, environmental protection, health, entrepreneurship, social inclusion, etc. These activities develop their communication and teamwork skills and open up new cultural horizons.

During the event, representatives of the National Erasmus+ Office also highlighted the importance of the Eurydice network – the online portal that provides useful information about the education systems across Europe.

Eurydice platform is thus a valuable tool for all those interested in the European educational space, but also in academic mobility. Starting from 2024, the Eurydice network has expanded in the space of the new candidate countries for membership of the European Union: Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia.

The event attracted significant interest from young people in Moldova, providing them practical information and valuable advice on how to be part of the Erasmus+ programme, in order to develop their skills and broaden their academic and non-formal education horizons.



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'Curious and involved' - interns involved in the joint Internship Programme of the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Moldova

Interns involved in the joint Internship Programme of the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Moldova took

part in an informal meeting with EU member states Ambassadors and Government officials.



'Curious and involved' – this is the impression of the Prime Minister about the young people enrolled in the joint Internship Programme of the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Moldova.

On 23 July, these met the EU Ambassador Jānis Mažeiks, the Ambassadors of EU member states accredited in Moldova, as well as the Prime Minister and Government officials.

The young people enjoyed informal networking with the officials, having the chance to address questions and discuss topics of interest to them.

Both Ambassador Mažeiks and Prime Minister Recean were impressed by the young people's motivation and encouraged them to get involved in the public administration to build a European future here, at home.

64 young people graduate the third edition of the joint EU and Moldovan Government Internship Programme

64 young people received their graduation certificates from the Internship Programme of the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Moldova in a festive ceremony on 28 August.

The event was attended by Prime Minister Dorin Recean and Ambassador of the European Union to Moldova Jānis Mažeiks, both of them mentioning the young people's strong motivation and enthusiasm. The officials welcomed the commitment of the programme's graduates and encouraged them to pursue a career in the civil service, contributing to the country's EU integration efforts.

The interns spent two months in public institutions, working side by side with civil servants and being mentored by the EU High Level Advisers. They also benefited from weekly information sessions on various topics of the public administration, gaining in-depth knowledge on a multitude of subjects.

Programme's finalists have been selected following a very rigorous and competitive selection process, comprising from a competition of CVs and cover letters, followed by interviews with representatives of the Government, the European Union Delegation and EU High Level Advisers. Monthly, interns received a 200 Euro allowance, the Programme being fully financed by the European Union.



The third edition of the Programme is also the most numerous one; the first and second edition resulting in 47 and 29 graduates, accordingly, some of which already having started their career in the public administration.

In premiere, graduates have the possibility to enter the civil service without competition and without a testing period, if they complete a minimum number of 480 hours of internship in the beneficiary institutions – a facility introduced by the Law on paid internships in state institutions this year.



Stronger Together

EU4Culture awards 150,000 euro for cultural grants to five regional cities in Eastern Partnership countries

The EU-funded EU4Culture project has awarded grants for a total of 30,000 euro to five regional municipalities in Armenia, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova, which are part of the EU4Culture Regional Cities Network. It aims to enhance the sustainability of their Cultural Development Strategies created in 2022 with the support of EU4Culture. The strategic plans of the five municipalities focus on boosting regional economies by fostering the advancement of local creative and cultural industries.

The newly awarded grants give them the opportunity to bring some aspects of their Cultural Development Strategies to fruition.

In the case of the Republic of Moldova, the beneficiary municipality is Orhei, which used the allocated funds for documenting and digitizing cultural heritage by developing plaques that incorporate QR codes, providing information in three languages, creating the Orhei region brand to promote cultural and tourist offerings, and supporting the organization of the Guitar Festival in memory of Iurie Sadovnic.



National Forum Cahul4Culture: the role of cultural policies in identifying, developing and promoting European values

On July 2-3, in Cahul, the "Cahul4Culture" National Forum was held, which brought together representatives of cultural institutions, national and international experts, government officials and community leaders, to discuss and share ideas about the importance of cultural policies in promoting European values. The event was organised in the context of the 522nd anniversary of the town of Cahul.

The Cahul4Culture Cultural Forum opened with remarks from local officials, EU representatives and national leaders. Panel discussions covered key topics such as the European legal framework for culture, parliamentary initiatives to support European integration, cultural policy in the Republic of Moldova and the strategic development of Cahul's cultural sector. Other topics included the modernisation of cultural services, the digitisation of local culture, the growth of

creative industries and cultural management practices. The Forum highlighted strategies to promote cultural tourism and inclusive development, drawing inspiration from European models. It concluded with a focus on local cultural heritage and sustainable regional growth.

The forum was organised by the City Hall of Cahul in partnership with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova, the "Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu" State University of Cahul and the Cahul District Council, with the financial support of the European Union within the project "Cahul - the Cultural-Creative Capital of the Republic Moldova". This project is implemented within the European Union project EU4Culture by the Goethe Institute (implementation leader), the French Georgia Institute, the Danish Institute and the Czech Centers.



The EU4Culture Network Festival: City Stories, Diverse Voices – ILLUMINATE. AMPLIFY.

Held in Cahul on September 28, the festival highlighted key achievements in cultural strategy development, alongside innovative projects and mobility program.

This vibrant event fostered cultural exchange and the digitalization of creativity, showcasing the works of artists from Moldova and other Eastern Partnership countries (Georgia, Belarus).

Through artist talks, performances, and collaborative projects, the festival illuminated the connections between Cahul's local cultural and creative sectors and international creatives. Themes such as creative entrepreneurship and audience engagement were explored, with digital tools enhancing the synergy between various forms of expression like art, music, and poetry.

The festival was structured into four clusters, engaging EU4Culture project beneficiaries from related fields:

- Professional Cluster – this featured panel discussions with professionals

from the cultural and creative industries, including high-ranking officials, representatives from the municipality, and national project leaders. EU4Culture beneficiaries shared their experiences, offering insights and discussing new opportunities for developing the local cultural and creative sectors.

- Visual/Video/Animation Artists Cluster – a breathtaking video projection mapping transformed the facade of the Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu State University into a canvas for animated artwork created by local and international artists.

- Digital Poetry Cluster – an immersive exhibition brought poetry into the digital realm, blending music, visual arts, and design to create innovative formats that redefined how poetry is experienced.

- Music Artists Cluster – the festival's immersive atmosphere was created with a concert at the Palace of Culture, featuring light shows and laser projections that added a dynamic visual element to the performances.



Stronger Together

The central area of Cahul was renovated with the support of the European Union

The surrounding area of the Palace of Culture "Nicolae Botgros" in Cahul municipality, the access to the "Nufărul Alb" Sanatorium and a section of Victoria Avenue were renovated. The works, worth more than €1,817 million, included paving the sidewalks, asphaltting a 0.7 km-long section of road, cycle paths, construction of three dry-type pavilions with music and light show, as well as a children's playground and green areas with directed irrigation. The works were carried out with the financial support of the European Union (80%

of the total amount) and the contribution of the City Hall of Cahul municipality (20% of the total amount).

The modernization of the central area improves the infrastructure and contributes to the development of cultural, sports, entertainment institutions and at least 13 local businesses located in the area. At the same time, the newly developed space will offer people, especially children and young people, a friendly environment to spend their free time.



"Revitalisation of the urban center's infrastructure will boost local businesses, cultural venues, sports facilities, and entertainment options. It will also create a welcoming space for people, particularly children and young adults, to enjoy their leisure time. The European Union has been proud to support Cahul. Through various initiatives, only in the past four years, the EU has provided over 10 million euros to fund projects that have improved public services, infrastructure, business environment, and local governance. These investments are a demonstration of the EU commitment to the city's well-being and prosperity,"

said Julda Kielyte, Team Leader of the Competitive and Inclusive Growth Portfolio of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.

The project for revitalization and modernization of the central area was selected by citizens following a competition organised by the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme, which invited Cahul residents to propose ideas for the transformation of their city.

The modernisation works in the central area of Cahul city took place within the framework of the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions," funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP and UNICEF. The works were carried out between September 2023 – August 2024.

"EU4Moldova: Focal regions" programme (2019-2024) supports smart, inclusive, and sustainable socio-economic development in the Cahul and Ungheni regions to bring a better quality of life to citizens. The programme has a total budget of €23 million, is financed by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).



EU support enhanced access to essential services for families in Moldova, including refugees

The European Union through the Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), to the "Strengthening Moldova's national capacities to ensure quality protection, education, health services and socio-economic opportunities for Ukrainian refugees" project over the past two years, UNICEF and IOM have made significant efforts to strengthen Moldova's systems to ensure quality protection, health, and education services for the most disadvantaged families, especially refugees from Ukraine.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and Chişinău Municipality, UNICEF has positively impacted the lives of approximately 59,000 children and their caregivers, including refugees, providing higher-quality child protection and social services. Over half of these beneficiaries are girls and women. UNICEF and IOM have also played a pivotal role in assisting the government to develop and adopt crucial decisions and regulations, enhancing child protection and social assistance frameworks. Their efforts include recruiting additional consultants and experts to support central authorities.



UNICEF's focus on education has involved training more than 2,000 educators to support and integrate Ukrainian children into Moldova's formal and non-formal education systems. This initiative has included early childhood education staff trained in playful learning pedagogy, child-centred approaches, and psychosocial support. As a result, around 26,000 children have developed vital soft skills, such as creativity, resilience, and emotional intelligence. Thirty thousand children will soon acquire social and emotional skills, including empathy, acceptance, and tolerance. Thanks to EU support, IOM has rehabilitated three playgrounds and equipped two schools, fostering social cohesion among local and Ukrainian children. UNICEF has contributed by building the capacity in STEAM fields for adolescents from the most disadvantaged areas, addressing gender inequalities, and reshaping public perceptions of the role of young people in information and communication technology.

In the health sector, IOM, in partnership with the National Health Insurance Company and the Ministry of Health, has ensured Ukrainian refugees' access to health services. More than 3,400 refugees have received emergency healthcare, and around 1,300 have accessed primary healthcare. Additionally, seven patients have undergone 920 dialysis sessions, and 511 patients have received cancer care. IOM has also delivered cancer medicines and medical equipment to the Oncology Institute. Furthermore, IOM has created socio-economic opportunities for vulnerable families in Moldova, including refugees. This includes cash for skills training for 129 Ukrainian refugees and local community members, online skills training for 20 individuals, and cash for microgrants for 90 participants. Additionally, 407 people have received job counselling sessions, and 20 entrepreneurs have benefited from grants.



European Union and the International Organization for Migration help enhance Ukraine – Moldova Border Security

On 8 August 2024, at Palanca-Maiaki-Udobnoe joint border crossing point, Oleh Nikolaichuk, Deputy Head of the State Customs Service of Ukraine, and Viorel Doaga, Acting Director of the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova, signed "The Technical Conditions for Data Exchange", finalizing the operationalisation of achievements under the European Union-funded integrated border management project.

Since 2020, the "EU for Border Security" project, implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), enhanced the joint control and information exchange on persons, vehicles and goods crossing the Ukraine–Moldova border. At three road border crossing points (Criva – Mamalyha, Otaci – Mohyliv-Podilsky and Palanca – Mayaki – Udobnoe), a video monitoring mechanism and an automated car plates recognition system were installed, allowing real-time customs information exchange.



“The central IT systems of the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova and the State Customs Service of Ukraine were modernized within the project. The upgrades improved the business processes and facilitated Ukraine’s and Moldova’s mutual exchange of information as well as the future interaction with the European Union customs information systems”,

stated Viorel Doaga.

The project also supported the Moldovan General Inspectorate for Border Police and the Ukrainian State Border Guard Service which received modern naval equipment for patrolling along the Dniester River. Cars, patrol boats and other specialized equipment enhanced crime prevention and rescue missions, especially during unfavourable weather conditions.

“The EU support allowed to facilitate trade and movement of people across the Ukraine-Moldova border, while preventing and combating smuggling and other border-related offences, crime and corruption. It ultimately contributed to the security, stability, and sustainable development of the region,”

said Nikolaichuk.

The “EU for Border Security” project lasted from January 2020 to June 2024, with the total budget of EUR 4,440,000. The European Union contributed EUR 3,552,000 and the rest was co-funded by the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova, the State Customs Service of Ukraine, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, and the General Inspectorate of Border Police of the Republic of Moldova.



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European Union support to IOM Moldova's Health Department

IOM Moldova's Health Department is committed to provide continuous assistance to Ukrainian refugees relocating to European Union or third-country nationals (TCNs) returning to their country of origin by providing health assessments that includes: medical history assessment, evaluation for communicable diseases, including COVID19 symptoms and testing, physical examination, chest X ray, ECG, and blood tests when medically indicated.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the IOM's Migration Health Department provided support for travel to 2,643 Ukrainian refugees and 2,738 TCNs.

Pre-migration health assistance including pre-embarkation health checkups are provided at the PMSI Clinical Hospital of the Ministry of Health, thanks to the generous support of the European Union.



European Union support to the IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Return

The Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) program within IOM Moldova provides support to third-country nationals, and their close Ukrainian family members who are fleeing the war in Ukraine to return to their country of origin. This program is implemented by IOM Moldova's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) team thanks to the support of the European Union. A key aspect of the program is screening.

The AVRR team provides individualized support not only for the return to the country of origin, but also for reintegration upon arrival.

Since January 2024, 514 people have been assisted with returning to their country of origin, and 39 have been provided a reintegration program to support their long-term reintegration.



European Union donation to the Oncology Institute through IOM

As part of the continuous commitment to enhance healthcare services and support cancer care initiatives in the Republic of Moldova, IOM delivered treatment supplies, supportive care materials, diagnostic equipment, and biopsy tools to the Oncology Institute.

The donated equipment, worth EUR 30,000, will improve the assistance to Ukrainian refugees, migrants, and Moldovans in detecting breast and cervical cancer.

This donation was made possible thanks to the generous financial support of the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments of the European Commission.



#Space3 - the place for learning and exploration, where the young generation's visions take wings

Creative young people, civic engagement, local change: this is how the #space3 programme can be described in a few words - the place for learning and exploration, where the visions of the young generation take wings, interconnect and bring change in the community, under the mentorship of Terre des hommes Moldova, with the financial support of the European Union.

After working during the summer to finalize and fine-tuning their projects, nine teams of students started their initiatives this autumn. Their projects focus on the pressing problems in their communities: low participation of young people in public life, lack of gender equality activities, misinformation, and gender discrimination.



"Our desire comes from the need to create a space where young people can feel at home. I can already imagine what it will be like - comfortable, safe, and accessible for all",

reported Ruslan, the leader of the initiative group "Attitude".

Daria, the leader of the „Equal Voices” group, proudly talks about her team's plans:

"We are going to start a debating club, which will become a platform for discussions and information, where young people will learn new things about gender discrimination. Through this project, we form new bonds, friendships and exchange ideas."



EU-Moldova

Stronger Together

Within the program, 11 other teams successfully completed their initiatives, some that started in 2023, others – this year. In Dondușeni district, for example, participants made their voices heard by local authorities and contributed to positive changes in their communities. Teams set up Youth Town Halls in 13 localities in the district, created a youth club and organised an Anti-bullying School.

"This experience has developed my financial and time management skills. I encourage young people to take advantage of projects aimed at their growth",

said Ruxandra, coordinator of the "Youth Community" initiative.

"The young people organised the election process, chose the candidates for the ballot, elected the mayor and other key positions in the City Hall. We clarified the tasks of each position and how the directorates work together. Then they planned an initiative and worked out the budget for implementation,"

Denis, leader of the Next Generation team, talked about the process of setting up the Youth Mayors' Mayors' Offices.

Initiatives in #space3 from other districts also focused on increasing youth involvement in the electoral process, simulating an election, promoting a healthy view on gender equality, illustrating situations of discrimination through a Social Theatre Festival. Other constructive ideas were also brought to



life, such as setting up a space for after-school activities, lighting up a football pitch and launching a podcast promoting young people.

The 20 teams from #space3 come from localities in the districts of Fălești, Strășeni, Dondușeni, Briceni, Drochia, Bălți, Ungheni, Dubăsari, Leova, Ialoveni and Nisporeni. The activities are carried out within the project "MYCS: Moldova Youth Civil Society - a Call for Stronger and Inclusive Youth Participation", implemented by Terre des hommes Moldova Foundation, in partnership with the Foundation for Civil Society Development (Romania) and the Partnership for Development Center (Moldova) and co-funded by the European Union.

