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# **NEWSLETTER OF THE DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

## **TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**



# **EU – MOLDOVA:**

## **COOPERATION NEWS**

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2024



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## MOBILITY AND PEOPLE

### Historic support for Republic of Moldova: the European Union offers €1.8 billion euro for the development of the country

The European Union has approved a €1.8 billion financial package for the Republic of Moldova, essential aid to support economic development and the reforms needed to integrate the country into the European Union. It is part of a plan to support Moldova between 2025 and 2027, the largest EU

support since Moldova's independence. The funding was announced by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during her visit to Chisinau on October 9-10, 2024.



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The financial support has come at a crucial time for Moldova as the country steps up its efforts to join the EU. The economic growth plan targets infrastructure modernization and increased financial assistance, integration into the EU Single Market and socio-economic reforms.

Plan results in figures by the end of 2027: more than 100,000 Moldovan citizens will have access to jobs in the Republic of Moldova, nearly about 5,000 enterprises, including small family businesses, will be launched, more than 25,000 small businesses

will receive support and 3,000 enterprises will receive assistance to export to the EU. Infrastructure will be improved with new roads and bridges and energy security will be strengthened with new interconnections. Nearly 40,000 eco-vouchers will help citizens buy energy-efficient appliances. Two new hospitals will be built in Cahul and Balti, 5,000 kindergarten places will be created, and 63,000 hectares of forests will be rehabilitated. Broadband internet networks will also be extended to remote areas of Moldova and roaming charges will be abolished.



The Economic Growth Plan represents a historic moment for the Republic of Moldova and marks a new stage in the process of joining the European Union. Through this financial package of 1.8 billion euro, the EU demonstrates its firm support for Moldova's European future, facilitating critical reforms

and opening the doors for the economic and social integration of the country. The successful implementation of this Plan will transform Moldova into a modern, competitive and prosperous economy, bringing it ever closer to the status of a full member of the European Union.

# Innovations and opportunities for urban development in the Republic of Moldova: the goal of the Business Forum organised in Edineț, with EU support

The municipality of Edineț hosted the "Smart City Solutions" Business Forum from October 24-25, 2024, a unique event held as part of the project "Edinet - Insight into Tomorrow Cities." This event celebrated the remarkable results achieved within the "Edinet - Insight into Tomorrow Cities" project, funded by the European Union and

implemented by the Edineț City Hall, in partnership with the Alba Iulia City Hall in Romania. The forum provided a platform for exchanging experiences and best practices in the field of smart cities, aiming to improve citizens' quality of life through advanced and sustainable technologies.



The forum began with the launch of a municipal bike-sharing service, an initiative designed to integrate eco-friendly transportation into Edineț's urban mobility system, made possible with the financial support of the European Union. A bicycle lane approximately 800 meters long was constructed, connecting two major city roads. Additionally, 20 electric bicycles were purchased for the sharing system, and three new bike parking stations were built and equipped. This service, developed under the

EU project "Edinet - Insight into Tomorrow Cities," will be managed by the municipal enterprise "Edineț Public Transport" in partnership with a private operator from Chișinău. For the creation of this service, European funds amounting to approximately 150,000 euros were invested, of which 50,000 euros were allocated for purchasing mobility units (20 bikes, GPS system mounted on each bike, showing each bike's location in real time, and bike tracking app).



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The "Smart City Solutions" exhibition also showcased the latest technologies and services for small and medium-sized cities in the Republic of Moldova, promoting their digital and sustainable transformation. The exhibition featured around 20 smart service providers from Moldova and Romania, including those who have already implemented many of these solutions in Edineț.

During the forum, participants learned first-hand about the outcomes of the EU project "Edinet - Insight into Tomorrow Cities" and were able to assess the impact of these outcomes on the quality of life of Edineț

residents. In December 2023, the project inaugurated a series of other modernized and digitized public services, including the sustainable public transport system, smart street lighting, investments in the education system, five impactful projects in residential neighbourhoods, public safety, local governance, and more.

The "Smart City Solutions" forum brought together around 100 participants: national and international urban planning experts, companies from Moldova and Romania, as well as professionals specialized in innovative solutions for the development of smart cities.



The project "Edinet - Insight into Tomorrow Cities," which is being implemented from March 1, 2021, to February 28, 2025, aims to improve urban development quality, public services, and overall living conditions for the citizens of Edineț by applying smart solutions across various areas of urban development: local governance, public

services, residential areas, business, and education. The project budget is 4,358,886 euros, of which 4,140,186 euros is a grant from the European Union through the "Local Authorities: Partnerships for Sustainable Cities 2020" program and 218,700 euros is contributed by the implementing partners.



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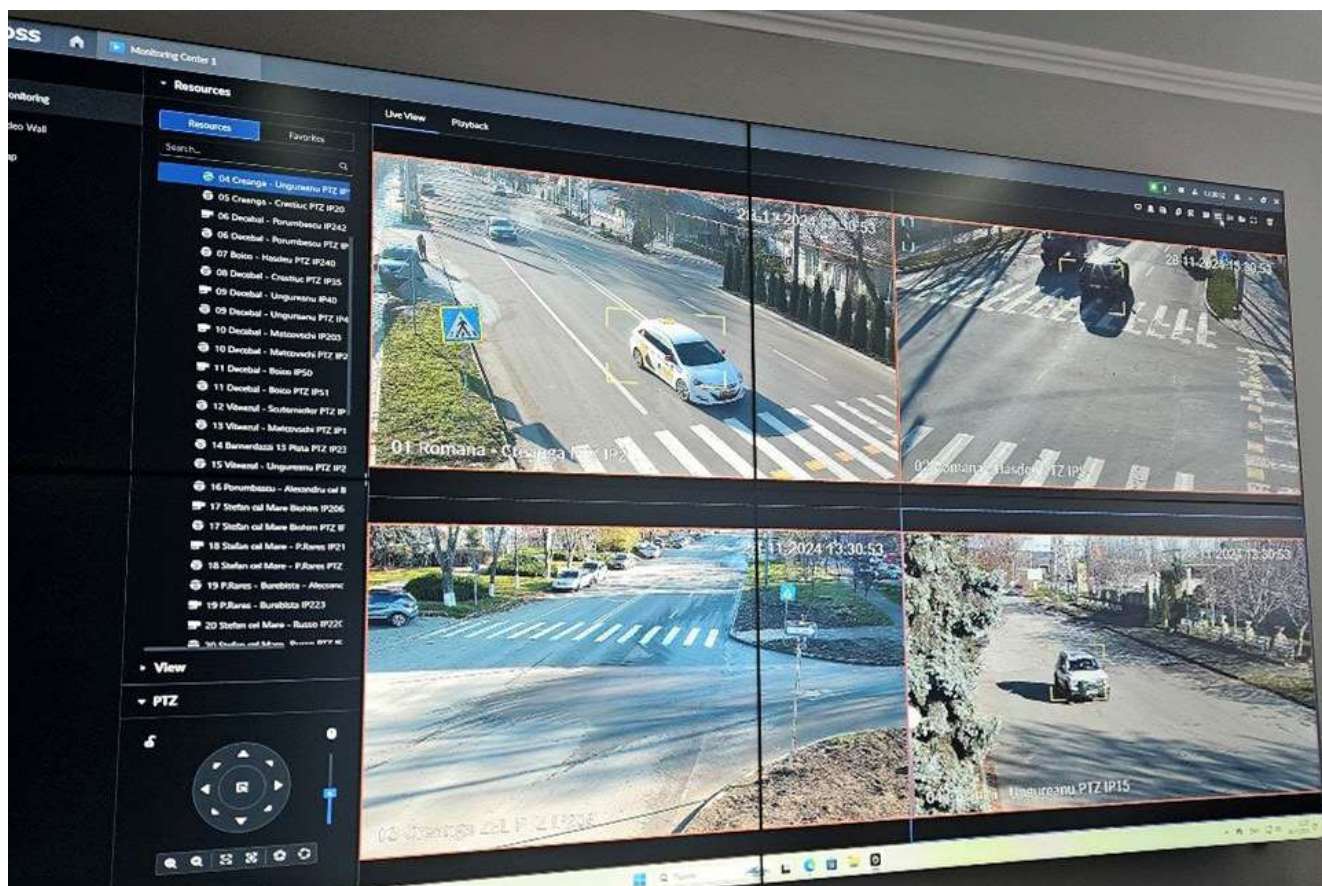
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# Ungheni becomes a safer city with EU financial support

An intelligent video monitoring system has been developed in Ungheni to enhance public safety and modernize municipal services. The project includes a video monitoring centre, an extensive fibre-optic network of about 19 kilometres and high-performance software that enables authorities to respond promptly to emergencies, incidents and

ensure the safety of residents. The system includes 52 high-resolution IP cameras strategically placed at intersections, streets, recreational areas, public institutions and waste collection platforms. The €103,815 project was supported by the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme, funded by the EU and implemented by UNDP and UNICEF.



The Video Monitoring Centre, created within the Ungheni Police Inspectorate, is equipped with a high-resolution video wall and high-performance servers, ensuring the safe storage of data in closed circuit for more than 60 days. The centre has two workstations equipped with performant IT equipment to facilitate fast and efficient response to alerts from operators.

This project will strengthen partnerships between local public authorities, regional

waste management operators and law enforcement to create a safer and more efficiently managed community. By installing video cameras in the city, authorities will be able to prevent illegal dumping of waste and damage to urban infrastructure as well as improve the logistical processes of public services delivery.

The intelligent video monitoring system inaugurated in Ungheni is modular, which will allow its further development by

adding up to a thousand cameras. A similar intelligent video monitoring system will also be inaugurated in Cahul.

“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 inhabitants. 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).





# Mitigating the negative impact of the war on refugees and vulnerable communities in Moldova

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 forces with the objective of assisting Ukrainian refugees and local vulnerable communities in Moldova. 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, which is still ongoing.

As part of the PLACE Consortium, Acted is providing financial support to 217

households from October to December 2024. This support is intended to address immediate housing needs, including rental payments and utility expenses, for a period of up to six months.

Acted provided case management services to 1,862 individuals, 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.



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Additionally, Acted held consultations for 179 families, providing assistance with the application process for the state compensation programme for the heating season. For individuals with disabilities and/or serious illnesses who were unable to visit the registration centre independently, a mobile team was arranged to visit their homes.

Acted and its partners are committed to making significant improvements to living conditions on a large scale. This includes enhancing the safety of vulnerable individuals and promoting the social integration of refugees.

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.





# The Erasmus+ Programme in Moldova and the European Training Foundation marked 30 years of activity

The year 2024 marked a double anniversary for two European Union programmes: 30 years of the Erasmus+ Programme in the Republic of Moldova and 30 years of the European Training Foundation (ETF). On this occasion, the National Erasmus+ Office in Moldova and ETF, in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union, organised an anniversary event on November 19 and 20.

The evening of November 19, at 7:00 p.m., prepared a festive moment – a classical music concert by the Erasmus+ beneficiaries from the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts, organised at the Organ Hall – a symbolic celebration of the partnership between Moldova and the Union European.



On November 20, an extensive seminar at the Technical University of Moldova explored key topics such as EU support for education and skills, the presentation of the preliminary conclusions of the Rapid Education Diagnosis Report (RED) and the results achieved by the Erasmus+ Programme in its 30 years of activity in the Republic of Moldova.

In three decades, the Erasmus+ Programme had a transformative impact on Moldovan education: over 5000 students and teachers benefited from international academic mobility, and numerous educational projects were implemented in universities, vocational education and training institutions, youth and sports organisations, bringing innovation and valuable resources. Until now, thanks

to the support of the Erasmus+ Programme in the Republic of Moldova, the following actions have been implemented: 83 Tempus projects, 35 capacity building projects in higher education, 37 Jean Monnet projects, 10 capacity building projects in the field of VET, 6 capacity building projects in the field of youth, 3 virtual exchange projects in the higher education and youth, etc.

On the other hand, in its 30 years of activity, the European Training Foundation has significantly contributed to the modernisation of education and

professional training systems in 28 partner countries, including the Republic of Moldova, facilitating the development of skills adapted to the labour market. The foundation has supported educational reforms, promoted social inclusion and mobility, and helped create evidence-based policies. Through its partnerships, the ETF has supported economic growth and human capital development, providing valuable expertise and strengthening political dialogue between member states and partner countries.



This anniversary has become not only an occasion for celebration, but also an opportunity to reflect on how the support of the European Union contributed to the transformation of the educational system in Moldova.

The event brought together decision-makers, representatives of public institutions, members of civil society organisations, education experts, academics and students, to discuss the progress made and to chart future directions for collaboration.



## 7 schools hosted reading clubs with writers “Bridges of books”

Cultural events entitled "Bridges of Books. Dialogue through Literature" brought together at a book club writers and pupils from several schools from both banks of Nistru river. Meetings with the writers were organised in seven schools in Găgăuzia region and in localities of the security zone on both banks of the Nistru River. The events were organised by the Writers' Union with the financial support provided by the European Union through the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP.

For many of the children this was their first encounter with a book's author. Poetry recitals, short skits, questions to the author - the students prepared thoroughly for these visits. The primary school pupils experienced deep emotions after the discussion with the

writer Maria Pilchin, who presented to them the book Doggy.

**Nadejda Pitel, a student of the 11th grade at the "Mihai Eminescu" Theoretical High School in Comrat, finds herself in the writer's stories:**

*"Meeting the writer, who has something in common with my hometown, gave me the opportunity not only to explore her ideas and creations, but also to find myself in the book Doggy. It was a meeting full of warmth and reflection! Thank you!"*



Gheorghe Budeanu, Dumitru Crudu, Maria Pilchin, Irina Nechit, Irina Nechit, Iulian Filip, Ianoș Țurcanu and Arcadie Suceveanu are among the writers taking part in the project.

*"The traditional meetings with readers continue to be effective in promoting reading, particularly given the importance of education in Moldova's development,"*

**says Iulian Filip.**

**Irina Nechit visited the pupils of the "Mihai Eminescu" High School in Dubăsari (based in Corjova):**

*"I believe that literature is the most accessible, lively and healthy means of communication. By telling them about books, about the destiny of characters, about the way we understand poetry, theater, prose, I was actually talking to students and teachers. There are rare moments when we can talk to each other face to face. That's why the meeting was, for me, particularly valuable and meaningful."*

In addition to meetings with writers, book donations were also made, to promote literary dialogue and reading among young people. These books have not only enriched the school libraries' catalogue, but have also facilitated students' access to contemporary literature, giving them the opportunity to discover local authors and connect more deeply with their language and culture.

*"Meeting writers can be very inspiring. It was a profound experience. Literature can really be a form of therapy and a way to cope with grief. Writing can be a great way to release thoughts and emotions. It is fascinating how Mr. Crudu has turned a difficulty like insomnia into a source of creativity. Today's meeting has left an emotional imprint on me,"*

**says Cristina Costev, a teacher at the "Luceafărul" High School in Vulcănești.**



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## Entry-level athletes from Tiraspol trained for the Chişinău marathon, thanks to EU support

20 amateur runners from the left bank of the Nistru River have enrolled in the first region's running school with one goal - to train for the Chişinău marathon. The school was launched by the Sport Platform, created with the financial support of the European Union through the Confidence Building Measures Programme implemented by UNDP.

The running school included both physical workout to strengthen muscles and yoga and relaxation exercises. All training programme took place outdoors and was open to anyone who wanted to join in. Both beginner and entry-level athletes were guided by professional coaches.

The idea to create this running school belongs to the founder of the Run Tiras club, member of the cross-Nistru thematic civil society platform on Sport.

The running school included both physical workout to strengthen muscles and yoga and relaxation exercises. All training programme took place outdoors and was open to anyone who wanted to join in. Both beginner and entry-level athletes were guided by professional coaches.

At the Chişinău marathon, 9 of the 20 students of the running school participated in the long-distance races, while the others tested their physical endurance in the FunRun race.



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The running school in Tiraspol and the participation of athletes from the left bank of the Nistru River in the Chişinău marathon is an activity of the Sport Platform, financially supported by the European Union through the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP.

The cross-river thematic platforms were created in 2017 under the Confidence Building Measures Programme as a result of good cooperation between CSOs from both banks. Within the programme there are six CSOs platforms in the following areas: health, education, environment, culture, sports, and tourism.

Through its work, the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented Confidence Building Measures Programme contributes to building trust between the people on both banks of the Nistru River by involving them in joint development projects.



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# Chisinau hosted EU4Culture Closing Conference, highlighting four-year impact on non-capital cities in EaP countries

On 28-29 November 2024, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, hosted the EU4Culture Closing Conference, marking the culmination of four years of impactful work. The event highlighted EU4Culture's contributions to the cultural and creative sectors in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and addressed the sustainability of its achievements.

The EU4Culture Closing Conference brought together international experts, city leaders, and key stakeholders from the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) to explore the

sustainable role of culture in driving socio-economic development in non-capital cities across the EaP countries. Over two days, the conference showcased the achievements of the EU4Culture project and discussed its long-term impact. International experts and project beneficiaries delivered presentations, with active participation from mayors, city representatives, and CCI stakeholders.

The official programme included a multimedia exhibition that showcased EU4Culture's results, highlighting success stories from participating cities.



With a budget of €7.85 million, the EU4Culture project has significantly strengthened cultural policy, fostered cooperation among CCI stakeholders, and advanced sector development in non-capital cities across

the EaP countries. Fourteen cities across Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine developed cultural strategies and implemented key actions, including post-war cultural initiatives



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in Ukraine. EU4Culture supported over 400 artists and cultural professionals in enhancing their skills through mobility projects, while 87 stakeholders developed expertise in internationalisation. Additionally, 32 public institutions and independent cultural organisations successfully

implemented innovative cultural projects, further advancing the creative sectors in the EaP countries.

The EU-funded EU4Culture project was implemented by the Goethe-Institut (lead), Institut Français Georgie, the Danish Cultural Institute, and the Czech Center.





# Over 400 Returnees supported in the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme in the Republic of Moldova

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has implemented Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programs worldwide. In the Republic of Moldova, the AVRR program is implemented by IOM Moldova thanks to the financial support of the European Union. The AVRR team focuses on assisting nationals and third-country nationals in their return and reintegration process in their country of origin.

Since January 2024, IOM Moldova has assisted referring Missions from EU and non-EU countries, with the return procedures of 366 Moldovan citizens to the Republic of Moldova. Since October 2024, 33 Moldovan citizens have returned home safely with IOM's operational support, with 15 persons receiving reintegration support. This year, 42 returnees finalized their reintegration plans which included the provision of cash

assistance to support their immediate basic needs, medical care, housing support, and skills development.

