



**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

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



EU – MOLDOVA: COOPERATION NEWS

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MOBILITY AND PEOPLE

Launch of the “Masa Bucuriei” campaign: an invitation to social solidarity

On March 15, 2024, “Diaconia” Social Mission launched the 15th edition of the “Masa Bucuriei” campaign. This year, the campaign is supported by the European Union through the “Partnerships for inclusive and resilient social canteen services” project, co-financed and implemented by “Keystone Moldova”, “Concordia. Social Projects” and “Diaconia.” The campaign aims to raise public awareness about the food insecurity faced by vulnerable groups and the importance of

community involvement to provide support to those in need.

The launch event, hosted by the State University of Moldova, facilitated interaction between the campaign organizers, public figures supporting the initiative, and students, who had the opportunity to learn more about the campaign's purpose and the social value of volunteering in supporting people in difficulty.

Fii Super Erou în Campania de Paști Masa Bucuriei



27 aprilie, 2024

Colecta de produse alimentare neperisabile

Înregistrează-te aici:

<https://masabucuriei.md/>



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“The “Masa Bucuriei”, being the longest-running social solidarity campaign in the Republic of Moldova, has supported thousands of people in need. Over all these years, hundreds of young people have actively engaged and ensured the successful execution of this noble initiative, either through volunteering or product donations. Young people, with their energy and activism, are the driving force in promoting social change through initiatives like the “Masa Bucuriei”. The European Union supports the campaign for the third consecutive year because we firmly believe that only through joint efforts and mobilization, of donors, entrepreneurs, and youth, can we offer real chances for a better life in the community”,

**stated His Excellency Jānis Mažeiks,
the European Union Ambassador to the
Republic of Moldova.**

Traditionally, the campaign culminates with a large national food collection on Palm Saturday, involving hundreds of volunteers across the country, in the collection of donations, in sorting and distributing them. This year, the event will be organized on April 27 in Chisinau and 20 other localities. All resources gathered during the campaign will be distributed throughout the year to the people in need, in the form of food packages or hot meals, served within social canteens.

“The collective solidarity gives us the opportunity to have a response to social challenges, because good is more meaningful and impactful when it is shared. Throughout its 15 editions, the “Masa Bucuriei” has become a platform for exercising and expressing solidarity for thousands of young people, and today we launch a new invitation with opportunities for involvement”,

**mentioned Igor Belei, Executive Director of
the Social Mission “Diaconia”.**



Also, the event was attended by Vladimir Dolghii, the pro-rector of the State University of Moldova, and the journalist Sorina Obreja.

They delivered inspiring messages to the students, emphasizing the significance of youth participation in social initiatives.

Ukrainian resilience through education: a Ukrainian teacher helps refugee children continue their education

Love for children and education knows no boundaries, even in wartime. Our colleague Yuliia Stetskaia, a trained teacher, employed by People in Need Moldova as a facilitator at the Digital Education Centre in the village of Calaracheuca, Ocnîța district, demonstrates this by her own example. From the first day of the hostilities, Yuliia, together with her family, fled from the border town of Mohyliv-Podilskyi and settled in the north of Moldova. There, she helps Ukrainian children to continue their education, even if they are far from home. Her story is a sad but inspiring one and confirms how much solidarity matters, especially in crisis situations.

Two years ago (24 February 2022), awakened by the sound of alarms announcing the beginning of the Russian invasion, Yuliia didn't think twice. She didn't think about luggage, material things... She took only her two daughters and hurried across the Nistru to reach the Republic of Moldova as quickly as possible. Her primary objective at that moment was to save her children from Russian missiles. Did it occur to Yuliia that by crossing the Otaci bridge she was leaving her home for such a long time? No, she had no idea. Like millions of Ukrainians who were forced to leave their homes, she hoped she would be able to return home soon. On that cold morning, it didn't even occur to her that she would have to live in another country for two years already.

"In the morning, at about 07:00 I was startled out of sleep by the sirens. It was the moment when our life changed radically. We didn't take anything with us, not even many thoughts we didn't have then."

All I could think about was how to protect my children. We were going into the unknown, we didn't know what awaited us in another country and what new challenges fate would prepare for us,"

Yuliia painfully recalls.



Once they realized that their return to Ukraine was indefinitely postponed, Yuliia's family began the difficult process of adjusting to a new place to live. Unfamiliar with the Romanian language, without much money and without many necessities, the family began to build their lives in a new reality. At the same time, the children needed to continue their education in one way or

another. Although Yuliia always wanted her daughters to learn in their mother tongue, she had to make the decision to enrol them in a Moldovan school. Unfamiliar teaching language, differences in the curriculum and probably a lot of stress made this “experiment” fail.

“The most difficult was for my eldest daughter Ivanka, who was 13 at the time. She tried to fit in at a local school, but it was complicated for her. That’s when we made the decision to switch to online education in Ukraine,”

says Yuliia.

Knowing from her own experience the difficulties in the educational process faced by refugee children, and having studied to be a teacher, Yuliia wanted very much to be useful, to be able to help Ukrainian schoolchildren to obtain the necessary knowledge even in these complicated conditions. People in Need gave her this opportunity. Thanks to European Union funding, our organisation has opened several Child-Friendly Spaces and with the support of donations from the Czech people, Digital Education Centres. Yuliia found herself at one of these centres, where she helps dozens of children, including her daughter, to continue their education at a high level.

“I was very happy, when I saw the job advertisement in one of the refugee groups on social media. It was an opportunity, which I exactly wanted. Plus, now I have the opportunity to spend more time with Ivanka. She is still learning at our center. Although she has always been very capable, now, under my direct supervision, her achievements have improved even more,”

says Yuliia with a slight smile.

In addition to her work with children at the Digital Education Centre, Yuliia supports our team in other projects aimed at improving the lives of those who have fled war.



One of the recent activities, that Yuliia offered to help with, was the campaign “Winter gives warmth”, part of the PLACE project, funded by the European Union and implemented by People in Need Moldova in consortium with NRC and Acted. The campaign involved providing over 600 Ukrainian and Moldovan children with winter clothes and shoes. Knowing how hard it is to be a refugee in a foreign country and how important this help is for those on very modest incomes, Yuliia was keen to get involved and help her compatriots and vulnerable families in local communities. Together with other colleagues from PIN Moldova, she accompanied parents and children from the north of the country to one

of the shops, where she helped them choose winter clothes. It was yet another opportunity for her to feel useful and to do something welcome for both her countrymen and the community, which hosted her.

“Like all Ukrainians, I wish very much for the war to end as soon as possible and for everyone to be able to return home. I wish that the children can return to their schools, to their desks as soon as possible...,” says our heroine in a slightly trembling voice. “And then, when that happens, I very much hope, that those who learn in our centres, will not have a gap in their knowledge,”

concludes Yuliia, as her eyes begin to shine with tears.



Eurydice Network launched in 2024 in Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia

In the context of the start of negotiations on the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union, new perspectives, including the field of education, are opening for our country. In addition to the launch of the new Erasmus+ opportunities in the field of higher education, vocational education and training, youth and sports, starting from 2024 the Eurydice network is expanding in the space of the new candidate countries for membership of the European Union: Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia.

Eurydice is a network established in 1980 by the European Commission and the Member States to support European cooperation in the field of education. All EU member states are part of Eurydice, along with some non-EU countries (48 national systems in total). Starting from 2024, the Eurydice network is part of the Erasmus+ programme. The European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for managing and promoting the network and its publications.

The Eurydice network helps improve education systems in Europe through providing high quality information on a wide range of aspects of education policy and practice. With the support of national units, Eurydice provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. Eurydice reports show how countries tackle challenges at all education levels: early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education, higher education and adult learning.

The National Erasmus+ Office in Moldova will be responsible for managing the Eurydice national unit, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research and the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova. In the context of this news, the representatives of the Office participated on January 26 at the initiation event of the national Eurydice units from Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia in Brussels. During the event, it was strongly emphasized that the exchange of knowledge and experience between the new member countries of the Eurydice network will not only enrich educational practices, but also contribute to the creation of a more interconnected and harmonious European educational community.

Also, on February 21, the National Erasmus+ Office hosted the delegation consisting of Giuseppe Paglione, programme officer within the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova; Ludmila Pavlov, deputy secretary general of the Ministry of Education and Research (MECC) and Galina Rusu, state secretary in the fields of vocational technical education and the national qualifications framework of the MECC. During the meeting, the team of the Eurydice national unit was presented, as well as the objectives of the project and the perspectives of collaboration with the Ministry and the EU Delegation during the management of the Eurydice national unit.



With the inclusion of national units from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the network responds to historical conditions and evolves into a broader platform for exchange and educational cooperation. The expansion of the Eurydice network signifies a collective

commitment to build a more thorough, inclusive and innovative education system. This fact also underlines the opening of new paths for cross-border cooperation and the development of joint educational initiatives.



Stronger Together

Go-karting is an art of resilience that brings together enthusiasts from both banks of the Nistru River

Due to a growing number of people wanting to engage in the sport, the first karting school in Grigoriopol was opened in 2022. The sports track needed investments to revive it, as it was already impractical.

Thanks to the support provided through the European Union's (EU) Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, internal improvement works were carried out, modern boxes were procured to store the karts, and changing rooms and sanitary blocks were equipped.

The EU investment costs for modernizing the karting school amount to 116,000 euros.

Ivan and Maxim are among the youngest students of the karting school. When they get into the cars, they say they feel equal to their older colleagues, but the instructor reminds them of the rules and safety on the track and that, being smaller, they need to reduce speed.



"My dad insisted that I go kayaking, but I didn't succeed there; I always capsized and gave up. I came to karting and enrolled myself. I like that besides going absolutely for free, I also learned overtaking rules, especially when we're at speed,"

says Ivan Vidrașco, 8 years old.

"I like being on the track, I like driving, and I especially like the 'eye-of-the-needle' manoeuvre,"

says Maxim Smirnov, 9 years old.



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"He has wanted to train and drive these cars since he was a little child. That was his choice, and we supported him, and we will continue to do so. We hope he grows up and participates in competitions,"

says Maxim's mother, Olga Smirnova.

The track is the heart of any karting track, and the Grigoriopol circuit is 1080 meters long, allowing for sports competitions for professional drivers from both banks of the Nistru River and beyond.

"I am a sports teacher, and my experience allows me to teach here as well. I tell my students that safety on the track is crucial—safety techniques, maintaining the trajectory, how to react on the track, how to work as a team and overcome psychological barriers. Many will say that karting is not complicated. It's not like that; pilots need to develop both physical strength and resilience,"

declares instructor Veaceslav Seniuc.



From Monday to Friday, the karting track is a training ground for students, and on weekends, professional drivers from both banks of the Nistru River train hard to improve their technical skills and achieve performance in competitions.

Every year, the National Karting Championship is organized in Grigoriopol with teams participating from both banks of the Nistru River.



Stronger Together

#EU4Youth: identifying youth priorities in Făleşti and Edineț through decision-making and critical thinking training sessions

On March 15, students from "Ion Creangă" Lyceum in Făleşti, and on March 22, students from "Pan Halippa" Lyceum in Edineț participated in special training sessions focusing on decision-making and critical thinking. Organised by EU4Youth, these sessions aimed to understand and address the challenges faced by young people in their communities while encouraging creative problem-solving.

In Făleşti, a group of 20 students engaged in a thorough analysis of community issues. Initially, they believed that youth marginalisation in decision-making, lack of job opportunities, and limited recreational areas were the main concerns. However, a survey of 92 students revealed different priorities: the absence of recreational spaces, increasing violence, and substance abuse.



To tackle these issues, participants formed four groups and proposed solutions. Notably, they suggested establishing an open-air cinema to address the lack of recreational areas, a simple yet effective idea.

This proposal gained support for presentation to the Făleşti Local Council.

Similarly, in Edineț, over 20 young individuals identified various community challenges, including educational and recreational deficiencies, stray animal populations, urban sanitation issues, and public transportation inadequacies. In response, they proposed organizing a city park cleanup day to enhance community well-being.

These collaborative efforts demonstrate the commitment of young people in Făleşti and Edineț to finding solutions to local problems and fostering positive change. Through these training sessions, they are empowered to become active agents of progress, contributing to a better future for all.

The action is part of a series of training sessions implemented by the 'EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment' project, co-funded by the European Union and the government of the Federal Republic of Germany, in partnership with Europe Café within the 'European Year of Skills'



#EU4Youth: National Youth Council of Moldova receives 50,000 EUR grant to strengthen youth engagement and empowerment

The National Youth Council of Moldova has been awarded a grant of 50,000 EUR under the EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment project, co-funded by the European Union and the government of the Federal Republic of Germany, and implemented by GIZ. This funding aims to not only improve the capacities of the National Youth Council of Moldova but also provides opportunities for its member organisations to collaborate on joint events.