MYCS aims to strengthen the capacities of local civic actors in the youth field to provide inclusive and sustainable youth participation

and empowerment programmes and services. More information about the project and its activities: www.tdh.md/MYCS



  EU-Moldova
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The PLACE where children find inspiration

In a world where emotional and psychological needs can be just as important as material ones, psychosocial support for those in need is essential, especially for those fleeing war. In the Republic of Moldova, refugee children and adults from Ukraine are receiving comprehensive support thanks to the European Union-funded PLACE project. This project not only provides material aid, but also focuses on psychosocial support tailored to the needs of these vulnerable people.

A successful example is the civil society organization "Aripi de Viață" (Wings of Life) in the city of Edineț, a local partner of People in Need Moldova. "Aripi de Viață" has become a psychological refuge for refugee children and women, offering activities that help them reintegrate and regain emotional balance. Through a mix of educational and recreational activities, refugees, together with local community members, form new friendships and develop essential social skills.



"Our centre was opened thanks to the support of People in Need through the European Union-funded PLACE project. We target women and children, the most vulnerable members of society. We try to support the women from Ukraine, who mostly come with their children.

We organise interactive and creative activities for them, both at our headquarters and in cooperation with other organisations,"

explains Victoria Staroselțeva, Director of the "Aripi de Viață".



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One of the main objectives of the centre is to promote friendship and mutual respect between Ukrainian children and those from the host community, thus contributing to an easier social integration process. Every day at Arip de Viață, activities such as creative workshops, educational games and even cooking sessions take place. Through these activities, the children learn to develop their social skills and recover emotionally from the trauma they have experienced. These activities help the children regain their confidence and feel part of a community, even if they are far from home.

"I like it here because it's a place where I can make new friends. We cook and do handicrafts, and then we get to take what we've made home,"

said Ecaterina, a 9-year-old girl who attends the centre.

The "Arip de Viață" centre is not just a place of support, it's a community where children can "grow wings" for a better future, despite the hardships they've endured.

"The support from the PLACE project is vital for us, as it allows us to organise all these activities for the children and women who need help the most. Without this support, we wouldn't be able to continue our work,"

added Victoria Staroselțeva.

The project activities are carried out thanks to the support of the European Union through the EU Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid and are managed by People in Need in consortium with Acted Moldova and NRC – Norwegian Refugee Council.



Empowering youth: Media Camp 2024 promotes EU values and media literacy

StratCom Project partnered with the Media Center for Youth for the organization of the summer edition of Media Camp 2024. In this edition of the Multimedia Connector Camp, 25 participants were selected from a pool of 251 applications.

These selected individuals aged 16-18 participated in the camp, which was designed to enhance their media and information literacy skills. The camp featured a comprehensive agenda including modules on freedom of speech, multiculturalism, and combating disinformation, among other topics. The participants, who came from diverse regions of Moldova, engaged in workshops and discussions led by experts, opinion leaders, media professionals and influencers.

The remarkable aspect of this camp was its ability to bring together, for the first time, both Russian and Romanian speakers, offering a unique environment for sharing opinions and views on the European future of Moldova.

Through various activities and sessions, these young people explored the benefits of European integration and developed critical thinking skills to counter disinformation. This multicultural gathering enriched their understanding while strengthening the bonds between different linguistic communities within Moldova.

The camp resulted in a series of multimedia products (reels, photo posts, live streams, and stories) generated by the participants, aiming to increase media literacy and education among their peers, as well as to promote youth participation, civic activity engagement, and highlight EU values, EU assistance and the idea of EU integration. These products will be further published and promoted on social media and online platforms.



Celebrating generations: Bunica & Bunelul Festival brings joy to Bălți

On September 22, 2024, the Bunica & Bunelul Festival (Grandma & Grandpa Festival) transformed the city of Bălți into a vibrant celebration of intergenerational connections, bringing together thousands of participants in a lively tribute to the special bond between grandparents and their grandchildren. The festival, which aimed to strengthen European values among seniors, provided a platform for families to connect, share stories, and participate in a variety of engaging and meaningful activities.

The event featured a diverse lineup of activities, with something for everyone. One of the main attractions was a webinar titled “Emotional Balance and Mental Health of Seniors,” led by well-known psychologist Ina Crasnojon. The session provided valuable insights into the importance of mental well-being for the elderly, addressing common challenges they face and offering practical advice on maintaining emotional resilience. The interactive nature of the webinar encouraged open discussions, allowing participants to share their experiences and learn from one another, strengthening a sense of community support.



Another highlight of the festival was the cooking workshop, which paired grandparents with their grandchildren in a fun, hands-on culinary experience. Together, they created delicious traditional dishes, bridging the generational gap through the art of cooking. This activity not only brought joy and laughter to the participants but also promoted the sharing of cultural heritage and family traditions, reinforcing the importance of preserving Moldovan culinary customs across generations.



Adding a playful and memorable touch to the festival, an instant photobooth was set up, complete with EU-themed props and decorations. Families could capture special moments of the day, creating lasting memories while celebrating European values like unity, inclusion, and solidarity. The photos served as keepsakes, reminding attendees of the importance of intergenerational bonds and the shared values that connect them to the broader European community.

The Bunica & Bunelul Festival also highlighted the European Union's commitment to building more inclusive societies. By focusing on the participation of seniors and their families, the festival promoted a sense of belonging and unity across generations. The event reflected the EU's core values of solidarity, care for all generations, and the importance of community engagement, reinforcing that the contributions of seniors are valuable and vital to building a strong society.



EU-Moldova

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A new laboratory at the Technical University of Moldova advances gender equality in STEM with the EU support

More than 400 students enrolled in the Electronics and Telecommunications Faculty at the Technical University of Moldova now have access to a modern laboratory equipped by UN Women Moldova through the EVOLVE4GE project, funded by the European Union. The lab was inaugurated on 16 September 2024 under the "Gender Equality in STEM" slogan to promote gender equality in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

"To ensure that women and girls contribute equally and thrive in STEM, we must remove access barriers, providing them with the necessary equipment and resources to learn, innovate, and lead. This is not just a donation but a strategic investment in Moldova's future, supporting the girls who will help shape it – a future without barriers and full of opportunities,"

emphasised Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova



"Women comprise only 29% of the STEM workforce globally. This gap is largely due to stereotypes. I hope that this lab will attract more girls to study STEM fields. When gender inequalities exist in certain areas, they later reflect in the labour market, particularly in wage gaps,"

highlighted Dominika Stojanoska, UN Women Moldova's Country Representative.

This strategic investment will enable the university to strengthen their efforts to bring more female students in STEM, by continuing to provide quality and high-tech education.

"When analysing the gender ratio among students, we find that we are indeed below the national average. The Mechanical Engineering Specialty has five female and 80 male students. We want to increase the number of girls applying for engineering specialisations,"

mentioned Viorel Bostan, Rector of the Technical University of Moldova

The laboratory is designed to create a dynamic learning environment, focusing on involving more girls and advancing research in electronics. It is equipped with cutting-edge tools that the students used in various projects, which they showcased at the event.

"STEM is a field where you develop both technical and creative skills. You learn so much information that can be applied anywhere to solve any problem, and it's useful for both girls and boys,"

said Nelea Manin, a second-year student who assembled six electronic kits. Manin encouraged other girls to consider a career in STEM:

"Girls, try every field—work on a small project, assemble something electronic or related to programming, then try making a dress. This way, you'll discover what you're passionate about. Electronics is an exciting field that constantly challenges you."



Students in the morning, Census enumerators in the afternoon

Their day would begin at the university, continue with interviewing Chişinău residents, and end with wedding preparations. We're talking about Maxim and Anastasia Sirbu, two of the approximately 4,000 enumerators involved in collecting data for the 2024 Population and Housing Census, the third since the Republic of Moldova declared its independence.

Maxim, a 23-year-old student at the Moldovan Academy of Orthodox Theology, and Anastasia, a 20-year-old student

studying Romanian language and literature and English at the "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University in Chişinău.

They decided to enrol as enumerators based on the recommendation of their future godfather, who had also worked as an enumerator 10 years ago. Moreover, the National Bureau of Statistics' regulation allows students to work as enumerators, as they can conduct the interviews outside of school hours and on days off.



They attended training sessions, learning about the census, fieldwork, and data collection. They also learned about confidentiality, communication, and appropriate conduct.

They were also interested in hands-on activities, where they learned how to use the tablet, digital maps, and data collection app. This year, for the first time in Moldova's census history, enumerators used tablets

to collect population and housing data, which ensured a high level of personal data protection, enabled efficient and secure data transmission, and helped reduce the time needed to process the information.

This was possible thanks to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the European Union, which supported the National Bureau of Statistics by providing a batch of 3,000 electronic tablets, complete with accessories, valued at approximately 800,000 euros. An additional 1,800 tablets had been previously purchased and used, including for the 2023 Pilot Population and Housing Census in 11 localities across the Republic of Moldova.

April 10 marked the first day of census for Anastasia and Maxim, a day filled with excitement and high hopes. Since then, for nearly three months, the two young people have been knocking on the doors of over 700 apartments in the Buiucani district of the capital.

Their responsibilities didn't end there. When they got home in the evening, around 9:00-10:00 p.m., they continued with their wedding preparations and practiced their first dance as a married couple. They got married on May 19.

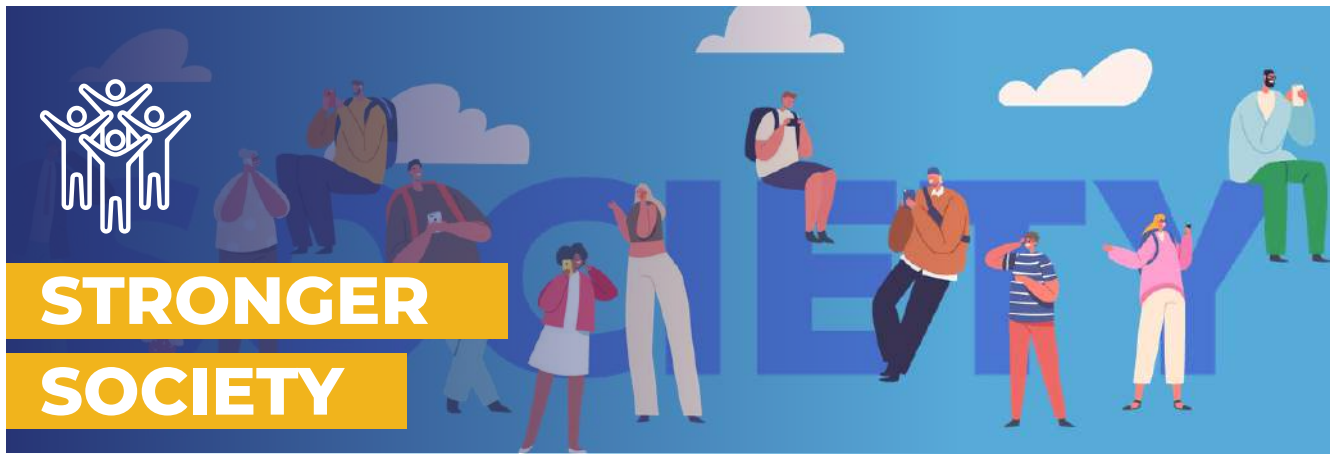
Despite their involvement in the data collection process, they planned a short two-day honeymoon, which they looked forward to enjoying fully after the census was completed.

Ten years from now, they envision themselves still involved in the Census, but as supervisors. They say that having 'learned the ropes of being enumerators', they are eager to take on new responsibilities – such as monitoring the data collection process, training enumerators, and coordinating their work.

According to preliminary data, between April 8 and July 7, 2024, the Population and Housing Census counted 2,448,000 persons, including both persons with and without usual residence in the Republic of Moldova, and 1,655,000 dwellings, including occupied, secondary, and unoccupied dwellings.

UNFPA supports census operations in over 155 countries worldwide. In our country, UNFPA provides the National Bureau of Statistics with technical and financial assistance, as well as international expertise, throughout all stages – from planning and implementation to data collection.

The preliminary census results will be presented later this year. Detailed final results will be available by the end of 2025.



Civil society from the Republic of Moldova honoured at the 5th European Civil Society Awards Gala

The Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova organised on Thursday, 5 September, the 5th edition of the European Civil Society Awards Gala, an event aimed at promoting and supporting the activities of the associative sector. Civil society organisations (CSOs) that have demonstrated excellence and outstanding

results in their fields of activity, through transparent and efficient use of the financial support provided by the European Union, were awarded today at an event attended by representatives of CSOs, the EU Delegation in Chişinău, public authorities and mass media.



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Organisations were rewarded for their significant contribution to the sustainable development of local communities, the promotion of more transparent governance, the development of the social sector, significant progress in the green economy and the strengthening of society's resilience to misinformation and manipulation.

Special attention was given to those CSOs that have achieved tangible results at the local level, reflecting one of the priorities of EU assistance to strengthen civil society throughout the country.

The awarded organisations were selected based on their positive impact on society and the way they have managed to mobilise and inspire local communities.



The winners of the fifth Civil Society Awards are:

- Public Association "Institutum Virtutes Civilis" – **Stronger Governance Award**
- Public Association "Filantropia Creștină" from Orhei – **Stronger Society Award**
- Public Association "Agency for Innovation and Development" from Tiraspol – **Stronger Economy Award**
- Public Association "La Strada" – **Gender Champion Award**

- Public Association "Alianța pentru Eficiență Energetică și Regenerabile" – **Green and Sustainable Development Award**
- Public Association "Aripile Dumbravei" from Volovița village, Soroca district – **Stronger Resilience to Disinformation Award**



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“One of the objectives of European Union assistance is to create equal chances and opportunities for all. In this context, I am delighted that this year’s Civil Society Awards Gala brings together winners from different regions of the Republic of Moldova. The prizes awarded at the Civil Society Gala also reflect our appreciation for the people who work in these organisations, for their dedication and passion, but also for taking responsibility to bring change for the better in the localities of the Republic of Moldova,”

said Jānis MAŽEIKS, European Union Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova.



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The Civil Society Organisations Awards Ceremony was broadcast on the online platforms of the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Moldova and national media institutions.

The European Union is currently supporting 26 initiatives implemented by civil society organisations in the Republic of Moldova for a total amount of around €35 million. The 26 grant projects in support of civil society organisations are being implemented in

11 areas of intervention, contributing to increased participation of civil society organisations, increased gender equality and non-discrimination, youth participation and entrepreneurship, economic development, better social services, increased social empowerment of local authorities, improved access to justice for vulnerable groups, support for media plurality and independence, etc.



Criuleni Health Center has a modern radiology and medical imaging laboratory, thanks to financial support provided by the European Union

The radiology and medical imaging laboratory at the Criuleni Health Centre has been modernised thanks to a non-reimbursable investment of €185,000 from the European Union. After almost four decades, patients of the Criuleni Health Center can benefit from modernised radiological services. The new imaging machine can not only take chest X-rays, but also bone X-rays, allowing doctors to identify fractures or dislocations. Patients will no longer have to go to other medical institutions for radiology services.

The services offered by the new medical equipment will benefit the residents of the Criuleni and Dubăsari districts, including residents of the left bank of the Nistru River. The purchase of a radiology and imaging station, including the renovation works, was made possible with the support of the Confidence Building Measures Programme, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP.



"The old microradiography machine, installed in 1987, has not been functional since 2022. During the pandemic it worked maximally, but with great difficulties. We had to contract the services from the district hospital which, due to the high volume of investigations, often deteriorated. With the installation of the new equipment, we will have the opportunity to investigate more population from risk groups from Criuleni and Dubăsari districts,"

said Violeta Panico, head of the Criuleni Health Center.



The new X-ray machine is connected to a computer that keeps electronic archive for 1,000 films, as well as a medical film printer. Moreover, individual radiation protection equipment was provided for the laboratory staff.

In addition to the purchase of the new X-ray machine, renovation and refurbishment works were carried out in the laboratory. The electrical, heating and ventilation networks were replaced. The finishing of the radiology cabinet was carried out in accordance with the new sanitary standards.

The laboratory was equipped with technologically advanced X-ray resistant furniture.

"There is a huge difference between old and new equipment. Now we work in very good conditions and benefit from modern equipment. The level of radiation is 20 times lower than before, which allows us to diagnose a larger number of patients and significantly reduce the waiting time,"

said Dumitru Cara, an imaging doctor at the Criuleni Health Center.