## **Voluntary Humanitarian Return: supporting third-country nationals**

Under the Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) program, financially supported by the European Union, IOM Moldova supports third-country nationals in returning to their country of origin in a voluntarily, safe and dignified manner and in achieving sustainable reintegration with full respect for human rights, regardless of their status. Since January 2024, IOM Moldova has assisted 709 Third-Country Nationals in returning home, of whom 68 have received tailored reintegration support.

IOM Moldova remains dedicated to helping migrants rebuild their lives and reintegrate into their communities.



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# IOM Cash assistance for protection, funded by the EU, a vital resource to address the immediate needs of vulnerable refugees

*"I fled Ukraine and decided to come to Moldova because my relatives live here. Thanks to this assistance, I will be able to buy winter clothes because I have no other clothes than what I wear and what I borrowed from my family's friends,"*

**said Gabraman, from Azerbaijan.**

Since May 2024, thanks to the financial support from the European Union, IOM Moldova's Protection Mobile Team has provided comprehensive case management to 81 vulnerable migrants (41 women, 34

men, and 6 minors). Services were tailored to individual needs and included information sessions, psychosocial counselling, referrals to state and non-state partners, and legal assistance to assist beneficiaries secure legal identity, travel documents, or regularize their status.

61 vulnerable migrants who fled the full-scale war in Ukraine also received cash assistance for protection, a vital resource to address immediate needs and strengthen their coping capacity.



# 980 individuals supported by the European Union with the IOM's multipurpose cash assistance programme

With financial support from the European Union, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the Republic of Moldova, in collaboration with ADRA Moldova, continued to run two well-established registration centers since 2022 on the Left Bank, located in Ribnita and Tiraspol. These centers are dedicated to registering vulnerable refugees and Third Country Nationals (TCNs) for multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA). They also serve as a place for regular information sessions to raise awareness about the cash assistance process and provide a platform for face-to-face discussions with people in need.

The multipurpose cash assistance program aims to help vulnerable individuals displaced from Ukraine meet their essential needs, including food, shelter, and healthcare. Additionally, cash assistance is provided to assist in covering their energy needs during the winter season.

Since May 2024, 980 individuals - 660 females and 320 males - have benefited from the MPCA program, receiving monthly cash assistance from IOM, thanks to the generous financial support from EU.

More information about the program: <https://bit.ly/4f02t7e> and video on [Facebook](#).





# Ukrainian health mediators guide refugees from Ukraine in accessing the healthcare system in Moldova

On December 16 2024, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the Republic of Moldova, in partnership with the European Union, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the National Health Insurance Company of the Republic of Moldova, conducted a training session for 11 Ukrainian health mediators affiliated with IOM. These mediators play a crucial role in raising awareness and guiding refugees and displaced persons from Ukraine in accessing the healthcare system in Moldova.

During the training, specialists from the National Health Insurance Company covered key topics such as access to the healthcare system, registration with a family

doctor, patient pathways, the package of healthcare services available to refugees and displaced persons with temporary protection (reimbursed by the National Health Insurance Company), and access to medicines and compensated medical devices.

The training is part of the project “Improving access to healthcare for refugees and people displaced from Ukraine benefitting from temporary protection in Member States” jointly implemented in Moldova by the European Union, WHO, and IOM, and funded by the EU4Health 2023 programme.



# Protecting vision and dreams: support for two brave sisters

In the chaos caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Tetiana, from the small town of Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi in Odesa Oblast, was forced to seek refuge in Moldova with her family, including her two nieces, Kateryna and Kristina. Moldova gradually became a second home after receiving a warm welcome. Yet, despite their newfound safety, their family faces a daunting challenge: both girls suffer from optic nerve atrophy, a degenerative genetic condition that severely affects their vision.



Kateryna, affectionately called Katyusha by her aunt, has only 7% vision in one eye and 2% in the other. The outlook for her younger sister, Kristina, is similarly grim. Doctors confirmed there is no treatment to reverse the condition fully but advised Tetiana to

help the girls experience as much of the world as possible while they can still see.

Refusing to give up, Tetiana searched tirelessly for solutions and found a clinic in Ukraine where specialists could help slow the disease's progression. However, the treatment is expensive and requires regular repetition—an overwhelming financial burden, especially after the family fled their home. During this challenging time, we provided funding for a treatment course to help protect the girls' eyesight.

*"After the treatment, we noticed an improvement as their eyes gained 2-3% more basic vision – a small but vital progression for us. All that remains is to continue this treatment,"*

***says Tetiana, grateful for any improvement.***

Despite the hardships they face, Kateryna and Kristina remain optimistic. Kateryna recently completed a massage course and continues her studies through distance learning at a medical college in Ukraine, where she is now in her fourth year. We supplied her with a specialized tablet to support her efforts. Kristina is also studying at the EDUTech Lab in Comrat, with support from People in Need, allowing her to continue online education at her school in Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi.

***Tetiana exclaims,***

*"You supported us exactly when we needed it most. This tablet is helping Katyusha tremendously with her studies. Thank you so much!"*



Though life remains challenging, the family dreams of peace and one day returning to their small house on the Black Sea coast. Tetiana hopes to invite all those who have helped them in their fight against both disease and war to her coastal home, hoping that peace will return by then.

Supported by the European Union through the EU Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid Programme, our efforts are part of the PLACE project, conducted in partnership with Acted, REACH (IMPACT Initiatives) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), bringing vital assistance to those who need it most.



# Hackathon E-INTEGRATION: an exercise of civic involvement of young students from Bălți

Building an informed society is not just a necessity, but a shared responsibility. This is especially the case nowadays when the line between fact and fiction can seem especially blurry. Through the Moldova ASSIST project, funded by the European Union, we aimed to increase citizens' involvement in the decision-making processes and promote open dialogue between communities and public authorities.

Young people are at the heart of any society's future prosperity, and because of this we at People in Need work to create tools and opportunities to engage them in creative projects and those relating to civic activism. Their input and participation in decision-making mechanisms is essential both for the creation of effective solutions and policies and for the development of stronger and more inclusive communities.



One of the prodigious initiatives in this regard is that of the regional partners A.O. GRAPP (Center for Management and Reforms in Public and Private Affairs), launching the **Hackathon E-INTEGRATION: Education and Critical Thinking for the European Future**, for young students of the State University "Alecu Russo" in Balti.

Dozens of committed and dedicated students competed to create innovative and accessible solutions to support Moldova

in the process of European integration and prepare the nation for the new economic, social and educational realities.

GRAPP trainers, together with the students, tackled important topics and identified practical solutions to combat discrimination, digital literacy of young people, support for young employees and entrepreneurs, integration of seniors in social systems, and inclusion of vulnerable people.



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Over two days, participating teams came up with remarkable ideas such as the creation of:

- ✓ Platforms for workers' rights and professional integration in the EU, responding to the needs of labor migration;
- ✓ Initiatives to combat discrimination and promote diversity;
- ✓ Information solutions on security and crime prevention with a focus on cross-border cooperation.

The E-INTEGRATION Hackathon proved to be a successful initiative, demonstrating that young people in Moldova are ready to actively contribute to European integration. The ideas and solutions proposed have the potential to bring concrete benefits to the community and support the country's transition towards a united and prosperous European society.

This activity is part of the information campaign carried out by A.O. GRAPP within 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.



## Bogdan Vrancean – a 17-year-old young man who became an inspiration for his peers

In the Republic of Moldova, young people rarely discuss politics or elections; particularly in rural areas, interest in elections and political culture among young people is very low. The primary reasons for this issue continue to be the lack of adequate information about the electoral process, misinformation targeting youth, and the absence of initiatives to develop critical thinking among young people.

In the framework of the PROELECT regional project run by the Transatlantic Foundation in partnership with ERIM and funded by the European Union, AO CRTF DACIA carried out a short-term initiative in the Soroca district to address the low participation of young people in elections. Twenty electoral video spots were created by young community

leaders, raising awareness about the importance of electoral participation on a larger scale.

Mr. Bogdan Vrancean became a pioneer of change and an inspiration to his peers. Although he was not yet of voting age during the first round of the 2024 presidential elections, his passion for change and social justice made him a strong voice in his community. He understood how critical each election is for building a better future.

Far from being discouraged by his inability to vote, Bogdan used his platform to encourage and motivate others to participate in the electoral process. His video spot, shared on social media, inspired many and received over 40,000 views on TikTok, along with numerous positive reactions.



At just 17 years old, Bogdan Vrancean proved that age is not a barrier to inspiring an entire generation to take an active role in shaping their future.

For more information regarding the project please access here: <https://dacia.org.md/rom/tinerii-formatiori-inspira-comunitatea-sa-voteze>

**Bogdan's message to the youth was:**

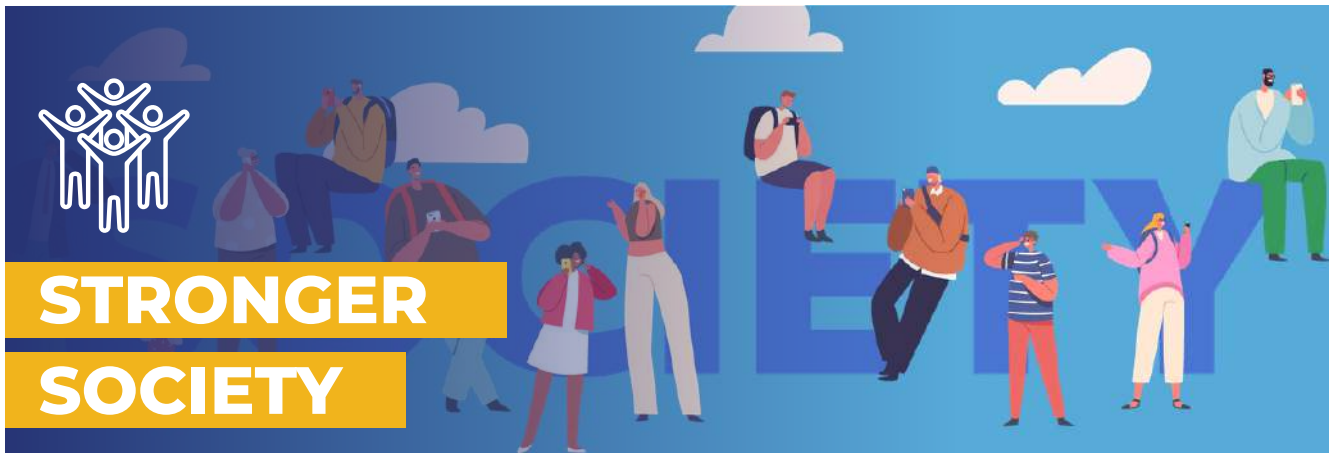
*"I can't vote... I encourage you to go and vote on October 20 and to vote for us, young people who don't have yet the right to vote, the vector for our country's development."*

All video spots can be found here:

[https://www.facebook.com/CRTFDACIA/?locale=ro\\_RO](https://www.facebook.com/CRTFDACIA/?locale=ro_RO)







## The Nordic-Baltic foreign ministers engage in dialogue with local communities across Moldova

Eight foreign ministers and state secretaries from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden visited the Republic of Moldova. In addition to official meetings with central authorities, they visited, on October 15, the northern, central, and southern regions of the country, where they participated in a series of “EU Talks” events.

European officials engaged with community members in Bălți, Comrat, and Ungheni to discuss Moldova’s European integration process, best practices, and development experiences from their respective countries, as well as the support and benefits of European integration.



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In Bălți, Gabrielius Landsbergis (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania), Lars Løkke Rasmussen (Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark), and Martin Eyjólfsson (State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland) addressed topics related to collaboration opportunities between Moldova and the countries they represent. They also spoke about the benefits of European integration and the support provided by the European Union and its member states in the accession process, offering concrete examples from their own countries' experiences.

In Comrat, Baiba Braže (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia), Espen Barth Eide (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway), and Pasi Rajala (Political State Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland) discussed local economic opportunities, the support provided by the European Union in the accession process, and the tangible results achieved by the ATU Gagauzia thanks to this support. The dialogue highlighted the importance of sustainable development and the European partnership for strengthening the economy and infrastructure at the regional level.



In Ungheni, Torbjörn Sohlström (Director General and Head of Euro-Atlantic and Security Policy Department, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and Margus Tsahkna (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia) engaged with citizens, local authorities, and business representatives, emphasizing the relevance of cooperation for the socio-economic progress of the region. The discussions focused on Sweden's and Estonia's experiences in the EU accession process and emphasized the economic, social, and administrative benefits that European integration brings.



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In 2023, the support amounted to €128.4 million. Additionally, the Nordic and Baltic countries have committed to contributing to increasing Moldova's resilience to hybrid threats, as well as to addressing the humanitarian and economic consequences of the war in Ukraine.



# Authorities and citizens from Râșcani, Rezina and Vulcănești engage in direct dialogue with the EU Ambassador

Authorities, entrepreneurs, and civil society representatives from Râșcani, Rezina, and Vulcănești had the opportunity to engage directly with the European Union Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova, Jānis Mažeiks.

These meetings with local communities were part of the EU Talks series of events, held between October and December 2024. The discussions provided participants with insights into the current EU funding opportunities for Moldova – ranging from infrastructure to social, cultural, and economic initiatives – as well as the mechanisms the European Union employs to ensure the proper use of European funds.

Participants also explored key topics such as local development priorities, the creation of new jobs, the improvement of public

services, support for local entrepreneurship, and methods to counter myths about the EU while protecting themselves from propaganda and disinformation.

Participants also explored key topics such as local development priorities, the creation of new jobs, the improvement of public services, support for local entrepreneurship, and methods to counter myths about the EU while protecting themselves from propaganda and disinformation.

The “EU Talks” events are organised by the EU Information Centre in the Republic of Moldova – Europe Café, with the support of the European Union, providing a platform for open dialogue between European officials and communities in Moldova. These discussions reflect the benefits of European





integration, collaboration on joint projects in various fields, as well as the culture, traditions, and history of the EU and its member states. The initiative reflects the EU's commitment

to supporting Moldova's development on its European path, highlighting the value of the strategic partnership between Moldova and the European Union.



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## With the financial support of the European Union, 10 social laundries have been opened in the Republic of Moldova, offering free of charge services to approximately 2,500 vulnerable individuals

With financial support from the European Union, 10 social laundries were opened in Ciuciuleni village (Hîncești rayon), Pîrlița commune (Ungheni rayon), Cărbuna village (Ialoveni rayon), Șeptelici village (Soroca rayon), Izvoare village (Florești rayon), Corpaci and Vișoara villages (Edineț rayon), Sălcuța village (Căușeni rayon), Domulgeni village (Florești rayon), and Cimișlia town (Cimișlia rayon). These laundries aim to support socially vulnerable groups by

providing free access to laundry services and opportunities for social interaction.

The social laundries offer laundry services, personal hygiene facilities, and opportunities for socialisation, improving the quality of life and promoting social integration for approximately 2,500 vulnerable individuals, including people with disabilities, the elderly, low-income families, and other disadvantaged groups.



The project funds were used to renovate spaces provided by town halls and to purchase modern furniture and equipment. Washing and drying machines were installed in the premises. Rooms for socialising were also created. In this way, the beneficiaries of the service will be involved in various

educational and recreational activities, which will provide them with the opportunity to integrate socially into the community and to develop personally. The European Union provided grants totalling approximately 221,800 euros to support the opening of the 10 social laundries.





*"This project once again demonstrates how partnerships between the European Union, local authorities, and the community can transform an idea into reality, creating practical and sustainable solutions to meet citizens' needs. The European Union supports and will continue to back such initiatives that bring community members together and contribute to the social integration of vulnerable people. Community mobilization and solidarity are crucial for building a better future in rural areas. We congratulate the Town Hall and all partners involved for their exemplary efforts,"*

**said Irina Beșliu, Programme Manager at the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Moldova.**

The project has also purchased transport units to facilitate the transport of clothing and other textiles for people with reduced mobility. They will benefit from having the items collected and delivered directly from their homes. At the same time, new jobs have been created to ensure the smooth running of the social service.

Once the project is completed, the town halls will take over the operation of the social laundries in their localities, ensuring the continuity of the service.

The Promotion of CSOs as Partners in Developing Resilient Social Services project is financed by the European Union, co-financed and implemented by a consortium of three civil society organisations: Keystone Moldova, the Dorcas-Moldova Foundation, and the Association for Neohumanist Education. The project has a total budget of €1,126,849, including €999,797 in non-reimbursable EU funding. The project is implemented starting February 2023 to January 2026.



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Under the project, regional civil society organizations, in partnership with local public authorities, will establish and develop at least **15 social services for vulnerable people** across **15 municipalities** in the Republic of Moldova. As a result, at least 1,500 individuals facing socio-economic challenges (such as low income, unemployment, pensioners, single-parent families, and homelessness) will be able to access the social laundry services free of charge.



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# The first edition of the Food Waste Prevention Gratitude Gala

On November 26, 2024, the Food Bank organised the first edition of the Food Waste Prevention Gratitude Gala, an event designed to highlight the contribution of partners in the agri-food sector who have supported people in need by donating the surplus food. The Gala brought together a diverse community of partners and supporters who have distinguished themselves through their impact in the development of the first Food Bank in the Republic of Moldova.

**Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova:**

*“Reducing food waste is one of the EU’s main objectives to achieve a circular economy by 2050. I am glad that together, we have succeeded in improving the legal framework*

*of the Republic of Moldova in the field of food waste prevention and have strengthened the functioning capacities of the Food Bank. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the donors - companies, farmers, partners and volunteers - as well as to the citizens who support the endeavour to prevent food waste and promote solidarity.”*

The Food Bank is an international mechanism whereby surplus food that is safe for consumption and at risk of being thrown away by food chain operators is recovered. Therefore, the Bank distributes these products to social services assisting vulnerable groups affected by food insecurity.



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As a token of high appreciation, during the event, seven agri-food operators, who have distinguished themselves by their constant involvement and significant contribution to the Food Bank, were awarded with the Gratitude Gala Trophy for preventing food waste.

This initiative was carried out as part of the project “Partnerships for Inclusive and Resilient Social Canteen Services” funded by the European Union, co-financed, and implemented by PI “Keystone Moldova”, PA ‘Concordia. Social Projects’, and RISM “Diaconia”.