Activities covered by the grant include training sessions on youth participation, workshops for Youth Council members on 'Policy Lab' methodology, an online campaign

highlighting the importance of youth engagement, and a national conference of youth organisations. These initiatives are designed to strengthen institutional capabilities, foster inclusive youth dialogues, increase youth engagement in policy-making processes, and facilitate the development of policy recommendations.

Furthermore, the grant prioritises outreach to youth in remote and disadvantaged regions, with the ultimate goal of empowering more young people and expanding their opportunities for growth. Implementation of these activities started in March and will continue for a duration of one year.



EU and IOM continue supporting the Ukrainian refugees

Since the beginning of the war, 2,585 Ukrainian refugees and third-country nationals in the Republic of Moldova have been resettled to the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA) Member States.

"We have no one in Norway, and we don't know what awaits us, but for us the most important thing is to go to a safe place. The registration process was simple with your assistance, and now we are ready to take the flight to a new life."

Ivana and her family, from Odesa, are one of hundreds of Ukrainian refugees who entered the Republic of Moldova to flee the war, and who were assisted by the IOM Moldova's Resettlement and Movement Management Team.

Since the beginning of the war in February 2022, 2,585 Ukrainian refugees and third-country nationals have been transferred by air transportation by the International Organization for Migration, in coordination with the Border Police of the Republic of Moldova, for their relocation to European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA) Member States.

Through the Migration Health Department, those assisted by this program also received pre-departure health assistance by IOM.

These activities are made possible thanks to the generous financial support of the European Commission's Directorate-General for EU Neighbourhood and Enlargement.



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"Joboteca" project – an architect of the young generation: shaping engaged, confident and future-ready young people

150 students, teachers, parents and partners from 25 communities across the country met on 25 January this year in Chisinau to take part in the celebration event of the achievements of the "Joboteca" project, for which they have been working together for three years. One by one, as in a big family, they valued their efforts, shared what they have learned, how they apply the knowledge and lessons learned, but also how they intend to pass on their experience to others and, especially, how they intend to keep the project activities alive in schools.

"Joboteca" was a large-scale pilot project carried out between February 2021 and January 2024 by Terre des hommes Foundation, Moldova and Romania offices, in 25 communities in 5 districts of Moldova, with the aim of giving young people a better start in adult life. With a total value of 1 110 396 Euros, the project was made possible thanks to generous funding from the European Union, which covered 90% of the amount.



"Joboteca" has prepared young people in grades 8-12 from 25 schools for the next stage of their life - adulthood: it has facilitated their entry into the labour market and given them a start to a more secure future through

courses, camps and trainings on career guidance, digital skills and entrepreneurship, by testing various jobs under the guidance of professionals, by launching local small businesses by the students themselves.

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Beyond the generous figures, the achievements and impact of "Joboteca" can be counted in the experiences and emotions lived by the beneficiaries, the motivation, courage, inspiration and opportunities they gained from their involvement in the project.

"Joboteca" has equipped 25 spaces - "job libraries" - in the 25 partner schools with the necessary technology; it has developed three courses for school students: career guidance, digital skills development and entrepreneurship; has enrolled 130 students in training and mentoring programmes; provided grants to 15 NGOs who in turn developed similar local projects for young people; 16 school students business ideas were awarded grants and turned into local businesses; 1300 students participated in the "Take Over Day" campaign, testing 50 jobs and professions, under the guidance of 300 mentors. In total, more than 6000 students in the 25 communities participating in the project benefited from unique activities and opportunities during the three years of the project.

"Joboteca" through the eyes of young people: "It has unlocked my ambition, confidence and inspired my future plans"

Anastasia and Cătălina are two of the more than 6000 school students who benefited from the activities offered by the "Joboteca" project. From career guidance to the theory and practice of starting a business, the young women have tried it all.

Career guidance for a better informed future

Career guidance courses and activities, as well as testing of various jobs under the guidance of specialists as part of the "Take Over Day" campaign helped thousands of young people make an informed and more empowered decision about their future.

Catalina Vilcu from Pitusca, Calarasi, is graduating from 9th grade this year, so she needed more clarity about her future profession. "Take Over Day" gave the verdict, says the young woman:

"Because I dreamed of wearing the white coat, I went to the district hospital. I witnessed a surgery, but I understood that I was not able to hold the scalpel in my hand. At the national stage, I chose to visit the Police Academy. I was impressed by what I saw there. I decided I wanted to be a police officer. I'm not going to save lives, but I'm going to protect them!"

says Catalina satisfied with her decision.

The student says that both "Take Over Day" and the training camps offered by Tdh have changed her vision and outlook for the future.

"Experienced mentors told us about how to launch a business, I was trained to organize events at my school, mobilize colleagues and be an engaged student. The activities I organized in school enhanced my teamwork, coordination and leadership skills,"

Catalina recounted her experience.

Small entrepreneurs today – for a chance at big business in the future

"Joboteca" also gave students the opportunity to learn about the science of entrepreneurship and test small businesses being still in the school. From hand-made organic candles, painting on clothing, growing organic vegetables and fruits, growing flowers, etc. - the "Joboteca" young people set up 16 local small businesses.

After a series of trainings and mentoring sessions with professionals on how to identify a business idea, how to develop a business plan and how to run the business itself, dozens of young people took part in the business ideas competition, which resulted in 16 ideas receiving funding.

We're used to old magazines, newspaper clippings or notebooks going to the bin or, at best, to the recycling bins. **Anastasia Stavila, a student at the "Constantin Stere" high school in Soroca**, has set up an innovative and environmentally friendly business - eco-friendly paper cups for seedlings. For her idea, Anastasia won a €500 grant. With this money, she bought the necessary tools and raw materials.



"The paper is shredded and soaked. After a day, I drain it of water and put it through the blender. In the composition I add ash, which I get from burning wood. The novelty in the glass paste is the fertiliser: the resulting glasses are 100 percent biodegradable and serve as fertiliser when they decompose,"

Anastasia proudly explained the process.

She wants to discourage farmers from using plastic cups and hopes her products will become popular as spring arrived, and the farming season began.

"The entrepreneurship sessions inspired my future plans. I plan to study business or management. "Joboteca" has given me ambition and confidence, for which I am grateful to Tdh,"

said the young entrepreneur.



Stronger Together

Involved and committed teachers - the reliable partners of the project

The "Joboteca" project has been a resounding success thanks to the active and wholeheartedly committed teachers. **Pelaghia Traci, from Taraclia, Causeni**, is one of them. She has a special passion for pedagogy and a special dedication to her students. These qualities motivated her to apply to the "Joboteca" project.

More than 40 years dedicated to pedagogy, that's how long Pelaghia Traci has been in front of her students morning by morning. She introduces them to computers and tells them about the digital world, one of the project's three extracurricular programmes. When she's not in the classroom, Pelaghia Traci, as headmistress, manages the smooth running of the "Stephen the Great and Holy" High School, one of the project's 25 partner schools.

Pelaghia Traci was involved body and soul in the project and motivated and encouraged

the students in everything: "At school, during breaks, when I saw the students involved in "Joboteca" in the hallway, I approached them each time to talk about their plans, activities", says the teacher.

For the "Take Over Day" campaign, Pelaghia Traci put her persuasive skills to work, so that, in the end, the list of professions requested by the students coincided with the real possibilities. She didn't give up until she saw her students' dreams come true.

"One of the students requested a day with the dentist. I turned to a former student who now works in a dental office. Another former student of the high school, who became a surgeon in Chisinau, opened the door of the operating room for other students passionate about medicine. I personally negotiated with each mentor,"

described her involvement the headmistress.



Young people from Taraclia got also a taste of the entrepreneurial experience. Members of the Child Advisory Board from the school opened a crochet and embroidery workshop, offered fitness sessions and drama classes. With the ten thousand euros granted in the project, they bought a computerized sewing machine, equipped the sports hall with machines and transformed the hall into a real theatre.

"Students gained new perspectives on the present and the future. Thanks to the activities, they have discovered and developed their skills, have had access to different opportunities. I noticed the change that occurred during the project - young people are freer, more confident, surer of what they want and what skills they have",

concluded Pelaghia Traci.

The project "JOBOTECA - Pilot Program for Preparing Young People in Moldova for the Labor Market" (2021 - 2024) was funded by the European Union and implemented by the Terre des hommes Foundation, Romania and Moldova offices, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Moldova.

More details about the project, activities and available informative materials: www.tdh.md/JOBOTECA



Modernisation of public lighting in Edineț: a smart and sustainable approach, supported by the European Union

Mun. Edineț has made significant progress in modernizing the street lighting system, contributing to the transformation of the city into a more sustainable and environmentally friendly place. As part of this process, 216 new poles have been installed and over 200 lighting fixtures have been equipped with LED technology, providing optimal and energy-efficient street lighting.

In the Vasile Alecsandri Public Garden, a notable feature of the project was the installation of 10 poles with additional functionalities, including WiFi systems and USB sockets, enhancing the experience of visitors. Additionally, 3 multifunctional poles have been equipped with informative panels, providing data on temperature, air quality, and time, to contribute to the information and comfort of residents and tourists.

For more efficient management of public lighting, 410 lighting control modules have been installed, and 40 lighting points have been modernized and integrated into the remote management system. These improvements allow for more precise control over energy consumption and ensure adequate lighting of public spaces.

Furthermore, as part of energy efficiency efforts, photovoltaic panels have been installed on the rooftops of three public buildings, generating electricity for street lighting and other city needs. This initiative reduces dependence on traditional energy sources and contributes to the municipality's budget savings.

In the future, the local administration intends to expand the use of photovoltaic panels, aiming to cover the energy needs of more public institutions and promote a sustainable urban development model.



Modernisation of the Island in Vasile Alecsandri Public Garden in Edineț, with EU support

Since the beginning of 2024, the project to arrange the island in Vasile Alecsandri Public Garden in Edineț municipality has made significant progress. Following the successful completion of the technical project in December 2023, the responsible team has initiated public procurement procedures for the landscaping works. This step marks the beginning of the actual transformation of the island into a revitalized and accessible green space for the city's inhabitants.

The constant efforts made to ensure the full completion of the landscaping works by next autumn aim to provide the community with a place for relaxation and recreation in the heart of nature. The project represents a firm commitment of the local administration to improve the quality of life in Edineț, turning the park into an attraction point and a haven of tranquillity for all citizens.



The European Union supports the transformation of public transport in Edineț

Edineț municipality has made significant strides towards a more sustainable and accessible public transport system. With the financial support of the European Union, the city has acquired eight modern buses that comply with EURO 6 emissions standards and are equipped for the accessibility of people with special needs. This initiative was complemented by the installation of 17 smart waiting stations, equipped with information panels, video cameras, photovoltaic lighting, and free WiFi, as well as the implementation of an advanced traffic light system at three key intersections in the city, giving priority to public transport.

In the period January-March 2024, Edineț mun. continued to progress in modernizing public transport services by creating a Municipal Enterprise dedicated to managing this service. This essential stage is accompanied by an active staff recruitment process and obtaining the necessary licenses and permits for operation, marking a transition to more a more efficient and structured management of public transport.



Invest in women - key topic of International Women's Day Campaign 2024

UN Women launched the campaign for International Women's Day, themed "Invest in women: Stories of empowerment." The event, financed by the European Union and Sweden, featured a storytelling format, which

was organized into two sessions focused on women's stories and interventions. Together, the participants shared their visions on how to increase investments in women to ensure a prosperous and equitable society.



Present at the event, H.E. Jānis Mažeiks, the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, spoke about the importance of investing in women, as well as the EU and UN Women's joint efforts to promote gender equality.

"By investing in women's stories and experiences, we contribute to a broader vision of their empowerment and resilience. From 2020 to 2023, the EU invested 5 million euros in the EVA project, transforming 24 communities in Cahul and Ungheni into champions of gender equality promotion.

Notable achievements include the launch of the Integrated Regional Service for Victims of Sexual Violence in Ungheni and the establishment of 16 clubs, which guided 250 women towards vocations and income-generating activities. Furthermore, 24 local public authorities have committed to respecting gender equality principles by signing the European Charter."

In continuation of these efforts, the European Union is supporting a new project launched by UN Women called "EVOLVE4GE: Accelerating gender equality by ensuring women's empowerment through economic opportunities, combating violence and gender-sensitive governance." Implemented until September 2027, the project will seek to increase opportunities for women and girls, ensure their rights and eliminate and prevent gender-based violence with support from Moldova's media institutions.

Dominika Stojanoska, UN Women Moldova's Country Representative, emphasized the campaign's collective message.

"Investing in women is both an economic priority and an important aspect of human rights. To accelerate progress towards achieving gender equality and ending poverty among women, we must invest in policies and programmes that address gender inequalities and encourage women's financial independence and leadership."

In a world facing multiple crises that put immense pressure on communities, achieving gender equality is more important than ever. Ensuring women's and girls' rights in all aspects of life is the only way to ensure prosperous and equitable economies and a healthy planet for future generations.