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"The first time I come to the new Roentgen, we'll see how it goes. Until now we used to go to the old one because we need to undergo the X-ray once a year, that's what they ask us to do at work,"

says Irina, a cook.

"Now we hope it will be better, clearer images. We schedule in advance and come to the center when needed,"

adds Anatol from Oxentea village.

More than 60,000 patients, including from the left bank of the Nistru River, are consulted annually at the health centre in Criuleni.

Since 2009, the EU has funded a number of projects to improve the healthcare sector in the region, providing vital equipment and renovating five health centres in the security zone, the hospital in Rezina and the hospital in Criuleni. In addition, exchanges of experience between specialists and health professionals from both banks of Nistru River have strengthened cooperation and improved the capacity of medical staff. In total, on the right bank alone, eight health facilities have been renovated, with investments of over €1 million, benefiting around 40,000 people on both banks.



Youth for Integrity Summer Camp 2024: Empowering the next generation of integrity leaders

From July 14 to 20, 2024, the Youth for Integrity Summer Camp brought together 30 passionate young anti-corruption volunteers, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote integrity in their communities. The week-long camp featured diverse activities, including training sessions on anti-corruption, online safety,

public speaking, and creative exercises such as forum theatre workshops and community project brainstorming sessions. These activities not only strengthened teamwork and critical thinking but also empowered participants to take on leadership roles in the fight against corruption.



The impact of this camp extends beyond the individual participants. By fostering a deep understanding of integrity and civic responsibility, these young leaders are now prepared to influence their peers and communities positively. The skills and inspiration they gained will help them spearhead initiatives that can drive

significant social change, contributing to a more transparent and accountable society.

One participant shared,

"This camp has inspired me to make a change in our country, to promote integrity and stop corruption."



Their commitment, along with the guidance provided by the National Anti-corruption Centre team and expert mentors, will undoubtedly resonate throughout society, strengthening the foundation for a better future.

The event was organised with the support of the "Strengthening the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms in the Republic of Moldova" project co-funded by the European Union, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and UK government.



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Strengthening the Investigative Reporting Network in Moldova

On August 22-23, 2024, the Investigative Reporting Networking workshop was held in Chişinău. The event brought together 20 participants, from the entire country, including 15 representatives from national media outlets and five from local media. The workshop, organised by GIZ/ACT project, aimed to strengthen the Investigative Journalists Network in Moldova by fostering collaboration and providing essential tools and strategies for effective investigative reporting.

Such networks are crucial for anti-corruption

investigative journalists, as it enhances their ability to share resources, collaborate on cross-border investigations, and amplify their impact in holding powerful entities accountable.

Participants received hands-on training in using open-source intelligence and social media intelligence tools. These tools help journalists gather and verify information from publicly available sources and social media platforms, ensuring that their investigative work remains accurate and trustworthy.



A participant investigative journalist noted,

"This workshop, like other events organised by GIZ, is invaluable for networking with colleagues within the Investigative Journalists Network, exchanging experiences, and building collaborative relationships with

investigative journalists from other countries. Additionally, the tools we acquire during the training will enhance our ability to document our work more effectively, ensuring that the investigations we conduct are more detailed and engaging."



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Addressing hate speech and hate crime: regional gathering of the network of Equality Bodies from the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership Region

A two-day workshop on addressing hate speech and hate crime took place at the premises of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, involving Equality bodies from the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership regions. The event supported by the EU and Council of Europe, gathered 50 representatives from both regions who discussed and exchanged on the best

practices, measures and common challenges when addressing hate speech and hate crime. Through monitoring and reporting, policy advocacy, raising awareness and supporting victims equality bodies play a fundamental role in protecting human rights and ensuring that all individuals are treated equally.



In her opening remarks, Angela Longo, Head of Anti-discrimination Co-operation Unit, Council of Europe, underlined the significant progress in engaging with Equality Bodies through this network, regularly exchanging best practices and addressing

the challenges of hatred and intolerance in societies. She highlighted that this new chapter of discussion delves into the grey area between hate speech and hate crime, addressing issues of incitement and biases.



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Representatives from Equality Bodies had the opportunity to discuss and enhance their knowledge on the [Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers Recommendation to member States on combating hate crime](#), adopted on 7th May 2024, as well as gain a clearer understanding of EU standards in the field of hate crime. Moreover, participants engaged in exchanges with peers from the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE), who shared insights on addressing hate speech in the public discourse. The National Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) in Italy provided practical examples for developing counter-narratives and raising awareness initiatives.

They also explored opportunities to advocate for legislative reform, foster multisectoral co-operation, enhance data collection, and overall improve national mechanisms to counter hate crimes.

This seminar was organised on 1-2 July 2024 within the action [“Promoting equality and combating racism and intolerance in the Western Balkans”](#) and the project [“Promoting equality and non-discrimination: towards more resilient and inclusive societies”](#) – co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe, and implemented by the Council of Europe under the joint Programmes [“Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye”](#) and [“Partnership for Good Governance”](#).



Addressing racism and racial discrimination in the context of the EU accession process in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership region

The Council of Europe in Strasbourg welcomed during 3-4 July a two-day conference, focusing on tackling racism and racial discrimination in the context of the EU accession process. The conference, supported by EU and Council of Europe titled "*Addressing racism and racial discrimination in the context of the EU accession process: state of play and tools available for the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership region*", brought together experts, policymakers, and practitioners from the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership region who discussed a joint approach in addressing racism and discrimination in their respective regions.

The conference was opened by Thorsten Afflerbach - Head of the Inclusion and Anti-discrimination Division of the Council of Europe, and Katerina Markovova - Head of the Programming Division of the Council of Europe, who stressed for the participants the importance of this meeting, serving as a platform for exchanging updates and good practices among key-stakeholders, with a special focus on the current state of play in addressing racism within the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions.

Elise Lassus, Project Officer at the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, introduced the EU legal and policy frameworks on racism and racial discrimination in policing, and provided for the participants an overview of the functioning of oversight bodies within the EU Member States.



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Participants engaged in a fruitful discussion regarding the preparations undertaken by EU Member States and their neighbouring countries for the implementation of National Action Plans against Racism (NAPARs) at the national level. Additionally, the exchanges explored the development of educational tools to combat hatred and racism, as well as the resources provided by the EU and the Council of Europe for legal professionals. Furthermore, representatives had the opportunity to gain valuable insights from both academic experts and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs), including the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

This two-day event empowered aspiring EU members with shared knowledge, collaborative strategies, and practical tools to curb racism and racial discrimination within their communities.

This event was organised within the action [“Promoting equality and combating racism and intolerance in the Western Balkans”](#) and the project [“Promoting equality and non-discrimination: towards more resilient and inclusive societies”](#) – co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe, and implemented by the Council of Europe under the joint programmes [“Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye”](#) and [“Partnership for Good Governance”](#).



Stronger Together

Building stronger partnerships to combat discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Republic of Moldova

A workshop was held in Bălți aiming to enhance the protection of victims of discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes. Participants included legal professionals, police officers and representatives of national authorities working in the field of equality.

The workshop titled “*Practical aspects of investigating cases of discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Republic of Moldova*”, focused on institutional proceedings, addressed practical aspects of examining, qualifying and documenting cases of discrimination, as well as internal procedures, competencies, and practices in each of the involved parties.



Measures to strengthen the co-operation between the judiciary, the General Police Inspectorate, the Equality Council, the People’s Advocate Office, and the Agency for Interethnic Relations were discussed in order to strengthen the mechanism of victims’ protection in the country, seek collaborative solutions among professionals working in the field of equality and ensure more training opportunities and an open dialogue between law enforcement agents. The workshop was organised in co-operation with the National Institute of Justice of the Republic of Moldova.

This event, held on 13 September 2024, is part of the European Union and Council of Europe joint programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe, and implemented by the Council of Europe in the framework of the project [“Combating discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Republic of Moldova”](#) and the [Council of Europe project “Promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova”](#).

Empowering Roma community mediators in the Republic of Moldova to combat discrimination

Roma community mediators attended a training that equipped them with the skills and knowledge to tackle discrimination and effectively advocate for Roma rights at both national and local community level.

This event was organised in co-operation with the Agency for Interethnic Relations and covered issues related to racism and xenophobia, preventing and combating discrimination and hate crime against Roma persons.



The challenges Roma community mediators experience in their daily work include issues related to the documentation and reporting of discrimination cases in employment, political participation, bullying of children at school, access to public services and justice. Legal protection mechanisms based on Council of Europe standards and best practices at European level for minority protection were presented during this training, in addition to providing practical exercises when addressing law enforcement institutions: lodging complains and supporting the victims of discrimination during that process.

- ✓ Develop inclusive strategies that consider societal diversity and the experience of persons facing ethnic discrimination;
- ✓ Advance reforms for better protection of Roma persons, including through continuation of awareness-raising initiatives for ensuring equal treatment and addressing stereotypical attitudes towards vulnerable groups.

At the end of this event, participants identified further need to:

- ✓ Ensure an efficient protection mechanism, through co-operation between all relevant institutions (e.g., the Equality Council, Police, People's Advocate, Ministry of Education, National Institute of Justice);

This event was organised on 25-26 June 2024, in co-operation with the Agency for Interethnic Relations, as a common initiative of the following projects: European Union/Council of Europe project "[Combating discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Republic of Moldova](#)", part of the European Union and Council of Europe joint programme "[Partnership for Good Governance](#)", Council of Europe project "[Enhancing diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova](#)" funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Council of Europe project „Promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova”.



Stronger Together

The Republic of Moldova and Romania launch the joint research grants programme “Stronger together in the European research area”

Romania and the Republic of Moldova make a significant step towards strengthening scientific cooperation at the European level by launching the joint programme of research grants “Stronger together in the European research area”. This ambitious programme aims to align research in the two countries to the EU standards and priorities, facilitating integration into European research networks and promoting scientific excellence in a transnational context.

The programme was launched during the international forum organised by the Ministry of Education and Research

together with the European Union High Level Advisers’ Mission today, 14 September, in Chişinău. The forum brought together over 180 researchers from Romania and the Republic of Moldova, in order to optimize the opportunities and resources offered by this program. By supporting joint research projects, the program contributes to the achievement of the European objectives of innovation and scientific progress, focusing on essential areas such as health, environment, digitalization and sustainable energy, stated the Minister of Education and Research Dan Perciun at the opening of the event.



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Stronger Together

Ludmila Nistor-Mihajlova, policy officer within the Directorate General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission highlighted the vital role of collaboration in the European Research Area, underlining the growing contribution of Moldova to Horizon Europe. She noted Moldova's progress, including €5.5 million in EU funding for research and innovation, while encouraging the participation and empowerment of young researchers. The official concluded by underlining the collective power of European research in addressing global challenges and building a sustainable future.

- ✓ Consolidation of international partnerships, which contribute to the creation of strong research consortia in strategic fields.
- ✓ Access to European scientific excellence: The grant programme aims to support innovative projects that are competitive at the European level, supporting the participation of researchers from Romania and the Republic of Moldova in top initiatives from the European Research Area.

The event set itself the goal of:

- ✓ Integration into the European Research Area (ERA), supporting scientific collaboration between researchers from Romania and the Republic of Moldova and their counterparts from other member states of the European Union. During the conference, the participants learned how they can access and capitalize on European funds for joint research projects.

The European importance of the program was underlined by Daniel P. Funeriu, EU High Level Adviser on Education and Research: "This bilateral initiative fully aligns with the EU priorities of developing a strong, innovative and integrated research ecosystem. Stronger together in the European research area promotes not only regional collaboration, but also the integration of researchers from Romania and the Republic of Moldova into European research networks, thus contributing to increasing their visibility and competitiveness at the international level.



EU supports promoting minority rights in Moldova: working together to achieve equality

UN Human Rights has a unique mandate from the international community to promote and protect all human rights of all people. The promotion of minority rights through the provision of expert and technical support to the state institutions and civil society is one core stream of work of UN Human Rights in Moldova.

The project 'Strengthening Minority Rights in the Republic of Moldova', funded by the

EU and launched in February 2024 aims to significantly increase the protection of minority rights by focusing on three pillars: promotion and protection of minority rights; equality and non-discrimination; and effective and meaningful participation of minorities. It provides an additional opportunity for UN Human Rights to enhance the capacity of state structures to respect, protect and fulfil minority rights.



April 2024, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) adopted recommendations addressed to the Republic of Moldova, which are meant to serve as a roadmap for the country over the next four years on how to improve Moldova's

compliance with respective international standards. The Specialised Commission on the implementation of the Convention of Elimination of Racial Discrimination (hereinafter Specialised Commission) was established to coordinate, monitor and report



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on the implementation of recommendations. The Specialised Commission is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research (MER).

To facilitate the complex task of the Specialised Commission, UN Human Rights Moldova, as part of the EU-funded project is supporting the Specialised Commission in its endeavour. So far, two participatory and inclusive meetings of the Specialised Commission to develop a set of measures to implement the recommendations received from CERD were supported. These meetings became a platform for an inclusive and participatory dialogue of state institutions, National Human Rights Institutions and civil society, all of whom are members of the Specialised Commission.

The project also responded to the request of the MER to build the capacity of the members of the Specialised Commission in promoting equality, adopting a human rights-based approach to promoting minority rights and efficient engagement with international and national human rights mechanisms. As part of a three-day training, the members of the Commission, among others, engaged in a constructive discussion for finalizing the set of measures to implement the recommendations received from CERD.

Following the support of UN Human Rights Moldova and the EU, the members of the Specialised Commission, have strengthened their capacity and expertise in the field of human rights, and have improved their coordination, which should have a positive impact on the human rights of minorities.



International Conference in Chişinău unites experts to combat disinformation with EU support

On September 10, 2024, Chişinău hosted a high-profile International Conference, organised by the IMS with support from the European Union. The event brought together 89 participants, including Moldovan officials, diplomatic representatives, media developers, civil society organization (CSO) members, journalists, media representatives, as well as national and international experts from various fields. The conference provided a dynamic platform for discussing key issues related to media and information literacy (MIL), countering disinformation, media self-

regulation, and strategic communication.

The discussions were timely and relevant, given the increasing challenges faced by Moldova in combatting misinformation and ensuring the integrity of media platforms. The conference highlighted the need for collaboration among stakeholders—from government officials to grassroots organizations—to effectively address the growing threat of disinformation, particularly in an age where digital media dominates the public sphere.



A significant highlight of the event was the panel dedicated to “Countering Disinformation,” which featured prominent international speakers from Estonia and Romania. These experts shared their countries' experiences and strategies for

tackling disinformation and building media resilience. The insights offered during the panel underscored the importance of media literacy as a tool to empower citizens and help them critically assess the information they encounter daily.



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The Estonian and Romanian approaches to strategic communication were presented as valuable models for Moldova to consider in its ongoing efforts to strengthen media integrity and counter the spread of fake news.

In addition to the informative panel discussions, the conference also celebrated the efforts of local organizations actively working to combat disinformation. During the EU Awards for the Fight Against Disinformation Ceremony, four organizations were recognized for their impactful contributions in this critical area: Cu Sens, Newsmaker, Centrul Media pentru Tineri, and the Association of Librarians of the Republic of Moldova. These organizations have been at the forefront of promoting media literacy, offering reliable information, and empowering citizens to engage responsibly with the media landscape.

Throughout the event, participants examined the role of media self-regulation, emphasizing how self-regulated, independent media platforms can serve as bastions of trust and accountability. The discussions also highlighted the EU's role in supporting these initiatives, reinforcing its commitment to promoting free and independent media in Moldova and beyond.

The conference provided a critical opportunity for cross-sector collaboration, enabling journalists, media experts, government officials, and civil society members to share best practices and identify new strategies for enhancing media literacy and resilience.

The success of this event not only reinforced the importance of addressing disinformation but also set the stage for further action and collaboration between Moldova and the European Union in promoting a strong, reliable, and independent media environment.



Celebrating European values at Etno Fest Taraclia: EU engages over 1,000 participants

Etno Fest Taraclia 2024, a celebration of Moldova's rich ethnic diversity, provided a lively platform for promoting European values and highlighting Moldova's journey towards EU integration. The event attracted a diverse and enthusiastic audience, with over 1,000 participants engaging in various activities that reflected the spirit of unity and cultural exchange.