***Oleg Paraschiv, director of the Food Bank:***

*“The Gala is an event to highlight the efforts of the people and teams who have particularly supported the call of preventing waste and promoting solidarity through a constant commitment to social involvement and responsibility. Due to the support of the European Union, since 2022, the recovery capacity of all food categories has increased. As a result, today, we have recovered 319 516 kg of food from 61 agri-food operators. This food has been distributed to 78 social services across the country assisting 9635 beneficiaries.”*

# The EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform announced plans for actions to boost social cohesion and counter disinformation amid EU accession efforts at its 14th meeting

The fourteenth meeting of the European Union - Republic of Moldova Civil Society Platform took place in Brussels on November 15, 2024. During the meeting, participants assessed the outcomes of the constitutional referendum, emphasizing the measures needed to strengthen social cohesion, combat disinformation, as well as the progress of the Republic of Moldova in the implementation of the Association Agreement.

**Liliana Palihovici, co-chair of the EU - Moldova Civil Society Platform, stated:**

*"The members of the EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform hope that the European Union will continue to support Moldova in its process of advancing reforms, the experiences of member countries are of great use to us, so we are ready to extend this cooperation and learn from the already proven successful experiences."*



Cristina Cerevate, Head of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, noted that the Moldovan Government must consider civil society as a

key partner in the process of EU integration, as the ambitious plan to join the European Union by 2030 is only achievable by joint efforts.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of the 14th Joint Declaration, which reflects the priorities and position of civil society on the European course of the Republic of Moldova. The full declaration adopted at the meeting can be accessed in Romanian version [here](#) and in English version [here](#). Further details are available on the project website: [euromonitor.md](http://euromonitor.md).

The European Union - Republic of Moldova Civil Society Platform was created on the basis of Article 442 of the Association Agreement and is composed of representatives of EU civil society, including members of the European Economic and Social Committee and representatives of civil society from the Republic of Moldova and is a forum for meeting and exchanging views on issues related to the implementation of the Association Agreement as well as the development challenges of the Republic of Moldova.

The fourteenth meeting of the EU – Moldova Civil Society Platform was held within the framework of the project "[Civil Society for European Integration](#)" funded by the European Union and co-financed by "Friedrich Ebert" Foundation Moldova, which is implemented by the Independent Analytical Center Expert-Grup, as the lead partner, in partnership with the Institute for European Policy and Reform (IPRE), A.O. Institutum Virtutes Civilis (IVC) and "Friedrich Ebert" Foundation Moldova.





# Promoting gender equality and women's access to justice across the Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkan regions

Judges, prosecutors and representatives from judicial training institutions across the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans regions met in Tirana, on 20-21 November, to assess the results of [the mentoring programme for legal professionals on women's access to justice](#).

A series of thematic exchanges were held on technology-facilitated violence against women, opportunities and risks for gender equality when using artificial intelligence in judiciaries, and efforts to enhance regional co-operation of judicial training institutions in the interest of improving to women's access to justice.



[The 2023 Reykjavik Declaration from fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe](#) recalls that the gender equality and the full, equal and effective participation of women in public and private decision-making processes are essential to the rule of law, democracy, and sustainable development.

In this sense, the European Union and the Council of Europe through their joint work are supporting the progress in access to justice for women in the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan countries, through tailor-made assistance to the authorities to implement the standards set in the Istanbul Convention.

The mentoring programme for legal professionals on women's access to justice is a key tool to address the constant barriers at the legal, institutional, and socio-cultural levels that women face when trying to access justice.

This event is organised within the action "[Women's access to justice in the Western Balkans](#)" and the project "[Women's Access to Justice: implementing Council of Europe's gender equality and violence against women standards](#)", which are respectively parts of the European Union/Council of Europe joint programmes "[Horizontal Facility III for the Western Balkans and Türkiye](#)" and "[Partnership for Good Governance](#)".



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## The “Integrity is a priority in customs” campaign has ended: over 25,000 people have been informed about the risks of corruption

The “Integrity is a priority in customs” campaign, organized by the Customs Service, the National Anti-Corruption Centre and the EU High Level Advisers’ Mission in the period 6 – 11 December, on the occasion of Anti-Corruption Day, has come to an end. In total, over **25,000 people** who crossed the border crossing points and underwent customs control were informed about the risks and consequences of corruption, as well as contact details for reporting cases of corruption or improper behaviour.

People received information leaflets, as well as vehicle air fresheners, with the contact details of the National Anti-Corruption Line. Posters with the same information were displayed at all border crossing points in the country.

The campaign was launched on December 6 by the leadership of the Customs Service and representatives of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and the EU HLA Mission, who went to the Leușeni border crossing point to personally distribute the information materials.

The information campaign is part of a series of measures to strengthen integrity, such as anti-corruption training for employees, promoting zero tolerance for corruption, creating strict monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and educating the public on the risks of bribery. All of these actions are undertaken to emphasize the importance of transparency, ethics and integrity.





# Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions identify strategies towards safer environment and spaces for the LGBTI community

LGBTI persons in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions face significant discrimination and abuse, including violence, due to their sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics. The latest Council of Europe Anti-Racism Commission (ECRI) [General Policy Recommendation No. 17](#) outlines recommendations for Council of Europe member states “to ensure that LGBTI people are safe, equally protected under the law and able to enjoy rights and freedoms to the same extent as all other members of society”.

To explore solutions to these challenges, the regional conference “Spaces and services to protect LGBTI communities” was held in

Sarajevo - Bosnia and Herzegovina on 5-7 November 2024. This event was organised with the support of the EU and the Council of Europe. Activists and representatives from civil society organisations from the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions gathered to discuss key strategies to create safer environments for the LGBTI community. This conference aimed to foster further collaboration and progress in the region, building on the findings of previous regional events in the field.

Discussions on initiatives by movements actively working against the recognition, protection, and advancement of human rights, as well identifying patterns and



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early warning signs, were crucial. These discussions helped to better identify such movements and anti-rights actors across Europe and the region, while also exploring promising strategies for countering them safely. Representatives of civil society organisations and institutions discussed critical issues such as family violence faced by LGBTI individuals. They also provided an overview of existing social and psychological support services, including safe spaces and shelters. Despite ongoing efforts, the group acknowledged the persistent challenges of securing sustainable funding and political support for human rights defenders in the above-mentioned regions.

The EU and the Council of Europe support human rights institutions and civil society organisations in promoting the rights of LGBTI persons in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership regions. By fostering multi-stakeholder dialogue, these organisations contribute to social change and improvements at both the domestic and regional levels.

This event is organised within the European Union/Council of Europe Joint Programmes "[Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye](#)" and "[Partnership for Good Governance](#)", in co-operation with the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) Unit of the Council of Europe. It is also supported by the Council of Europe project "Enhancing Equality and Non-Discrimination in Georgia" and the European Union/Council of Europe Joint Project "[Support for implementing European standards relating to anti-discrimination and rights of national minorities in Ukraine](#)".



# Empowering legal professionals in the Republic of Moldova to combat discrimination

A tailor-made training for 51 judges, prosecutors, and judicial staff in the Republic of Moldova was organised to support them further in the identification of prejudices and stereotypes, legal practice in handling discrimination cases, as well as working with the victims of hate speech and bias-motivated offences. The training was based on relevant European Court of Human Rights case law.

Council of Europe resources, including the recent [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech](#), the [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate crime](#), and other relevant European standards in the field, were used during the training.



Participants got familiar with relevant domestic cases and had the opportunity to participate in practical exercises on judicial redress for discrimination cases, discussing ways of improving established working methods. A significant focus was put on the existing national jurisprudence, addressing issues such as how to ensure a better access to justice for the citizens, and improving the support to the victims of discrimination. Some recent cases of hate speech and incitement to discrimination in the context of the presidential elections in the Republic of Moldova were also analysed. At the end of the training, organised in co-operation with the National Institute of Justice of the Republic of Moldova,

participants identified the need to continue with training activities but also further develop a dialogue between different actors in the law enforcement system to ensure further improvements, efficient and robust response to cases of hate speech, hate crimes and discrimination.

This event 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”](#).

# Towards a better legal protection of minorities in the Republic of Moldova

Legal professionals (50 persons), judges, prosecutors, and staff from judicial institutions of the Republic of Moldova, were trained on the latest European and Council of Europe standards and on the European Court of Human Rights case law on discrimination on religious, ethnic, sexual and linguistic grounds.

The local context and the efficiency of legal remedies against discrimination of minorities in the Republic of Moldova

were presented and discussed, focusing on better standards of protection in line with the relevant European practice. Along with this, participants were updated on the newest legal developments, and took part in practical exercises on antisemitism cases, discrimination based on sexual orientation, and on religious grounds, exchanging on ways to improve the redress measures for the most vulnerable segments of the society in the country.



This event 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”.



# Police officers in the Republic of Moldova enhanced abilities in investigating hate speech incidents

As a part of [dedicated police training](#) program, 23 police officers improved their knowledge and skills in documenting, analysing and qualifying hate speech cases in line with European standards and with the Council of Europe recommendations. Ultimate aim of this activities is to address the widespread occurrence of hate speech, and to ensure a prompt and professional intervention of competent investigative agents for combating hate speech incidents and its harmful impact on Moldovan society.

This two-day peer-to-peer training that was conducted by the Council of Europe in partnership with the General Inspectorate of Police, contributed to enhancement of established working methods of police officers related to hate speech, but also allowed for exchange on the efficiency of legal remedies against incitement to discrimination and hatred and ways ahead for more efficient investigations of hate speech incidents, in line with the European standards, including the Council of Europe [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech](#).



This event was organised in partnership with the General Police Inspectorate, as part of the Council of Europe project "[Promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova](#)" and 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](#)".



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# Promoting transparency and inclusion: key takeaways from public discussions on budget monitoring and social development

In October, a series of round tables were held to present monitoring reports developed as part of the "Civil Society for European Integration" project. Funded by the European Union and co-financed by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Moldova, the project is implemented by the Independent Think Tank Expert-Grup in collaboration with the Institute for European Policy and Reform (IPRE), A.O. Institutum Virtutes Civilis (IVC), and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Moldova.

In total, 3 round tables were organized in various localities, including: the commune of Congazcicul de Sus, ATU Gagauzia, Balti and Chisinau.

The purpose of these meetings was to present and discuss the main findings of the monitoring reports, which addressed various topics related to the monitoring of budget spending in the social, economic and justice sectors in the respective localities.



A.O. Vesta Gagauzia presented the monitoring report on budgeting processes and public finance management, analyzing the activities of the municipality of Congazcicul de Sus in the field of participatory budget implementation, transparency and citizens' involvement in decision-making processes, green economy and energy efficiency. Following the analysis, the authors from A.O Vesta

(Vesta Gagauzia) team, with the guidance of experts from IPRE (Institute for European Policy and Reforms) came up with a number of recommendations on the development of strategic documents and measures to ensure a better and more effective strategic approach to development in the areas of economy, culture, infrastructure, social sphere, support for vulnerable inhabitants of the commune.

The Association for Human Rights Lex XXI, from Balti, developed the analytical report presenting the results of monitoring the effectiveness, transparency and impact of the program "Europe an Village", 1st edition, on the development of rural communities in the Northern region of the Republic of Moldova, guided by expert Marina Soloviova, program director at Expert-Grup. The subjects of the monitoring were the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development and the municipalities from the North of the country participating in the "European Village" program.

The Center for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities organized a round table on the topic "Potential of Moldovan universities to implement the Inclusive Education Development Programme 2024-2027". The report presented at the event, developed with the guidance of IPRE experts, includes an analysis of how prepared Moldovan universities are for the implementation of the Inclusive Education Development Program 2024-2027, what are the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for higher education institutions and what good practices for the inclusion of students with disabilities are already being applied.

To access the full reports, please visit [euromonitor.md](http://euromonitor.md).





# The project “Partnerships for Inclusive and Resilient Social Canteen Services” has successfully concluded its activities

The results of the project Partnerships for Inclusive and Resilient Social Canteen Services were presented during the conference organised on December 9, 2024. The event was an opportunity to assess the impact of the project on the development of the food support service in the country.

With the financial support of the European Union, the activity and improved infrastructure of 5 social canteens in Cosernitsa, Ghetlova, Antonesti, Cazangic and Dorotcaia was supported, providing hot meals for 494 people suffering from food insecurity. The project also helped to improve the regulatory framework regulating the prevention of food waste in order to incentivise economic agents to donate the surplus food. The collection capacity of the Food Bank was also strengthened, with 319.5 tonnes of food recovered. Through the social canteen and other social services, around 9700 people in need benefited from the recovered food.

**Ludmila Malcoci, executive director P.I. Keystone Moldova:**

*“The project aimed to develop sustainable and inclusive food support services, emphasising on diversifying the forms of delivery of these services, improving the legislative framework and strengthening the Food Bank. It also encouraged closer collaboration between social canteens and the Food Bank to increase the resilience and efficiency of these services.”*

In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection within the project, a set of draft normative acts aimed to regulate the activity of social canteens and other forms of food support, such as: framework regulation for food support service, minimum quality standards, operational manual and methodology for costing were elaborated.

The event was carried out as part of the project Partnerships for Inclusive and Resilient Social Canteen Services funded by the European Union, co-financed, and implemented by PI “Keystone Moldova”, PA “Concordia. Social Projects”, and RISM “Diaconia.



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## Combating gender-based violence through community-level awareness raising

UN Human Rights has a unique mandate from the international community to promote and protect all human rights for all people. In addition to providing expert and technical support to the Government, UN Human Rights Moldova actively collaborates with civil society representatives, enhancing the capacity of activists and community mediators to promote and protect minority rights.

Since February, UN Human Rights has been implementing the project '**Strengthening the rights of minorities in the Republic of Moldova**', funded by the European Union. One component of the project is to support and strengthen Roma community mediators on the left bank of Dniester/Nistru River. UN Human Rights recognizes and appreciates the role of community mediators in assisting the Roma community in accessing public services and promoting equality through their daily work.



On 11 December, with the support of UN Human Rights, Margareta Prodan, Roma community mediator in Dubăsari city contributed to the awareness of Roma women on gender-based violence by conducting an information session within the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign.

The information session included watching a thematic film, a dialog with a psychologist about the forms and types of gender-based violence and most importantly-about the

existing mechanisms of prevention and protection from violence. The information session was attended by about 20 women and girls who showed interest in the topic and were actively involved

The information session was a safe platform that allowed participants to share their stories, to make sure that gender-based violence cannot be silenced and that it is always necessary to look for ways to prevent and protect against it.



*"This is the first time such an event has been held in our town. I did not expect that it would arouse such interest and activity among women and girls. At the end of the meeting, the participants asked me to organize such events more often and to pay more attention to the awareness of women and girls,"*

**said Margareta Prodan.**

Members of the Roma community continue to face discrimination and stigmatization on both banks of Dniester/Nistru River, and one of the many reasons for the continuation of this harmful practice are the widespread stereotypes against Roma. Such stigmatizing attitudes contribute to Roma communities becoming more closed.

Events such as these allow for dialog with and within the Roma community on important topics and are an effective instrument for raising the awareness of the Roma community.





# Public appeal for legislative measures in psycho-emotional health, vocational guidance and sexual education for young people

Youth organizations within the MYCS network draw attention to the significant challenges faced by young people in the Republic of Moldova in the areas of psycho-emotional health, vocational guidance, and sexual-reproductive education. In a public

appeal, these organizations urge the authorities to adopt legislative measures that address the urgent needs of young people, in order to improve their quality of life and opportunities for personal and professional development.



## Psycho-emotional health

One of the most concerning issues highlighted is psycho-emotional health. Studies show that 20% of young people suffer from problems such as depression, anxiety, or chronic stress, often exacerbated by phenomena such as bullying and the lack of adequate psychological support. To address this situation, the organizations propose the adoption of the Psychologist Law and a Code of Ethics to regulate the activities of psychologists.

Additionally, the MYCS network recommends the creation of online platforms that would allow for the confidential reporting of mental health issues, the expansion of psychological services in schools, universities, and communities, as well as the implementation of an annual continuing education program for psychologists. Moreover, there is a need

for increased government resources for training mental health professionals and for creating accessible support centers for young people.

## Vocational guidance

Another major issue is the lack of access to quality vocational guidance services. The Republic of Moldova has one of the highest rates in Europe of young people who are neither employed nor enrolled in education. This phenomenon particularly affects young people from vulnerable groups, including those with disabilities.

Therefore, the MYCS network proposes the development of a national regulatory framework that ensures the quality of career counseling services and expands them beyond the existing networks. Other recommended measures include



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professional training for counselors, the development of an online portal with information about the labor market, and the adaptation of vocational training programs to meet the demands of the current economy.

### **Sexual-reproductive education**

Regarding sexual-reproductive education, the organizations highlight the lack of correct and accessible information for young people. This deficiency contributes to high rates of sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies.

The organizations recommend making sexual education a mandatory subject in schools, with content adapted to the age and needs of students. Other proposals include organizing information campaigns on contraception and testing for sexually transmitted infections, as well as developing a national program to improve access to sexual health and contraceptive services.

This Public Appeal is part of an advocacy plan developed by the 12 youth organizations in the MYCS network since the summer, as part of the Advocacy and Communication Camp. The document will be submitted to the authorities to support the creation of an environment conducive to the development and well-being of young people.

The MYCS network was established in 2023, within the project "MYCS: Moldova Youth Civil Society – a Call for Stronger and Inclusive Youth Participation", co-funded by the European Union and implemented by Terre des hommes Moldova Foundation in partnership with the Foundation for Civil Society Development (Romania) and the Center Partnership for Development. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of local youth civic actors to deliver inclusive and sustainable youth participation and empowerment programs and services.

The full text of the Appeal can be downloaded here: [tdh.md/MYCS-apel-unic-propuneri-legislative-2024](https://tdh.md/MYCS-apel-unic-propuneri-legislative-2024)





## INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENT

### Launch of the European Consumer Centre in Moldova: strengthening consumer protection and confidence in the EU single market

On November 5th the European Consumer Centre from the Republic of Moldova (ECCM) has been officially launched. This event marked an important step in strengthening consumer confidence in market mechanisms and in the European Single Market. The Centre's inauguration was accompanied by a round of discussions that have focused on the role of the Centre, its short, medium, and long term goals.

The event was attended by representatives of the central public administration, authorities with consumer protection and market surveillance competences, from the Republic of Moldova and Romania, donors, representatives of business associations and academia, as well as experts in the field. The discussions culminated with a plenary debate.



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**Present at the event, Máté CSICSAI, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova, noted that:**

*"The EU is proud to support the creation of the European Consumer Center in Moldova. The Centre will protect consumers and help them make informed decisions, benefiting both consumers and businesses in Moldova. This is an important step towards Moldova's integration into the EU: the Centre will ensure the smooth functioning of the single market, the enforcement of consumer protection laws and will enable consumers to amicably settle their disputes with EU vendors and vice-versa. Created based on the model of other ECCs, ECCM will bring Moldova one step closer to the European Union!"*

ECCM is envisaged to become an important pillar in supporting consumer rights and facilitating consumer access to information, while and supporting consumers with their cross-border disputes.