EU-Moldova

Stronger Together



Social services for vulnerable people in the Republic of Moldova were developed with the financial support of the European Union and the Soros Foundation Moldova

In partnership with local and central public authorities, civil society organizations have created and improved 41 social services for people from vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova. The activities were carried out in the framework of the project "Civil society

organizations working for better social services," funded by the European Union, co-financed and implemented by the Soros Foundation Moldova, in partnership with IP Keystone Moldova and AO „Institutum Virtutes Civilis."



  EU-Moldova
Stronger Together

The project has created 12 day and placement centers for children and adults at risk, eight mobile teams and home care services, six rehabilitation centers for children and adults with disabilities, three vocational guidance services for young people at risk, three community houses and sheltered housing services, three services for children and adults with visual and hearing disabilities, two social laundries, a social canteen and a Barnahus-type center in Balti. These services operate in [29 districts and municipalities](#).

The "Civil society organizations acting for better social services" project started in 2021 and will end in July 2024. It has a total budget of 3,375,000 EUR, of which the European Union contributes 3,000,000 EUR.

Social services created or developed under the project must be sustainable. The public authorities take over the services developed and continue to manage them.



The project aims to empower social civil society organizations (CSOs) to become pillars in social policy dialogue and build inclusive communities for vulnerable groups. Thus, at each project stage, specialists have benefited from initial and continuous training, counseling, and mentoring provided by Keystone Moldova. Institutum Virtutes Civilis has developed a methodology for costing social services with the Ministry

of Labour and Social Protection, which will contribute to developing service contracting practices.

During the project, 6,739 people from vulnerable groups benefited from social services, of which 58.4% were from rural areas and 41.6% from urban areas. Most (74%) beneficiaries were children, and 17% were older adults.

Civil society organisations, beneficiaries of grants for anti-corruption initiatives, presented their results

The event presenting the results of the local Civil Society Organisations (CSO) grant programme and the Anti-Corruption Social Theatre Gala took place on March 12, 2024. The event was attended by more than 80 representatives of partner civil society organisations, anti-corruption institutions, international donor organisations, and NAC anti-corruption young volunteers. The event was watched live by 5382 people.

The event marked the successful completion of the local grant programme and presented the results of three regional projects implemented by CSO ProEuropa, CSO Centrul Contact, and CSO ProCoRe.

The regional civil society organisations received 500,000 EUR each for anti-corruption initiatives in the North, South, and Centre regions. They subsidized 48 local civil society organisations implemented projects in the health, education, and agri-food sectors, with a large involvement of young people. They also strengthened the capacities of local CSOs, set up Transparency Councils and citizen participation committees, and carried out over 800 awareness-raising events, including 51 social theatre performances on anti-corruption.



Stronger Together

The event culminated with the presentation of three social theatre plays on anti-corruption, which were part of the activities of local civil society organisations.

The Local Grants Programme is an activity of the project "Strengthening the rule of law and anti-corruption mechanisms in the Republic

of Moldova", co-financed by the European Union and BMZ, which provides additional support to the Government of the Republic of Moldova's commitments to improve the effectiveness of state and civil society measures in preventing and combating corruption in the Republic of Moldova.



Towards ensuring the right to legal gender recognition in the Republic of Moldova

The Council of Europe facilitated a common platform for discussion between state authorities and civil society organisations from the LGBTI community, with a focus on ensuring the right to legal gender recognition to persons living in the Republic of Moldova, as well as on the related European standards and examples of good practices.

It was highlighted that all strategies and measures in this respect have to take into account the diversity which exists in the society, as well as the experiences of persons that faced discrimination and intolerance, including on the grounds of

sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or sex characteristics.

This event, organised in January 2024, is part of the European Union and Council of Europe joint programme “[Partnership for Good Governance](#)”, co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe, and implemented by the Council of Europe, in the framework of the project “[Combating discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Republic of Moldova](#)” and in cooperation with the [Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics Unit](#).



Advancing regional cooperation to bring forward equality reforms for the protection of LGBTI community

A regional peer exchange on tackling equality reforms and focusing on the protection of LGBTI persons, took place in Podgorica, Montenegro. The two-day event organised with the support of the EU and the Council of Europe, brought together representatives of human rights institutions, equality bodies, as well as civil society representatives and experts in the field from Albania, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine. During the seminar, participants had the opportunity to learn from their peers, but also to strengthen the co-operation and synergies at the regional level to increase the institutional potential to contribute to the necessary social change at the domestic level.

This event is organised as part of the European Union and Council of Europe joint initiatives: "[Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye](#)" programme, "[Partnership for Good Governance](#)" programme, and the project "[Support for implementing European standards relating to anti-discrimination and rights of national minorities in Ukraine](#)". It was implemented in co-operation with the Council of Europe [Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics \(SOGIESC\) Unit](#) and in partnership with [ERA – LGBTI Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Turkey](#).



Oncology Institute of Moldova equipped with financial support of the European Union

New equipment delivered by the International Organization for Migration to the Institute of Oncology will allow a diagnostic method implemented for the first time in the Republic of Moldova, thanks to the financial support of the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments.

The International Organization for Migration in Moldova facilitated the delivery of new medical equipment to the Institute of Oncology as part of a project funded by the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments.

The Gamma Probe System CENNA-500W is an equipment that will be used in various types of cancer surgeries where sentinel lymph node biopsy is indicated. This includes cancers such as breast cancer, melanoma, and certain types of head and neck cancers.

Dr. Victor Ciuperca, head of the Skin Cancer and Melanoma section of the Institute of Oncology, stated that the Institute of Oncology did not have such a device so far and that the Gamma Probe will guarantee a new approach and a new technique for patients, including Ukrainian refugees.



"This device will allow us to implement the method of early detection of the Sentinel Lymph Node according to the approved National and International Clinical Protocols. We will be able to correctly assess the stage of oncological disease and apply timely and effective treatment for skin, breast, gynecological and cervical cancer. We will have the opportunity of combining surgical treatment with polychemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment, reducing disability due to oncological diseases, and increasing the survival time of oncological patients. This is a diagnostic method that will be implemented for the first time in the Oncology Institute and in Moldova."

The donation, worth 450,000.00 MDL (equivalent to 25,499.00 USD), is part of the Project "Strengthening national capacities and services to ensure Ukrainian refugees have access to quality protection, education, and health services, and greater opportunities for socio-economic inclusion" implemented by IOM in Moldova to support the Ministry of Health and Oncology Institute, in particular through direct coverage of the costs of exceptional medical expenses, and to guarantee diagnosis and oncology treatment for refugees, third-country nationals and Ukrainian refugees.



Graduates of the Leadership Academy "Women for Good Governance" – ready to positively change the country

Over 150 women leaders from across the country, on Friday, January 26, 2024, participated in the networking event dedicated to the graduates of the Leadership Academy "Women for Good Governance", organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation Moldova and the NGO "Institutum Virtutes

Civilis", with the financial support of the European Union and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Most of the participants were involved in the general local elections of November 2023 and obtained public positions - as mayors, local or rayonal councilors.



At the opening event, the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, Jānis Mažeiks, emphasized the importance of active participation of women in public life.

"The participation of women in good governance and the political life of the country is an ambitious objective, and the Republic of Moldova should be proud that it has already achieved it. However, this can be further improved through the continuous empowerment of women. Out of 200 women, trained and mentored under the EU Initiative "Partnerships for Women's Leadership and

Good Governance", 68 women ran for local elections in 2023. Among them, 46 women were elected as mayors or members of local or rayonal councils. This is a concrete result of the training and mentoring provided. These women received support to overcome their fears, to act, and to become agents of change in their communities. The European Union will continue to support such initiatives so that women have a strong voice in decision-making processes at the local, regional, and national levels,"

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

The President of the NGO "Institutum Virtutes Civilis", Liliana Palihovici, pointed out that the Leadership Academy represents a unique opportunity for participants to diversify their knowledge and contribute to the promotion of inclusive public policies in their communities.

"Here, in the Academy, we provide you with practical tools to turn your ideas into concrete actions. We hope that the Academy has become not only a place of learning but also a promoter of positive changes in local governance, contributing to the building of a fairer and more responsible society,"

mentioned Liliana Palihovici.

She claims that through the Leadership Academy for Women and Good Governance, she was encouraged to assume her leadership role and actively participate in the decision-making process.

"Through my involvement in local governance, I hope to contribute to the development and implementation of policies that respond to the needs of the community and promote equality and diversity. I am determined to use the skills acquired within the Academy to positively influence the lives of the inhabitants of Cazaclia, thus contributing to the creation of a more equitable and inclusive society for all,"

Elena expressed confidently.

The Academy participants come from various regions of the country. Elena Momat is a local councilor from Cazaclia, ATU Găgăuzia.

Since 2021, the Leadership Academy has been developed under the project "Partnerships for Women's Leadership and Good Governance", implemented by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation Moldova and the NGO "Institutum Virtutes Civilis", with the financial support of the European Union and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.



New national studies on women's access to justice in the Eastern Partnership countries available

Policy-makers, judges, prosecutors, legal professionals, as well as representatives of academia and civil society can now benefit from updated national studies “Barriers,

remedies and good practices on women’s access to justice” for [Azerbaijan](#), [Georgia](#), [the Republic of Moldova](#), and [Ukraine](#).



The studies were first prepared in 2017 and updated in 2023 with the aim to identify and support the removal of obstacles to women’s access to justice in these four Eastern Partnership countries, as well as to strengthen the capacity of national authorities to ensure that the justice chain is more gender-responsive.

All four studies now feature an outline of positive developments that have occurred in the countries since their first publication, such as the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, but also the negative consequences of unforeseen events, namely the global Covid-19 pandemic and Russia’s full-scale aggression against Ukraine.

Download the national studies “Barriers, remedies and good practices on women’s access to justice” [for the Republic of Moldova](#), link: [Barriers, remedies and good practices for women's access to justice in the Republic of Moldova \(coe.int\)](#).

The studies are part of the European Union and the 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 regional project [“Women's Access to Justice: implementing Council of Europe’s gender equality and violence against women standards”](#).



INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENT

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training launched EUR 5.5 million project to improve the capacities of law enforcement officials in Moldova

The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) launched in February 2024 a project to strengthen the operational capacities of Moldovan law enforcement officials and contribute to improving the delivery of public services in the field of security.

The EU4SecurityMoldovaprojectwill address the needs identified in the Moldova' Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)' sectoral programme for education, integrity and digitalisation. The project envisages the provision of funds for equipping the Moldovan Police with cutting-edge technology to upgrade their capabilities in fighting cybercrime and firearms trafficking. EU4Security Moldova will also facilitate training and capacity building for MIA's personnel.

In her opening words, the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, said:

"EU4Security Moldova is an important project to improve our joint security, to keep our people safe. It will help in the fight against firearms trafficking, which is a growing threat in Moldova, and against cybercrime, a big challenge of today. All in all, this project is an important step in our journey towards a common European future, and towards Moldova's membership to the European Union."



Stronger Together



CEPOL is the EU hub for law enforcement training. It facilitates the prevention and fight against serious and organised crime, terrorism and emerging security threats by facilitating and enhancing cross-border cooperation through vocational training. By implementing international cooperation

projects with non-EU countries, CEPOL builds trusted and equal partnerships that contribute to creating a strong European security ecosystem.

For more details, please visit: <https://www.cepola.europa.eu/international-cooperation>



Public procurement in areas at high risk of corruption in Moldova – monitored

In February and throughout March, five monitoring reports on public procurement in areas with a high risk of corruption, such as health, education, and agri-food, in the development regions: north, centre, south, UTAG, and the municipality of Chisinau are being presented. The

monitoring was conducted by experts from the Centre for Analysis and Prevention of Corruption (CAPC), with support from the "Strengthening the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms in the Republic of Moldova" project, co-funded by the European Union and BMZ.



General findings reveal fragmented procurement processes, opaque procedures, and inadequate regulatory frameworks. In education, there are issues with inconsistent planning and incomplete tender documents. Healthcare procurement faces challenges related to competitiveness and limited bidder access. Additionally, food safety regulations are inconsistent, posing challenges for quality assurance.

The recommendations highlight the importance of increasing transparency, improving legal frameworks, and addressing identified risks to ensure better use of public resources.

In this context, CAPC has worked on improving the OpenMoney digital platform, which provides access to essential information and facilitates monitoring of local and sectoral public procurement. The upgrade includes modules such as "Locality Passport," "Public Person Integrity," and "Agricultural Subsidy Distribution," offering transparency and access to data on agricultural subsidies.

National Bank of Moldova successfully completed the twinning project funded by the European Union

The Twinning Project “*Strengthening supervision, corporate governance and risk management in the financial sector*” launched on 18 October 2021 and implemented by the National Bank of Moldova (NBM) with the assistance of the European Union has come to an end.

The project has achieved significant accomplishments, including the development of a new macro-prudential policy strategy, the alignment of insurance and non-bank lending regulations with EU directives, the adjustment of oversight regulations for financial market infrastructure, and the preparation of Moldova’s accession file to the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA).



These achievements were presented at a public event in Chisinau on Tuesday 19 March.