A key highlight of the festival was a dedicated EU-branded tent, which offered a range of interactive experiences designed to engage participants of all ages. Interactive quizzes tested attendees' knowledge of European culture and values, with winners receiving EU-branded promotional materials as prizes. These competitions not only made learning fun but also helped consolidate a deeper understanding of Europe and its significance for Moldova's future.



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Innovation and gender equality empowered by the European Union at Techstars Startup Weekend Chişinău

More than 40 young people came together for the 5th edition of **Techstars Startup Weekend Chişinău: Let's Innovate Together** to develop creative ideas in the technology field. Co-financed by the European Union and implemented by UN Women Moldova through the "EVOLVE4GE" project, this three-day hackathon had a clear and inspiring mission—to attract and empower girls and women to take an active role in the tech driven startups.

Techstars Startup Weekend Chişinău is part of the larger Techstars ecosystem, which supports entrepreneurs through mentorship, funding and networking opportunities. From 13 to 15 September 2024, over three days and precisely 54 hours, participants presented ideas, formed teams and worked intensively on developing business ideas. This edition focused on encouraging more girls and women to start technology-based businesses, especially using artificial intelligence.



"I'm glad my idea was seen as having potential and that it will be implemented. The startup idea is to connect musicians and music enthusiasts with institutions that can provide them with available spaces,"

said Ioana, a member of the "Muzconnect" team, which took first place.

"Ioana was the one who came up with the idea, and without her, we wouldn't have been able to make this happen. I believe women play a vital role because they make the group more interesting and diverse,"

added Ghenadie, another member of the "Muzconnect" team.



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With the participants speaking Romanian, Russian, Spanish, and English and guided by 15 mentors, the weekend provided a diverse,

inclusive learning environment with gender equality at its core.



Six civil society organisations receive financial support to prevent and combat violence against women

Six civil society organisations (CSOs) working to address gender-based violence in Moldova have been awarded small grants to strengthen their internal capacities. This financial support was provided through the “EVOLVE4GE” project, funded by the European Union and implemented by UN Women Moldova.

The CSOs received their grants at an awards ceremony on 18 July 2024. Over the next six months, each organisation will undertake activities to improve their internal systems and

processes, develop technical and managerial skills, and promote gender equality and women's rights.



“This event exemplifies the strong partnership between UN Women Moldova, the EU and CSOs. Together, we can create an environment where every woman and girl feels safe and respected and their rights are protected and promoted,”

mentioned Svetlana Andrieș, UN Women Moldova’s Deputy Country Representative

Evghenia Hiora, Programme Officer at the EU Delegation to Moldova, explained that preventing and combating gender-based violence is a crucial priority of the EU's

Gender Action Plan, launched in 2020, and part of the EU acquis that Moldova must align with on its path to EU membership.

“In 2023, the EU provided approximately EUR 9 million for civil society funding in Moldova. We firmly believe that CSOs’ efforts will contribute to a stronger democracy and a more equitable and just society in Moldova,”

she said.



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The awards ceremony was held under the slogan “Partnership for Change.” With EU financial support, UN Women Moldova provided small grants ranging from MDL 88,000 to 177,000 to the following CSOs: Each Contributes for Change, Association of Intellectual Games from the Republic of Moldova, National Women's Institute of Moldova 'Equality,' Theatre Center of Moldova, Family Support Association for Early Recovery of Children with Hearing and Vision Deficiencies and “Biaz Gul”.

“These grants will help us to ensure sustainable activities, access resources and be more competitive. We plan to integrate the gender equality dimension into seven of our internal documents. Our association does not yet have a defined online presence, so we aim to develop an organisational website,”

said Svetlana Gheorghieva, President of the NGO “Biaz Gul”.

“During previous project, we often faced the issue of insufficient internal regulations and policies that did not meet European standards. We are grateful for this grant, which allows us to update our internal documents and provides us with the necessary resources to develop our technical capacities,”

said Elena Savin, President of the National Women's Institute of Moldova “Equality”.



European Union supports Moldova's first Integrated Service for Victims of Sexual Violence

Moldova's first Integrated Regional Service for Victims of Sexual Violence assisted 33 victims during the first eight months of its pilot period. The service, launched in Ungheni, provides victims of sexual violence with access to specialised medical care, forensic expertise, and psycho-social and legal assistance, all in one location, and covers six districts: Ungheni, Făleşti, Sîngerei, Călăraşi, Nisporeni, and Teleneşti. The service is funded by the European Union and implemented by UN Women through the "EVOLVE4GE" project.

The Integrated Regional Service for Victims of Sexual Violence is piloted by the International Center „La Strada”. In the piloting period, the service offered critical support to 50% of victims within the first four days of reporting abuse, including access to immediate medical and forensic examinations and emergency contraception. The victims also received psychological counselling and legal representation, both crucial for their short and long-term well-being. Around 90% of those assisted benefited from state-provided legal aid.



Data collected during the pilot period found that 90% of the perpetrators were known to the victims—they were often the victims' partners—highlighting the entrenched nature of domestic and sexual violence. This evidence underscores the importance of a localised, accessible service that provides swift and effective crisis and long-term intervention.

The activity of the Regional Integrated Service for Sexual Violence is being made possible through the EU's funding of UN Women's "EVOLVE4GE" project. By supporting integrated and specialised services, UN Women is ensuring survivors receive the necessary care while also laying the groundwork for systemic change in the fight against sexual violence.



Stronger Together

Youth engage in open dialogue on gender equality

In a dynamic discussion on September 3rd, youth and EU Delegation representatives came together to explore how European Union values of gender equality and non-discrimination can inspire change in Moldova. The event, part of the EU-funded project EVOLVE4GE, provided a direct platform for youth to connect with EU officials.

The dialogue highlighted the EU's commitment to advancing equality through various initiatives, such as the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and supporting organisations to combat discrimination.

"UN Women Moldova, with the support of the EU, can strengthen its efforts to prevent and combat gender-based violence by funding activities and projects focused on promoting equality, inclusion, and empowering women,"

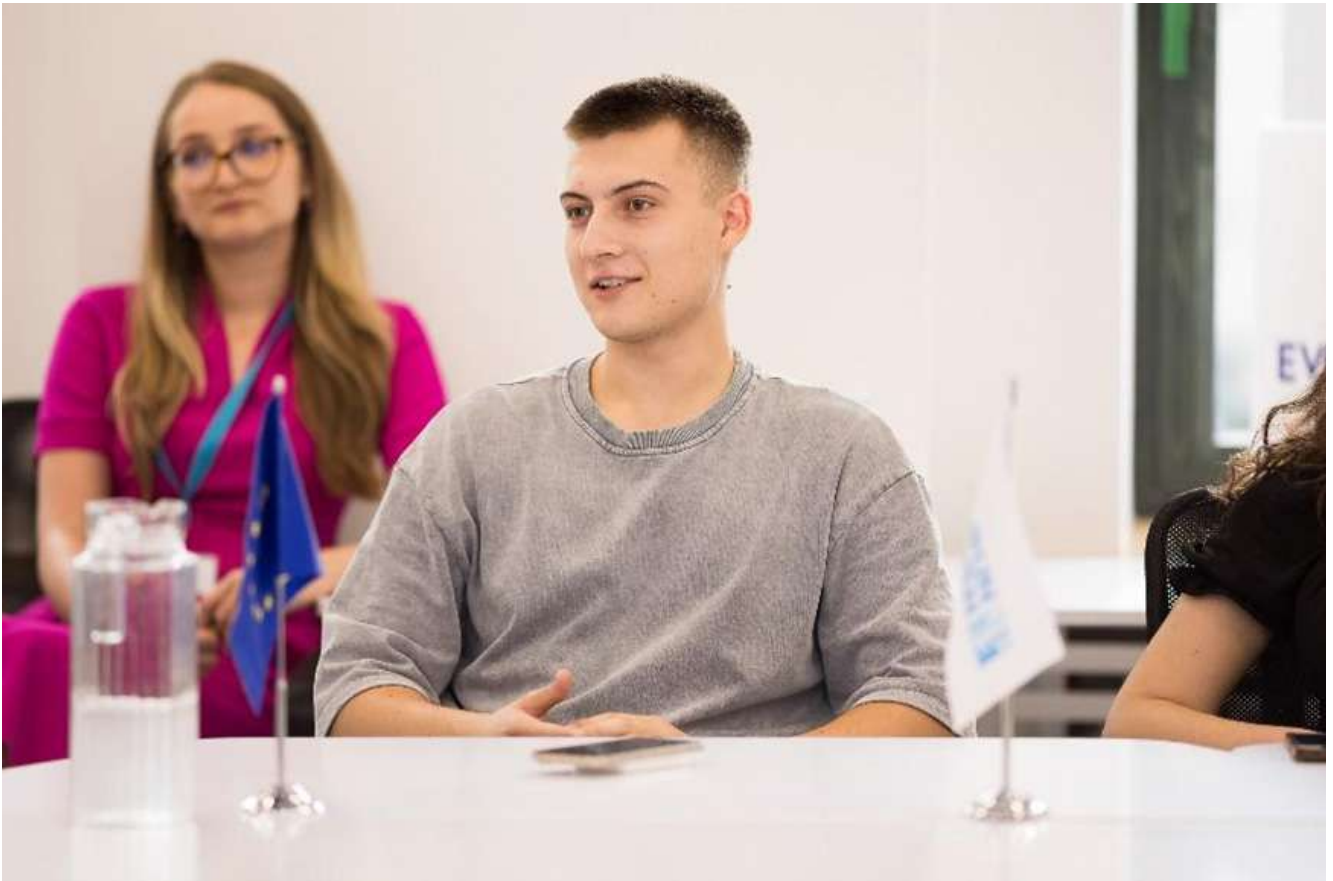
emphasized Svetlana Andrieș, UN Women's Deputy Country Representative.

Magdalena Mueller-Uri, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Moldova, spoke about the crucial milestones Moldova has achieved toward EU integration but noted that discrimination remains a persistent issue. To support Moldova's path to non-discrimination and democracy, she said the EU has provided €2.2 billion to various sectors.



Participants discussed the types of discrimination still prevalent in Moldova, with youth sharing personal experiences and actions they can take to promote gender equality. According to the Global Gender Gap report in 2023, Moldova ranked 13th, a notable improvement from its position of 28th in 2021. Women still earn 13.6% less than men, however, and cases of gender-based violence remain alarmingly high, suggesting that sustained efforts are required.

Evghenia Hiora, Program Officer at the EU Delegation in Moldova, said the EU Delegation works closely with organisations such as UN Women and other international and local organisations on targeted programmes to advance gender-responsive budgeting and women's leadership, among other issues. The Delegation also has around 120 projects integrating non-discrimination perspectives across different sectors.



Marcela Nistor, a member of Moldova's Parliament, passionately discussed the importance of women's political representation. Women represent around 36% of the members of Parliament, showcasing Moldova's commitment to enhancing women's participation in governance.

"We must inspire the younger generation to push beyond traditional barriers, to challenge outdated norms, and to excel in fields where they have historically been underrepresented,"

said Marcela Nistor, a member of Moldova's Parliament.

The session concluded with a Q&A, allowing the young attendees to voice their thoughts on discrimination and encourage the next generation to actively create a more inclusive society.

“The fact that young people from various organizations and institutions were present shows that the interest in these topics is real, and we have much to learn from European experiences,”

said Mihai Cataraga, 18, who devised the idea to organise the dialogue.



"Partnerships for Strong Communities" event held to enhance community engagement in promoting gender equality

UNFPA and UN Women, with funding from the European Union, hosted the networking event "Partnerships for Strong Communities" as part of the second phase of the programme "EU4Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence." The event united over 40 participants, including partner organisations, public authorities, beneficiaries, and media representatives, to enhance community engagement in promoting gender equality and challenging gender stereotypes.

"The European Union's support extends to initiatives like this, which focus on changing perceptions and behaviours at the community level. But this work cannot be done alone. It requires partnerships – between governments, civil society, youth, fathers, faith leaders, and the entire community. Through local engagement, we can ensure that change not only happens but lasts,"

emphasized H.E. Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, during the event's opening.



"By working together with various local stakeholders, we can promote lasting changes in harmful attitudes and perceptions, which unfortunately still disproportionately

affect women and their ability to exercise their political, economic, and social rights,"

highlighted Dominika Stojanoska, UN Women Moldova's Country Representative.

Karina Nersesyan, UNFPA Moldova's Country Representative, issued a powerful call to action, urging men to engage as equal partners in change:

"Men who embrace equality aren't just doing the right thing. They become beacons of hope, illuminating the path towards a world where the lives of women and girls are profoundly improved."

Participants engaged in interactive discussions on topics such as raising community awareness, working with youth and fathers, empowering women with disabilities, and collaborating with religious leaders to overcome gender stereotypes, promote positive social norms, and prevent or address gender-based violence.

Given setbacks in Moldova's "Perceptions and Stereotypes" indicator, as highlighted by the 2024 Gender Equality Index, such events are crucial for raising awareness and mobilising representatives from communities to combat gender stereotypes.

The "EU4GenderEquality" programme continues its efforts to promote equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Moldova. Led by UN Women and UNFPA, the initiative is leveraging the expertise of four organisations: Institutum Virtutes Civilis, Motivație, the Diaconia Social Mission of the Metropolis of Bessarabia, and the Child Rights Information Center. Now in its second phase, which will last until June 2026, the programme focuses on five regions: Orhei, Ialoveni, Ștefan Vodă, Căușeni, Fălești, and Chișinău municipality.



European Caravan: A free space for discussion and information on EU reforms

Building an informed society is not just a necessity but a shared responsibility. Only through education, transparency and active engagement can we face challenges and protect our fundamental democratic values.

To involve citizens in the decision-making processes and promote dialogue between communities and public authorities, People in Need Moldova, with the financial support of the European Union, is implementing several activities through the Moldova

ASSIST project. Through this project, we are strengthening CSO capacities at the regional level. These capacities support joint initiatives for conflict prevention and mediation; they also increase collaboration between local communities and civil society actors. For example, the AO Regional Center for Community Development (CRDC) is participating in the project through the launch of the European Caravan.



The Caravan is a proactive way of fostering dialogue and debate on European Union reforms in Moldova. Over two weeks, the CRDC team travelled to 5 locations in the south of the country: Hîrtop, Leova, Cantemir, Larga Nouă and Badicul Moldovenesc, where they met representatives of local public authorities, teachers, employees of cultural institutions, high school students, and community members.

The meetings aroused great interest, especially among young people, who demonstrated advanced skills and competencies in community development. More than 100 participants were informed about notable regional development projects funded by the European Union through myth-busting games about the EU integration process. They had the opportunity to discover the multiple advantages of Moldova's accession to the European Union in the context of the upcoming referendum on October 20, 2024.



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The European Caravan was an opportunity for people of different age groups living in the south of the country to express their opinions and reservations about the democratic processes in our country and an event of social cohesion and involvement of civil society actors in the process of the European integration process.

The European Caravan is part of the information campaign realised by AO CRDC within the "Moldova ASSIST: improving access to quality public services and social cohesion" project, funded by the European Union and implemented by People in Need Moldova.



INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENT

Chişinău hosted the 11th EU Security HUB meeting on combating foreign information manipulation and interference

The European Union Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management (EU Security HUB) convened in Chişinău on September 18-19, 2024. Co-organised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) and Directorate-General for Communication Networks, Content and Technology (DG

CNECT), and the EU Partnership Mission to Moldova (EUPM), this Hub edition focused on countering foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) and brought together officials and experts from the European Union and Moldova, civil society representatives, and investigative journalists specializing in FIMI.



EU-Moldova

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During the meeting, participants discussed comprehensive strategies to counter FIMI, exchanged insights, analysed best practices and addressed the challenges faced by EU Member States and Moldova in combating FIMI in an integrated way.

"One of the most serious threats facing Moldova today is foreign information manipulation and interference. FIMI not only endangers the integrity and sovereignty of our country, but also threatens the security of the entire region. Our response to it must be appropriate: swift, effective and coordinated",

said Adrian Efros, Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova.

The European Union has taken a leading role in combating FIMI, a phenomenon that undermines democratic values and processes both within Europe and beyond. FIMI can exacerbate polarization and division within the EU, posing significant security risks. Strong and efficient cooperation with external partners is crucial for the EU, its Member States, and partner and candidate countries, like Moldova, in addressing this threat.