The event was organized within the framework of the project "Consolidation of the consumer protection framework in the Republic of Moldova", implemented by the Expert-Grup as consortium leader, in partnership with the IPRE, and funded by the European Union and the Soros Foundation Moldova.



# Launch of the Handbook on the negotiations for the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union

The Handbook on the negotiations for the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union was launched on 21 November 2024. The event was attended by the EU Ambassador in Moldova, Jānis Mazeiks, the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, Cristina Gherasimov, and one of the authors of the textbook - Vladimir Međak.

*enlargement process is not for Brussels, but for the people of this country, who will become European citizens. It is essential to inform about the concrete benefits of the integration that all citizens of the Republic of Moldova will enjoy".*

***EU Ambassador to Moldova, Jānis Mažeiks, underlined the crucial role of the publication in strengthening the country's commitment to European integration:***

*"This handbook is not only about explaining European legislation, but also about communicating with citizens. The*

***Ms. Gerasimov mentioned that***

*"The Handbook is an important tool for our European path and an useful guide for all those involved in the process".*



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**Primož Vehar, Team Leader of the Project, underlined that this Handbook was drafted**

*"in a language that is understandable to the general public, because the process of EU accession is not a process that belongs only to the elites of society, but one that includes the entire society".*

**Dr Vladimir Međak presented an overview of its content noting that:**

*"The basic aim was, first of all, to explain what is happening in the process of a country's European integration. Secondly, we wanted to avoid any misunderstandings or misconceptions about EU membership".*

The Handbook provides a detailed overview of the accession process, including general information about the European Union, such as the structure of its institutions and its fundamental principles, the history of EU enlargement. There are presented criteria

for candidate countries, the relationship between the EU and the Republic of Moldova and the steps of accession negotiations, from opening to closing thematic chapters, with practical examples from the experience of other Member States.

The Handbook is primarily addressed to decision-makers and civil servants directly or indirectly involved in the negotiation process and who may have different levels of knowledge and experience. It is also intended for the civil society, journalists and all interested citizens.

The publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union, within the framework of the Project Support for structured policy dialogue, coordination of the implementation of the Association Agreement and enhancement of the legal approximation process, the main role in the elaboration belongs to experts Vladimir Međak and Aljoša Race.

The manual is also available online: [RO](#) and [EN](#).





# EUPM Moldova: Proactively bolstering Moldova’s ability to tackle hybrid threats

Between 19th-20th of November, EUPM Moldova actively participated and supported the first edition of the Moldova Security Forum that took place in Chişinău. A premiere strategic forum, the event brought together leaders, experts, and practitioners from across the world to discuss Moldova's security challenges, regional stability, and evolving global threats. Cosmin Dinescu, Head of EUPM Moldova, took part in a debate on bolstering capabilities to proactively detect and counter hybrid threats. The underlying objective of the debate was to ensure that Moldova's institutions are prepared for the myriad ways in which hybrid threats may arise as well as primed to react to them in a timely and concerted

manner. This aims to contribute to the wider goal of strengthening the resilience of key institutions of Moldova's government and support efforts to guarantee the protection of the democratic values and Moldova's chosen European path.

The forum was organized by the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), the NATO Liaison Office in the Republic of Moldova and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in the Republic of Moldova. The event was attended by high-level representatives from Moldovan ministries and agencies, EU institutions, EU Member States embassies and representatives, as well as by other international partners and civil society organizations.



Moldova Security Forum – Panel on Hybrid Threats

# EUPM Moldova organizes study visits to Estonia, Finland, and Latvia

As part of its ongoing support for Moldovan authorities, EUPM facilitated two recent study visits to EU member states for representatives of key institutions, including employees from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The visits focused on enhancing expertise in crisis preparedness (Estonia) and cybersecurity (Estonia, Latvia, Finland), two areas of growing continued importance for the Republic of Moldova.

The first visit focused on exploring ways to enhance the cooperation in crisis management and civil protection, and was

organised in partnership with the Estonian Centre for International Development (ESTDEV). This visit contributes to the EUPM's broader support to the strengthening of Moldova's crisis management structures, focusing on the Ministry of Interior and on the development and implementation of policies and solutions at national and regional level. During the visit to Estonia, meetings were held at the Government Office, the Ministry of the Interior, the Estonian Rescue Service, and the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences.



*Meeting with the Estonian Rescue Board in Tallinn, the Moldovan delegation discussed the latest developments in civil protection and new tasks for civil defense.*

The second visit took place in Estonia, Latvia, and Finland and approached the topic of incident management, vulnerability scanning, and critical infrastructure defence in the field of cyber security, with as primary objective to support the Republic of Moldova to strengthen technical cyber capabilities in

these fields. The study trip was organized in partnership with the EU funded project "Moldova Cybersecurity Rapid Assistance II" implemented by the e-Governance Academy (eGA). The study trip contributes to a safer and more resilient digital future of Moldova, learning from the good practices of national institutions in EU Member States.





Fire station in Estonia



Workshop - Study visit to Estonia, Finland and Latvia

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# Technical infrastructure and communication systems of the Moldovan Border Police modernised with the financial support of the European Union

On 31 October, EUBAM held its annual Task Force Tobacco meeting in Chisinau, Moldova, uniting representatives from law enforcement agencies across Moldova, Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, Europol, OLAF, and the private sector. The meeting addressed the evolving dynamics of the illegal tobacco trade, an issue exacerbated by the current geopolitical landscape and Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine.

Discussions centred on the illicit cigarette trade, examining its sources, trends, markets, countermeasures, and the confiscation and recovery of assets derived from illegal activities. Participants highlighted an increase in the illicit tobacco market. EU member states have witnessed a surge in the illegal movement of cigarettes from Moldova and Ukraine, and the latter a rise of locally manufactured, counterfeit cigarette consumption.



The demand for illegal cigarettes has increased considerably after Russia's unjustified war of aggression on Ukraine. As normal supply chains were cut, many clandestine factories were opened here in Europe to produce on the spot. Participants

emphasized the importance of tackling illicit cigarette manufacturing, given its widespread impact on public health, social welfare, and economies. They focused on developing more effective strategies to combat this illegal trade and protect



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public health and revenue streams through collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The meeting also highlighted recent achievements in anti-smuggling efforts. Participants reviewed case studies showcasing improved collaboration with EU enforcement bodies to intercept shipments before they reach EU markets. The Task Force assessed technological advancements and intelligence-sharing frameworks to enhance interdiction efforts across partner nations further.

**Slawomir Pichor, Head of EUBAM, noted that**

*this annual meeting is essential to bolstering coordinated efforts in tackling illegal tobacco flows, especially as the war in Ukraine continues to alter smuggling routes.*



# EUBAM enhances border security skills with Train-the-Trainers course for Moldovan Border Police

Between 28 October and 1 November, EUBAM organized an intensive Train-the-Trainers course on second line checks for eight officers from the Moldovan Border Police. The course aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of MDBP officers, equipping them to train their colleagues in advanced border control techniques.

This course covered various second-line inspection procedures, including in-depth document verification, detailed interviewing, biometric screening, thorough luggage and vehicle searches, and advanced database checks.

Two experts from the Romanian Border Police and one from the Finnish Border Guard led the training, sharing best practices and expertise in second-line inspection procedures. These skills will enable Border Police officers to conduct more effective screenings, enhancing border security while maintaining smooth operations for legitimate travellers.





# Head of EUBAM Meets Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration

On 10 December, Slawomir Pichor, Head of the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM), met with Oleg Serebrian, Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration of Moldova (DPMR), to discuss joint initiatives undertaken by EUBAM and Moldovan national authorities, as well as future confidence-building measures.

The meeting underscored EUBAM's efforts to support Moldova's European Union integration process, emphasizing the alignment of practices with EU standards

on both banks of the Nistru River. These initiatives aim to enhance traders' access to EU markets. The Deputy Prime Minister expressed strong appreciation for EUBAM's contribution.

DPMR also advocated for expanding collaboration with the Moldovan Chamber of Commerce and Industry to organize additional workshops and seminars designed to support businesses in the Transnistrian region.



# Over 30 employees of the National Commission for Financial Markets consolidate their skills in the field of consumer protection in financial services

The EU High Level Advisers' Mission jointly with the National Commission for Financial Market (NCFM), organized a series of training sessions on consumer protection in financial services. The series comprised 10 trainings, between October – December 2024, and aimed to provide the necessary support for understanding and developing the institutional capacity required to transpose the Directive 2014/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the comparability of fees related to payment accounts, payment account switching and access to payment

accounts with basic features.

At the opening of the event, the Chairman of the NCFM, Dumitru Budianschi, thanked the European Union for the financial support provided, mentioning the valuable experience of the National Authority for Consumer Protection from Romania in transposing EU directives, as well as the importance of these training sessions in the context of the NCFM taking on the mandate of regulating and supervising the protection of consumers' rights regarding financial services.



At the same time, he emphasized that this training session will provide the necessary support for the development and establishment of a uniform set of standards that will facilitate the comparison of services and commissions related to payment accounts and that will prevent discrimination of consumers who

intend to open and use a cross-border payment account, based on residence criteria.

Over 30 employees of the NCFM participated in the training session.

# Ministry of Finance and the EU High level Advisers' Mission launch an awareness raising campaign on the new tax and customs policy

The Ministry of Finance jointly with the EU High Level Advisers' Mission implemented an awareness raising campaign on the new tax and customs policy, which started in October with a dialogue with the business community. The purpose of the event was to explain the new fiscal measures before their entry into force, in order to prepare the business environment for upcoming innovations and potential challenges.

In the beginning of the event, State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance Cristina Ixari noted the importance of an open dialogue between state authorities and the business environment, emphasizing that this type of interaction not only improves transparency, but also contributes to the formulation of more effective fiscal policies adapted to current economic realities.



The EU High Adviser on Customs and Tax Policy, Rosario De Blasio, emphasized the crucial role of cooperation among all stakeholders involved in the process of elaboration and consultation of this important policy document. “In order to efficiently respond to all possible challenges in this process and advance in the transposition of EU legislation, we need joint coordinated efforts and awareness of the fact that every ingredient matters in this complex exercise.”

During the event, specialists of the Ministry of Finance, State Tax Service and Customs Service, involved in the elaboration and consultation process of the new tax and customs policy presented the main

facilities introduced both for legal entities and for natural persons.

The customs and tax policy for 2025 was developed by the Ministry of Finance, with the support of the EU High-Level Advisers' Mission, and underwent a complex consultation process with representatives of the business environment, trade associations, central and local public authorities, around 300 proposals being examined in all.

The information campaign continued with the session “Budgetary-fiscal and customs policy 2025: interpretation, mechanisms and application procedures – VAT and Excise Duties component”. The second event of the information campaign was



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held in a hybrid format, gathering over 400 participants.

The third and final information session of the awareness-raising campaign was dedicated to the 2025 budgetary-tax and customs policy: interpretation, application

mechanisms and procedures. The main topics discussed during the event concerned the income tax, local taxes and the Customs Code. This was attended by over 900 persons: 130 with physical presence and over 770 in online format.



# Representatives from over 20 countries gathered in Chişinău to discuss current topics in customs cooperation

On 16-17 October, the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova jointly with the EU High Level Advisers' Mission hosted the 27th Meeting of the National Contact Points of the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Eastern and Central Europe (RILO ECE).

The large-scale event brought together representatives of the RILO ECE network from the Republic of Moldova, Albania, Croatia, Estonia, Montenegro, Romania,

Slovakia, Georgia, Poland, Greece, RILO West-East networks, RILO for Asia and the Pacific, RILO for Eastern and Southern Africa. The event was also attended by representatives from the World Customs Organization, the EU High Level Advisers' Mission, the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), the Universal Postal Union, the EUBAM Mission, EUPM Moldova, FRONTEX and partners from the private sector.



The purpose of the event reflects the importance of strengthening the RILO ECE network in its complex mission to support the member administrations of the World Customs Organization, by providing operational support, facilitating mutual administrative assistance, and promoting regional cooperation with other law enforcement agencies and authorities.

The agenda of the meeting included topical subjects regarding administrative assistance in the customs field, the most significant achievements in the current year, as well as the establishment of cooperation priorities for the future.

During two days, the meeting served as a platform for discussions between the delegates of the RILOs member states, enabling the exchange of experience and best practices in the law enforcement field, with an emphasis on trends in smuggling, interoperability, and recommendations for improving the mechanisms used by RILO ECE in preventing and combating cross-border crime and facilitating legitimate trade.

Special attention was paid to new developments in IT tools, to facilitate real-time information exchange, data visualization, as well as the development of digital solutions for customs authorities on data collection, analysis and management in the anti-fraud sector.

The participants reiterated the importance of mutual administrative cooperation in the customs field, both regionally and internationally, under the auspices of the World Customs Organization, through data and information exchanges, cooperation and support within the joint operations carried out aimed at preventing and combating customs offenses and the smuggling phenomenon.

Note: The Republic of Moldova hosts for the second time this large-scale event (the first RILO ECE event was organised in October 2007).





# National Commission of Financial Markets continues to benefit from EU assistance for the adoption of transparency standards and comparability of fees related to payment accounts

The EU High Level Advisors' Mission, in collaboration with the National Commission of Financial Markets (CNPF), organized, on 1 November, an information session on Consumer Protection in Financial Services: Provisions of Directive 2014/92/EU and Best Practices Regarding the Framework Contract for Payment Services.

At the opening of the event, the president of the CNPF, Dumitru Budianschi, noted that adopting community practices requires ensuring greater transparency regarding the

fees associated with payment accounts, as well as increasing the mobility of retail financial service consumers to develop an integrated and competitive financial market. In this regard, a set of norms and procedures will be established to enhance the possibilities for comparing services and payment account fees and to encourage the switching of payment accounts, thus avoiding discrimination against consumers based on residence.



The EU High Level Adviser on financial services, Nicolae Grigore, emphasized that a series of fundamental rights have been defined at the European Union level to protect consumers when they use financial products and services. In this regard, he cited Directive 2014/92/EU concerning the transparency and the comparability of fees related to payment accounts, payment account switching and access to payment accounts with basic features, which ensure increased transparency regarding the fees associated with payment accounts, while

also supporting the financial mobility of retail financial services consumers and the development of an integrated and competitive financial market.

The informational session was led by Paul Anghel, short-term expert for consumer protection in financial services within the EU HLA Mission, and General Director for Market Control and Supervision and European Harmonization within the National Authority for Consumer Protection of Romania.



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# Modern DNA laboratory to strengthen Moldovan law enforcement

A modern forensic DNA laboratory has been established at the Technical-Criminalistic and Forensic Expertise Center of Moldova's General Inspectorate of Police. The examinations being done at the newly operationalized laboratory contribute to crime investigations when analysing biological evidence collected from crime scenes. This initiative marks a significant step toward modernising Moldova's law enforcement, improving crime-solving efficiency and strengthening crime prevention efforts.

The Central Project Management Agency (CPVA), under the EU-funded EU4REFORMS-DNA project, supplies the laboratory with missing DNA equipment and trains Moldovan specialists. As part of this project, CPVA organised a series of 10 practical seminars and training sessions, each lasting one to two weeks, held in both Lithuania and Moldova. These sessions provided Moldovan specialists with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective DNA analysis.





Following international standards, the laboratory will seek for the accreditation of examinations under ISO 17025, enabling Moldova to exchange DNA data with EU member states once it joins the EU. It will help in solving complex crimes, improving detection rates, reducing crime and establishing a national DNA database—an essential tool for law enforcement.

*“Modern DNA technology is more than a tool for crime investigation. It fosters collaboration in law enforcement, builds mutual trust and enhances regional security,”*

**says Tomas Butrimas, the project's key expert.**



The €1 million project, running from 2023 to 2025, is funded by the EU. It includes training of DNA specialists, supply of needed DNA equipment and developing infrastructure to maintain high-quality forensic investigations. Moldova considers this project as a critical milestone in enhancing its legal infrastructure.

CPVA has collaborated with Moldova for over a decade. Alongside the EU4REFORMS-DNA project, CPVA is implementing the European Peace Facility project to strengthen Moldova’s armed forces and the EU4Youth programme to promote youth employment and entrepreneurship.

# Advancing Judicial Excellence in Moldova: Strategies for Communication, Human Resources, and Court Efficiency

In the framework of the PGGIII Project “Support to further modernisation of the court management in the Republic of Moldova”, draft **Communication Strategy of the Superior Council of Magistrates (SCM)** and the Guide on the relations of the courts with the media and the public have been developed. The documents offer solutions to improve the communication and institutional relations between the SCM and the courts, other legal professionals, the media and the public in the pursuit of improvement of trust in the judiciary.

A **draft Human Resources Strategy of the Judicial System of the Republic of Moldova** was developed by the Working Group on the optimisation of human resources policies in the judicial system. This policy document has been developed following consultations in two focus groups composed of court managers, judges, and court staff, and on the basis of a broad survey on the challenges and needs of the human resources of the judiciary among representatives of the same target groups.



The Strategy **aims at defining a long-term vision** for a modern and efficient management of human resources in national courts. It contains an ample SWOT analysis and an Action Plan that sets the framework for future modernisation in line with European standards. The Strategy takes into consideration the needs such as ensuring a high quality of human resources, talent

attraction and retention, competitiveness and transparency in employment, gender equality and non-discrimination, social inclusion, work-life balance, professional satisfaction of the employees etc. Improving the HR policies of the judiciary will support a better quality of justice and increased court user satisfaction.



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A draft **Tool to reduce the backlogs in the national courts has been developed** on the basis of the CEPEJ Backlog Reduction Tool. The document offers a definition of the “backlog”, contains a step-by-step methodology for evaluating and reducing it and puts forward a set of essential key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the backlogs and to determine their causes. It also proposes measures to monitor the impact and ensure the sustainability of the backlog reduction efforts. The draft was discussed by the Working Group on the standardisation of annual reporting on courts’ performance during its meeting on 29 November.

To improve the training programme of the National Institute of Justice in court management, the HELP Course “Quality of Justice – Work of CEPEJ” has been translated into Romanian and installed on the HELP platform. The NIJ will integrate the course into their training curriculum.





# Improving Moldova's Law Enforcement trainers

The EU4Security Moldova Project has delivered a comprehensive course for trainers in Chisinau from 28 October to 01 November. This train-the-trainers initiative was designed to improve the training capacity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Moldova and to equip trainers, lecturers, and subject matter experts with the skills to deliver law enforcement training and assessments in both offline and online sessions. Moreover, it aimed to impart knowledge on utilizing learning tools and techniques to enhance student knowledge retention and classroom interactivity.