In her opening address at the conference, NBM Governor Anca Dragu stressed that, thanks to European support, the central bank in Chisinau had made significant progress in aligning its financial supervision tools with European norms and standards:

the methodology of the European Banking Authority, so that the attractiveness of the Moldovan banking sector for EU investors and the resilience of our financial system will increase”
emphasized the NBM Governor.

“We have delivered tangible results to market participants and meticulously prepared the SEPA accession file recently submitted to the European Payments Council. It is time to move forward. Our goal for this year is to obtain a positive assessment of the equivalence of our banking legislation with the European standards, following



  EU-Moldova
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The project was implemented over 30 months, with the support of the Consortium consisting of the National Bank of Romania, the Bank of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Central Bank of Lithuania, the Financial Supervisory Authority, and The National Authority for Consumer Protection (ANPC) of Romania. Another beneficiary of the project was the National Commission for Financial Markets from the Republic of Moldova.

The overall objective of the project was to support the Republic of Moldova in implementing reforms related to the EU-Moldova Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) and the Association Agenda, and as specific objective, to enhance supervision, corporate governance, and risk management in the financial sector.

During the 30 months of the project, a total of 139 short-term technical assistance missions were carried out by experts, including approximately 1000 working days of training and 15 study visits to Romania and Lithuania.

Thus, at the end of the project, the main achievements are:

- » Development and approval of a new macroprudential policy strategy;
- » Development of the framework for a macroprudential stress testing model;

- » Improved quality of the financial stability report of the National Bank of Moldova;
- » Development of the primary and secondary frameworks for insurance and reinsurance and motor third party liability insurance in line with the EU Solvency II and MTPL Directives;
- » Development of the necessary regulations for the supervision of the non-bank credit organisations (NBCO) sector;
- » Training of the NBM staff responsible for the supervision of NBCOs;
- » Development and adoption of NBM regulations on the supervision of financial market infrastructures and payment systems, including the amendment of four laws to align with international best practices and the EU acquis; training of the NBM staff responsible for the supervision of financial market infrastructures and payment systems;
- » Preparation of the accession file of the Republic of Moldova to the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), which was submitted to the European Payments Committee (EPC) for assessment on 30 January 2024.

European Union and UNFPA donate 3,000 electronic tablets to the National Bureau of Statistics

The European Union and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) handed over to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) a consignment of digital equipment, including 3,000 electronic tablets and related accessories, worth about 800,000 EUR. The digital equipment is provided for the Population and Housing Census (PHC) that will take place from 8 April to 7 July 2024.

Director General of the National Bureau of Statistics Oleg Cara expressed his gratitude for such a generous donation, stressing that it will have a positive impact on the census process.

“With the donated equipment, for the first time the quality of the data collected in electronic format will be ensured, the length of interviews and processing time will be significantly reduced, which will also enable much faster dissemination of census data. The tablets will not only improve the accuracy of the data but will also contribute to a greener approach by eliminating the need for paper forms.”



The tablets will be equipped with data collection applications and will allow enumerators to enter information into electronic census questionnaires.

The modern equipment provided is in line with EU and UNFPA commitments to support the National Bureau of Statistics in conducting a census that meets international standards.

The 2024 Census is financed from the state budget of the Republic of Moldova and 1,800 tablets have already been purchased to replenish the stocks needed for the statistical exercise.

The Population and Housing Census is conducted every 10 years and is the most important national statistical exercise to provide a complete demographic picture of the country. The data collected during the census will provide important and quality information to develop national

and local public policies necessary for the economic and social development of the country. Therefore, the active participation of Moldovan citizens in the PHC is of high importance.

The European Union and UNFPA provide technical and financial support to the NBS under the project "Support to the National Bureau of Statistics in conducting the 2024 Population and Housing Census" during the preparation and implementation of the PHC.



Representatives of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova visited the headquarters of the Council of Europe

For two days, between 31 January and 1st February, 11 representatives of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova visited the headquarters of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

The purpose of the visit was to get acquainted with the different bodies and services of the Council of Europe, their way of functioning and to increase the awareness of the staff of the Ministry of Justice involved in policymaking, legislative drafting, and in the

reporting processes, regarding the various instruments of the Council of Europe. The study visit also aimed at facilitating direct exchanges between the staff of the Ministry of Justice and representatives from different sectors of the Council of Europe.

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](#)".



Representatives of the Superior Council of Magistracy and judges participated in a seminar on the freedom of expression of judges

The Council of Europe organised a seminar on the topic of freedom of expression of judges. 27 representatives of the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) and judges from the Supreme Court of Justice, Courts of Appeal and district courts from the Republic of Moldova benefited from it. The seminar was delivered by two international consultants of the Council of Europe: Mr Philip Leach, Professor of Human Rights Law

at Middlesex University in London, and Mr Đuro Sessa, Justice and former President of the Supreme Court of Croatia and President of the International Association of Judges.

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](#)".



Representatives of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova visited the Constitutional Court and the Court of Cassation of the Republic of Türkiye

On 4 March 2024, members of the working group of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova (the Constitutional Court) working on developing a new online database for the decisions of the Constitutional Court visited the Constitutional Court (CC) and the Court of Cassation (CoC) of the Republic of Türkiye.

The study visit was organised by the Council of Europe in the view of supporting the

development and deployment of a new online database of the Constitutional Court aimed at increasing the public accessibility of its decisions through a more modern, efficient, and user-friendly system.

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".



The 29th anniversary of the Constitutional Court marked by a workshop on the admissibility criteria for referrals under the exception of unconstitutionality

Council of Europe supported a workshop organised by the Constitutional Court on the admissibility criteria of referrals under the exception of unconstitutionality. 24 judges from Chisinau Court participated in the workshop which also marked the 29th anniversary of the Constitutional Court.

The workshop was led by judges and staff of the secretariat of the Constitutional

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

The workshop was supported 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".



Improving the annual reporting on court performance and optimisation of human resources policies of the judiciary in the Republic of Moldova

The Working Groups to promote uniform reporting on court performance and for optimisation of HR policies of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova met again on 4 and 6 March 2024.

The first Working Group exchanged views on the current situation and on the proposals for streamlining the practices of yearly reporting on court performance. The main challenges faced by the Moldovan judiciary regarding human resources and possible solutions thereto were discussed during the meeting of the second Working Group.

During the Working Groups' sessions were emphasised the importance of the [JUSTAT AIS](#) as a tool for data gathering and analysis in the process of evaluating the performance of courts and managing their human resources.

This activity has been organised within the framework of the Project "Support to further modernisation of court management in the Republic of Moldova", co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe in their Partnership for Good Governance (2023-2027).



Improving data collection on hate crimes in the Republic of Moldova, supported by the European Union

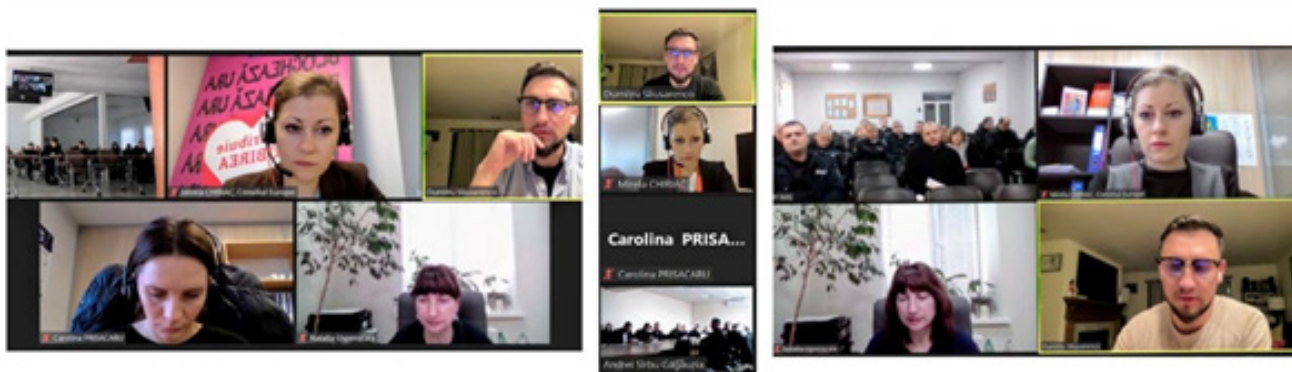
Throughout February 2024, the Council of Europe held three online information sessions on hate crimes for 82 operators of the Police database in the Republic of Moldova. They aimed to present and discuss the latest developments and practices on disaggregated data collection.

An efficient processing of data reported to the Police in alleged cases of hate crimes, represents an important element when providing systemic responses to discrimination and hate crimes.

This activity 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](#)”.

Colectarea datelor dezagregate cu privire la motivele de prejudecată

Sesiuni pentru operatorii bazei de date din cadrul Inspectoratului General al Poliției



EUPM Moldova provides specialised English language training for representatives from Ministry of Internal Affairs

20 participants from the relevant Ministry of Internal Affairs departments benefit from a specialised 'English for crises management' language course, provided by EUPM Moldova. The training began in March 2024, and will last for 26 weeks. During the training, the participants will enhance their skills in professional language, listening and speaking.

With the improved technical English skills the participants will be able to better cooperate with Moldova's international

partners in cross-border or global threats and crisis situations, and better participate in international activities including capacity building, exchanges and co-operation.

The training, requested by the leadership of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs, is part of the EUPM Moldova's project 'Increasing the institutional resilience of Moldovan crisis management structures to face hybrid and other threats' and is being conducted by the QUO VADIS training centre in Chisinau.



EUPM Moldova hands over IT Equipment to Moldovan Governmental Counterparts

In March 2024, EUPM Moldova handed over IT equipment to several Moldovan governmental institutions, among others to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Centre for Strategic Communication and Combatting Disinformation (StratCom Centre) and the Presidency.

The donation of the IT equipment contributes to addressing the needs expressed by Moldovan counterparts. The donations aim to increase the counterparts' level of interoperability as well as to enhance their resilience by ensuring that electronic infrastructure is less vulnerable.

The donation of the equipment is part of EUPM Moldova's support to enhance the resilience of the security sector of Moldova in the areas of crisis management and



hybrid threats, including cybersecurity and countering foreign information manipulation and interference.



A new EU High Level Adviser in the field of Anti-Money Laundering and Assets Recovery and Management starts his assignment in Moldova

A new EU High Level Adviser, in the field of Anti-Money Laundering and Assets Recovery and Management, started his assignment in Moldova on 10 January. Zydrunas Bartkus, coming from Lithuania, joins the EU HLA Mission to provide policy advice to the Office for Prevention and Fight against Money Laundering and to the Criminal Assets Recovery Agency.

Mr Bartkus has over 24 years of experience in the sector, previously holding top level management positions in the Lithuanian relevant institutions, including that of Director of the Lithuanian Special Investigation Service, between 2018 – 2023. He has an equally vast international experience, also as Project Leader in EU Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova.

With the new EU HLA, the Mission has a total number of 14 Advisers, in the fields of Anticorruption, Agri-food Sector Development, Reforms Coordination, Internal Security Affairs, Strategic Coordination & European Affairs, Environment and Green Transition, Local Public Administration Reform, Education & Research, Energy, Customs and Tax Policy, Justice and Prosecution Services, Public Finance Management, Financial Services. The current Mission started in January 2023 and will last until January 2025.

Details about each of the serving High Level Advisers can be found at <https://www.eu-advisers.md/ro/category/mission-2023-2025/eu-high-level-advisers/>



The 11th regular Anticorruption Donors' Network meeting organised with EU support

The 11th regular Anticorruption Donors' Network meeting took place on 26 January, organised with the support of the EU HLA Mission. During the meeting, representatives of the donor community presented the planned and ongoing activities and projects in the field of anticorruption and exchanged opinions on the key ongoing reforms in the field of anticorruption.

Yet another topic was the introduction of the new EU High Level Adviser on Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery and Management; as well launching the idea of an 'Anti-corruption Café' as an informal discussion platform, for development

partners and beneficiary institutions to meet regularly and exchange opinions on anticorruption issues.

The Anticorruption Donors' Network is an informal network of development partners, implementing projects and activities in the anticorruption sector. It was established at the initiative of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova in September 2022. The network aims at providing a communication platform for all the donors active in the field of anticorruption for regular interaction, identification of synergies and coordination of efforts, in order to avoid overlapping.



Coordination meeting between the EU High Level Advisers, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova and EU Delegation management

A regular coordination meeting between the EU High Level Advisers, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova and EU Delegation management was held in February 2024, with the aim of taking stock of the developments in the EU HLAs' sectors of activity.

The topics addressed during the meeting focused on the progress and main challenges in each of the fields of currently operating EU High Level Advisers – anticorruption, anti-money laundering and assets recovery and management, agri-food sector development, education, energy, financial services, public finance management, justice & prosecution, local public administration, customs & tax

policy, environment, internal security affairs, strategic coordination and European affairs, reforms coordination.