"Foreign information manipulation and interference are used to undermine public confidence in the legitimacy and effectiveness of democratic institutions. Thus, FIMI can also escalate political violence in already conflict-prone regions, thereby undermining EU and international peacekeeping efforts around the world. On this occasion, I urge everyone to inform themselves from several sources, to develop their critical thinking. This means to think twice before sharing social media posts and to report false information and fake accounts",

said Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to Moldova.

The Head of the EU Partnership Mission to Moldova, Cosmin Dinescu, noted,

"One year after the first Hub meeting focused on hybrid threats, we have witnessed an intensification of such threats, particularly the FIMI phenomenon, in Moldova. EUPM Moldova, the only civilian mission under the EU Common Security and Defence Policy with a mandate to support efforts against FIMI, has, over the past year and a half, shared with Moldova the experience, practices and methodologies developed at EU level within a unified framework for addressing FIMI. This support will continue and intensify, in the spirit of the strong partnership we have with the Moldovan authorities. Our shared goal is to enhance the country's security and, by extension, the security of the EU, while safeguarding democratic values and processes. In the face of a complex challenge, we are responding with a comprehensive, coordinated, and joint approach".

The thematic panels of the meeting covered key topics such as effective cooperation with civil society, a crucial pillar in the fight against FIMI; the legal frameworks governing efforts against FIMI, and strategies for identifying and preventing FIMI. The participants also analysed the link between FIMI and other hybrid activities that fuel disinformation narratives, such as illicit financial flows, violent protests, using concrete examples from Moldova.

The event aimed to strengthen strategic cooperation between national institutions and European partners and reach agreement on required actions and operational outcomes, reaffirming the commitment to close collaboration for ensuring regional and European security.



Stronger Together



The EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management is an operational platform that facilitates cooperation on internal security and border management within the EU, between its agencies, Member States, and Moldovan authorities. Established in July 2022, the EU Security Hub focuses on six priority areas: arms and ammunition trafficking, migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, preventing and combating terrorism and violent extremism, cybercrime, and drug trafficking.

The Security Hub serves as a joint operational group, connecting specialists and providing a platform for strategic discussions. Over two years of activity, it has delivered tangible results that have strengthened cooperation between the relevant Moldovan institutions and European partners, as well as enhanced information sharing on the latest developments in cross-border crime and hybrid threats.

EUPM Moldova: Assisting in developing the capacity to resist foreign information manipulation and interference

On 18-19 September, EUPM Moldova co-organized the 11th edition of the EU Security Hub dedicated to FIMI. The objective of the 2-days strategic seminar was bringing together EU expertise and good practices and Moldovan experts in state institutions, media and civil society organisations with an aim to commonly finding ways to bolstering the capability of Moldova's institutions and of the society to combat foreign information manipulation and interference in a coordinated and holistic manner.



The main topics tackled were efficient cooperation with the civil society, which is a pillar of countering FIMI, the needed legal tools for regulating the counter-FIMI activities, prevention and identification of FIMI.

The connection between FIMI and other hybrid activities was analysed. The seminar was co-organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, the European Commission, and EUPM Moldova.



Securing the Foundations of Democracy - Strengthening crisis management capacities of Moldovan Law Enforcement Agencies

EUPM Moldova continued supporting a strengthened resilience of the Law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Moldova in face of crisis and foreign interference through a series of three trainings focused, among others, on countering the illicit money flows and financial investigations.



The programme was done in partnership with the European Gendarmerie Force – EUROGENDFOR, INTERPOL, the National Centre Bureau of INTERPOL, the Moldovan Ministry of the Interior and the European Union High-Level Advisers Mission. European expertise and good practices were brought

to Moldovan practitioners for exchange of experience, specialised advice towards capacity building and operational support. 13 Moldovan specialised institutions had experts trained during these three seminars and workshops.



Strengthening Moldova's National Firearms Focal Point: key workshop held in Chişinău

As part of the EU4Security Moldova project, a two-day workshop on "Strengthening the Capacity of the National Firearms Focal Point (NFFP) in Moldova" took place at the General Police Inspectorate in Chişinău. The event, organised by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training

(CEPOL), brought together law enforcement officers and experts from Moldova, Europol, Interpol, SEESAC, EMPACT, and National Firearms Focal Points from several EU Member States, including Romania, Spain, Sweden, Portugal, and Belgium.



The workshop, held on 15-16 July, 2024 aimed to build Moldova's capacity to combat firearms trafficking, enhancing the operational effectiveness of the NFFP, and aligning its operations with European Union standards.

Participants engaged in discussions on best practices from EU Member States, exploring various models of organization, equipment, and processes essential for the efficient operation of firearms focal points.



EU4Security Moldova and CEPOL provides specialised training for law enforcement working to combat drug trafficking

The EU4Security Moldova project recently conducted a five-day training event from September 9th to 13th, 2024, in Chişinău, Moldova. The program aimed to strengthen

Moldova's response to drug trafficking via postal and courier services, a growing method for smuggling illegal substances across borders.



The training brought together 25 law enforcement officers, including police and customs to enhance their ability to detect and combat drug trafficking operations through mail systems. Key topics addressed included identifying criminal patterns, improving risk analysis, and utilizing specialized investigative methods such as controlled deliveries. The course also covered financial investigations related to the use of cryptocurrencies, which are increasingly being exploited by traffickers.

One of the defining features of this training was the involvement of experienced trainers from across Europe.

Law enforcement experts from CEPOL, Belgium, Romania, and Portugal shared their countries' best practices and case studies. These sessions offered deep insights into the latest techniques in investigating drug-related crimes involving cryptocurrencies and other high-tech methods.

In addition, the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) expert guided participants through advanced risk assessment techniques, focusing on how to identify high-risk parcels and develop strategic prevention methods to intercept illicit drugs before they reach their destinations.



Trainers provided participants with hands-on experience, emphasizing practical exercises and case development. Their diverse expertise allowed participants to

gain a comprehensive understanding of both traditional and emerging threats in drug trafficking.



EU4Security Moldova and CEPOL host training on human trafficking and online victim identification

From 23 to 27 September 2024 law enforcement officers from Moldova concluded a five-day training session in Chişinău. The session aimed to enhance skills in identifying and investigating human trafficking (THB) cases, with a special focus on online victim identification. Organised by **EU4Security Moldova** and **CEPOL** this event addresses the urgent need to combat human trafficking in the digital age.

The training, which brought together 25 participants, focused on using **open-source intelligence (OSINT)** techniques to detect and investigate trafficking activities that exploit the internet. Recognizing the increasing use of online platforms by traffickers, the event emphasized practical digital investigation skills and international cooperation.



Participants engaged in case studies and exercises led by international experts from prestigious European institutions, including Frontex, Guardia Civil and Europol, which helped them develop advanced OSINT skills, social media monitoring techniques, and strategies to effectively identify trafficking victims online. The agenda included sessions on the role of **international cooperation** in

human trafficking investigations, providing participants with insight into cross-border collaboration for more effective case resolutions.

This training underscores the commitment of EU4Security Moldova to building the capacity of law enforcement institutions to combat crime.

More transparency in the fight against money laundering with the EU and Council of Europe support

The beneficial owners (BO) of entities will be able to be identified and verified more effectively, based on international standards, following an event organised by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Service for Prevention and Combating Money Laundering of the Republic of Moldova (SPCSB). Representatives of banks, non-

bank lending organizations, representatives of the Public Services Agency, the State Tax Service, as well as lawyers, notaries and bailiffs improved their skills in beneficial ownership identification and reporting through a series of group-targeted training events organised in Chişinău from 22-25 July 2024.



The subject of beneficial ownership transparency has gained prominence in recent years. Misuse of legal entities (companies, foundations, partnerships, trusts, etc.) facilitates tax evasion, corruption, and money laundering, therefore determining who the beneficial owners are is crucial to guaranteeing fiscal transparency, financial sector integrity, and law enforcement activities. A complicated beneficial ownership landscape mandates that professionals stay abreast of advancing regulatory norms and sophisticated ownership structures.

During this event, participants gained a thorough understanding of complex ownership structures, national and global regulatory standards, and techniques for identifying and verifying beneficial owners. Financial compliance officers, legal professionals and regulatory consultants participated, in person and online, in case studies analysing risk management strategies and improved reporting practices. As a result, they became better equipped to navigate and mitigate the risks associated with beneficial ownership.

These training events resulted in reporting entities being better equipped with the necessary skills to identify the beneficial owners of their customers and being able to properly assess the level of money laundering and terrorist financing risks associated with corporate customers and to apply a risk-based approach.

The trainings have better prepared institutions in Moldova to meet international compliance standards in the area of beneficial ownership transparency. This initiative underlines the country's commitment to strengthen

the integrity of its financial sector and its resilience to economic crime.

This event is part of the joint European Union and Council of Europe program "Partnership for Good Governance", co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe, in the framework of the project "Strengthening the regime for the prevention of money laundering and asset recovery in the Republic of Moldova".



The EU and Council of Europe supports the Superior Council of Magistracy in developing its institutional strategy

Establishing an internal strategic vision is a cornerstone for any public-sector institution and its management to plan further resources to implement its mandate. The Council of Europe supports the development of an institutional strategy for the Superior

Council of Magistracy (SCM) of the Republic of Moldova, aiming to advance and guide institutional reforms within the SCM and its specialised boards for the upcoming years, informed by the priorities of the justice sector reform and EU accession path.



This support is the result of a desk research and an extensive and far-reaching process of consultation with different stakeholders organised in the Republic of Moldova in February 2024 aimed at interviewing key justice sector actors, civil society

representatives and the donor community, to assess the state of play and SCM's needs on the main intervention areas of the strategy. The findings and recommendations deriving from these exercises were summarised in a document developed for the SCM.

The document provides an analysis of the main contextual issues for the SCM, insights with regard to the SCM's institutional needs and planned actions for the next years. It also contains suggestions for intervention areas and immediate short-term strategic objectives, recognising the importance of proceeding ambitiously but methodically, for long-term sustainability.

The document outlines actions with regard to the following main intervention areas, reflecting SCM's priorities, competences and resources but also the expectations that internal and external players have in regard to the SCM's activity:

- ✓ Strengthening judicial independence and integrity of judges
- ✓ Increasing the quality of justice
- ✓ Increasing the efficiency of justice
- ✓ Increasing the transparency and accountability of Justice and the SCM



Initial training of judges and prosecutors: the Council of Europe supports the National Institute of Justice in the implementation of EU TAIEX recommendations

The Council of Europe continues its efforts to support the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in the process of implementation of 2022 EU TAIEX recommendations. In this respect, the Council of Europe is providing

expert support to the NIJ for addressing the recommendations concerning the initial training of candidates for the position of judges and prosecutors.



On 9-11 July 2024, as part of this complex and ongoing process, Mr Francesco Perrone, international consultant of the Council of Europe, held consultation meetings in Chişinău with the staff and trainers of the NIJ, members of the Superior Council of Magistracy and the Superior Council of Prosecutors, as well as judges and prosecutors – graduates of the NIJ, and candidates for the position of judges and prosecutors currently undergoing training at the NIJ. Mr Perrone also attended selected sessions of initial training at the NIJ.

The consultations were organised in the view of facilitating the analysis of the concept, curriculum, and methodology of the initial training of candidates for the position of judges and prosecutors. As a result of a comprehensive analysis and considering the findings in 2022 EU TAIEX report, specific recommendations for the improvement of different aspects of the initial training will be provided to the NIJ.

The activity is carried out within the framework of the joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe "Support to the Justice Reform in the Republic of Moldova".



Stronger Together

National Bank of Moldova employees further consolidate their skills during seminar organised by the NBM and EU HLA Mission

The EU High Level Advisers' Mission, together with the National Bank of Moldova (NBM) organised on 12 August a seminar dedicated to the main technical aspects related to the management of interest rate risk associated with activities outside the trading portfolio that must be taken into account in the supervisory authority's evaluation process. The event brought together NBM employees and provided a valuable platform for dialogue and exchange of experience in the field.

At the opening of the event, the vice-governor of the National Bank of Moldova, Constantin Șchendra, emphasized *the importance of this risk, as well as the need to evaluate it exclusively, explicitly and comprehensively in the processes of risk management and evaluation of internal capital*. He highlighted the relevance of the seminar for knowledge

and best practices sharing and the NBM's commitment to integrate international standards to improve risk management.

Nicolae Grigore, EU High Level Adviser in the field of financial services, presented a series of essential aspects regarding the identification, management and quantification of the Interest Rate Risk (IRRBB), specifically: governance strategy, management framework and responsibilities, risk appetite, policies, processes and risk control measures. Additionally, during the seminar, principles governing the management and supervision of exposure to this risk, as established by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, as well as best European practices in the field, were presented.



Practices for supervising interest rate risk associated with non-trading portfolio activities were also presented during the seminar, focusing on the essential technical and procedural aspects in evaluating this risk by supervisory authorities.

This seminar represented yet another important step in strengthening knowledge and practices related to interest rate risk in the banking sector in Moldova. It provided an opportunity to explore principles and methods for managing this risk, thereby contributing to the development of better practices in the field.

Representatives of the National Bank and the insurance sector further consolidate their skills in a training session organised with EU support

The National Bank of Moldova (NBM) jointly with the EU High Level Advisers' Mission organised a training session for the insurance sector, dedicated to the evaluation of quantitative requirements according to European regulations. The event was focused on the implementation of the Solvency II rules, which set requirements applicable to insurance and reinsurance companies in the EU, with the aim of guaranteeing adequate protection of policyholders and beneficiaries.

At the opening of the event, the governor of the National Bank of Moldova, Anca Dragu, emphasized the importance of the full application of EU directives in the context of Moldova's European integration.

"For the insurance sector, this means not only aligning with European standards, but also strengthening financial resilience and stability in a solid business environment. This sector must be functional, and the participants in this market must be protected",

emphasized Anca Dragu.

The deputy governor of the National Bank of Moldova, Constantin Șchendra, added that it is essential to ensure that insurance companies are prepared to implement the quantitative requirements of the Solvency II Directive and to face the inevitable changes in the regulatory and economic framework, along with the advancement the European integration process.



At the same time, the EU High Level Adviser on financial services, Nicolae Grigore, highlighted the fact that the rigorous application of the Solvency II requirements will contribute to the protection of consumers and the financial stability of insurance companies, facilitating integration into the single European market and opening new opportunities for cooperation and development for the Republic of Moldova. The EU High Level Adviser emphasized the importance of the application of similar prudential principles by all insurance companies, to ensure adequate capitalization in relation to the risks to which they are exposed, even in the most difficult economic conditions.

Moreover, he emphasized the need to implement stricter corporate governance standards, as well as more complex transparency and reporting requirements, according to Solvency II requirements.

More than 50 representatives of the NBM and the insurance sector are participating in the training session. The participants will be trained for eight days, between August 28 and September 6, 2024, by two experts from Romania, who will provide the necessary support to the Moldovan insurance sector in assessing the degree of preparation for the implementation of Solvency II requirements.



European Union Border Assistance Mission boosts Moldovan Customs Service with technical assistance

EUBAM has provided technical assistance worth 123,000 euros to the Moldovan Customs Service to enhance its operational capabilities. The donation includes servers, smart batteries, and printers to improve the service's efficiency and reliability.

Head of EUBAM, Slawomir Pichor, met with Viorel Doaga, the Acting Head of the Moldovan Customs Service, to discuss the e-queue system and the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) in the Republic of Moldova, both designed to facilitate

trade and quicker processing of goods in transit at border crossing points. Slawomir Pichor also received an overview of the current state of implementing coordinated control at the Giurgiulesti-Galati border crossing point between the Republic of Moldova and Romania. Additionally, they discussed EUBAM's upcoming support for the Moldovan Customs Service, including capacity building, technical assistance, and operational activities.



Using the opportunity, the EUBAM Head presented the Moldovan Customs Service with a donation from a larger package aimed at supporting border and customs authorities in both the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The Moldovan Customs Service is now equipped with new servers and components to enhance the performance and data integrity of the NCTS system. Network equipment, such as switches and antennas, will enable customs officers to set up local networks for peripheral workstations. UPS and smart server batteries will ensure an uninterrupted power supply during power cuts. Additionally, 15 multifunctional

printers have been provided to ensure office operability, and 25 iPads enable Customs Posts to monitor real-time traffic on control lanes, streamlining traffic at the border and optimizing the actions of customs officers.

"EUBAM is proud to support our partners with the equipment essential for modern border management, promoting European Union standards and procedures for quicker crossings of people and goods. We are committed to contributing to a strong foundation for our partners on their European Union journey ahead,"

emphasized Slawomir Pichor, Head of EUBAM.