During the course the participants were introduced to various training methods and course design strategies, including the ADDIE Model (Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate) and Bloom's Taxonomy for designing course objectives. The trainees engaged in group work, assessments, and presentations, all aimed at enhancing their skills as lecturers. The training also highlighted cutting-edge technologies like Virtual Reality and its application in law enforcement training.



All course sessions were based on a Train-the-Trainers Manual developed by the EU4 Security Moldova Project, featuring step-by-step guides on how to develop and implement both online and onsite training activities.

# Advanced Open-Source Intelligence Activity: EU4Security Moldova Training in Chişinău

From November 10–15, 2024, EU4Security Moldova hosted an Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) training for 26 Moldovan Ministry of Internal Affairs officers in Chişinău. The course provided advanced knowledge and practical skills essential for data analysis and criminal investigations using OSINT.

The event featured expert speakers from Poland, Portugal, France, Spain, and the Republic of Moldova. Sessions covered Artificial Intelligence integration in OSINT, environment hardening, web scraping with Python, dark web investigations, and cryptocurrency tracing. Hands-on exercises included real-case inspired challenges on virtual labs and Capture the Flag (CTF) activities.



The training concluded with a highly engaging CTF, strengthening the participants practical skills.

## EU4Security Moldova implements comprehensive leadership course in Chişinău

In the framework of the EU4Security Moldova project, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), implemented a Leadership and Management in Internal Affairs course in Chişinău, Moldova, from 25 to 29 November. This training targeted the personnel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, focusing on those in managerial and leadership positions. The aim was to enhance participants' professional growth while providing an overview of modern leadership trends and understanding strategic thinking and management within law enforcement agencies.

During the course, the participants explored different leadership models, strategic aspects of leadership, and financial management. Special attention was given to emotional intelligence and effective communication techniques, essential soft skills for leaders in the policing sector. The training also addressed team leadership and performance management, promoting a work culture within the Ministry that values the wellbeing of staff.





# EU4Security Moldova: operational training needs assessment report

The EU4Security Project concluded in December the Training Needs Assessment process with a validation workshop in Chisinau from 2 to 4 December. The event aimed to present to the partners of the Ministry of Internal Affairs the results of the assessment conducted by the project and to validate the content of the draft report.

The workshop concludes the Operational Training Needs Assessment (OTNA) component of the project, which started already in June with the implementation of a course in Chisinau on the EU OTNA Methodology.

Following the course in June, the TNA questionnaire was designed together with the Moldovan partners and disseminated in August to the relevant actors to collect the data set. The questionnaire obtained a very large participation, with 764 hundreds submitted responses. The data was carefully

analysed during the following months, and online workshops took place with the participation of the MIA to clarify aspects and keep up to date all the stakeholders involved.

During the final workshop in December, the draft TNA report was presented, highlighting Domestic violence, Corruption, Drug trafficking and Cybercrime as the most relevant crime areas where training is needed for the upcoming period. The participants in the workshop agreed with the priority list presented and validated the overall results of the assessment. The results were also used to lay the foundation of a MIA training portfolio based on the priority areas identified.

The EU4Security Project is implemented by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL).



# Advancing Public Health: SARS-CoV-2 Genome Sequencing Training in Moldova

From 3 to 6 December 2024, the EU-supported training on SARS-CoV-2 genome sequencing took place in Chisinau, enhancing the capacity of Moldova's National Agency for Public Health (ANSP). Specialists gained hands-on experience with advanced techniques to improve monitoring and detection of viral variants.

This critical skill will strengthen Moldova's public health response to current and future infectious disease threats. This training was realised with the support of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data programme.



# Judges of the Supreme Court of Justice and members of the Superior Council of Magistracy of the Republic of Moldova visit the Council of Europe

On 7-8 October 2024, seven representatives of the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) and four judges of the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) of the Republic of Moldova visited the headquarters of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The visit was organised in view of enhancing the awareness of the representatives from the SCJ and SCM regarding standards and best practices for upholding the integrity of the judiciary, improving the efficiency of the judicial system, and ensuring that the

Republic of Moldova fulfils its commitments to the Council of Europe.

The visit also aimed at building connections between the SCJ, the SCM, and representatives of different entities of the Council of Europe, including the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), that would contribute to strengthening collaboration and the effective implementation of Council of Europe standards related to justice and human rights.



The SCM and SCJ delegation held discussions with representatives of several bodies of the Council of Europe: the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission); the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO); the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE); the Superior Courts Network (SCN), the Monitoring Department of the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), the Co-operation Programmes Division. The delegation also met with the representatives of the Registry of the ECtHR and the Department for the Execution of the Judgments of the ECtHR. Besides various

aspects of the independence of the judiciary, issues related to the application of Protocol No. 16 to the European Convention on Human Rights were also discussed during the respective meetings.

The visit was organised 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](#)" and Council of Europe Project "Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Republic of Moldova", which is part of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024.



# Trainers of the National Institute of Justice undergo training in the European Union law

The Council of Europe is supporting the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in developing the module on the European Union (EU) law as part of its curriculum for continuous training of judges and prosecutors.

As part of this effort, Council of Europe organised a two-day training for trainers (ToT) in the EU law, for 10 trainers of the NIJ.

Head of Council of Europe Office in Chisinau, Falk Lange, underlined the importance of this training since Republic of Moldova was granted the status of candidate country to the European Union.

*"The aspirations of the Republic of Moldova are very clear, but at the same time their accomplishment requires a long-term, responsible and challenging process involving all state institutions, including through proper application of the European Union law by the judges and prosecutors. In this context, the training in European Union Law is a very important one for the Republic of Moldova at this moment,"*

**noted Falk Lange.**



*"The European dimension of judicial training is no longer just an additional component, but is becoming a central element of professional training in the field of justice. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce and strengthen*

*a module on EU law for the beneficiaries of the National Institute of Justice",*  
**emphasized Adrian Cerbu, the Director ad interim of the NIJ.**

The ToT was developed and delivered by the consultant of the Council of Europe, Razvan Horatiu Radu, Prosecutor at the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice. During the two-day training, the NIJ trainers developed their knowledge about the EU institutions, with a stronger focus on the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU), its areas of competences and relation with the national courts.

The dedicated sessions also covered topics such as the protection of fundamental human rights in the EU, the correlation between the CJEU and the European Court of Human Rights, and many more.

The ToT was organised 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](#)".



# The Council of Europe strengthens the professional capacity of Prosecutorial and Judicial inspectors in the Republic of Moldova

The Council of Europe organised a two-day training on disciplinary matters related to judges and prosecutors for the prosecutorial inspectors functioning within the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP) and judicial

inspectors – within the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM). Members of the SCP and the Disciplinary and Ethics Board of the SCP also joined the training.



The training sessions addressed various aspects of disciplinary proceedings involving judges and prosecutors. They focused particularly on the Council of Europe standards concerning the institutional independence and professional autonomy of the judiciary. The sessions also covered the disciplinary liability of judges and public prosecutors, the investigation and evidence within disciplinary proceedings in light of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, and the relationship between judicial ethical standards and disciplinary offences.

Two Council of Europe international consultants led the trainings – Dr Lorena Bachmaier Winter, Professor of Law at Universidad Complutense Madrid in Spain, and Horatius-Nicolae Dumbravă, Judge and Trainer in Ethics for continuous training

at the National Institute of Magistracy of Romania.

Throughout the sessions, the trainers presented examples of good practices of disciplinary proceedings against judges and public prosecutors from other jurisdictions and gave an overview of the practical issues related to the techniques and tactics concerning the reasoning of disciplinary cases against judges and prosecutors. In addition, various case studies on investigative techniques and tactics were discussed during the training sessions.

The training was organised 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](#)".



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## Judges and prosecutors enhanced their knowledge of EU institutions, fundamental rights protection, international legal cooperation in criminal matters and rule of law standards in the European Union

Judges and prosecutors took part in a series of trainings dedicated to the institutions of the European Union (EU) as well as protection of fundamental rights and competences of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), international legal cooperation in criminal matters and the rule of law standards under the EU framework.

Mr. Razvan Horațiu RADU, international consultant of the Council of Europe along with Mr. Iulian Alexandru RUSU, NIJ trainer, delivered sessions on the EU founding treaties, its institutions and mechanisms as well as the decision making process within the EU. Their sessions also focused on the protection of fundamental rights within the EU and the CJEU.



Ms. Laura Felicia CEH, international consultant of the Council of Europe, and Ms. Diana ROTUNDU, trainer of the NIJ, focused on the international legal cooperation in criminal matters, relevant institutions as well as the available tools and mechanisms within the EU in this respect.

Mr. Horațiu Nicolae DUMBRAVĂ, international consultant of the Council of Europe, along with Mr. Iulian Alexandru RUSU, trainer of the NIJ in their joint sessions covered the standards of the Council of Europe concerning the rule of law, the EU mechanisms pertaining to the rule of law and the relevant jurisprudence of the CJEU.

The trainings were a result of the joint efforts of the Council of Europe and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to strengthen the knowledge of judges and prosecutors on various aspects of the EU law. The training sessions were integrated in the module on the EU Law included in the continuous training programme for judges and prosecutors of the NIJ and were delivered

jointly by international consultants of the Council of Europe and the national trainers of the NIJ.

The trainings were organised 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".



# Workshop on admissibility criteria for referrals to the Constitutional Court under the exception of unconstitutionality

Council of Europe supported the organisation of a workshop on the admissibility criteria for referrals to the Constitutional Court under the exception of unconstitutionality. Judges from Chisinau Court participated in the workshop held by the Constitutional Court.

The discussions focused on the admissibility criteria of the referrals, as well as the problems encountered by first instance court judges in relation to requests under the exception of unconstitutionality.



The Head of the Council of Europe Office in Chisinau, Falk Lange, emphasized the importance of the mechanism of referrals on the exception of unconstitutionality in the procedure of protection of human rights enshrined in the Constitution. „Acknowledging the significance of such direct exchanges, the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the Constitutional Court, will continue to support similar initiatives in the future primarily within the framework of the already mentioned EU-Council of Europe joint project “Support to the Justice Reform in the Republic of Moldova”, he stated.

The workshop was organised 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"](#).



## Judges and staff of the Constitutional Court participated in a seminar on European Union Law

Judges and staff of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova participated in a seminar dedicated to the European Union Law. The seminar focused on topics like the general principles of the European Union Law, primacy of the European Union (EU) Law, founding treaties of the EU, relevant caselaw as well as national constitutional identity.

The seminar was delivered by, Judge of the Court of Justice of the European Union, Prof. PhD Ineta ZIEMELE and Judge of the General Court of the European Union, Prof. PhD Ion GÂLEA.

The Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, Mr Jānis MAŽEIKS, mentioned that the European Union will continue supporting the Republic of Moldova by providing financial and technical assistance.

Mr Falk LANGE, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Chisinau, highlighted the importance of the Constitutional Court (CC) as guardian of the Constitution and emphasised the commitment of the Council of Europe in supporting the CC in its efforts to promote the observance of human rights, the rule of law and democracy.



The president of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova, Ms Domnica MANOLE thanked the European Union and the Council of Europe for the provided assistance and reiterated the importance of strengthening the capacities of the judges and staff of the Constitutional Court and expressed her confidence that the seminar

will enable the staff of the institution to develop a practical approach in relation to the topics discussed during the seminar.

The seminar was organised 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".



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# Position paper: assessing legislative amendments and their implications for Moldova's EU accession

Vitalie Rapcea, program director at the Independent Analytical Center Expert-Grup, developed a position paper on the "Draft amendments to some normative acts (amending Law No. 131/2012 on state control and sectoral laws related to state control)". In the Position Paper, the author came up with several explanations why the proposals included in Article XXXVII of the draft law submitted to the Parliament for approval are not in line with the provisions of the *acquis Communautaire*, are not reasoned, affect the balance between the interests of the business environment and

the protection of consumer rights, and may also seriously affect the process of accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union. Click [here](#) for a detailed analysis.

The position paper was developed within the project "Civil Society for European Integration", funded by the European Union and co-funded by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Moldova, implemented by the Independent Think Tank Expert-Grup as lead partner, in collaboration with the Institute for European Policy and Reform, A.O. Institutum Virtutes Civilis and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Moldova.



## NOTĂ DE POZIȚIE

**DE LA SUPRAVEGHEREA CONTROALELOR LA CONTROLUL SUPRAVEGHERII PIETEII:  
CUM PROPUNERILE DE MODIFICARE A UNOR ACTE LEGISLATIVE POT AFECTA  
INTERESUL PUBLIC ȘI PROCESUL DE ADERARE LA U.E.**

„SOCIETATEA CIVILĂ PENTRU INTEGRAREA EUROPEANĂ”  
Proiectul este finanțat de Uniunea Europeană și cofinanțat de Fundația „Friedrich Ebert”  
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# The State Labour Inspectorate adopts a new strategic approach

The State Labour Inspectorate (SLI), with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO), is taking significant steps toward modernising its strategic approach to inspections, aiming to ensure compliance with labour legislation.

Over 20 SLI representatives, along with members from both social partners – the National Confederation of Employers of Moldova and the National Trade Union Confederation of Moldova – participated in a workshop dedicated to developing a strategic inspection plan. The main objective of the workshop was to align SLI's practices with ILO's new Strategic Compliance Model – a modern methodology that helps inspectorates achieve effective results, even with limited resources. This approach will enable SLI to plan resources more effectively, target priority issues, and achieve more consistent results.

During the two-day workshop (October 29-30), participants engaged in interactive sessions and case studies under the guidance of Rumsha Shahzad, Technical Officer for Compliance & Technology, LABGOV, Geneva and Luiz Carlos Lumbreras Rocha, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Specialist at ILO's regional office for Central and Eastern Europe (DWT/CO-Budapest). The trainers provided tailored solutions to address the specific challenges faced by Moldova's labour inspectors.

Experts emphasized that strategic planning, founded on a collaborative approach with institutional partners and associations, enhances employer accountability and supports the development of a more equitable economic environment. Furthermore, this innovative planning enables labor inspectorates to analyze and address the root causes of non-compliance within targeted economic sectors, employing either short-term solutions or long-term strategies to promote sustainable compliance.



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The implementation of Strategic Compliance Planning is a key element in SLI's ongoing reform efforts, aimed at enhancing the expertise of inspectors in OSH and undeclared work prevention.

The strategic plan developed during the workshop will be piloted in priority sectors (as construction, agriculture, HORECA services) and will include concrete measures

to address undeclared and under-declared work, including among Ukrainian refugees.

The training took place from October 29-30, as part of the "EU Support for a More Inclusive Labour Markets in the Republic of Moldova" project, funded by the European Union and implemented by the International Labour Organization.



# Supporting the Ministry of Justice and Justice Sector Reforms in the Republic of Moldova – Fact-finding Mission and Capacity Building Workshops

In July 2024, the OECD officially launched an EU-funded project aimed at supporting the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova in advancing its justice sector reforms. The project leverages best practices from EU and OECD countries to strengthen Moldova's justice system through analytical support, policy recommendations, and capacity building initiatives.

From 25 to 29 November, an OECD delegation, composed of international and local experts, conducted a fact-finding mission in Moldova. The mission focused on collecting evidence for the functional review of the justice sector, and evaluating the Justice Sector Strategy. The team engaged with various stakeholders in both Chişinău and Ungheni, gathering data for the upcoming OECD Justice Review, which is scheduled for publication in 2025.



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During the same week, two capacity-building workshops were held to further support the reform process. The first, held on 26 November, focused on “Building Capacity in Conducting Functional Reviews for Justice Sector Reforms”. This workshop aimed to equip Moldovan justice stakeholders with the tools and methodologies needed to carry out a functional review of the justice system. On 27 November, the second workshop, “Designing Tools for the Evaluation of Moldova’s Justice Sector Reform Strategy” aimed at further developing an analytical framework to evaluate justice sector

reforms. Special emphasis was placed on digitalisation and integrity as key areas of interventions of the ongoing justice strategy. Both workshops served as interactive platforms where, over the course of two days, key representatives from Moldovan justice sector institutions, international experts, and peers from EU and OECD countries shared policy advice based on their diverse professional backgrounds. Participants shared valuable insights, advice, and best practices, contributing to the ongoing development of Moldova's justice system.





# Workshop on the latest developments in International Public Sector Accounting Standards

As part of the new Component 6 “Supporting the Ministry of Finance in the Implementation of the Public Sector Accounting Reform”, the EU-funded “Support the Moldovan Government in identifying and preparing projects linked to the implementation of the Association Agreement” (PPF) Project team organised a workshop on 8 October 2024 led by PPF Project experts Irina Grigoryan and Eugenia Busmachiu.

The workshop brought together representatives of the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Court of Accounts and the biggest line ministries. The event focused on updating participants on the recent changes in International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in the context of the public sector accounting reform in Moldova.



The MoF State Secretary Vladimir Arachelov welcomed the participants and highlighted the need for developing National Public Sector Accounting Standards for Moldova.

Moldova began developing its National Public Sector Accounting Standards (NPSAS) based on IPSAS in 2016. By 2018, 22 NPSAS had been developed by the MoF with their implementation planned from 2020. The progress, however, was delayed due to the conclusion of EU technical assistance and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The MoF now has decided to resume the efforts for developing and implementing NPSAS. The PPF team will provide on-the-job technical assistance to the MoF Treasury in updating the reform Concept and Action Plan, amending and developing NPSAS and building capacity in the government to implement the new standards.





## ECONOMY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

### From international experience to local success: the growth journey of “VIVACAR PLUS S.R.L.” with EU support

VIVACAR PLUS S.R.L., located in Hîncești, is among the companies that recently benefited from non-reimbursable financial support provided by the European Union. The company specializes in auto repair services and is managed by Mr. Victor Belciug.

The entrepreneur initially opened the auto service in 2015 but paused operations after some time. Together with his wife, he went abroad to work and returned in 2023

to relaunch the business. Seeking external resources for business development, Victor Belciug applied to the “Start for Youth” program, managed by the Organization for Entrepreneurship Development.

With the help of a grant worth 192,000 MDL provided by the European Union, the entrepreneur equipped the auto service with modern tools and equipment.



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*“Every month, we service around 100 cars. The tools and instruments we currently use for repair work are over 10 years old, worn out, and need to be replaced. The project also includes a personal contribution of over 100,000 MDL,”*

**explained the entrepreneur.**

The new set of equipment purchased with EU funds will enable the provision of advanced auto repair services, ensuring faster and higher-quality work.