Regular coordination meetings between the EUD management and the team of EU High Level Advisers take place on a monthly basis, providing the platform for comprehensive updates on the progress achieved in each sector, agreeing on priority actions and ensuring synergies between the activity sectors of all HLAs.

The EU High Level Advisers' Mission is a team of top-level experts from EU member states, providing policy advice to Moldovan state institutions, the project being financed by the European Union.



EUBAM-led Arms Working Group updates situational picture and coordinates preventive measures against firearms trafficking

EUBAM together Europol, Frontex, Eurojust, OSCE, EMPACT, and representatives from law enforcement agencies in Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, and Romania, recently convened for a crucial operational meeting of the Arms Working Group on 30 January.

The gathering brought together experts from the EU/international institutions and regional law enforcement agencies to delve into the national situational picture of firearms trafficking along the EU's eastern external border. Key highlights of the meeting included in-depth discussions on the situational picture, latest significant cases, trends and challenges in the detection of illegal weapons at the border and beyond it.

While acknowledging the effectiveness of legal and preventive measures implemented

by participating countries against illegal arms trade, ammunition, and explosives, the participants emphasized the need for continued vigilance. With the ongoing war in Ukraine, concerns were raised about the potential for criminal groups to exploit the situation, making it imperative to anticipate and counteract the rise in illegal weapon access and smuggling across borders.

A unanimous consensus emerged among all participants regarding the necessity to enhance control activities along the Moldova-Ukraine border. The group emphasized the importance of strengthening inter-agency and international cooperation, particularly in the realms of information exchange, both investigative and intelligence, and collaborative preventive actions.



EUBAM leads the effort to combat cross-border crime in the Lower Danube Region

EUBAM brought together experts from Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania to address the pressing issue of combating cross-border crime.

The meeting offered a critical insight into the evolving dynamics of criminal activities within the Lower Danube Region, spanning the borders of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Romania.

Participants highlighted the reorientation of routes used by smugglers and international organized crime, resulting in a diversification of criminal activities. Notably, the smuggling of cigarettes, counterfeit goods, drugs, weapons, ammunition, and industrial and electronic equipment emerged as significant challenges confronting customs authorities in the region.

A consensus emerged among the experts that closer, timely cooperation and real-time exchange of information between border customs offices are essential to prevent and combat customs fraud and smuggling effectively.

Emphasizing the importance of sharing concrete cases and intelligence, participants underscored the necessity for an operational, rapid exchange of information to enable swift verification of illegal commercial operations and fraudulent activities.

In light of these discussions, representatives from Romania, Ukraine, and Moldova recognized the imperative to enhance the exchange of information at the regional level. Furthermore, all parties agreed to coordinate joint actions to counteract cross-border crime, primarily fostering and intensifying regional and international cooperation in this critical area.



  EU-Moldova
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EUBAM, together with the European Commission, advocates to advance joint border control initiatives

On 14 March, EUBAM facilitated the discussion between the European Commission, Moldovan, and Ukrainian customs and border authorities about the region's near-future joint border control activities.

The meeting took place at Palanca (MD)-Maiaky-Udobne (UA) jointly operated border crossing point (JOBCEP) in connection with the visit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Operational since the end of 2017 on the Moldovan side, this JOBCEP is an example of the successful implementation of Integrated Border Management principles, exemplifying effective collaboration between Moldovan and Ukrainian border and customs authorities to ensure efficient and secure border crossings for travellers and trade.

Discussions included the status of the renovation works funded by the European Commission at the Reni (UA)-Giurgiulesti (MD) border crossing point, where a similar joint control initiative will be implemented on the Ukrainian territory. The crossing point is located on route Reni (UA)-Giurgiulesti (MD)-Galati (RO) in the lower Danube region under the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes to the EU and beyond.

Slawomir Pichor, Head of EUBAM, emphasized the importance of leveraging successful joint border control practices to enhance collaboration at additional border crossing points between Moldova and Ukraine. It aims to optimize procedures and infrastructure to support increased cargo traffic and capacity along the transport corridor.



  EU-Moldova

Stronger Together

Advanced equipment for the Customs Service for the efficient management of the flow of goods and persons, provided by the European Union

On the 14th of March 2024, in Chişinău, The European Union handed over to the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova a wide range of IT equipment and services aimed at supporting the growing efforts in the efficient management of the cross-border movement of goods and persons in and out the country while ensuring the dignity and well-being of migrants. This support was offered within two projects funded by the European Union: “EU-IOM Supporting Protection, Transit, Voluntary and Informed Return and Reintegration of Eastern Partnership

Citizens and Third Country Nationals affected by the conflict in Ukraine”, and “EU 4 Border Security” both implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Moldova.

The donated equipment and services include the modernization of the central information system of the Customs Service. In addition, video surveillance cameras and related software were installed, to ensure the *Closed-Circuit Television* and the *Automatic Number Plate Recognition* functionality in the new *Frontiera* Informational System.



Moreover, with the financial support of the European Union, the Customs Service was equipped with ten cars to ensure an operational and mobile response in urgent situations. Also, surveillance cameras, server and IT equipment, modular outdoor LED displays were provided to the newly renovated Sculeni border crossing point.

The handover ceremony took place at the Customs Services premises in the presence of Igor Talmazan, Director of Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova, Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, and Lars Johan Lönnback, Chief of Mission, IOM Moldova.

Fostering collaborative governance: lessons learned from EU4Accountability

The collaboration between Local Public Administrations (LPAs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) stands as a cornerstone for fostering social accountability, transparency, and local development in Moldova.

From the activities implemented by CSOs in collaboration with LPAs, supported by EU4Accountability with funding from the European Union, a number of key topics of impact for society on participatory budgeting, capacity building, policy development and civic engagement and many others were highlighted.

Thus, of the 59 projects, participatory budgeting was successfully implemented in 51 communities, allowing citizens

to actively engage in decision-making processes. Additionally, CSOs actively participated in public hearings, amplifying community voices and advocating for transparent decision-making processes. CSOs conducted surveys to identify pressing community issues, informing effective policy interventions.

CSOs played a pivotal role in capacity building for Local Public Administration representatives, providing essential training and support. Broadcasting equipment was provided by CSOs to LPAs for greater monitoring and transparency. Furthermore, CSOs organized study visits for capacity building and knowledge exchange.



Informational panels were installed in municipalities by several CSOs to facilitate the dissemination of crucial information to the public. Additionally, election simulation games were organized by CSOs to engage and educate young people, fostering a culture of civic participation. CSOs also developed or updated websites to promote transparency and accessibility, ensuring citizens have access to relevant information.

Several associations developed or updated their strategies to empower citizens in policymaking. Moreover, CSOs participated in Local Council for Participation/Civil Society forums, advocating for community interests. Newsletters developed and distributed by CSOs informed the population regarding local council decisions, ongoing developments, and community news.

The synergy between CSOs and local public authorities LPAs has demonstrated a tangible positive impact on promoting transparency and citizen involvement. This collaboration has not only enhanced trust among stakeholders but has also galvanized civil society towards community advancement. Notably, there has been a significant increase in citizen involvement in decision-

making processes, facilitated by improved participation techniques. Consequently, citizens' trust in authorities has seen an upsurge, leading to greater accountability in the decision-making process. Furthermore, active participation of all community members in political processes has been encouraged, facilitated by the creation of a platform for direct interaction between the community and LPAs. Moreover, efficient management of public funds has been achieved through the implementation of participatory budgeting mechanisms, ensuring transparency and accountability in resource allocation. These collaborative efforts signify a promising trend towards more inclusive and accountable governance in Moldova.

EU4Accountability runs from 2022-2024, is funded by the European Union, and is implemented by a consortium of three organisations: European Association for Local Democracy, European Partnership for Democracy and People in Need Moldova, extends to 10 districts (Cahul, Comrat, Cimislia, Falesti, Floresti, Glodeni, Riscani, Straseni, Stefan Voda, Telenesti) and provides for a total budget of EUR 1.6 million.



Training course on costing of public investment projects, organised with EU support

On 27-29 February 2024, the EU-funded “Support the Moldovan Government in identifying and preparing projects linked to the implementation of the Association Agreement” (PPF Project) team delivered a training course on Costing of Public Investment Projects for participants from the Ministry of Finance, Court of Accounts, Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, and Ministry of Health.

The objective of the course was to introduce a structured approach to costing capital

projects, aimed at enhancing the ability to evaluate investment proposals for capital budget planning.

The course consisted of 6 modules covering various topics such as: Cost classifications, Marginal and absorption costing, Standard costing, Variance analysis, Relevant costs for decision making, and Costing for capital projects. It was delivered by PPF Project experts Irina Grigoryan and Eugenia Busmachi.



Training session on the new public investment project appraisal procedure with the Ministry of Finance

On 22 March 2024, at the request of the Public Investment Directorate of the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the EU-funded "Support the Moldovan Government in identifying and preparing projects linked to the implementation of the Association Agreement" (PPF Project) team conducted a training session to the MoF units that form part of the new Working Group on the new public investment project appraisal

procedure to implement Regulation 684/2022.

The MoF Project Appraisal Working Group is composed of the Directorate Public Investment (Secretariat), General-Directorate Budget Policies & Synthesis, General-Directorate for Public Debt & External Assistance, and General-Directorate of Sectoral Budget Policies.



The session was organised by Viorel Pana and Angela Dvornic, Director and deputy-Director of Public Investment, and attended by all directors, Natalia Sclaruc (Budget Synthesis) Elena Matveeva (Public Debt) and Vasile Botica (Sectoral Budget Policies) their deputies and other officials. Lilia Taban, who has until recently been part of the Public Investment Directorate and part of the reform process from the very beginning, also attended the meeting. The attendance signifies the commitment of the MoF to effectively implement Regulation 684/2022.

The PPF Project experts delivering the training session included, Gnel Sedrakyan, Konstantinos Kyriakopoulos, Leonidas

Crisciunas, Roman Ivanov, Yiannis Hadziyiannakis and Eugenia Busmachi. They provided a detailed session on the appraisal criteria for public investment projects, the appraisal scoring methodology and the web-based Project Appraisal IT module designed to automate both the submission process of public investment project proposals by central public authorities and the appraisal process.

The successful implementation of the new public investment appraisal procedure should culminate to the establishment of the 'Project Pipeline' of public investment projects as foreseen by Regulation 684/2022.

Introductory workshop on the new public investment project appraisal procedure, organised with EU assistance

On 13 and 14 February 2024, the EU-funded Project “Support the Moldovan Government in identifying and preparing projects linked to the implementation of the Association Agreement” (PPF Project), together with the Ministry of Finance, held an introductory workshop aimed at informing representatives from fifty central public authorities on the new public investment project appraisal procedure (Regulation 684/September 2022).

Participants were briefed on the new regulatory framework on public investment management and were introduced to the new workflow required to operationalise the new investment project appraisal procedure. They were also introduced to the features of the web-based IT module to facilitate project

submissions by central public authorities and project review by the dedicated Working Group of the Ministry of Finance.

State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Ion Gumene, opened the workshop emphasising the importance of applying the new public investment project appraisal procedure by all central public authorities, which will lead to establishment of the single project pipeline. It is expected that the new system will address the chronic underspending of the capital budget in recent years.

Addressing the opening session, Josip Juric, Programme Manager from the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova, referred to the importance of efficient utilisation of EU assistance provided to Moldova for various infrastructure projects.



The workshop marks the first step in a broader initiative aimed at enhancing the capacity of the central public authorities to develop and submit public investment projects in line with the Regulation 684/September 2022. The PPF Project team will provide regular support through customised trainings and on-the-job assistance on investment

project preparation and appraisal, and the application of the IT module.

The workshop was delivered by Lilia Taban, Deputy Head of Investment Directorate, Ministry of Finance, and members of the PPF Project team: Gnel Sedrakyan, Public Investment Expert, and Leonidas Crisciunas, IT Expert.

Officials of the Ministry of Justice and Superior Council of Magistracy strengthening communication skills

The Council of Europe organised a training on communication issues for 12 representatives of the Ministry of Justice, and 20 representatives of the Superior Council of Magistracy. The training comprised of both theoretical part and practical exercises.

During the training, participants analysed contextual elements of the institutional communication, improved their skills in formulating institutional messages and interacting with the press.

The training was organised within the framework of the European Union-Council of Europe Joint Project "Support to the Justice Reform in the Republic of Moldova".



Discussions on improving the mechanism of civil forfeiture of illegal assets in the Republic of Moldova

The Council of Europe organised on 26 March, 2024 a round table event dedicated to discussing the mechanism for civil forfeiture of illegal assets in the Republic

of Moldova, attended by government representatives, legal experts, members of civil society, and international partners.



The event highlighted the importance of enhancing civil forfeiture mechanisms as an essential tool in combating corruption and money laundering and for ensuring the recovery of illegal assets. It offered an excellent platform for discussing challenges, solutions, and best practices in this area. Participants shared perspectives on developing and refining the draft legislative framework on civil confiscation to ensure its effectiveness, fairness, and compliance with European and international standards. The event was organised following a review of the draft Law on civil confiscation of the Republic of Moldova and provision of related improvement suggestions.