European Union Border Assistance Mission leads workshop on combating migrant smuggling at Palanca-Maiaky-Udobne joint border crossing point

On 14 August, a workshop on combating migrant smuggling was held at the Palanca-Maiaky-Udobne Joint Border Crossing Point, led by Milko Merdzhanov, Head of the EUBAM Office in Ukraine. The workshop brought together officials from six different services from Moldova and Ukraine, highlighting the importance of international cooperation in addressing this serious issue.

The event featured two experts from the General Directorate of Combating Organised Crime of the Republic of Bulgaria, who shared their extensive experience in combating migrant smuggling. Their presentation included an overview of investigative methods, intelligence-gathering techniques, and key considerations when investigating such crimes. They also presented two case studies showcasing successful investigations of migrant smuggling in Bulgaria.

In addition to the insights from Bulgarian experts, representatives from the General Inspectorate of Border Police and the Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova provided an overview of the current challenges in detecting and investigating migrant smuggling within their country. Similarly, officials from the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, and the National Police of Ukraine shared their experiences and challenges in combating this crime.

The workshop concluded with a discussion on the opportunities and challenges of international and interagency cooperation in combating migrant smuggling. Participants emphasized the need for continued collaboration and information sharing to effectively address this complex issue. This workshop reflects EUBAM's ongoing commitment to strengthening border security and fostering cooperation between Moldova and Ukraine to combat cross-border crimes, including migrant smuggling.



Stronger Together

30 body cameras donated to the State Labour Inspectorate with European Union and International Labour Organization support

A set of thirty body cameras and related equipment have been donated to the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI), under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI). This initiative was carried out under the “EU support to inclusive labour markets in the Republic of Moldova” project funded by the European Union and implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

This initiative aims to strengthen SLI's operational capacities by providing them with an additional tool to improve the execution of unannounced inspections. This supports the legal provision that came into force on March 1, 2023, which grants SLI specialists the right to conduct unannounced visits on the activities of economic agents. It will also increase the risk analysis and promote internal policies of integrity and zero tolerance toward abuse and corruption.



The use of body cameras during labour inspections is expected to increase public trust in state institutions and strengthen the credibility of the SLI. At the same time, the implementation of these technologies will

improve accountability, transparency, and evidence collection, while also protecting inspectors from accusations of abuse or corruption.

The total budget allocated for purchasing the cameras is EUR 45 000. The body cameras will be distributed across ten strategic locations - the Central administrative office of the State Labour Inspectorate and territorial labour inspectorates in Chişinău, Bălţi, Cahul, Cimişlia, Drochia, Edineţ, Orhei, UTA Gagauzia, Călăraşi, and

Căuşeni. The equipment package includes licenses, magnetic mounting kits, chargers, controllers, one central workstation and specialized software. Inspectors from the whole country will benefit of training sessions on proper usage of the equipment and will receive all technical support for one year.



The total budget of the “EU support to inclusive labour markets in the Republic of Moldova” project is EUR 2 million.

New EU equipment donated to the General Inspectorate of Police strengthens rights and security of Moldovans and Refugees in local communities

On 11 July, 2024 the European Union handed over 40 patrol vehicles and 100 body cameras to the General Inspectorate of Police (GIP) within an EU funded project implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the Republic of Moldova. The donation, worth EUR 710 000, aims to strengthen the capabilities of the Police to respond promptly to emergency situations

and protect the rights of people living in local communities. The body cameras will enhance police accountability as well as protect the rights of Moldovan citizens, as well as Ukrainian refugees and third-country nationals. It aims to promote transparency of interactions. The patrol vehicles will be deployed across the country to strengthen the GIP's capabilities to respond in a timely manner to any emergency situations.



The handover ceremony took place at the GIP's headquarters in Chişinău in the presence of the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér

VÁRHELYI, the Minister of Internal Affairs in the Republic of Moldova, Adrian EFROS, and the IOM Moldova's Head of Programmes, Damien Fresnel.

"This generous EU in-kind assistance worth EUR 710,000 (approx. 14,63 million lei) aims to respond to the urgent needs expressed by the national authorities in the context of the emergency situation (refugees crisis, securing borders, Solidarity Lanes and energy crisis); It will further strengthen national capacities in line with EU acquis as well as to foster confidence with citizens through the promotion of Community Police,"

stated the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér VÁRHELYI.

The donation was made within the EU funded project "Supporting Protection, Transit, Voluntary and Informed Return and Reintegration of Eastern Partnership Citizens and Third Country Nationals affected by the conflict in Ukraine" as part of the EU and IOM joint work to support the Ministry of Internal Affairs and its specialized agencies in ensuring pathways for regular migration and border security, and in protecting the rights of refugees during the prolonged stay in Moldova due to full-scale war in Ukraine.



Strengthening public order and security for the citizens of Moldova supported by the European Union and Team Europe

The new EU-funded project EU4Public Order has started its activities for a three-year implementation period and with a budget of 2 million EUR. The project is being implemented under coordination of the resident expert (Italian Carabinieri - Arma dei Carabinieri) Lt. Colonel. Fabio Ficuciello, deployed in Chişinău since 1st of September.

EU4Public Order is designed to strengthen the capacity of the public order forces within the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) of the Republic of Moldova, enabling the institutions to provide services at the

highest level, in line with European Union practices. The project supports the MIA law enforcement force giving special attention to the General Inspectorate of Carabinieri in its tasks related to public security and order. It covers both the prevention and the fight against crime, while advancing human rights.

The components of the EU4Public Order project aim to support the implementation of the “National Strategy for Public Order and Security”. Its activities will include training and consultancy, as well as upgrading digital equipment.



The project aims to increase the professionalism and performance of public order institutions in the Republic of Moldova in compliance with the best EU standards, with a focus on public order and security. The project will also contribute to the further promotion of human rights, privacy and data protection, gender equality in the provision of security services for the benefit of citizens.

The signing ceremony of the new EU-funded project EU4Public Order took place in June 2024. The project has just started on 1st of September 2024, with the deployment of the Italian expert, Lieutenant Colonel Fabio Ficuciello.

Supporting the Ministry of Justice and Justice Sector Reforms in the Republic of Moldova – Project launch

On 16 July, the OECD officially launched a new EU-funded project to assist the Moldovan Government in advancing in the implementation of justice sector reforms, drawing on best practices from EU and OECD member countries. The project will run until end-2026 and aims to strengthen Moldova's justice sector through analytical support, policy recommendations, and capacity building activities.

Minister of Justice Veronica Mihailov-Moraru provided opening remarks, followed by a project presentation and panel discussions with key stakeholders from Moldova's justice system and peers from EU and OECD

countries.

From 9 to 13 September, the OECD team went on a fact-finding mission to engage with justice sector stakeholders, including institutional actors, legal professionals, and NGOs. The mission focused on gaining insights on Moldova's approaches to enhance people-centred access to justice, exploring critical issues such as barriers to justice, legal empowerment, and the effectiveness of justice service delivery. The team travelled to both Chişinău and Comrat, to gain a better understanding of justice service delivery in different parts of the country.



The following week, the team organised two capacity building workshops. The first one, held on 18 September, focused on "Navigating Justice Reform: Advancing People-Centred Justice Approaches" while the second, which took place on 19 September, looked at "Supporting the Establishment of an Evaluation Framework of the Justice Sector Strategy".

The first workshop introduced key [OECD tools](#) – including the [OECD Framework on People-centred Justice](#), the [2023 OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice](#), and the [2023 Child-Friendly Justice Framework](#) – which will help guide the establishment of a people-centred culture in Moldova's justice system.

One session specifically focused on legal needs surveys, building on [OECD-OSF Guide: Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice](#) and countries' experience.

The second workshop provided an opportunity to deepen participants' understanding of evaluation frameworks and methodologies applicable to public programmes and policies, specifically within the context of Moldova's justice sector reforms.

Both workshops served as interactive platforms where key representatives from Moldovan justice sector institutions, international experts, and peers from EU and OECD countries shared experiences and discussed challenges.

Through a series of interactive sessions, discussions, and practical exercises, participants gained insights into effective strategies for enhancing justice services that effectively respond to the needs of the Moldovan population.

These are the first of a series of workshops that will be held throughout the OECD project to enhance the capacity of Moldovan institutions. In parallel, the team will prepare an OECD Justice Sector Review including also a Functional Review of the Ministry of Justice with the overarching goal of fostering a more transparent, accountable, and people-centred justice system.



RESTART results: investing in the expansion of mobile teams in northern Moldova with EU financial support

On Monday, 12 August, there was an official car donation event for the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. They will be distributed to the Territorial Agency for Social Assistance (ATAS) North as part of the project "Moldova Assist: Improving Access to Quality Public Services and Social Cohesion", funded by the European Union and implemented by People in Need Moldova.

The three donated cars, valued at 1.15 million lei, will expand the Territorial Structures of Social Assistance mobile teams subordinated to ATAS North. With the help of these vehicles, social assistance workers will provide their services to more citizens in the territory, especially in distant places and hard-to-reach localities and communities.



"At the beginning of 2024, the Mobile Team service existed in only 15 out of 33 districts. We want to bring this service to every district and provide the necessary assistance to all citizens anywhere in the country."

"This generous donation will help to achieve this goal, to provide more social protection for the people of Briceni, Ocnița, and Rîșcani,"

says Alexei Buzu, Minister of Labour and Social Protection.

The Mobile Team is a specialised social service for people with disabilities. It provides social assistance and support at their homes based on their needs and advice and support to the people involved in their inclusion process. Mobile teams provide at-home social, psychological, and medical rehabilitation assistance to facilitate independence and social integration. The teams include psychologists, social workers, physiotherapists, and speech therapists.

Expanding the social service "Mobile Team" will enhance the well-being of individuals facing significant challenges through recovery services, psychosocial rehabilitation, family involvement in care, and prevention of institutionalisation.

The "Restart" reform aims to improve governance and transparency in the social assistance system and to ensure uniform and equitable access to quality social services.

"Today's event shows our shared commitment to improving lives through social services, which are the foundation on which we build a stronger and more resilient society. Our support for these mobile units and the donation is driven by the believe that everyone regardless of where they live should have the access to services that improve the quality of their life",

stated Marcia Kammitsi, Programme Manager, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.

PPF Project duration extended for one additional year

On 1 July 2024 the EU Delegation signed the second contract addendum extending the EU-funded “Support the Moldovan Government in identifying and preparing projects linked to the implementation of the Association Agreement” (PPF) project duration for one additional year (end 30 June 2026) and adding three new components as follows:

Component 6: Supporting the Ministry of Finance in the Implementation of the Public Sector Accounting Reform

This new Component is about updating and working towards the introduction of the National Public Sector Accounting Standards (NPSAS).



In 2016, Moldova had initiated public sector accounting reform aligned to the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) adapted for Moldova as the basis for NPSAS. The MoF with the help of EU technical assistance at that time had developed 22 NPSAS by the end of 2018, the introduction of which was planned from January 2020 after the adoption

of relevant legislative and regulatory changes and the development of an integrated accounting system. The PPF Project will assist MoF to update the existing NPSAS to reflect the changes in IPSAS and develop new NPSAS as required.

Component 7: Supporting Moldova in Developing Processes linked to the Coordination of Economic Policies with the EU

Under this new Component, the PPF Project will assist the MoF in the establishment of the Economic Reform Programme (ERP) preparation process in Moldova.

All EU candidate countries submit annually an ERP document to the European Commission. The ERP document contains medium-term macroeconomic projections (for a number of economic indicators including growth, inflation, the external balance and capital flows), budgetary plans for the next three years, as well as a structural reform agenda.

The structural reform agenda includes

reforms to strengthen competitiveness and improve conditions for inclusive growth and employment creation in a number of areas. The ERP document plays a key role in the bilateral dialogue of the EU candidate country with the EC on economic and financial matters.

Component 8: Support to the communication of PFM reform and the PFM strategy

This new Component is about developing capacity within the MoF for communicating the PFM Strategy and ongoing reforms, including the European integration process that falls under the responsibility of the MoF.

PFM is a critical element in Moldova's

process towards EU membership and the Ministry of Finance will require support in communicating on planned PFM reforms as required by the EU integration process.

The consortium partner companies of the PPF Project are 4Assist Development Consultants LTD and DT Global.



Moldovan pilot ministries strengthen their gender responsive budgeting capacities

A series of training workshops on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) was launched as part of ongoing efforts to integrate gender perspectives into Moldova's annual budget planning. Supported by the European Union and implemented by UN Women Moldova through the "EVOLVE4GE" project, this initiative aims to strengthen capacities of line ministries on the application of GRB as an approach that ensures public resources are allocated to address the

needs and priorities of both women and men, girls and boys, including the most excluded groups in the society.

Gender-responsive budgeting is an approach that ensures government resources are distributed equitably and transparently. It requires policymakers to consider gender disparities when planning budgets, ensuring that public funds contribute to reducing inequalities by responding to the different needs of women and men.



The training workshops were divided into two phases. Informative in nature, the first segment explained the importance of GRB in shaping public policies and budgets to representatives from four ministries: Agriculture and Food Industry, Labour and Social Protection, Infrastructure and

Regional Development, and Finance, along with the Court of Accounts and the State Chancellery. Experts shared best practices and lessons learned from countries with similar socio-economic contexts that have successfully implemented GRB reforms at various levels of government.

The second phase was more hands-



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on, focused exclusively on the two pilot ministries: the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. These workshops delved into the practical application of GRB, including tools for data disaggregation and aligning sector policies with gender equality objectives. Legal obligations for implementing GRB in Moldova were also discussed, alongside strategies for enhancing the efficiency of gender-sensitive budgeting.

In line with the gender provisions stipulated in the Annual Budget Circular for 2025, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry were tasked with integrating gender perspectives into at least one sub-programme by setting gender-responsive

objectives and indicators to address gender gaps in their respective sectors. This step is part of more extensive efforts to gradually mainstream gender across the country's budget system, making GRB a central element in planning, not just a separate activity.

Future mentoring sessions will be held to ensure continued capacity development of line ministries on GRB, along with support to the Ministry of Finance to mainstream gender perspective in the Medium-Term Budget Planning. UN Women, with the EU's financial support, strives to make GRB a sustainable and integral part of Moldova's public finance management system.



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ECONOMY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

EUBAM-led Regional Customs Group outlines Moldova's ambitious transport infrastructure development vision and cross-border projects to boost trade

On 12 September, the Moldova-Romania-Ukraine Regional Customs Coordination Group convened in Chişinău, Moldova, under the leadership of EUBAM Head Slawomir Pichor. The meeting included key officials such as the newly appointed Director of the Moldovan Customs Service, Alexandru Iacub, Vice-President of the Romanian Customs Authority, Alexandru Dudu, and State Secretary Mircea Păscăluţă, who presented Moldova's bold plan to become a regional hub for international transport.

State Secretary Păscăluţă outlined Moldova's strategic vision for transport infrastructure development, including the Lower Danube region. The long-term goal is to transform Moldova into a key player in international goods transport, with multimodal terminals planned for Ungeni, Chişinău, and Giurgiulesti port.

Among the upcoming initiatives are constructing a bypass road around Giurgiulesti village and expanding the access road between the Reni-Giurgiulesti and Giurgiulesti-Galati border crossing points to four lanes. This project, valued at over €15,000 and co-funded by the EU at 50%, is expected to significantly reduce congestion in the critical tri-border region of Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania.

Additionally, Andrii Donchenko, Head of the Service for Restoration in Odesa Oblast, provided an update on Ukraine's plans to renovate border crossing points in the Odesa region, complementing Moldova's efforts to streamline transport across borders.



Lidia Ababii, Deputy Director of the Moldovan Customs Service, offered insights into the progress of the implementation of the New Computerized Transit System (NCTS). This will connect Moldova’s national electronic system with the trans-European information network and streamline transit procedures for Ukrainian goods passing through Moldova and into Romania. The electronic exchange of data between Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine has the potential to greatly improve transit efficiency in the Lower Danube region.

Further updates were provided on coordinated control efforts at the

Giurgiulesti-Galati border crossing point, where both physical infrastructure and formal negotiations between Moldova and Romania are advancing.

“All of the developments highlighted are indispensable for building robust cross-border connections in the Lower Danube region to support Ukrainian trade. In the longer term, these initiatives will not only benefit business and trade in Ukraine and Moldova but also contribute to deeper integration to the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T),” emphasized EUBAM Head Slawomir Pichor.