The European Union promotes SME development in the Republic of Moldova

through targeted measures to strengthen business infrastructure, create new jobs, and enhance the national economy.

In the spring of last year, the European Union signed a direct grant agreement, allocating 8 million euros to finance seven support programs implemented by the Organization for Entrepreneurship Development. Since the launch of the “EU for Small and Medium Enterprises” project, over 204 investment projects have been supported with EU funding. The total value of grants awarded exceeds 4.8 million euros, while the investments generated in the national economy approach 11 million euros.



**VICTOR BELCIUG**

founder, "VIVACAR PLUS", city of Hîncești



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# The European Union Delegation emphasizes the importance of modernising SMEs at Entrepreneur Expo 2024

The European Union reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the economy of the Republic of Moldova by promoting sustainable practices at Entrepreneur Expo 2024.

The event, held from October 10 to 13 in

Chişinău, brought together over 500 businesspeople, international experts, and government officials. Over the course of four days, it featured thematic sessions, discussion panels, and B2B meetings focused on strategic areas of interest.



**The European Union Delegation highlighted its support for SMEs in adapting to European standards and enhancing their competitiveness in the EU market. Adam Grodzicki, Deputy Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation, stated:**

*“Supporting entrepreneurship and the sustainable development of SMEs is a shared goal at the core of our approach to developing Moldova’s private sector.”*

*We assist SMEs in adapting to the new realities of the EU market so that they can export their products and compete successfully while meeting European standards.”*



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**During the event, 46 companies received non-reimbursable grants worth approximately 19 million lei to develop their businesses. Miroslav Bozic, Program Officer at the EU Delegation, underlined the partnership with Moldovan authorities:**

*“Our partnership with ODA and the Government of the Republic of Moldova supports the modernization of SMEs, making them more efficient, productive, and sustainable. Most of the grants are focused on the industrial sector, highlighting the country’s shift toward value-added industries.”*

Entrepreneur Expo 2024 also featured an exhibition showcasing products and services from over 150 local companies. The event was organized with financial support from the European Union through the “EU for Small and Medium Enterprises” project and other development partners of the Republic of Moldova.



# Sorintex: how the Moldovan textile cluster is modernising and expanding production

The Sorintex cluster organisation brings together textile companies from northern Moldova and has become an important platform for integrating them into international supply chains. During the EU4Digital ICT Innovation Forum in Chisinau on 9 October 2024, Sorintex received a prestigious European Cluster Excellence Initiative Bronze Label, and cluster president Andrei Mirza explained the benefits that

participant organisations receive from cluster membership and collaboration.

One of the main advantages, according to Mirza, is cooperation between cluster participants. Sorintex comprises 25 companies as well as universities, vocational schools and other organisations, which allows the cluster to strengthen market positions and provide access to major tenders.



*“Clustering has given new impetus. Enterprises consider cooperation as a gateway to more important orders. We have already got our voice heard at the republican level, which was not the case five or six years ago. So, everyone has realised that our strength is in association,”*

**stated Andrei Mirza, Sorintex president.**

*“At first many businesses feared there would be competition, but everyone has already settled into their niche. We have participated in national tenders and successfully completed large orders such as clothing for the army and other structures,”*

**Mirza said.**

The cluster helps its small businesses to participate in large projects. Thanks to cooperation, companies join forces to complete textile orders, which allows them to successfully compete on international markets even with big players.

When Sorintex cluster was established in October 2018 with the support of the

European Commission, it included 15 industrial companies and three educational institutions. Today, the 25 light industry companies that are part of the cluster are exporting their products, including for well-known brands such as Richmond and Rich Barber, with a total annual turnover of around 20 million euro.



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*"We have already entered international markets: 90% of our cluster members export their products,"*

**added Andrei Mirza, Sorintex president.**

Sorintex is actively introducing new technologies such as 3D design and modelling. However, the cost of such solutions is high, so the cluster helps small businesses get access to these technologies through equipment sharing.

*"As an association, we purchased expensive equipment that can be used by all our cluster members. It is especially important for small companies, since it is difficult for them to buy equipment worth 40-50 thousand euro on their own,"*

**Mirza explained.**

Sorintex cluster has not only become the key player in the Moldovan textile industry market, but has also opened new horizons for its participants, providing access to international projects and technologies that contribute to their development and growth.

More: Sorintex: [how the Moldovan textile cluster is modernising and expanding production - EU4Digital](#)



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# “EU4Moldova: Local Communities”: Support for Moldova’s Vocational Education and Training (VET) system

In recent months, substantial progress has been made in enhancing Moldova’s Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. Through the “[EU4Moldova: Local](#)

[Communities](#)” programme, Team Europe has provided essential support in three areas: textbooks, infrastructure, and equipment.



## Systemic support: textbooks and training

Three new VET textbooks have been developed for the specializations of baker, car mechanic, and welder, to be used across Moldova. These textbooks are clear, practical, and aligned with job market needs. Written by experts in collaboration with teachers, they will help students acquire valuable skills for the job market. To support their effective implementation, teacher training sessions were organized, ensuring the materials are well-understood and effectively utilized. This initiative will enhance the learning experience for both students and teachers, with two more textbooks to be finished next year.

## Structural support: upgrading school infrastructure

The programme has pledged to upgrade critical infrastructure at three VET institutions in need: the College of Veterinary Medicine and Agricultural Economics in Brătușeni, the Vocational School in Cupcini, and the Vocational School in Leova. Cooperation agreements have been signed with these institutions, committing to the renovation of dormitories, classrooms, and roofs, as well as the installation of solar panels to supply sustainable, cost-free green energy. These investments are sure to create better environments for students to learn and live.



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### **Equipment support: enhancing practical training**

Additionally, IT and technical equipment were donated to enhance practical education. The IT equipment includes laptops, smartboards, projectors, and computers, while the technical equipment features a seed machine, wine fermenter, welding tools, car mechanic tools, a refrigerator, an oven, a milking machine, and more. This equipment will help students gain hands-on experience and develop essential career skills.

### **Conclusion: a commitment to Moldova's future**

Team Europe remains committed to improving Moldova's VET system to support

youth professional skills development and career success. The "EU4Moldova: Local Communities" programme contributes to a brighter future for Moldova, where young people can build fulfilling careers and a better life at home.

These activities are part of the "[EU4Moldova: Local Communities](#)" programme, a Team Europe initiative funded by the EU, the governments of Germany, Austria, and Poland, and implemented by GIZ, ADA, and SFPL in Moldova.

## 90 mayors and deputy mayors from the Republic of Moldova attended a forum on regional development

90 mayors and deputy mayors from 26 districts are participating in the Mayors' Forum in Ungheni on 12-14 November. The local officials represent communities supported by two major programmes funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP: "Mayors for Economic Growth" and "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions".

The Forum, dedicated to regional development, facilitates dialog between representatives of local public

administration, so as to establish partnerships, gather expertise and best practices for local infrastructure development and sustainable urban planning. Good practices of mayors from Romania, Poland and Lithuania were presented at the event. Also, the third day of the forum included visits in Ungheni municipality to Independence Square, Tourist Information Center, Free Economic Zone (supported by the EU and UNDP Moldova) and "Eiffel Bridge".



During the event, the results of the "Mayors for Economic Growth" (M4EG) initiative, funded by the European Union with a budget for the Republic of Moldova of 1.8 million euro and implemented by UNDP, were presented. The initiative is focused on capacity development of local authorities and implementation of strategic projects for sustainable economic development in the network of 65 municipalities and district councils.

With the support of M4EG, localities such as Ceadâr-Lunga, Sireți, Taraclia and Geamăna have implemented

energy efficiency projects, attracting investments for interventions such as thermo-insulation of kindergartens and modernization of street lighting, etc., which has contributed to energy savings and reduced expenses for over 20,000 inhabitants.

In Copceac, Drochia, Cimislia, Cărpineni and Volintiri, M4EG supported projects for economic development, inclusion of refugees and strengthening social cohesion, benefiting more than 35,000 people.



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The forum also mentioned examples of good practices achieved by the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme, which, with a budget of 23 million euro, has contributed to the development of the Ungheni and Cahul regions, improving living conditions for more than 200,000 inhabitants. These regions have benefited from strategic interventions in various fields, such as business environment development, investment attraction, infrastructure improvement, development of smart solutions and capacity building of local administration.

Thus, in the municipalities of Cahul and Ungheni, the SMART City platform was developed, the One Stop Shop was established, kindergartens were equipped with IT equipment, in Ungheni more than 1000 water meters with remote reading and video monitoring were installed at the regional operator AVE Ungheni.

The programme also supported 74 entrepreneurs and 8 clusters with over 180 members. These interventions, aimed at developing the business environment, have generated over 440 new jobs and around 250 new products and services have been created. As a result, Ungheni and Cahul are now on their way to becoming smart, green and inclusive regions.

The initiative "Mayors for Economic Growth" and the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme are EU-funded projects implemented by UNDP Moldova, which promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life in the Republic of Moldova, prioritizing job creation, infrastructure development and capacity building of local public administration.





## 20 entrepreneurs from both banks of the Nistru river to launch or develop their businesses with EU financial support

20 entrepreneurs from the security zone and the left bank of the Nistru river start to develop their businesses thanks to the financial support provided by the European Union through the Confidence Building Measures Programme implemented by UNDP.

The financial assistance provided totals app. 536,000 EUR. The entrepreneurs selected through the competition will

benefit from equipment, services, expertise, training and mentoring. This will contribute to the economic development of the region and create new job opportunities.

The selected businesses cover a various spectrum of areas such as: food, agriculture and livestock, educational services, industrial goods (textiles), HoReCa, entertainment services and others.



Ecaterina Rusnac from Cocieri is one of the beneficiaries. She had long wanted to start her own business. The necessary equipment - a stone mill, where quality wholemeal flour will be produced - will soon be purchased.

*"Nowadays, start-up entrepreneurs need not only financial support, but also access to educational resources, mentoring and socializing with peers. Access to funding and expertise is critical to the growth and development of start-ups, including in the long term. It's like a catalyst to grow,"*

**says Ecaterina.**



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And if a stone mill for flour production is to be set up in Cocieri, then in Tiraspol, Ivan Cernîcenkowill develop his bakery "Vanin hleb" ("Ivan's Bread"). An additional production line will be created for a new type of bread, namely yeast-free or gluten-free bread.

*"Financial support can significantly help entrepreneurs to cover start-up costs such as equipment and marketing. Start-up entrepreneurs now need support in many forms: funding, training, access to resources - opportunities to network with other entrepreneurs and investors. These interventions will help create jobs and promote growth,"*  
**says Ivan.**

Supporting beginner entrepreneurs and the business environment is part of a broader effort by the European Union and UNDP to build confidence and promote economic development on both sides of the Nistru.

Since 2014, the EU Programme Confidence Building Measures implemented by UNDP has supported the development and increased the competitiveness of more than 70 SMEs on both banks of the Nistru River.



# Transformation and development of the labour market in the Republic of Moldova

Launched in spring this year, the “Support for a More Inclusive Labour Market in the Republic of Moldova” project, funded by the European Union and implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO), strengthens key institutions and professionals, enhancing their capacity to achieve the objectives outlined in the employment policy framework.

This project is a technical cooperation initiative that adopts a systemic approach

to promoting decent work. With the main objective of improving the capacity and performance of the National Employment Agency (NEA) and the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI), the project supports the reform of these two divisions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and contributes to the development of measures that ensure greater institutional efficiency.



## Support for NEA reform

The project significantly contributes to the modernization of NEA by strengthening institutional capacity and improving citizens' access to efficient employment services. Key achievements include:

✓ Digitalization: Three e-learning modules have been transferred to the national governmental platform

<https://mlearn.gov.md> to support the training of NEA staff, and a new module on employment promotion is under development.

✓ Capacity building for NEA staff: Approximately 80 employees have been registered and can access internalized online modules, where they learn to monitor and evaluate employment



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services, develop active labour market programs, and apply advanced profiling and client segmentation techniques.

✓ **Data-based profiling:** A modern, widely used EU-aligned tool has been developed to help NEA counselors identify individuals at risk of long-term unemployment and provide personalised support.

✓ **Support for social assistance beneficiaries:** A procedure for activation incentives for social assistance beneficiaries is being developed based on their profiles. The ILO will also prepare an analytical document (using data and focus groups) to guide the development of an activation program for working-age beneficiaries.

✓ **Improved access to inactive individuals and effective active labor market Policies:** The ILO will procure three vehicles to pilot employment caravans. Individualised support will be designed based on the profiles of inactive individuals (age, gender, education level, disability, poverty, and social exclusion indicators) and delivered in partnership with local institutions (public, private, and NGOs).

✓ **Vocational training:** The project supports the development of the “Vocational Training Voucher Platform”, which will allow unemployed individuals to access professional training courses and view registered training service providers.

✓ **Accessibility:** With the project’s support, a technical note has been developed to facilitate the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market through workplace adaptation grants, in line with Articles 36 and 38 of the Law 105/2018 on Employment Promotion and Unemployment Insurance.

✓ **Infrastructure modernisation:** The project supports the renovation of the NEA territorial office in Cimişlia, with construction works set to begin after the

design documentation is finalized and approved.

### **Support for SLI Reform**

The State Labour Inspectorate receives technical and methodological assistance to improve the enforcement of labour legislation and the protection of workers’ rights. Support includes:

✓ **Improvement of the legal framework:** Aligning national legislation with international standards to combat undeclared work and ensure efficient inspections.

✓ **Strategic planning:** A Strategic Compliance Plan is being developed in collaboration with social partners and based on ILO best practices.

✓ **Professional training:** The training needs of SLI staff have been assessed, and 19 gender-sensitive modules are being developed for a new initial and continuous workplace training curriculum.

✓ **Digital modernisation:** The REDCAM system, used for managing inspection and research case files, has been improved and will be expanded to enhance case management and transparency.

✓ **Infrastructure modernisation:** Renovation of the SLI office within the MLSP headquarters is progressing, with works to begin following the finalisation and approval of the design documentation.

The “Support for a More Inclusive Labour Market in the Republic of Moldova” project aligns with the ILO Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) 2021–2024 and focuses on strengthening the labour market in the Republic of Moldova. With a €2 million budget and a duration of 24 months, this initiative is funded by the European Union and implemented by the International Labour Organization.

# Better quality animal products for all consumers

To improve trade opportunities and create a favourable business environment, the Republic of Moldova needs to raise the level of technical requirements, complying with EU quality standards.

Here too, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in partnership with the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova, is doing its part to help promote the quality of local products, improving the practices of public and private laboratories by strengthening testing capacities.

To this end, in the framework of the project "Improving the standards compliance through increased national capacities for residue monitoring", a partnership with the Institute of Hygiene and Veterinary Public Health (IISPV) of Romania was initiated in the field of animal health.

Between November and December, a group of Moldovan specialists had the opportunity to study and test, through the exchange of best practices with Romanian colleagues, new methods for quality control of animal products in line with EU and international requirements. The training covered two areas, antimicrobial resistance and the detection of drug residues in tissue (meat and liver), milk, eggs and honey.

A wide range of drug residues are currently being investigated in laboratories in the Republic of Moldova. However, for certain investigations, the National Agency for Food Safety (ANSA) partners with laboratories outside the country. As a result of this training, the specialists in our laboratories will be able to cover the full spectrum of these investigations at the highest level. And this means saving financial resources, first of all.



*The state and economic agents will be able to carry out laboratory investigations and determine drug residues in the country without contracting external laboratories. In addition, it will be easier to release the results of the investigations in about two weeks, instead of the current one to one and a half months,*

***explains Diana Curchi, Deputy Director of the National Centre for Animal, Plant and Food Safety (CNSAPSA).***

*Moreover, in the long term, the experience gained from these trainings, the capacity building of the laboratories, in tandem with the expertise provided by the project consultants, will help us to translate into practice policy documents that are essential for human well-being, such as the National Program for Surveillance*



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*and Control of Antimicrobial Resistance for the years 2023-2027, for example, the CNSAPSA laboratory Head also emphasized.*

The exchange of best practices provided by the project "Improving the standards compliance through increased national capacities for residue monitoring" implemented by UNIDO will therefore give local farmers and economic operators the chance to become more competitive on the internal and external market, ensuring quality products to consumers.







## Moldova’s hospitals undergo modernisation: energy efficiency at the core

Hospitals with safe and modern facilities, offering comfortable conditions for patients and staff alike, is becoming a tangible reality for Moldova. Citizens are now closer to experiencing healthcare environments that meet European standards, thanks to the Moldova Energy Efficiency Project (MEEP). Supported by the European Union (EU), the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the project is transforming ten Republican hospitals through energy-efficient upgrades and comprehensive renovations.

### Advancing renovations: Conceptual designs in final stages

The project has entered the conceptual design phase, which is a critical step toward equipping five hospitals with sustainable, modern infrastructure tailored to their specific needs. This phase goes beyond technical planning, focusing on defining the functionality of key renovation measures, including thermal insulation, heating system upgrades, energy-efficient lighting, improved accessibility, and compliance with fire safety regulations. These advancements align with Moldovan regulations and European standards, ensuring a foundation for enhanced healthcare environments.

Among these healthcare facilities is the “Diomid Gherman” Neurology and Neurosurgery Institute, block 2, which has operated for nearly 40 years without major renovations. Designed to outdated Soviet standards, the building faces significant energy losses and ventilation challenges.