The roundtable represents a significant step towards reinforcing the rule of law in the Republic of Moldova and ensuring enhanced frameworks for the recovery of criminal assets. It provides clear guidance for future legislative efforts and promotes increased cooperation among all stakeholders involved.

The Round Table is part of the joint European Union-Council of Europe program "[Partnership for Good Governance](#)", co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe within the project "Strengthening the Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Regime in the Republic of Moldova."

Mechanisms for social re-use of confiscated assets discussed with the national authorities in the Republic of Moldova

Government representatives, national and international legal experts, members of civil society and development partners met on 27 March to discuss the improvement of the framework for the recovery and management of confiscated assets as an important step in the fight against organised crime and corruption in the Republic of Moldova. The event, which focused on optimising the processes of identifying, tracing, confiscating, and managing illegally acquired assets underlined the authorities' commitment to dismantling the economic backbone of criminal networks.

During the discussions, international experts highlighted the need to introduce comprehensive civil forfeiture procedures alongside with appropriate tools to compensate crime victims and ensure the social re-use of assets generated by crime. The need for a robust policy framework allowing for optimal management of confiscated assets, their use for social welfare and the direct compensation of

those affected by crime was analysed, aimed at using these assets in a way that benefits society.

The establishment of a Confiscation Fund and an independent Confiscation Fund Commission were presented as essential steps towards greater transparency and accountability. These changes would not only increase public confidence in the government's efforts to fight corruption but would also ensure that Republic of Moldova implements mechanisms for the re-use of illicit assets, in line with international standards and best practices in this area.

The event was organised in the framework of the joint European Union-Council of Europe program "Partnership for Good Governance", co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe within the project "Strengthening the Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Regime in the Republic of Moldova".



Over 150 specialists from tax and customs fields, familiarized with latest developments in the sector, during large scale workshop organised with EU support

On 29 March, the EU High Level Advisers' Mission jointly with "Monitorul Fiscal FISC.md" magazine, the Ministry of Finance and the State Tax Service organised a large-scale workshop dedicated to fiscal and customs news in the context of alignment of the national legislation to EU Directives.

The event brought together top management of the Ministry of Finance, State Tax Service, Customs Service, as well as representatives of the business environment, accounting and auditing professional associations, representatives of the banking system and other experts in the field.

In the opening of the first discussion panel, Finance Minister Petru Rotaru spoke about the Ministry's efforts to implement changes and innovations in the customs and tax fields, in order to align them with the directives of the European Union, thus highlighting the institutional commitment to the harmonization of national legislation with the EU acquis. "Currently, the main focus is on the elaboration of the draft law on tax and customs policy for 2025, and the proposals received from all interested parties are of major importance, taking into account the impact of this law on the national economy and on the private sector", noted the Minister of Finance.



Rodica Musteata-Staci, Director of Monitorul Fiscal FISC.md magazine highlighted the importance of a coherent and easy-to-apply legislative framework, which would contribute to the voluntary compliance of taxpayers, the optimization of tax administration costs, the improvement of interaction with the public, thus having a positive impact on the correct calculation and duly payment of fiscal obligations to the state budget.

EU High Level Adviser on Customs and Tax Policy, Rosario De Blasio welcomed the efficient cooperation between the Ministry of Finance, Customs and Tax authorities, resulting in a large number of legal acts, standardized and aligned to the EU legislation, as well as in a permanent communication with the business associations and the general public.

“The process of integration into the European Union requires consistency and a gradual approach. Moldova can already prepare itself for EU accession by implementing step by step the requirements foreseen in Chapter 16 of the EU Aquis – Taxation, and Chapter 29 – Customs Union, which will bring mutual benefits for the negotiating parties – the European Union and the Republic of Moldova.”

Within three discussion panels, the participants addressed several important topics regarding the implementation of EU directives on VAT and excise duties, key aspects related to the functionality of the transfer pricing concept, advantages of the new Customs Code from the perspective of import-export operations, digital solutions as a tool for business efficiency, as well as reporting of financial accounts in the context of the automatic exchange of financial account information.





ECONOMY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The European Union and UNDP improve infrastructure to attract more investment in Cahul and Ungheni regions

The European Union is offering 1.5 million euros for the creation and modernization of infrastructure to attract investments in Cahul and Ungheni regions. A technology center for innovation and production will be set up in Sculeni, an industrial hub will be renovated in Ungheni. A regional agri-food market will be constructed in Cahul and the local business development centre

in Crihana Veche village will also benefit from landscaping works and improved road access.

Each of the four initiatives will benefit from EU funds of between 200,000 and 550,000 EUR, through the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme, implemented by UNDP and UNICEF.



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The initiatives were selected through an open competition and aim to contribute to mobilizing new investments, supporting start-ups, creating jobs and promoting innovative technologies by attracting competitive businesses at the local level. This depends on the existence of viable public infrastructure such as access to water supply systems, sewage, electricity, natural gas, road networks, etc.

"This initiative aims to support economic development and to create new jobs in Crihana Veche. We hope that this business centre will host more competitive businesses and startups, especially launched by women entrepreneurs, young people,"

said Igor Miclaus, the mayor of Crihana Veche village.

"The Technology Center for Innovation and Production we will establish will be specialized in production of microelectronics exclusively based on renewable energy sources. So, we put Sculeni on the map of communities with growth potential. We hope that as many locals as possible will get jobs in this new Centre and also highly skilled workers will commute to Sculeni, which will only have wins to take,"

said Olga Oncea, Administrative Director of the company aiming to create the Center.

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

For more details about the programme's activities in Cahul and Ungheni regions, access www.eu4cahul.md and www.eu4ungheni.md



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The new SME Policy Index 2024 in Moldova, developed with the EU support

On 12 March 2024, the OECD presented the new edition of the SME Policy Index in Chişinău.

Deputy Prime Minister Alaiba provided opening remarks, followed by a presentation of Moldova's results by the OECD and a panel discussion.



Moldova has made consistent progress since the previous edition of the SME Policy Index, scoring above the average of Eastern Partner (EaP) countries in nine dimensions out of twelve and showcasing the best performance among its counterparts in the area of green economy. Since 2020, Moldova's SME policy improved in eleven SME Policy Index dimensions. Particular progress has been achieved in the areas of SME skills, operational environment and SME internationalisation. The assessment reveals some setbacks with regards to public procurement.

Moldova strengthened its **institutional and regulatory framework for SME policy**, with the Roadmap on Reducing Regulatory Burdens for SMEs, the re-organisation of the SME agency as ODA and the adoption of the National Programme for Promoting Entrepreneurship and Increasing Competitiveness.



Entrepreneurial learning became a pillar of Moldova's strategic planning documents, with efforts to align with European key competences and the adoption of a normative-legal framework for non-formal learning.



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The Credit Guarantee Fund and the investment incentive programme “373” are important instruments to facilitate SMEs’ **access to finance**. Further improvements include the expansion of the sources for and coverage of credit information, and the wide availability of microfinance options, now supervised by the National Bank.

Policies to improve SMEs’ **access to markets** suffered from delays in public procurement reforms. With regards to standards and technical regulations, Moldova made significant progress to align its framework with the WTO and the EU, notably with the TBT-WTO Agreement. New programmes for SME internationalisation contribute to progress made in the area of export promotion and e-commerce.

Advancements in the area of **business support and innovation** were driven by better monitoring practices, access to a network of business incubators, and the possibility for SMEs to procure advisory services from a broad network of external providers. Moldova also updated its regulatory and financial incentives to accelerate SME greening.

Finally, on the **digital economy for SMEs**, Moldova has made considerable efforts to accelerate the digital transformation, with a leading role for the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation. In line with these institutional changes, the new National Digital Strategy for 2023-30 should be implemented and delineate clear roles and mechanisms for co-ordination among stakeholders.



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Team Europe is focused on digitalization of the Moldovan Vocational Educational and Training system

Within the EU4Moldova: Local Communities programme, Austrian Development Agency (ADA) with the support of the European Training Foundation (ETF), organized the digitalization conference of the Moldovan

Vocational Educational and Training (VET) system. This conference is a large platform for collaboration and discussion among key VET stakeholders.



The representatives from Centers of Excellence, the donor community supporting the Moldovan VET system, ICT industry, and officials from the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova launched constructive discussions on the importance of accelerating the digitalization of VET system, based on the results of a deep research performed by the European Training Fund, which outlined the key findings and underscored recommendations tailored for both national and institutional levels as well. Likewise, the research encompassed a comprehensive survey covering all 88 Moldovan VET institutions, supplemented by interviews with over 10 significant stakeholders actively contributing to the digitalization of the VET system.

The Moldovan Vocational Education and Training system (VET) will align to the green educational management system. With European Union and Austrian financial support, within the EU4Moldova: Local Communities programme, the Moldovan Education Management Informational System (EMIS) will be upgraded and extended with two VET modules: Electronic Registers and Electronic Agenda.

The "Electronic Register" will be used by teachers and will allow the management of data on student's achievement, attendance, monitoring of qualifications offered by institutions, etc. The second module - "Electronic Agenda" will allow automatic tracking of student attendance and prevent trends in absenteeism. Similarly, teachers will be able to use electronic diaries to monitor students' academic progress and easily distribute announcements, assignments, educational content, and many more.



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The EMIS system is a tool for managing information about students' and teachers' workload providing data for the national education system. The data collected could underpin the implementation of education policies, decision-making, and monitoring of the situation of the school environment.

The extended system will enable the Moldovan Ministry of Education and Research to make well-informed strategic decisions on the development of the VET system.

The upgrading of EMIS for VET is carried out within the framework of the programme "EU4Moldova: Local Communities", funded by the European Union, and the governments of Germany, Austria, and Poland. The upgrade of SIME activities is implemented with the management of the Austrian Development Agency.



Automatic validation procedure of export customs declarations launched with the EU support

On 23 February, the Customs Service jointly with the EU High Level Advisers' Mission officially launched the "Procedure of Automatic Validation of Export Customs Declarations" within a presentation event organised for the business community, attended by the top management of the Customs Service and representatives of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova.

In the opening of the event, the Director of the Customs Service, Igor Talmazan, thanked the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Moldova for the constant support provided in the process of aligning

and implementing the EU legislation, highlighting that the efforts of the Customs Service are channelled to duly inform the business environment and the society about all the benefits and innovations of the new customs legislation, with the aim of reduced bureaucracy, modern processes and digitized services. One of the simplifications offered to the business environment is the procedure for automatic validation of export customs declarations – a tool aimed at promoting exports and expanding the sales market for domestic products.



The EU High Level Adviser on Customs and Tax Policy, Rosario De Blasio, welcomed the launch of the automatic validation procedure, noting that besides being an important innovation introduced with the new Customs Code, the automatic validation procedure also marks a positive change in the relations between the customs authority and the business:

"It will offer tangible benefits to economic operators and also increase the efficiency of the risk analysis mechanism used by customs. Furthermore, it will consolidate the mutual trust between the Customs Service and the business environment, contributing to the development of legitimate trade and at the same time, facilitating the business activity",

concluded the EU HLA.



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During the event, the Customs Service specialists presented the IT functionalities of the automatic validation system, as well as practical aspects of the customs procedure. Economic operators dealing with export operations, who participated in the testing process of the automatic validation procedure, also shared their impressions and positive feedback about this new facilitation tool.

Starting 23 February, the procedure can be used by all economic operators exporting domestic goods, which means that the customs declarations selected on the

green customs control channel will be automatically validated, within 15 minutes of their receipt, by the “ASYCUDA World” information system without the direct involvement of the customs officer.

The automatic validation of export customs declarations is part of the large-scale process of modernizing customs procedures, by aligning them to European customs control standards, in order to optimize customs clearance times and costs, facilitate exports, reduce physical interaction with customs officials and minimize fraud risks, through digitalisation of customs processes.



EU4Business open-door mobility facilitates cross-border ventures

EU4Business: Connecting Companies, project managed by Eurochambres and financed by the EU under the EU4Business initiative, has three main goals. First, it aims to boost sustainable economic growth in Eastern Partnership countries, creating more jobs and improving living standards. Second, it helps Business Support Organisations from the Eastern Partnership better assist local SMEs in expanding internationally and accessing new markets. Lastly, the project supports SMEs in trading, especially with EU countries.

From 18 to 22 March, The EU4Business: Connecting Companies project organised its Open-Door Mobility for BSOs. This one-week study visit to Brussels was exclusively designed to provide insights to BSOs from the Eastern Partnership region to better understand the advocacy landscape within the heart of the European Union.



The delegation of 28 participants included representatives from each of the national chambers from the Eastern Partnership: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. Among them were five delegates from Moldova, including esteemed organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Moldova, Moldovan Technology Transfer Network, ANTRIM, and Technovator.

"I am deeply thankful for the chance to enhance my advocacy skills through facilitated workshops and networking. The knowledge gained will strengthen my ability to advocate effectively for important initiatives."