European Union supports the entrepreneurial sector in the Republic of Moldova

On August 28, 35 companies from various regions of the Republic of Moldova received business development grants from the European Union. The total funding amounts to 14.2 million lei, allocated through programs managed by the Organization for Entrepreneurship Development (ODA).

The beneficiary companies operate across sectors such as agriculture, beekeeping, dairy processing, furniture manufacturing, and medical services. The grant ceremony was organised by ODA in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization.

The European Union Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova, Jānis Mažeiks, emphasized the importance of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the development of local communities:

"Supporting the development of SMEs is a priority of the European Union's assistance to the Republic of Moldova. A successful entrepreneur has a strong impact on the communities in which they operate and on the quality of life of the people in these communities."



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development and Digitalization, Dumitru Alaiba, added:

"Every leu invested in starting and growing a business is a direct investment in the future of this country. A business that grows here, at home, becomes a pillar of local development, creating jobs and contributing to the well-being of the community."

"By supporting entrepreneurs, we are investing in our European future."

It is worth noting that, in the spring of last year, the European Union allocated 8 million euros to finance seven support programs managed by ODA, contributing to the development of the entrepreneurial environment in the Republic of Moldova.



EU-Moldova

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European Union support for sustainable development: Vasile Tataru, the entrepreneur from Pitușca, modernises his winery with the support of an EU grant

Vasile Tataru, an entrepreneur from the village of Pitușca, Călărași district, is among the beneficiaries of the non-reimbursable financial support offered by the European Union for business development. Three years ago, he transformed his household into an authentic winery that attracts tourists eager to discover Moldova's winemaking traditions. His winery stands out with a cellar arranged in a traditional Moldovan style and a wine tasting room, offering visitors an authentic experience.

Recently, in August, Vasile Tataru obtained a European grant of 220,000 lei through the "SME Greening Program," managed by the Organization for Entrepreneurship Development (ODA). With this money, he plans to equip the winery with a modern wastewater treatment and waste management station. The total cost of

the project is 300,000 lei, of which nearly 80,000 lei represents the entrepreneur's personal contribution.

This financial support will enable Vasile Tataru to expand his business, with plans to build a new wine production facility and to export to the European market.

The European Union continues to be a reliable partner in supporting the development of the SME sector in the Republic of Moldova. Since last spring, the EU has supported 122 investment projects through seven programs managed by ODA. The total value of the grants supported amounts to nearly 64 million lei, contributing to investments of over 153 million lei in the national economy.



LEADER Programme campaign to promote the results achieved in 2022 and 2023 launched

The LEADER approach has been introduced in the Republic of Moldova, with the support of international partners, in 2016, aiming to develop rural communities.

Throughout the years, the impact of the locally implemented projects has shown the effectiveness of the LEADER approach, transforming it into the national LEADER Programme in 2022, funded from the National Fund of Agriculture and Rural Development, through the [Agency of Interventions and Payments in Agriculture](#) (AIPA). Thereby, Moldova became the first non-EU country, which managed to transform the LEADER approach into an instrument of public policies for rural development.

The projects implemented within the LEADER Programme are aimed at improving local communities according to Local Action Groups' (LAG) Development Strategies. LAGs are entities formed within the European LEADER rural development methodology. In the Republic of Moldova, there are 51 active Local Action Groups with legal status, covering 497 Administrative-Territorial Units (UAT) and 783 villages, with a total population of approximately 1.14 million people, comprising over approx. 56% of the country's territory.



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The national LEADER Programme, in the years of 2022-2023, supported 37 LAGs with funding of approximately 173.6 million MDL. A total of 893 investment projects with a subsidy value of 138.4 million MDL were implemented, divided into public (387 projects), civic (141 projects), and entrepreneurial (365 projects) sectors.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI) and AIPA have launched the campaign to promote the results of the first edition of the national LEADER Programme with a [Press Briefing](#) on 20 September 2024. The campaign will take place until late

November and will touch upon the results of this rural development tool through a *series of video materials-success stories, a photo exhibition at MAFI and National Museum of History of the Republic of Moldova, infographics, participation in TV and Radio shows.*

The campaign to promote the results of the first edition of the LEADER Programme is supported by the “EU4Moldova: Local Communities” programme, financed by the EU, the German, Austrian and Polish governments and implemented by the GIZ, ADA and SFPL in Moldova.



Moldova Business Week 2024: Edineț Forum unites local and international entrepreneurs

As part of *Moldova Business Week 2024*, the Edineț Industrial Park hosted a significant regional session that gathered over 60 local and international entrepreneurs, officials, and development partners.

The event offered a key platform for discussing Moldova's business environment, promoting exports, and forging new partnerships, particularly as the country advances in its EU accession negotiations.

The forum was well-represented in the media, with prominent outlets such as NordInfo.md, NordNews.md, TV Nord, and Radio Moldova extensively covering the event. TV Nord played a pivotal role in extending the forum's reach by sharing video footage with national broadcasters Pro TV Chișinău and TV8, resulting in broader national exposure. This widespread media attention underscored the event's importance to Moldova's evolving business landscape.



Key discussions at the event focused on attracting foreign investment and developing Moldova's industrial and agri-food sectors. Participants explored opportunities to strengthen collaboration between local and international businesses. Speakers, including Moldovan government officials, and representatives from the European Union, emphasized the crucial role of external partnerships in driving regional development. The event also highlighted how sectors like agriculture, electronics, and digitization could serve as engines for growth and innovation in Moldova.

The forum not only served as a catalyst for high-level discussions but also provided participants with a unique opportunity to

network and explore business opportunities in Moldova. The event also featured field visits to two local companies in northern Moldova, offering further insights into the agri-food sector's export potential.

Moldova Business Week 2024 continues to be the country's premier business and investment forum, with events held across four regions—Chișinău, Bălți, Edineț, and Ungheni. This year's edition, under the slogan "Moldova – Your Next Investment Destination," attracted over 1,000 participants from diverse industries, reaffirming the country's growing appeal as a hub for investment and sustainable partnerships.



Stronger Together



Replication of EU models: Innovations towards Green Energy and the Circular Economy

On September 9-10, 2024, the city of Eindhoven, Netherlands, hosted a delegation of signatories of the Covenant of Mayors – representatives from the municipalities of Bălți, Cantemir, and Ceadâr-Lunga. The visit, organised by the CoM-East III project funded by the European Union, focused on environmental protection and urban adaptation to climate change. The Moldovan delegation not only witnessed the innovations implemented by the Dutch city but also understood why Eindhoven is globally recognized as a hub for sustainability and cutting-edge technology in the fields of energy and environmental protection.

The first day included an official meeting at the Eindhoven City Hall, a symbolic building recently renovated to meet the highest energy efficiency standards. The City Hall saves annually the amount of energy consumed by 200 households and reuses rainwater, an

essential innovation in modern cities aiming to reduce waste of natural resources. Such projects place Eindhoven at the forefront of “smart city” initiatives, where technology and sustainability go hand in hand.

Eindhoven is internationally known for its innovative approaches to the transition to green energy and the circular economy. The city has become a center of excellence for developing green solutions, such as solar energy regeneration and large-scale implementation of smart recycling systems. During the visit, the delegation explored the BioArt laboratories, a space that symbolizes how the city integrates research and innovation to address environmental issues. In these laboratories, participants discovered how biomaterials and eco-friendly technologies offer new ways to reduce the ecological footprint of cities.



Eindhoven inspired representatives from Bălți, Cantemir, and Ceadîr-Lunga, proving that innovation can change the face of cities

and create a greener, more sustainable future.

Covenant of Mayors in Comrat: Mayors from UTA Găgăuzia align with the European Initiative

In August, mayors from UTA Găgăuzia gathered in Comrat to discuss the benefits of joining the European initiative, the Covenant of Mayors. The event featured Serghei Anastasov, the mayor of Comrat, Grigore Stratulat, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Environment, Alexandru Morcov, Chief of Staff of the Minister of Energy, Adam Grodzicki, Deputy Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation in the Republic of Moldova, and Irina Plis, national expert for the Covenant of Mayors.

The Covenant of Mayors, active at the national level for over a decade, supports local authorities in developing sustainable and resilient communities, facilitating the implementation of European projects for energy transition and adaptation to climate change. With the help of the European Union, communities in the Republic of Moldova are achieving various measures to meet ambitious CO2 emission reduction targets included in their Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans.



Until recently, the Găgăuzia region had only two active signatories – Ceadîr-Lunga and Tomai. However, the capital of the region, Comrat, recently became the 100th signatory of the Covenant following a decision by the Municipal Council. During the event,

participants also discussed the results achieved by other signatory municipalities, such as Cantemir, Feștelîța, Călărași, and Ocnița, providing a positive example for future signatories of the Covenant of Mayors.



Press tour in Ceadîr-Lunga: Results of European Investments

The municipality of Ceadîr-Lunga is a success story in the Găgăuzia region, having joined the European goals for sustainable energy and climate in 2017 by signing the Covenant of Mayors. The city has made significant progress in transitioning to green energy. LED street lighting, solar lanterns on pathways, solar panels on the roofs of schools and kindergartens, and a recently completed photovoltaic park through the "European Village" program are just a few of the achievements that enhance the quality of life for residents.

The results of these initiatives were presented during a press tour organised by the CoM-East team, which supports the signatories of the Covenant of Mayors. Irina Plis, national expert of the Covenant, emphasized that Ceadîr-Lunga is one of the most active cities in Găgăuzia in promoting green energy.

"Ceadîr-Lunga is an exemplary city within the Covenant of Mayors. Over 80 cities and villages in the country participate in this initiative, and Ceadîr-Lunga is among the most active in implementing the local action plan for energy and climate,"

said Plis.

Christophe Frering, the regional project leader, highlighted the importance of communicating with citizens regarding European investments.

"People need to be informed about these investments and how they can get involved. Only by collaborating with citizens can we leverage these investments for the benefit of all,"

stated Frering.



The event was attended by Mayor Anatolie Topal, Deputy Mayors Valentin Kara and Mihail Stamov, representatives of the CoM-East project, GIZ Moldova, AEER, and the Ministry of Energy. The press visit was organised under the CoM-East III Project, supported by the European Union.

#EUSEW2024 results: 8,500 citizens were involved in activities dedicated to energy and climate

The award ceremony for the European Sustainable Energy Week 2024 (#EUSEW2024) took place in Chişinău at Europe Café, gathering the most active signatory municipalities of the Covenant of Mayors for Energy and Climate.

During the ceremony, 18 mayors from the municipalities of Bălţi, Ialoveni, Truşeni, Dişcova, Puţinţei, Giurgiuleşti, Ceadâr-Lunga, Străşeni, Budeşti, Cantemir, Costuleni, Vişniovca, Volintiri, Talmază, Sireţi, Vorniceni, Hîrbovăţ, and Anenii Noi received diplomas for their involvement in promoting sustainable energy, and three of them were also awarded monetary certificates of 500, 400, and 300 euros, provided with the support of the CoM-East III project funded by EU funds.

The Minister of Energy, Victor Parlicov, who attended the event, emphasized the crucial importance of the green transition across all sectors of the economy. He highlighted that sustainable energy and energy efficiency are essential not only for the environment but also for the economic well-being of citizens.

“The green transition impacts practically every area of people’s lives. Without efficient buildings and modern lighting, we waste significant resources. The green agenda is a very practical aspect that brings changes at both local and national levels,”

stated the minister.



On a similar note, Adam Grodzicki, Deputy Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation in the Republic of Moldova, pointed out that the energy transition is a global effort that requires the involvement of all local authorities.

“The European Union is proud of its cooperation with cities in the Republic of Moldova and the Eastern Partnership region through the Covenant of Mayors. Local authorities are at the forefront of this transition and play a fundamental role in combating climate change,”

Grodzicki emphasized.

A notable success story was the Sireți City Hall in the Strășeni district – Mayor Leonid Boaghi received First Place and an Excellence Diploma for efforts to implement sustainable solutions. Boaghi stated that this award represents recognition of the collective work of the community and an encouragement to continue projects for sustainable energy.

Throughout the European Sustainable Energy Week, over 8,500 citizens from the participating municipalities were engaged in educational activities, workshops, and sports events, all aimed at promoting energy efficiency, resource conservation, and environmental protection. Initiatives included drawing exhibitions, performances, bike marathons, and tree planting, all under the sign of a greener and more ecologically responsible future.



Civil society organisations and local public authorities: Partners for energy efficient communities in the Republic of Moldova

At the project concept stage of the "Local Partnerships for energy efficiency in social services" project Grant program, 111 applications were received showing the commitment and desire of civil society organizations to make their contribution to sustainable transformation of communities in the Republic of Moldova.

The selection process resulted in 66 short-listed project concepts.

A number of intermediate selection stages are currently underway, first being the preliminary technical assessment of social services buildings. This stage looks to analyse these buildings' technical capacity.

The following intermediate steps are carried out as well, including social audit of social services and energy audit of the buildings to identify innovative solutions that will allow reducing energy consumption of the

buildings and develop recommendations on the improvement of the quality of the social services. This will provide a clear perspective on each institution's capacity and needs that will inform the implementation of projects that generate real benefits for the communities. As a result of these intermediate selection stages, 50 of 66 short-listed organizations, whose concepts were selected at the first stage, will be invited to submit the full project proposal.

Next, Soros Foundation Moldova will award at least 35 grants from the funds of the European Union, amounting to approximately EUR 87,000 each. These funds are intended to support initiatives aimed at major improvement of energy efficiency in social services. These projects are meant to optimize the use of energy resources, reduce expenses and promote sustainable practices.



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The "Local Partnerships for energy efficiency in social services" project is funded by the European Union, co-financed and implemented by the Soros Foundation

Moldova in partnership with Keystone Moldova and the Social Innovation Fund of Moldova, starting from February 1, 2024, with a duration of 36 months.



Stronger Together

Driving Sustainability: Moldova Electromarathon Showcases EU Support for Green Energy

In a remarkable demonstration of Moldova's growing commitment to sustainability, over 20 electric cars from Moldova and Romania participated in the Moldova Electromarathon: Fast and Green 1000, completing an ambitious 1,000 km journey within 24 hours. The marathon not only tested the endurance of electric vehicles but also highlighted the progress Moldova has made in transitioning to green energy, with the European Union playing an essential role in supporting this progress.

The participants, everyday electric vehicle owners, embarked on a route that showcased the country's advancements in renewable energy infrastructure. Along the way, they passed several key sites of renewable energy development, including wind turbines and photovoltaic parks—each a proof to Moldova's embrace of sustainable energy. These sites, many of which have benefited directly from EU investments, gave participants a firsthand look at how EU-backed projects are driving Moldova's energy transition.



A key focus of the event was educating participants on the EU's extensive contributions to Moldova's sustainable development. Each participant received detailed materials outlining the EU's ongoing efforts in supporting green energy projects across the country. These materials included a curated list of EU-funded projects, highlighting renewable energy facilities that are instrumental in reducing Moldova's carbon footprint. The route itself was designed to emphasize the tangible impact of these projects, providing an opportunity for participants to witness the scale and success of Moldova's renewable energy sector.

The marathon served as more than just a demonstration of electric vehicle capabilities—it was a powerful communication platform, placing the European Union's role in promoting energy sustainability and innovation in the spotlight. By featuring EU support in the event's communication materials, the Electromarathon highlighted how Moldova's collaboration with the EU is transforming the country's energy landscape. This partnership is not only helping Moldova reduce its dependence on fossil fuels but also positioning the country as a leader in the region's renewable energy movement.



The Moldova Electromarathon: Fast and Green 1000 stands as a symbolic event, reflecting the growing collaboration between Moldova and the EU in energy and environmental protection. As Moldova continues on its path towards a greener future, the marathon exemplified the real-world impact of these partnerships and the importance of continued innovation in the field of sustainable energy.

The success of this marathon, both in terms of participation and visibility, highlights how electric mobility and renewable energy are rapidly gaining traction in Moldova. It also signals the strong potential for future EU-Moldova collaborations that can further accelerate the country's transition towards a more sustainable, eco-friendly economy. Through events like this, Moldova is demonstrating that a cleaner, greener future is within reach—powered by innovation, collaboration, and the shared vision of a sustainable Europe.