*“The windows and doors are old, and the building urgently requires capital repairs,”*

**noted Vladimir Dolghi, the institute’s director.**

*“The internal ventilation system increases risks for immunocompromised patients, as well as hospital-acquired infections, as highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.”*

Currently, drafts of the conceptual designs are nearing completion for the following hospitals, with projected energy savings after renovation:

- ✓ Neurology and Neurosurgery Institute: block 2 (29.6%)
- ✓ Psychiatry Clinical Hospital: main



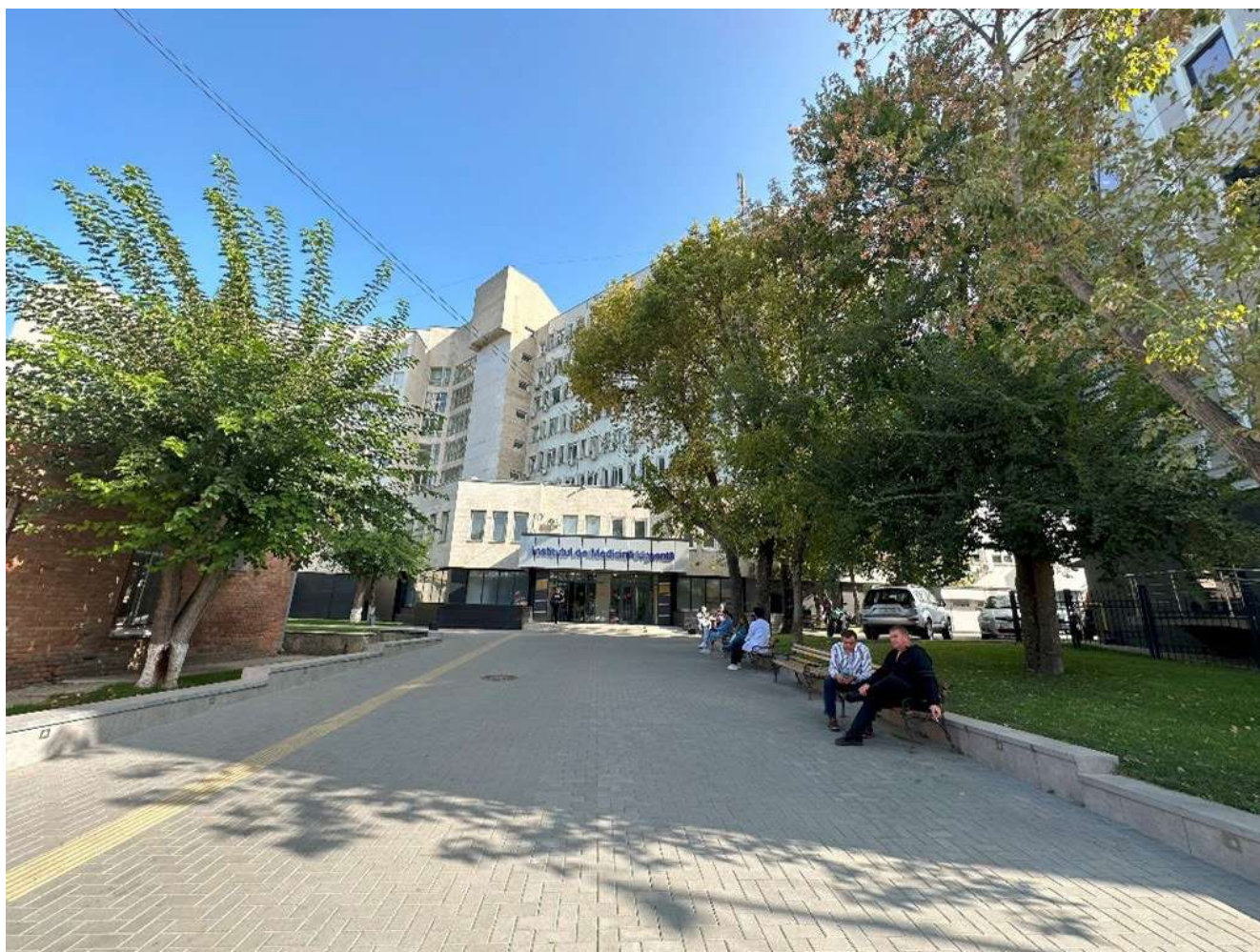
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block (21.2%) and children's unit (78.8%)

✓ Cardiology Institute: main block and dispensary (51.5%)

✓ Diagnostics Centre & Phthisiopneumology Institute: main block (10.8%) and TB laboratory (50.8%)

The initial drafts for the designs of these facilities were developed between August and December. These drafts serve as the foundation for the final detailed designs—including technical drawings, bills of quantity, and specifications—which will be completed for all hospitals by July 2025. Once finalised, the tendering process for the construction works will be launched.



### Expanding to more hospitals

While work continues on these five aforementioned institutions, preparations are also underway for the next batch of hospitals, with contracts for technical design set to be signed in January 2025. This includes:

✓ Oncology Institute (main block)

✓ Republican Clinical Hospital (main block)

✓ Mother and Child Institute (maternity block and polyclinic)

✓ Emergency Medicine Institute (blocks 1, 2, and 3)

✓ Balti Clinical Hospital (central and paediatric blocks)



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By the end of 2025, final designs for these hospitals will be ready, ensuring the project remains on track for timely construction.

*final designs for these hospitals will be ready, ensuring the project remains on track for timely construction. "A phased approach to hospital renovations was chosen to effectively manage the complexity and scale of the project,"*

**explained Ruslan Surugiu, Director of the Moldova Energy Projects Implementation Unit (MEPIU).**

*"This strategy considers the specialised requirements of hospital renovations and the limited capacity of local companies capable of executing such complex projects. By pacing the works, we can avoid overburdening the market and ensure that each phase receives the necessary attention to meet both energy efficiency and medical functionality standards."*

## **A path to improved healthcare**

MEEP's renovations go beyond energy efficiency, aiming to create safe, functional, and welcoming environments for patients and staff. Advanced insulation, energy-efficient LED lighting, modern ventilation systems, and compliance with accessibility and fire safety standards are key measures. These efforts are expected to cut energy consumption by 40%, saving Moldova approximately EUR 2.8 million annually while improving healthcare delivery.

This work is more than just infrastructure—it's about creating hospitals that serve their communities effectively. With a people-centred approach and technical precision, MEEP is enabling Moldova's healthcare sector to modernise.

Moldova Energy Efficiency Project is a major initiative aimed at improving energy efficiency in public buildings, with a total investment of EUR 75 million provided by the EU, the EIB, and the EBRD. The project focuses on the renovation of ten Republican hospitals, nine located in Chisinau and one in Balti, to achieve significant reductions in energy consumption and costs. MEEP is implemented by the MEPIU, in collaboration with the National Centre for Sustainable Energy, under the auspices of the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Moldova.



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# National organisations from the EU4Dialogue team participated in COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan

Representatives of the Alliance for Energy Efficiency and Renewables (AEER) and the European initiative Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy – Piotr Comarov, AEER Development Director and technical expert for the Covenant of Mayors, and Cristina Smolenschi, Deputy Mayor of Strășeni Municipality – contributed to the development of a regional study on climate vulnerability. The study, created as part of the EU-funded EU4Dialogue project, was launched during a high-level panel hosted

by the Ukrainian Pavilion at COP29 on November 22, 2024.

Written by 14 experts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, the study highlights the importance of cross-border cooperation in reducing climate vulnerabilities. Successful practices in cross-border water governance between Ukraine and Moldova are presented as valuable lessons for the South Caucasus region.



Over the course of three years, EU4Dialogue (Component 1) brought together experts in water, energy, and climate change from six countries. They discussed common issues ranging from transboundary water management to the transition to green energy and built networks for cross-border cooperation.

The EU-funded project "EU4Dialogue: Supporting Understanding Between Conflict Parties" is the first component of the broader EU4Dialogue program. It runs for five years and aims to facilitate dialogue and improve understanding between

parties by conducting studies, organizing events, training sessions, and workshops for participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova.

Implemented by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. in partnership with IDIS Viitorul (Republic of Moldova), IDP Women Association "Consent" (Georgia), the Institute for Mediation, Counseling, Development (Germany), and Cowater International (Belgium), the project will continue until July 2025.



# Over 40 municipalities in the Republic of Moldova joined the 'Learning Energy Efficiency' Network

More than 40 Local Public Authorities in the Republic of Moldova have signed a memorandum to join the Learning Energy Efficiency Network (LEEN) during a ceremony held in Bălți Municipality. This agreement serves as a key pillar in achieving energy efficiency goals established at international, local, and regional levels.

Mostly comprised of signatories to the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, the municipalities are demonstrating their

commitment to supporting the state's efforts in establishing a regional energy management system by joining the LEEN network. Consequently, localities will collaborate to establish a network of energy managers. These future managers will operate in one locality or a group of neighboring localities, acting as local experts on all energy and energy efficiency matters, ranging from best practices to in-depth knowledge of systems.



The LEEN initiative primarily focuses on Covenant of Mayors signatories that have developed and are actively implementing Action Plans for Energy and Climate. Furthermore, a collaboration agreement was signed between the “Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in the Republic of Moldova” (E4M) project and the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy in the Republic of Moldova. This agreement

ensures a shared understanding of LEEN's objectives and aligns the actions of the two signatories with other ongoing projects in Moldova's localities.

Other localities are welcome to join the LEEN network. Local Public Authorities can access more information about eligibility criteria by emailing [aeer@aeer.md](mailto:aeer@aeer.md) or visiting <https://aeer.md/leen.html>.



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The "Learning Energy Efficiency Network" (LEEN) is implemented by the Alliance for Energy Efficiency and Renewables with support from the "Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in the Republic of Moldova" (E4M) project, financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ Moldova.



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# Strengthening the capacity of local actors in drafting energy efficiency and social services improvement projects

Throughout November 2024, four regional workshops entitled "Drafting project proposals for the development of energy efficient communities in the Republic of Moldova" were organized within the "Local partnerships for energy efficiency in social services" project.

These events aimed to strengthen the competences of about 100 representatives of civil society organizations and public authorities of the Republic of Moldova, providing the support in developing their integrated projects proposals that are meant to contribute to the sustainable development of local communities.



The workshops were attended by civil society organizations and representatives of public authorities, as well as their project partners. The organizations were selected based on the project concepts submitted within the grant program for the development of

energy efficient communities in the Republic of Moldova, as well as on the results of the energy audit of buildings where the social services are provided and on the results of the social audit.

The workshops program was planned for three days each to combine theoretical sessions and practical exercises. The first day was about the social and energy audit of public buildings used to provide social services and the identification of the needs and priorities for improving energy efficiency. Day two focused on community mobilization and development of local partnerships, something that was intended to encourage the active involvement of citizens and other relevant actors in community projects. The last day addressed the technical and operational aspects of project proposals, including planning activities, budgeting, ensuring visibility and results' monitoring.

These sessions equipped the participants with the necessary knowledge and tools to develop competitive project proposals, that will have to be submitted for the grant competition that will result in the selection of 35 projects to get the funding.

Projects written by organizations will facilitate the strengthening of community energy efficiency to ensure optimal resource use and improvement of social services that better respond to the needs of the vulnerable population. The actions will be aimed at improving the energy efficiency of buildings where social services are provided, beneficiary community mobilization and social services quality improvement.

Through collaboration and active involvement, civil society organizations and public authorities demonstrate their ability to generate positive and sustainable change for the communities in the Republic of Moldova.

The "Local partnerships for energy efficiency in social services" project is implemented from the funds of the European Union, co-financed by Soros Foundation Moldova and implemented in partnership with Keystone Moldova and the Social Innovation Fund of Moldova.





## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE



### Exchange of best practices in Water Supply and Sanitation – study visit to southern Moldova

Inspired by the belief that valuable lessons can be learned close to home, a delegation of representatives from 13 local authorities and 4 service providers from Edinet, Straseni, and Leova rayons recently took part in a study visit to southern Moldova. Supported by the EU4Moldova: Local Communities programme, this visit provided participants with first-hand insight into Leova and Cahul's approaches to effective water supply and sanitation services.

From 30 October to 1 November, participants explored a range of local projects that highlighted efficient water management practices, from streamlined network administration to securing the investments needed for infrastructure modernisation. During discussions in Leova and Cahul, they examined how local water supply and sanitation systems (WSS) are structured and gained a deeper appreciation for the benefits of service regionalization. A session with Cahul water service representatives reinforced that regionalizing WSS services can significantly enhance sector performance by improving management and delivering high-quality, affordable water to residents. This remains a shared objective for the teams in Leova, Straseni, and Edinet

working with the programme. The visit also included a tour of Apa Canal Cahul's "one-stop-shop" center, demonstrating efficient, customer-focused service delivery for the local community.

In Colibasi, participants explored an array of community-driven projects supported by various international partners, including water infrastructure developments. This example highlighted the essential role of community engagement in driving local development forward.

Beyond technical benefits, the study visit created opportunities for collaboration between local authorities, service providers, and development partners. In interactive sessions, participants tackled the field's current challenges and explored sustainable solutions, from investment strategies to innovative technology and inter-municipal cooperation models.

Study visits like this one foster local capacity and lay the groundwork for sustainable infrastructure modernisation, contributing to the establishment of high-quality public services that benefit Moldova's communities.



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This study visit was made possible through the welcoming support of Leova and Cahul District Councils, Apa Canal Cahul, and the Municipalities of Leova, Iargara, Cahul, and Colibași, and facilitated by the EU4Moldova: Local Communities programme – a Team Europe initiative funded by the European Union and the governments of Germany, Austria, and Poland.



# Ongoing support for enhancing air quality and environmental protection in the Republic of Moldova

In the last quarter of this year, the Ministry of Environment in partnership with the EU-funded Twinning project "Air quality and environment" implemented a series of activities in accordance with the approved Rolling Work Plan.

As part of the 1st and 2nd Components of the project, focused on air quality management and the integrated environmental data system, the working teams concentrated on several key activities:

- ✓ the analysis of the national legal framework on air quality and defining an action plan,
- ✓ working visits to the Environment Agency labs and to the air quality monitoring stations from Chişinău, Mateuţi and Leova to evaluate the monitoring infrastructure and equipment in the local stations,
- ✓ initiate the assessment of the current emission reporting system,
- ✓ assessment of existing environmental data and the formulation of solutions for their integration into a modern system, in accordance with European requirements.

Components 3 and 4 dedicated to circular economy – waste management and environmentally sound management of chemicals included the following priority planned activities:

- ✓ GAP analysis of the legal and regulatory frameworks on waste management and on chemicals.



- ✓ evaluation of the existing extended producer responsibility systems (EPR) in the Republic of Moldova, which include the management of waste from electrical and electronic equipment, batteries and accumulators, packaging, vehicles, oils and tires.
- ✓ identifying ways to transpose the Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulation (CLP), the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation into national legislation, as well as the transposition of the RoHS Directive restricting the use of certain hazardous substances.

The analysis of institutional capacities is a key activity of the project which will lead to a series of practical trainings planned for spring 2025 for local specialists, focused on data quality assurance, equipment maintenance and calibration, sustainable waste management, classification of chemicals, their labelling and the issuance of safety data sheets.

The initiatives started within this project will support the Republic of Moldova in achieving environmental objectives and aligning

with EU standards, contributing to better air quality and improved environmental conditions affecting human health.

The Twinning project "Air quality and environment" is financed by the European Union and implemented by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova in partnership with counterpart organisations from Finland, Sweden and Lithuania.





# First Meeting of the trilateral working group on water management of the Prut river

The first meeting of the expert level working group established on the basis of the "Declaration on Cooperation in International Water Management Issues in the Prut River Basin" took place in Chisinau on 3 December 2024. The event brought together technical experts from the three signatory countries of the Declaration (Republic of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine), as well as representatives of the International Convention for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), under the auspices of which the Working Group operates.

During the event, the participants presented the current situation in the field of integrated water resources management in the Prut River Basin, as well as the activities carried out at the national level to protect and prevent pollution of water resources.

The working plan for the next three years was also developed, and the Republic of Moldova will chair the working group for the next two years. Among the priorities adopted are the initiation of the elaboration of the River Management Plan for the Prut River Basin, the promotion of the implementation of coordinated measures and the strengthening of joint monitoring in the Prut River Basin.



The Declaration on Cooperation on International Water Management Issues in the Prut River Basin between the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine was signed in Kyiv, Ukraine, on 20 October 2023.

The objectives of the document include strengthening the dialogue between both decision-makers and technical experts of the Prut River Basin countries with the aim of strengthening governance at the basin level; increasing the level of knowledge

and sharing of data and information in the context of adaptation to climate change; harmonising and ensuring synergies between national control systems in the field of water protection and early warning in case of risk of accidental water pollution; increasing the level of public participation in riparian areas and organising joint awareness-raising activities and joint participation in EU programmes.



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# EU-supported Hackathon empowers Moldovan youth to innovate for sustainable water management

On 4-5 December 2024, 38 young innovators, water experts, and tech enthusiasts gathered in Moldova for an inspiring two-day Water Data Hackathon, to develop digital solutions to address Moldova's pressing water challenges by promoting the use of open-source data.

Organised by the European Union's EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data programme in partnership with the NGO Renașterea Rurală and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova, the event brought together students of IT, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and water/environmental sciences to co-create tools for sustainable water management.



**Why water data matters.** Moldova's water resources are under pressure from climate change, ageing infrastructure, pollution, and inefficient water use. With agriculture and industry relying heavily on rivers, lakes, and groundwater, the need to access reliable data to inform the public and the water managers is more important than ever. As the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data programme has developed actions to strengthen access to environmental datasets produced by the Moldovan administration, the hackathon aimed to promote the use of existing open datasets by encouraging participants to

develop new information products and services based on datasets made available by the Moldovan administration and at global level (including open satellite information).

**The Hackathon: A hub of creativity and collaboration.** Participants—Moldovan students and young professionals—worked in multidisciplinary teams combining expertise in IT, GIS, and environmental sciences. Together, they developed innovative solutions to streamline the collection, visualisation, and accessibility of water data for decision-makers and citizens.



Focusing primarily on surface water quality and flood-related data, participants explored practical applications to improve water management. While each team impressed with their creativity and determination, the winning solutions showed exceptional ingenuity. The three winning teams came up with innovative and impactful solutions.

**Looking Ahead.** The top three teams received funding to finalise their proposal when possible, into fully functional digital solutions. Beyond the prizes, the Water Data Hackathon inspired young professionals to actively contribute to Moldova's sustainable development goals. It promoted the efficient use of environmental open datasets, underscored the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and highlighted the transformative potential of digital innovation in tackling environmental challenges.



## Workshop on Water Accounts for Moldovan and Ukrainian experts

On 17-18 December 2024, experts from Moldova and Ukraine gathered in Chisinau for an EU-led regional workshop on Water Accounts. This workshop was organized as part of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data programme and provided practical training on calculating

water accounts, a vital tool for understanding water use and availability.

These efforts contribute to evidence-based decision-making for sustainable water resource management in Moldova and Ukraine.



# Waste management: a priority for Local Authorities

On November 21–22, 2024, representatives of 33 active signatories of the Covenant of Mayors from the Republic of Moldova participated in a workshop on efficient waste management, organized under the EU CoMEast III project. The event aimed to provide practical solutions for improving local waste management in the context of climate change adaptation.

In the opening session, Justina Grigaraviciene, EU High-Level Advisor on Environment and Green Transition, and Nadejda Bocan, representative of the Ministry of Environment, emphasized the strategic role of local authorities in implementing sustainable waste management solutions. Irina Plis, CoM-East national expert, noted that this topic is a top priority for local administrations. A recent survey revealed that nearly 90% of the Covenant's signatories consider waste management an essential issue.