Elena Stepanov, Executive Director at ANTRIM.



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The study visit allowed participants to delve deeper into the decision-making processes of European institutions and strategize on how to influence them effectively. A pivotal moment during the visit was a full-day policy training session, led by Eurochambres' policy team in collaboration with representatives from DG Near and Eurochambres' delegates from the Czech Republic and Spain. This immersive session shed light on the priorities of the EU Policy, with a particular focus on the EU Single Market, the Economic dossier, and the EU Green Deal.

"The training, focused on policy matters, has been an invaluable experience for both personal and professional growth. Throughout the programme, I gained a comprehensive understanding of EU business policies and their implications, thanks to the insightful sessions and engaging discussions. I would like to extend my appreciation to all the organisers, facilitators, and speakers who contributed to making this programme a resounding success. Your dedication to promoting business excellence and fostering meaningful connections is truly commendable."

**Sandra Dolghii, Policy and Advocacy
Manager at European Business
Association.**

The open discussions and brainstorming sessions that followed, allowed attendees to exchange ideas and inspired them on new services to put at the disposal of their members.

"This mobility was extremely valuable to me and Technovator in general. I have established superb connections and picked up good practices, I have gathered inspiration on the development of our services, and I have exchanged perspectives with many good people."

All the experience gained will be maximized in our local and regional context. Chapeau bas for the entire organizing team! You are amazing!"

**Irina Tizu, Project Manager at
Technovator.**

Participants also had the chance to join the Conference "EU Enlargement: The business perspective" organised by Eurochambres on 20 March. During the event, Ben Butters, CEO of Eurochambres presented the results of two comprehensive surveys on the business perspective on EU enlargement. These surveys highlight the vital role of private sector in EU enlargement and emphasise the need for a collaborative approach. Attendees gained insight into the significance of timely information on the accession process and EU acquis, essential for candidate country companies to adapt effectively.

Furthermore, the visit featured a meeting with Andrius Kubilius, Member of the European Parliament for the European People's Party, followed by a tour of the European Parliament.

The speed meeting matchmaking event offered the delegation an invaluable platform to expand their networks and provided an seize opportunities for future collaborations.

"This event organised by the EU4BCC Team was an event that united the joy of experience and networking opportunities with the interactive possibilities of meeting new kind and professional people. We learned about tips and useful information concerning advocacy and hope to implement those good practices here in our country. We do believe it is possible with joint efforts, positive attitude, and proactive approach."

**Vitalie Moraru, President of Moldovan
Technology Transfer Network.**



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Visits to Brussels-based Business Support Organisations, including Brussels Chamber of Commerce and Industry were organised. These visits provided invaluable insights and fostered opportunities for future collaborations and partnerships between the EU and EaP regions.

The EU4Business Connecting Companies project will organise three additional study visits between May and September. Moldovan BSOs and SMEs are warmly invited to take part in these initiatives. For more details and registration, please visit the project website: <https://connectingcompanies.eu/>.



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EU4Digital workshop helps align Moldova–EU roaming regulations

Upcoming changes to the Republic of Moldova’s roaming regulations were the topic of a workshop held in Chişinău on 19–20 February 2024. EU4Digital Facility’s Telecom Rules experts met with representatives of the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation, the national regulatory agency ANCRETI, and local telecommunications

service providers. The aim of the event was to support further progress in harmonising Moldova’s electronic communications legislative framework with EU standards and ‘acquis’ – the collection of common rights and obligations that constitute the body of EU law.



Regarding Moldova’s progress in the telecoms sector, roaming regulations expert Ioanna Choudalaki, said that Moldova’s roaming approximation to the EU roaming acquis holds great significance, as it not only supports businesses but also brings people closer together.

As Moldova moves towards EU accession, its telecoms regulations will need to reflect the rules stipulated under the EU’s roaming regulatory framework, building upon the retail and wholesale roaming guidelines specified by the [Body of European Regulators](#)

[for Electronic Communications](#) (BEREC). In the near future, EU4Digital experts will support Moldova in drafting legislation that reflects not only international roaming rules but also the electronic communication regulations as established by the [European Electronic Communications Code \(EECC\)](#).

Find out more about the [launch of EU4Digital telecoms legislation harmonisation activities](#), visit our ‘Explainers’ web content and view our short video [This is Telecom Rules](#), available in the following ‘[Library](#)’.

More inclusive work environment for women and men

Over 25 representatives of the State Labor Inspectorate (SLI), the National Confederation of Trade Unions of Moldova, and the National Confederation of Employers of Moldova participated in the training “Identifying gender-based discrimination in the workplace”. The purpose of the training is to enhance knowledge and skills in the prevention and identification of gender-based discrimination in the workplace.

The opening ceremony of the event was attended by representatives of state institutions responsible for creating a fair

labour market that offers equal opportunities for all employees. Corina Ajder, State Secretary at the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, reaffirmed the commitment in this regard:

This action is part of a series of institutional training activities for labour inspectors carried out under the project “EU support to inclusive labour markets in the Republic of Moldova”, implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) with financial support from the European Union.



“I want to mention that, during its path towards European Union integration, the Republic of Moldova has undertaken multiple commitments, including combating undeclared work, child labour, labour exploitation, as well as other aspects such as ensuring equal opportunities, gender

equality in the workplace, and more. Given the current context of the country, we need to join forces to raise awareness about this issue and implement the European Union’s good practices at local level,”

said Aurica Butnari, representative of the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Moldova.



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The aim of the training was to develop new practices and provide new tools for labour inspectors to complement the support needed in cases of gender-based discrimination in the workplace. The importance of this activity was also emphasized by Ala Lipciu, National Coordinator of the International Labour Organization in the Republic of Moldova:

“Gender equality and non-discrimination have been fundamental principles underpinning the work of the ILO since its creation. These principles are also an integral component of the ILO Decent Work Country Programme for Moldova (2021-24) which aims to improve access to decent and productive work for women and men, better rights at work, stronger social protection systems and consolidated social dialogue.”

“Regretfully, gender stereotypes about the role of women in our society continue to prevail in Moldova and beyond. Understanding the complexity of this phenomenon in the world of work helps identify as well as prevent it.”

During the training, participants addressed topics such as understanding how stereotypes affect decisions, the difference between direct and indirect discrimination, how to identify wage discrimination, and discrimination in promotion or advancement. They learnt about useful tools for labour inspectors to conduct inspection visits, assess, identify, and analyse gender-based discriminatory practices that may occur in the companies they audit. The training took place from February 20th to 22nd.



Team Europe for stronger local communities in the Republic of Moldova

In partnership with the State Chancellery of Moldova, the “Local Communities – Stronger Together” conference marked the second annual gathering under the “EU4Moldova: Local Communities” programme, serving as a pivotal platform for sharing of good practises from programme implementation and fostering dialogue among stakeholders.

Launched in 2021 as a Team Europe initiative, the “EU4Moldova: Local Communities programme”, supported by the European

Union and the Governments of Germany, Austria and Poland, aims to enhance the quality of life of the Moldovan population, with a special focus on the rayons of Edinet, Straseni, and Leova. Through strategic objectives, such as improving public service delivery, enhancing access to infrastructure, creating business and job opportunities, and promoting community-led local development, the programme seeks to bolster the long-term resilience of these communities.



The “Local Communities – Stronger Together” conference brought together more than one hundred stakeholders, including central governmental representatives, development partners, local public authorities, representatives of civil society and the private sector.

In the opening of the event, Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, has mentioned:

“Since the start of the programme in 2021, many more partnerships have been formed and concrete activities implemented jointly with different level of Government, from

national to village level, Local Action groups, business initiatives and active citizens. ‘Localizing development’ aims at changing the public sector systems to be more inclusive, equitable or adaptive, in order to achieve development outcomes at the grassroots level. We hope, it will also offer the opportunity of joining forces towards Moldova’s path of inclusive development and integration into the European family.”



Stronger Together

Andrei Strah, Deputy General Secretary of the Government has also stated:

“We all want a better life for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. That is exactly why we believe that the central public administration and the local public administration must work together in order to succeed the achievement of the citizens expectations, to increase the quality of the life in the Republic of Moldova and to build, together, a European Moldova.”

The conference featured an interactive panel discussion and several moderated working groups, with international and local speakers to encourage active participation and knowledge sharing.

Key topics included enhancing access to public services, improving business friendliness in local communities, and prioritising investments to achieve a better quality of life for residents.

The conference ended with the formulation of actionable conclusions from the working groups, emphasising the importance of collaborative efforts to accelerate local development and promote the well-being of Moldovan communities.

The “EU4Moldova: Local Communities programme” remains dedicated to its mission of enhancing the resilience and well-being of communities in the Republic of Moldova, with a focus on sustainable development and inclusive growth.



Business Information and Consulting Centre launched in Bălți with EU support

On 31 January, the ODA Business Information and Consulting Centre for Entrepreneurs opened in Balti thanks to the financial support of the European Union and Germany.

The centre was inaugurated by the Moldovan Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation in association with the Entrepreneurship Development Organisation (ODA).

The Centre in Balti aims to develop human capital through the promotion of entrepreneurial skills and culture, providing business information and consulting services about grant programmes accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the North of the country. One of the long-term objectives of the centre is also the contribution to the creation of jobs in the regions of the Republic of Moldova.

"We are confident that the launched Centre, managed by the ODA, will contribute to making Moldova a more attractive place to set up and invest in businesses, create employment opportunities and conduct economic activities,"

said Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union in the Republic of Moldova.

The centre in Balti became operational thanks to the financial support provided by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as part of the 'EU4Moldova: Local Communities' programme.

The Business Information and Consulting Centre is located on 13 Decebal Street. It will be open from Monday to Friday between 8:30 and 17:30. Discover more about the centre [here](#).

The "EU4Moldova: Local Communities" programme is financed by the European Union, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland – Polish aid; and jointly implemented by the German Development Cooperation through GIZ, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the Solidarity Fund PL (SFPL) in Moldova.



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Developing and strengthening the capacities of Local Action Groups from Republic of Moldova, with EU support

In the beginning of 2024, there were launched training courses within the "Institutional empowerment of LAG Associations in the implementation of the LEADER Program" training program, as a part of the "EU4Moldova: Local Communities" programme.

So far, several training courses have been carried out for 51 LAGs from the country. The first course - "The elaboration and implementation of Operational Plans and Short-Term Operational Plans" - took place between 24-26 January. The aim of the initiative is to strengthen the knowledge,

develop the skills, and shape the behaviours of the employees of the LAG Associations. These are necessary for the effective elaboration and implementation of short-term operational plans, to achieve the objectives and measures outlined in the Local Development Strategies. The second course - "Accounting in the LAG Association" - was held between 14-16 February. During this course, 36 participants learned how to effectively manage the financial and accounting aspects specific to LAG Associations.



"Even if we have been working since the beginning of the LAGs creation and we knew a lot about how to work with documents, during the courses I understood that there is still a lot to learn. We knew some steps, but it was very chaotic. Now, we were able to create a structure in the LAG",

Mariana Ermurachi mentioned,

Manager of the "Lunca Prutului de Jos LAG", who participated in the "Management of documents and institutional memory in the LAG Association" course. It took place on 13-15 March, offline and online, where the directors and managers of the LAGs developed their professional skills in the respective fields.

Another training course carried out in the hybrid format was “Human resources and contractual relations within the LAG. Conflicts of interest and risk management” course, where, besides the aforementioned topics, the participants discussed hiring procedures of various categories of personnel, management of conflicts of interest, and other.

The training courses were organized by the LEADER National Network in Moldova, within the “EU4Moldova: Local Communities” programme, financed by the European Union,

the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland – Polish aid; and jointly implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the Solidarity Fund PL (SFPL) in Moldova. The content of this article belongs to the authors and does not necessarily reflect the vision of the above-mentioned partners.



Entrepreneurs in Cahul learn how to prepare their businesses for export

Startup City Cahul organized the sixth edition of the Business Breakfast event at Inotek, which was attended by entrepreneurs and other interested individuals. The special guest of the event was Sabina Crigan, Partner at Gateway&Partners in Moldova and Romania. This company specializes in the international development of local

exporters, aiming to boost export sales and provide vital market information.

Participants discussed preparing businesses and products for export, as well as analysing foreign markets. Additionally, experts provided entrepreneurs with details regarding international market requirements.



Businesspeople from Cahul affirm that such events offer them the opportunity to exchange ideas, experiences, and learn successful practices from industry professionals. In this way, entrepreneurs can take the necessary steps to increase visibility, develop their businesses, and identify potential partners.

Business Breakfast is a networking event for the entrepreneurial community in the Cahul region, organized by the Inotek Foundation and EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul. The project is implemented from 2020 to 2024 by ATIC, with financial assistance from the European Union in partnership with Sweden.

"Thanks to today's event, we learned about the correct tools and strategies to expand our services or products into a market in the EU. We thank Inotek for this opportunity and connection with such individuals and companies,"

said Corneliu Susanu, a young entrepreneur.