Stronger Together



ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE



EU4Moldova: Local Communities: Donation of essential equipment and support for improving waste management in Leova rayon

Modernisation of Republic of Moldova goes together with its progress towards European Union accession. One important step is its alignment with environmental standards, to which an efficient waste management system is essential.

To achieve this goal, the EU4Moldova: Local Communities programme, a Team Europe

initiative, donated a series of essential equipment to the city of Iargara to significantly improve the waste management system. Moreover, the communes of Cazangic, Sărățica Nouă, Sărata Nouă, Tigheci, and Baiuș will also benefit from support in improving the solid waste management and water supply and sanitation for their residents.



In this sense, a set of essential waste management equipment was handed over to Iargara municipality, with the support of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), including:

- ✓ one garbage truck to streamline waste collection routes
- ✓ minivan to enhance logistical operations
- ✓ one backhoe loader to provide support at the designated waste disposal site
- ✓ various waste operational equipment.

To encourage residents to adopt waste sorting practices at home, the programme has also offered approx. 5,000 colored bins of different sizes for separate waste collection. The value of the investment in this equipment represents approximately 280,000 euros.

On the same day, a grant certificate with a total value of 180,000 euros was handed over to a selected local NGO, with the aim of improving the provision of local public

services in the city of Iargara and the communes of Cazangic, Sărățica Nouă, Sărata Nouă, Tigheci, and Baiuș. The NGO will support local authorities implementing their plans to improve solid waste management services, as well as water supply and sanitation. This support provides for the development of small infrastructure measures, connecting vulnerable families to public services, improving the quality of services, informing and involving the community in the decision-making process.

This joint effort contributes to a cleaner and healthier Moldova, while providing a strong boost to local communities. Through efficient waste management and better access to water, Iargara and neighbouring towns can enjoy a safer and more pleasant environment, with direct benefits to public health.

Find out more about the event [here](#).

The “EU4Moldova: Local Communities” programme is funded by the EU, the German, Austrian and Polish governments and implemented by the GIZ, ADA and SFPL in Moldova.



Stronger Together

A new EU Funded Twinning Project on air quality and environment was launched in Moldova

The Twinning project “Air Quality and Environment” officially started its implementation on 1st of July 2024 having as the central beneficiary the Ministry of Environment and other beneficiaries: Environment Agency, the Environment Protection Inspectorate and the State Hydrometeorological Service. The beneficiary administrations will benefit from the assistance of partner institutions from the European Union (EU): the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) as the lead

partner, the Lithuanian Environmental Project Management Agency (APVA) and the Swedish Chemicals Agency (KEMI) – as junior partners.

The kick-off event took place in Chişinău on 12 of September with the participation of the representatives of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova, Finnish, Lithuanian and Swedish Embassies, the project’s beneficiaries and EU member states partner institutions.



The Twinning project “Air Quality and Environment” is scheduled to run from July 2024 to December 2026. The total budget of the project is 2,000,000 EUR. The central aim of this project is to increase the pace of approximation and implementation of the *acquis communautaire* in the fields of air quality and air pollution reduction, environmental information, circular economy/waste management and sustainable management of chemicals.

Thus, the project’s first mission was related to the Component 4 “Environmentally sound management of chemicals strengthened”. The MS experts, in close cooperation with the key staff at the BC institutions worked on GAP analysis of the legislation to assess

the current situation regarding the legal and regulatory framework, institutional and staff capacities for the sound management of chemicals in Moldova.

Throughout the duration of the project, a series of interactive activities will be undertaken to help the beneficiary institutions and other stakeholders to strengthen Moldova’s capacity to fulfil environment-related commitments, in line with the EU-Republic of Moldova Association Agreement, the EU Integration process and other international agreements. These actions will encompass capacity-building activities, trainings, study visits, mid term and final events, and awareness raising campaigns.

Eco-Conscious Youth: driving sustainable development

Raising awareness and continuously informing citizens about the importance of environmental protection and the dangers of irrational use of natural resources, as well as the direct involvement of community members in identifying and solving local environmental problems are some of the main conclusions reached by young people from Cahul and Ungheni districts, participants in the summer camps "Green Adventure for Eco-Conscious Youth", held in July this year.

For five days, over 60 teenagers aged 16-20 benefited from an interactive and varied educational program on topics related to water resource protection, access to safe water sources and menstrual hygiene, as well as climate change, waste management, energy efficiency, and environmental protection in the context of European integration. The activities were organised within the "EU4Moldova: Key Regions" Program, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP Moldova and UNICEF.



"We focused on group workshops, games, and educational quizzes, so that young people could easily perceive the information presented and directly apply the newly acquired knowledge. Moreover, through study visits to the wastewater treatment plants in Valea Mare, Sculeni, and Cantemir, as well as to the protected natural area "Pădurea Domnească" and Lake Beleu, located in the Lower Prut Scientific Reserve, we gave them the opportunity to see what wastewater means and how the purification processes take place, what the degradation of an ecosystem means, and how important biodiversity conservation is,"

said Elena Culighin, President of the National Environment Center.

"Through this camp, we aimed to inspire young people to become agents of change in their communities. Our young people have the power to influence the future of the environment, and we must provide them with the necessary support and knowledge to succeed,"

said Jana Midoni, UNICEF Education Programs Officer.

At the same time, 11 educational institutions in Cahul district and 9 in Ungheni district benefit from support (equipment and teaching materials) worth 500 euros to implement projects aimed at solving environmental problems in the community. This was made possible thanks to the initiative "Eco-School: a healthy environment in Cahul and Ungheni" launched at the end of May with the aim of promoting environmental education and developing responsible behaviour to maintain ecological balance.



Stronger Together

The summer camps "Green Adventure for Eco-Conscious Youth", as well as the initiative "Eco-School: a healthy environment in Cahul and Ungheni" were carried out within the UNICEF project "Enhancement of WASH, Environment Knowledge and Skills for Youth

in the Key Regions Cahul and Ungheni", implemented by the National Environment Center, within the EU4Moldova: Key Regions Program, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP Moldova and UNICEF.



New science laboratories for students in Cazangic and Sărățica Nouă: a further step towards increasing environmental awareness

As part of the “EU4Moldova: Local Communities” programme, the two schools of Cazangic and Sărățica Nouă communes, located in the Leova district, have recently been equipped with furniture and modern equipment for physics, chemistry, and biology laboratories. These modernized facilities will enhance students' access to high-quality science education and offer them the opportunity to better explore the environment.

The new equipment makes science lessons more engaging and practical, a sentiment

echoed by 8th-grade students from the Mihai Viteazu gymnasium in Cazangic. Meanwhile, the students of Sărățica Nouă gymnasium, where children from 4 neighbouring towns are currently studying, show that they are already enthusiastically testing the new equipment. Now, students in both communities use microscopes, test tubes, equipment for studying electrical circuits and optical phenomena, an astronomical telescope, an interactive screen, and a variety of other instruments designed for experimentation and in-depth study.



Local authorities and school principals emphasised that education and community involvement are crucial pillars for building a prosperous future. The upgraded

laboratories in these schools are more than just educational spaces—they symbolize a shared commitment to creating a safer and brighter future for the younger generation.

This investment in education is part of a broader €180,000 support for improving the water supply, sanitation and solid waste management in six communities in Leova district.

For Cazangic and Sărățica Nouă this will be ensured through:

- ✓ Improving access to clean water and sanitation for residents and public institutions.
- ✓ Expanding water and sewage network connections for vulnerable families and institutions.
- ✓ Installing reverse osmosis filters in schools and other public buildings to ensure safe drinking water.

- ✓ Strengthening the capacities of local public authorities (LPA) and operators for more efficient local public service delivery and water resource management.
- ✓ Actively involving the community in environmental protection activities and decision-making processes.

These initiatives not only improve local infrastructure but also raise awareness among residents, especially young people, about the responsible use of natural resources and the importance of environmental preservation.

This support was offered within the “EU4Moldova: Local Communities” programme, financed by the European Union, the German, Austrian and Polish governments and implemented by the GIZ, ADA and SFPL in Moldova.



United for a cleaner future: EU Delegation and local partners join forces for World Cleanup Day

On September 20, 2024, the European Union Delegation (EUD) to the Republic of Moldova, together with EU Member State ambassadors, local authorities, citizens, teachers, and students, united for an impactful cleanup action along the banks of the Nistru River near the village of Telita, Anenii Noi, in celebration of World Cleanup Day. This event marks the third consecutive year of the initiative in Moldova, emphasizing a growing commitment to environmental protection and sustainability.

The cleanup effort saw participants gather dozens of bags filled with waste, which were carefully sorted into recycling categories, including plastic bottles, paper, cardboard, and ferrous materials. This reinforced the collective dedication to sustainable waste management and proper recycling practices. The National Center for Environment played a key role in guiding participants on efficient waste sorting, ensuring that the collected materials could be processed in an environmentally responsible way.



European Union Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova, Jānis Mažeiks, highlighted the importance of community involvement in environmental efforts, stating:

"Taking responsibility for our environment is not just a symbolic gesture—it is a civic duty."

"Today's cleanup action is a powerful reminder that protecting nature is essential for both current and future generations. The European Union stands firmly with Moldova in its journey towards sustainable development and environmental protection."



Stronger Together



World Cleanup Day, a global movement founded in 2018, aims to draw attention on the growing issue of waste pollution by mobilizing millions of volunteers from over 190 countries. The Republic of Moldova has been an active participant in this global initiative, with the campaign coordinated nationally by the National Environmental Center (NEC). The NEC works closely with both central and local authorities to ensure broad engagement and a lasting environmental impact across the country.

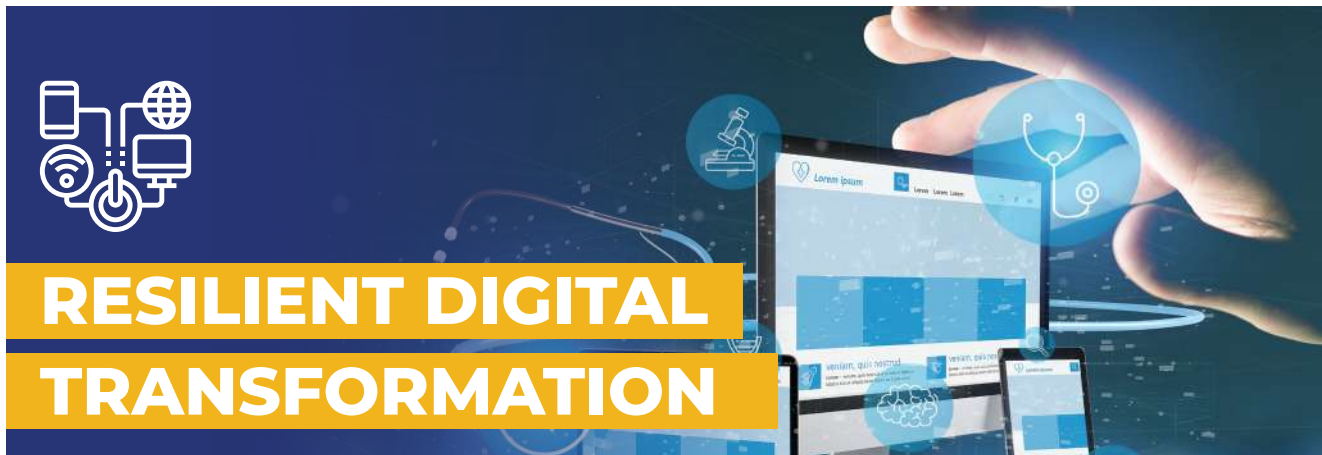
This year's event, which brought together diverse participants from various sectors of society, highlighted not only the urgent need for environmental action but also the

collective power of communities working together toward a cleaner, greener future. The EU and its Member States continue to support Moldova's efforts to promote sustainable development as part of a broader European agenda focused on improving the quality of life and fostering a green economy.

As Moldova aligns itself with global efforts to protect the environment, events like World Cleanup Day serve as a testament to the country's dedication to a cleaner and healthier planet for all. Through joint efforts, Moldova is not just cleaning up its local areas but contributing to a global mission for sustainability.



Stronger Together



Successful EU4Digital Ukraine–Moldova–Romania eCustoms pilot promises improved trade

Successful completion of a trilateral EU4Digital eCustoms pilot between Ukraine, Moldova and Romania represents a significant stride towards a more integrated, efficient and innovative trade environment within the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region and with the European Union (EU). On 10 September 2024, representatives of

the European Commission’s Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations ([DG NEAR](#)), Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union ([DG TAXUD](#)) and the Ukrainian, Moldovan and Romanian customs authorities reflected on the pilot and its impacts in a post-pilot conference.



  EU-Moldova
Stronger Together

The European Union (EU) and its Eastern partners, notably Ukraine, Moldova and Romania, are addressing substantial challenges at their border crossing points (BCPs) due to increased trade flow pressures and regional tensions, aggravated by Russian military actions against Ukraine. These issues cause congestion and delays at the borders, leading to major financial and safety concerns. Ukraine and Moldova, both pursuing EU accession, are constantly striving to manage the challenges encountered, with the EU's 'solidarity lanes' support for enhancing trade under its [Priority Action Plan](#).

To improve border operations, there's a need for deeper cooperation between customs authorities and the adoption of digital solutions like the Systematic Electronic Exchange of Data (SEED+). The SEED+ system aids in pre-arrival information sharing between customs authorities and the forecasting of traffic to support safer and quicker border crossings. This allows the improvement of risk management and border security at the same time.

In this context, the EU4Digital Facility successfully tested the exchange of specific data between customs authorities in Ukraine, Moldova and Romania.

The previously completed eCustoms pilots were bilateral tests between [Ukraine and Romania](#) in 2023 and between [Moldova and Romania](#) in 2022. The new, trilateral pilot between Ukraine, Moldova and Romania

was a more comprehensive and complex initiative from EU4Digital's [eTrade](#) thematic area of activities. This pilot covered the exchange of extended data sets, through an increased number of BCPs, utilising the cooperative efforts of three national customs administrations, and spanning from June to August of 2024. This latest pilot recorded more than 125,000 truck movements, in comparison to 80 and 153 trucks for the bilateral Ukraine-Romania and Moldova-Romania pilots respectively.

The eCustoms pilot implementation team encountered some challenges, which presented valuable learning opportunities and showcased their great commitment to technical and organisational agility in the process.

Since Ukraine, Moldova and Romania each have their own specific IT systems and infrastructure for dealing with customs data, and the pilot provided automatic integration of data flows between systems, front line officers reported some technical issues. The efficiency of the technical teams in dealing with these challenges underscored the importance of streamlining processes, enhancing cooperation and communication, and the active involvement of all beneficiaries in setting operational standards to realise the full potential of eCustoms data exchange.

More information: <https://eufordigital.eu/successful-eu4digital-ukraine-moldova-romania-ecustoms-pilot-promises-improved-trade/>

EU4Digital helps Moldova and Ukraine align with EU digital regulations




As the digital landscape continually evolves, and with large digital platforms now impacting significant portions of daily life, the European Union (EU) introduced the [Digital Markets Act](#) (DMA) and [Digital Services Act](#) (DSA) in 2022. The [DSA and DMA form a set of regulations](#) that apply across the whole EU, with the aim to create a safer digital environment and a fair and equitable digital economy for all. However, the need for fairness and security online does not stop at the borders of the EU. This is why the EU4Digital Facility has launched activities to support the governments of Ukraine and Moldova in aligning their legislation with the DMA and DSA, which in turn further supports their process of accession to the EU.

In close collaboration with the [Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization](#) of the Republic of Moldova and the [Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine](#), the EU4Digital Facility will be reviewing the countries' drafted legislation on digital services and then providing

recommendations in order to ensure approximation with the EU's DMA and DSA regulations. This follows meetings with key Ukrainian and Moldovan stakeholders in May and July to review the planned activities and agree the next steps.

The goal of the work is that the legislation implemented in Moldova and Ukraine will both align and interconnect with legislation in the EU. This alignment with the EU is an important step in the countries' accession process but is also to protect the safety of citizens and the integrity of democracy, as online disinformation and propaganda are growing rapidly. Furthermore, creating equitable and fair digital economies will only further strengthen both nations and provide new opportunities for citizens to improve their lives and participate in the global digital market.

Further information: <https://eufordigital.eu/eu4digital-helps-moldova-and-ukraine-align-with-eu-digital-regulations/>



This newsletter is produced within the framework of the project “EU Visibility and Public Diplomacy in the Republic of Moldova 2024”. The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by the GOPA PACE S.A.

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