The first day of the workshop focused on theoretical and legislative aspects, including best practices and case studies on waste management. Participants explored

concrete solutions such as strategic planning, integrating the circular economy, and identifying funding sources.

The second day highlighted success stories from communities like Rîșcova, Mereni, Budești, and Sireți, demonstrating how active citizen engagement can reduce waste and protect the environment. Participants also visited the ABS Recycling plant to learn about advanced sorting and recycling technologies.

The workshop reaffirmed the commitment of local authorities in the Republic of Moldova to developing an integrated and sustainable waste management system aligned with European standards.





# A Training of Trainers Promotes Climate Justice Education at the Moldova State University

As part of the 2024-2025 EU-funded project "Development of Climate Justice and Human Rights Education at Moldova State University (MSU)," the Global Campus of Human Rights (GC) and MSU are collaborating to integrate climate justice into the academic curriculum. The project's focus is on building interdisciplinary collaboration between MSU's Faculties of Law and Biology, equipping scholars with the knowledge and skills to address the climate crisis through a human rights lens.

Part of the project is a Training of Trainers (ToT) program, running from October 2024 to June 2025, designed to support MSU academics to develop expertise in climate justice education. Organized over three phases, the training includes workshops, role plays, case studies, e-learning sessions, and group discussions. These activities provide hands-on learning to ensure faculty members can incorporate climate justice and human rights into their teaching.



In addition, the program will help creating interdisciplinary learning opportunities for MSU students, raising awareness of the climate crisis and its links to human rights. The initiative aims to promote a comprehensive understanding of the climate challenge and prepare future leaders to

address both environmental and human rights issues.

A key outcome of the collaborative process will be the establishment of the Climate Justice and Human Rights Education Lab at MSU, which will serve as a hub for research, education, and advocacy on these critical



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topics. The Lab's vision and strategic objectives will be developed as part of the ToT work plan, ensuring its long-term impact. Moreover, the training also includes English language courses offered by MSU's Resource Centre for Continuing Education to enhance lecturers' language skills and enabling them to engage in international research and collaborations, particularly within the GC network.

The second phase of the ToT, held in Chisinau from December 6th-8th, 2024, featured intensive seminars led by GC experts such as Adriano Remiddi, head of the GC Capacity Development Unit, Zoi Aliozi, GC alumna and EU Climate Pact Ambassador, Pim Martens from Maastricht University, and Samentha Goethals from University of Seville. These sessions provided in-depth

learning on interdisciplinary approaches to climate justice, policy negotiation, and collaborative teaching. Participants also engaged in experimenting role-playing models, among them the Climate Fresk® an innovative board-game that accelerates the understanding of climate issues. The project team will now work on adopting the Fresk model into the teaching activities.

By the end of the training, participants will have also developed a roadmap for the second edition of the newly established [European Cross-Regional Spring School on Climate Justice and Human Rights](#), with follow-up activities to ensure the continued integration of climate justice at MSU. This collaborative effort represents a significant step in advancing climate justice education in Moldova and the wider region.



*"While the impact of academic work often goes unnoticed, spreading the passion for climate justice education and training others to teach it makes all the challenges of academia worthwhile.*

*Empowering others to champion the cause of climate justice education and take climate action in academia is truly a privilege,"*  
**stated Dr Zoi Aliozi, Climate Justice expert and EU Climate Pact Ambassador.**



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## Green schools, brighter future: EU-funded project empowers Moldovan youth

Thanks to the generous support of the European Union, young people in the key regions of Cahul and Ungheni are playing a vital role in building a greener future.

Approximately 1,000 teachers and students in Cahul and Ungheni have been given the opportunity to implement practical solutions that promote environmentally responsible behaviour and ecological balance within their schools. This has been made possible by a €10,000 grant from the European Union to the "Eco-School: A Healthy Environment in Cahul and Ungheni" initiative, part of the EU4Moldova: Key Regions program, implemented by UNDP Moldova and UNICEF. With this funding, project beneficiaries have undertaken a variety of eco-friendly projects within their schools.

From installing water filters and creating green spaces to promoting recycling and organic farming, young people have shown that they have the power to be agents of change, starting with their own communities.

Access to safe drinking water is a fundamental human right, yet in many rural areas, especially in disadvantaged communities, children face a severe shortage of this essential resource. The "Eco-School" initiative has conducted water quality analyses, providing a clear picture of the current situation and identifying optimal solutions for each school. Some schools have already implemented concrete measures to ensure access to clean water and adequate hygiene conditions, such as installing water filters, hand pumps, water coolers, and rainwater harvesting systems.

Recognizing the specific needs of girls, the initiative has also focused on promoting personal hygiene. Some schools have been equipped with special boxes containing feminine hygiene products, ensuring that every girl has access to the necessary resources.



Another important focus of the "Eco-School" initiative is the proper management of waste. Many participating schools have implemented selective waste collection projects, including the collection of electrical and electronic waste, transforming these educational institutions into models for environmentally responsible communities. Students have also been encouraged to give new life to collected waste by transforming it into useful and aesthetic objects.





Project beneficiaries have also adopted a proactive approach to combating climate change and promoting energy efficiency, successfully implementing innovative projects that combine green technologies and environmental monitoring systems. For example, some schools have replaced old light bulbs with LED lights, while others have equipped students with sensors to monitor air and soil quality, turning them into "nature detectives."

The projects implemented under the "Eco-School" initiative cover a wide range of practical activities, from environmental education and awareness raising to concrete actions to improve the environment, such as clean-ups, plantings, and field research. Students are actively involved in these projects, contributing to their personal development and the formation of a generation that is responsible for the environment.



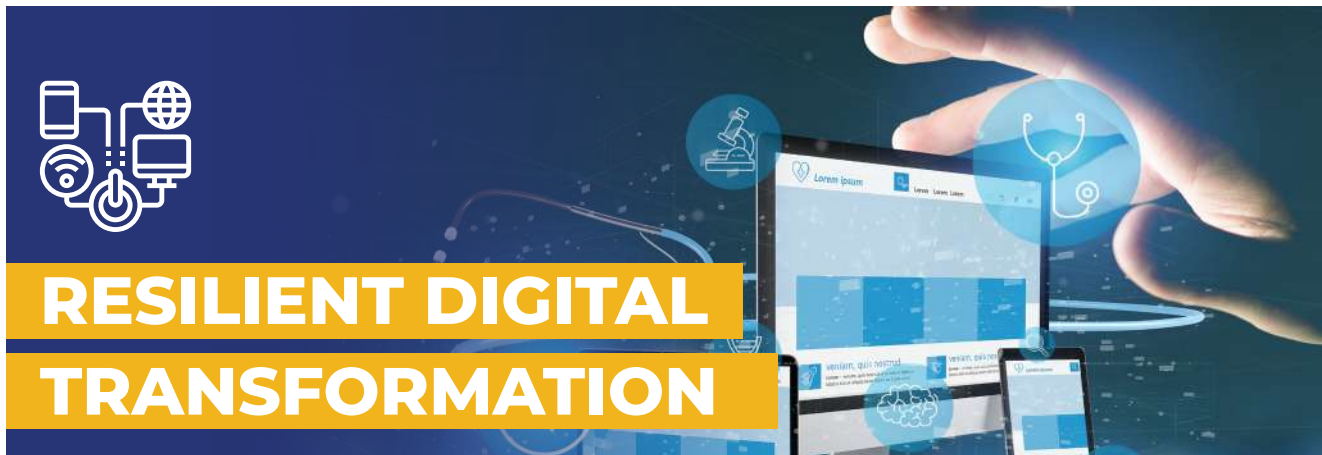
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The "Eco-School: A Healthy Environment in Cahul and Ungheni" initiative involved 11 educational institutions in Cahul district and nine in Ungheni district, reaching approximately 1,000 teachers, students, and their parents. The initiative was carried out within the framework of the "Enhancement of WASH, Environment Knowledge and Skills for Youth in the Key Regions Cahul and Ungheni" project, implemented by the National Environment Centre within the EU4Moldova: Key Regions program, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP Moldova and UNICEF.

It is worth noting that the "Enhancement of WASH, Environment Knowledge and Skills for Youth in the Key Regions Cahul and Ungheni" project was awarded at the 2024 NGO Gala in the category: Organization that has contributed most to the development of the associative sector at the local level.







## Moldova's digital capabilities: Continuously evolving needs tackled with EU material support

EUPM Moldova continues to support key institutions of the civilian security sector of the Republic of Moldova. This December, in response to direct requests and after extensive needs assessments exercises,

EUPM Moldova donated vital IT equipment to a number of Moldovan institutions, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the General Police Inspectorate, the Cybersecurity Agency, and the Task Force for Implementing the National Crisis Management Centre.



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The donated IT equipment are another step towards further increasing the analytical capabilities, operational efficiency, and cybersecurity of key governmental institutions, ensuring their ability to execute precise and timely actions in protecting the Republic of Moldova from hybrid threats.

In addition, EUPM Moldova, together with the U.S. Embassy in Moldova, the EU Delegation to Moldova and other partners, directly supported a project to upgrade Moldova's crisis response capabilities through using a more modern, integrated, and secure communications system.

The donations come at a critical time, as Moldova continues to face a large number of cyberattacks and hybrid threats targeting its infrastructure, government systems, and key sectors. Investments in cybersecurity and modern IT infrastructure are vital for creating a resilient digital environment and represent one essential part of the EU's broader efforts to support Moldova's resilience and prosperity.



# Republic of Moldova hosted first international cluster event

The role of clusters in regional development and smart specialization, the development of digital competences, examples and opportunities for interregional and international collaboration between clusters are some of the topics discussed at the international conference "Clusters Meet Regions", held for the first time in the Republic of Moldova, on 10-11 October 2024.

The event, organized by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme Moldova and the Romanian Cluster Association - CLUSTERO, brings together over 150 participants: entrepreneurs, experts, representatives of public authorities, clusters from the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the European Union.



The event tackles the role of clusters as dialogue partners in the design, implementation and monitoring of regional development policies and programmes, with a focus on smart specialization, skills for industrial transition and entrepreneurship. It also addresses the role of clusters in the economic development of the Republic of Moldova, as well as interregional collaboration in the EU through clusters, with a special focus on the Danube and Black Sea

regions.

On the margins of the conference, nine clusters from the Republic of Moldova were awarded the ECEI Bronze Label "Striving for Cluster Excellence" by the European Cluster Analysis Secretariat. They are the "Dealurile Măgurii", Berry and Furniture clusters from the Ungheni region, as well as the VIA Cahul, "Apicol" and "Bacii Sudului" clusters from the Cahul region, together with the "Inima Nistrului", "Herbafruct" and Livestock

and dairy production “Ovi-caprin Cimișlia-Basarabeasca” micro-clusters. The nine clusters have a total of over 235 members and were created in 2022-2023 with the support of UNDP, the European Union and the Government of Switzerland.

Bronze certification facilitates access to opportunities for collaboration with clusters in the European Union, partnerships and the development of joint projects. This will boost local economic development and fortify community resilience by supporting local entrepreneurship, attracting investment and generating new jobs.



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# Innovation clusters in focus at EU4Digital ICT Innovation Forum 2024

More than 200 EU and Eastern partner policymakers, international donors, start-ups, cluster organisations and other experts joined the [EU4Digital ICT Innovation Forum 2024](#) online and in Chisinau, Moldova, on 9 October. Under the theme 'Eastern

Partnership clusters capacity building to support digital innovation', they discussed challenges in the evolution of innovation clusters and met five cluster organisations who were announced as 'winners' of EU4Digital support in a European quality benchmarking process.



Innovation clusters are important players in the digital start-up ecosystem and economy, and have been placed in the focus of EU4Digital activities in 2024. The ICT Innovation Forum brought together key representatives of relevant public authorities from Eastern partner countries, donor organisations and clusters, as well as relevant European representatives and experts. Together they shared experiences of and strategic plans for supporting innovation clusters within the digital economy, building their capacity to foster innovation among start-ups and existing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Eastern partner countries, and helping them to harness the benefits of digitalisation. Sharing hopes for future growth and development, the discussion centred on collaboration together, leveraging human capital and fostering dialogue to build tangible cluster support.

The ICT Innovation Forum 2024 showed that clusters play a key role in digital transformation of the Eastern Partnership

countries. They not only foster innovation deployment and job creation, but also help integrate the region's economy into European and global value chains.

"This is just the beginning of our journey together and we hope that with the help of clusters, the Eastern Partnership will become a fully-fledged part of Europe's Digital Single Market," stated Thibault Charlet, Programme Manager, Digital Transition and Economic Development, DG NEAR.

Further information: [Innovation clusters in focus at EU4Digital ICT Innovation Forum 2024 - EU4Digital](#).

# 'EU4Digital DESI Accelerator: Methodology Updates and Actions from EaP Countries'

On 8 October 2024, EU4Digital kicked off a series of technical support events designed to boost DESI adoption in EaP countries with the regional workshop, 'EU4Digital DESI Accelerator: Methodology Updates and Actions from EaP Countries.' The event brought together over 30 representatives from statistical institutions and policymakers across the EaP region, all working toward a common goal: aligning their practices with the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI).

The workshop spotlighted key updates to the DESI methodology and their implications for EaP countries. With the high standards set by the Digital Decade Report, the focus was on ensuring accurate and comprehensive data. The evolving DESI surveys are becoming vital tools in helping to shape high-quality national digital roadmaps for EU Member States and addressing the most relevant issues in today's digital landscape. Experts from EU4Digital shared a detailed overview of the changes in the Digital Decade framework and DESI methodology, including updates from July 2024, and explored how these updates could impact data collection in the EaP region.

Gediminas Samuolis, Head of Knowledge Economy and Special Surveys Statistics in Lithuania, added valuable insights by sharing Lithuania's best practices in using surveys for DESI calculations, offering practical examples that EaP countries can apply.

DESI alignment is important for EaP countries because they share similar goals and challenges with the EU when it comes to digital transformation. Aligning with the DESI methodology ensures consistent benchmarking, facilitates targeted EU support and allows for the comparative analysis of key digital indicators in line with EU standards.

During the event, participants from the EaP region shared common concerns, including challenges in adapting to methodological changes and a lack of technical expertise to align their surveys with EU methodologies. EU4Digital is committed to helping solve these issues through dedicated capacity-building sessions, running from October 2024 to February 2025.



# The European Union and Sweden support the establishment of the largest innovation centre in the southern region

"EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul", a five-year project funded by the European Union in partnership with Sweden and implemented by the National Association of ICT Companies, marks a major milestone in the digital transformation and economic development of the southern region. On October 8th, renovation work began on the building that will host the largest innovation and IT excellence centre in the region: Inotek - EU Innovation Centre Cahul. This initiative is realized through a broad public-private partnership, with support from development partners, "Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu" State University, and the Cahul City Hall. The new Inotek centre will open its doors in the spring of 2025.

The four-story building, with over 1,600 square meters of space, will provide the community with a modern, multifunctional

facility to meet the diverse needs of its users. The future centre will offer state-of-the-art amenities for children, youth, adults, entrepreneurs, and professionals and will serve as a comprehensive platform for innovation, access to advanced technologies, digital solutions, and training programs, supporting economic development and expanding opportunities for the residents of the Cahul region.

Inotek will contribute to the development of a more equitable and inclusive economy by encouraging girls and women in the region to embrace and harness the potential of information technologies to grow, assert themselves, and pursue their aspirations. Over 60% of the total participants involved in the initiatives and actions carried out by the Centre will be girls and women.



## Better Employment Opportunities for Youth and Support for Innovative Entrepreneurship in the Southern Region

The Inotek centre will focus on developing and enhancing ICT skills among youth in the region, offering them a wide range of educational and training programs, thus

equipping them with the tools needed to access better opportunities in the job market. In the first two years after its opening, with financial support from the Government of Sweden under the "Inotek4Cahul" project, more than **4,000** students will benefit from STEM programs offered or supported by

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Inotek. Young people will develop relevant digital and entrepreneurial skills, gaining a significant competitive edge in an increasingly technology and innovation-oriented global job market.

The centre's programs will cover key areas such as programming, web design and development, graphic design, artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship, and more, preparing youth for well-paid, dynamic careers in the IT and digital sectors. Thus, Inotek will play a crucial role in reducing youth unemployment in the region and will contribute to retaining local talent, offering viable solutions to prevent migration.

At the same time, Inotek will become the epicentre of actions and events dedicated to supporting the business ecosystem and facilitating the establishment of startups in the southern region of Moldova. The centre will conduct entrepreneurship development programs for youth, host events for the transfer of experiences and best practices for regional entrepreneurs, and promote community-building and collaboration initiatives.



More than **1,000** people will benefit from training, consultancy, new knowledge, and connections through participation in community and entrepreneurial events organised by Inotek in the first two years after its launch. Young entrepreneurs will have access to the resources and knowledge necessary to launch, develop, and accelerate innovative businesses, while the business community in the southern

region will have access to a communication and collaboration platform that will facilitate the exploration and capitalization of new opportunities for improving, expanding, and reconfiguring their business models and processes.



Stronger Together

## **From 247 to 1,600 Square Metres Dedicated to Innovation, Impact Programs, and Transformative Initiatives**

In its first phase, the Inotek Innovation Centre was launched on May 17, 2023, at "Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu" State University in Cahul. The centre spans 247 square metres and offers a modern space that provides access to the latest technologies and digital tools, as well as relevant training and education programs. The launch of the centre was made possible with the support of the European Union and Sweden, under the "EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul" project.


Over 3,000 people from the region, 51% of whom are girls and women, benefited from the 55 initiatives carried out under the Inotek umbrella in its first year of activity, with support from development partners, taking advantage of significant opportunities for learning, personal development, career guidance, business growth, experience exchange, and valuable networking.

### **What Will the New Inotek Centre Space Look Like?**

In the first phase, funded by the European Union in partnership with Sweden, the building's first and second floor will be fully

renovated and endowed. The ground floor will include a reception area and two conference rooms, a mini-café, and a common relaxation area. This floor will also house the Youth Maker Club and meeting rooms. The second floor will feature meeting rooms, training spaces, administrative offices, and coworking spaces for companies, complemented by a common dining area. This phase is expected to be completed by May 2025, after which the Centre will open its doors to the public.

In the next phase, renovation work will continue on the third and fourth floors. The third floor will house an extended coworking space, including meeting rooms, offices, a children's area, and laboratories for educational activities. The fourth floor will include a mini-hotel facility for event participants and offices for startups and SMEs. This floor will also feature a sports area and a common dining space. To fully capitalise on the potential of the new centre, the project implementers are making efforts to identify additional funding opportunities that would contribute to the final renovation and endowment of the third and fourth floors.



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