Unique project in the South of Moldova: with support provided by the EU, the Rizov family creates a digital winery

The business history of the Rizov family from Taraclia begins in 2008, when its members bought several plots of land and started cultivating vines. After more than ten years

of work, the family managed to develop their own winery and can be proud of high-quality wine that meets all international standards. The founder of the winery is Serghei Rizov, 46 years old.



"We have our own vineyards and grow mostly varieties for red wine. We are currently investing in modern winemaking, developing our own brand - Familna Vinarna RIZOV. We are also members of the Association of Small Wine Producers and of the regional winemaking cluster in Cahul",

says the winemaker.

In order to develop his business, last year, the entrepreneur decided to apply to the Digital Impact program, part of the EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul project. Thus, after passing all the stages of the program, Serghei Rizov obtained a grant thanks to which he developed a digital wine cellar, a unique project in the Republic of Moldova.



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"The implementation of the Digital Wine Cellar project required a total investment of 690 thousand lei. The uniqueness of this digital winery lies in the possibility to conduct tastings, rate and buy wines using the mobile application and the website as well. The most important advantage is the possibility to store the wines in the cellar, with the permanent monitoring of the storage conditions: temperature, humidity or light",

mentions the entrepreneur.

According to Serghei, the purpose of creating this digital winery is to expand its customer base, but also to develop the culture of wine consumption in the Republic of Moldova.

"This technical solution allows wine lovers to buy wines immediately after they have been made, store them properly and consume them at the peak of their development. It's a kind of investment in high-quality wines with development potential,"

said the winemaker.



The entrepreneur says that projects like Startup City Cahul have a primary role in the development of the southern region of the country.

The Digital Impact Program for Cahul is implemented by Startup Moldova in

the period 2022-2024 and is part of the EU4Moldova Project: Startup City Cahul, financed by the European Union, Sweden and implemented by ATIC. The objectives of the program are to support the development of digital and innovative startups in the Cahul region.



ENERGY

RESILIENCE

Better study and working conditions for over 600 students and teachers of the “Alexei Mateevici” Theoretical Lyceum in Șoldănești

On 27 February 2024, students, their parents and teachers, the European Union Ambassador and German Embassy

representative, and many other guests celebrated the inauguration of the renovated “Alexei Mateevici” Lyceum building.



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Adriana Cebotari, 12th grade student, in her speech to the guests of honour said:

'Thank you for creating a space where our knowledge meets our inspiration and our creativity takes wings. So thank you, not just for building the walls, but for building our future. With confidence and gratitude, we are proud to call ourselves students of this high school.'

The project for renovation of the Theoretical Lyceum in Soldanesti town is the last of the eight projects in schools implemented with EU funds. Thanks to solar panels, improved thermal insulation, new windows, improved heating and ventilation systems, the Lyceum will now consume only half of the energy previously used.

For more details, check the [press release](#) by Regional Development Agency (RDA) Centre.

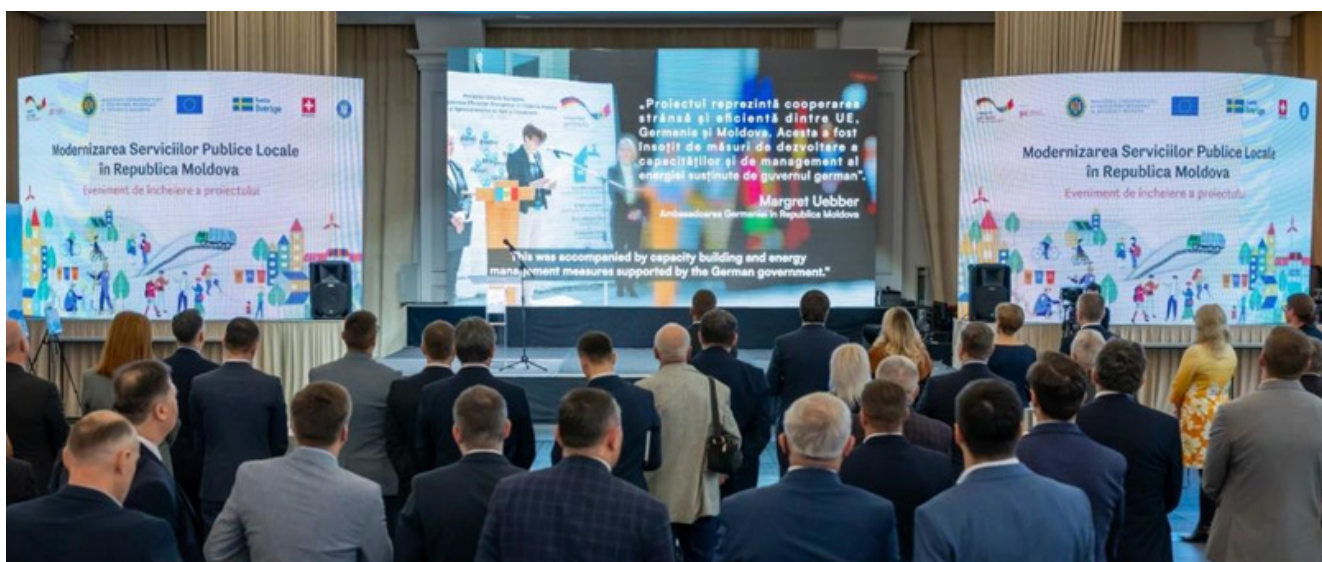
The investment measure „Increasing energy efficiency of ‘Alexei Mateevici’ Theoretical Lyceum is funded by the European Union and implemented by the RDA Centre under the ‘Construction of water supply and sanitation infrastructure as well as energy efficiency in public buildings’ project. The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by the German Development Cooperation through GIZ (Moldova) in partnership with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development. The total budget of the project is 39.8 million Euro.



The results of a multi-donor project in regional development presented

On Thursday, 29 February 2024, the [closing event of the project „Modernization of Local Public Services in the Republic of Moldova” \(MLPS\)](#), implemented during 2009-2024 by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in partnership with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, took place. We invite you to check out the [project video](#) showcasing the project interventions and results.

One of the important actions of MLPS was the ‘Construction of water supply and sanitation infrastructure as well as energy efficiency in public buildings’, funded by the European Union and implemented during 2018-2024. The project budget was of 38.9 million Euro. Together with the Regional Development Agencies, 18 infrastructure projects have been implemented – ten in the field of water supply and sanitation and eight in energy efficiency in public buildings.



Today, more than 5200 students and teachers benefit from better study and working conditions, and energy consumption and CO2 emissions have been reduced by about 60%. Also, about 100 thousand people now have access to improved water services, and 9 thousand – to sanitation services. Almost 200 km of water supply network were built and 30 km of sewerage network were upgraded.

Andrei Spinu, Minister of Infrastructure and Regional Development:

“Modernisation of local public services in the Republic of Moldova” helped us to be one step closer to more developed regions and localities, improved public water and sanitation services, renovated schools and hospitals, but most importantly – this project leaves behind trained specialists who will be able to benefit from EU projects and continue building European Moldova here at home.”



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

„As we move forward, we need to build on the lessons learned from this project so that we can continue investing in the development of quality public services, promote stronger communities and together secure Moldova’s chosen path to the European Union.”

The project „Modernisation of Local Public Services in the Republic of Moldova” was implemented by GIZ in partnership with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development. The project was funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the European Union, the Governments of Sweden, Switzerland and Romania. The total budget of the project – 98.1 million Euro.



Inspiration for new community projects

Tarigrad, Sireți, and Vinogradovca, the Signatories of the EU initiative Covenant of Mayors in Moldova have implemented innovative sustainable energy solutions to improve the quality of life in the community. The pilot projects carried out by AEER within the project "Energy-Resilient Communities

for Moldova with the Support of the Diaspora and Native Associations," realized with the financial support of the German government through GIZ Moldova, aim to reduce dependence on traditional energy sources at the local level, contribute to reducing high energy bills, and, last but not least, improve the quality of the environment.



Innovative technologies have been combined in these three localities, which will minimize dependence on fossil fuels and significantly reduce carbon emissions.

Of course, the costs borne by local authorities will be considerably reduced, considering that renewable energy is not only inexpensive but also sustainable over time.

What makes these projects special? The AEER experts mention the combination of different energy sources that complement each other, thus optimizing final costs.

For example, at the kindergarten in Tarigrad, the focus was on hybrid photovoltaic and thermal panels (PVT) to reduce bills, which include both a solar collector and a photovoltaic panel that produces electricity and hot water. Here, solar air heating technology (SAH) was also used—a well-known system for heating or preheating

air in commercial, public, and residential buildings.

The advantage of this air system is its year-round usability, not just in winter or off-season. During winter, it heats the air, and in summer, it can be used for drying fruits and vegetables.

In Sireți, complex solutions such as solar panels, solar collectors, wind turbines, and a biomass-based power plant were implemented to provide heating and hot water supply to the local kindergarten.

In Vinogradovca, special attention was paid to the use of renewable energy to offset the increase in electricity and natural gas tariffs. Thus, solar panels, solar collectors, and a wind generator were installed, combined with measures to thermally insulate the local school, which also serves as a center for refugees.



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A common essential aspect of these pilot projects is the implementation of advanced energy consumption monitoring and management systems – EMIS. This allows for more efficient resource management and stricter consumption control.

The solutions in Tarigrad, Sireți, and Vinogradovca were adopted based on the specific needs and resources of each community. Certainly, the pilot projects can serve as inspiration for other communities and local authorities, promoting a comprehensive approach for lower bills, public services, and better living conditions for all.

The localities of Tarigrad, Sireți, and Vinogradovca are beneficiaries of the Project "Energy-Resilient Communities for Moldova with the Support of the Diaspora and Native Associations," carried out by AEER in partnership with the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy in Moldova. The activity is carried out within the project "Policy Advisory Fund," funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ Moldova.



The third meeting of the Municipal Development Cooperation Platform in the framework of the Covenant of Mayors-East EU-funded project

The third meeting of the Municipal Development Cooperation Platform took place in Chişinău, organized within the framework of the Covenant of Mayors-East project, with the financial support of the European Union.

The topics addressed included sustainable local development, increasing energy efficiency, increasing the use of green energy as a solution to mitigate climate change, the role of local authorities in promoting sustainable energy and environmental protection, etc.



During the meeting, challenges and solutions in implementing SECAPs were also discussed, and the most important aspects were included in the national roadmap of CoM-East regarding investments in energy and adaptation to climate change.

Minister of Energy, Victor Parlicov, described the Ministry of Energy's priorities relevant to local public authorities, mentioning amendments to the Law on the Promotion of Renewable Energy Sources. The document allows local public authorities to create energy communities and provides for the allocation of capacity quotas within the "net billing" support mechanism.

Additionally, the Minister mentioned that starting from 2024, an energy efficiency obligation scheme has been introduced, which will feed into the Energy Efficiency Fund in the Residential sector of Moldova.

"This year will be a pilot for these investments, followed by an ESCO-type investment mechanism, managed by the National Center for Sustainable Energy, dedicated to public authorities," said the Minister of Energy.

Speaking about environmental priorities, Minister Rodica Iordanov urged signatories to participate in the National Program for the Expansion and Rehabilitation of Forests, the implementation of which will make us more resilient to climate change. This result will also be possible by afforesting land within local authorities over the next 10 years, subject to erosion, landslides, and unsuitable for agricultural use, as well as by rehabilitating protective forest belts for fields.

The Minister also emphasized that promoting sustainable energy and environmental protection are the main objectives of the National System for Monitoring and Reporting Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Reducing the level of CO2 locally is a major objective for Covenant signatories.

Covenant signatories reiterated the need for governmental support to achieve climate neutrality objectives.

During the event, opportunities from the "Climate City Gap Fund" were presented, which provides support to Covenant signatories. The project submitted by the municipality of Bălți to this international fund has already been selected for funding. Also, with the support of the Covenant of Mayors office, a project of the municipality of Strășeni was approved for another international program - Urban Transition Mission.

Additionally, the results achieved by 10 localities through the project "Energy-Resilient Communities for Moldova with the Support of the Diaspora and Native Associations," realized with the financial support of the German government through GIZ Moldova, aimed to reduce dependence on traditional energy sources at the local level, contribute to reducing high energy bills, and, last but not least, improve the quality of the environment.

A solemn moment was the awarding of flags and diplomas of accession to the Covenant of Mayors for four new localities: Gangura, Zaim, Coropcenii, and Chetrosu.

Following the vote of those present, the new members of the Platform's permanent Group were elected on behalf of the Covenant signatories. This position was delegated to Ms. Valentina Casian, Mayor of Strășeni, President, and Mr. Alexandr Petcov, Mayor of Bălți, Co-Chair.

Last but not least, the objectives and activities of the CoM-East Action Plan for 2024 were presented.





ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE



Regional operator AVE Ungheni is developing and is being upgraded thanks to the investments from the EU

The regional operator AVE Ungheni offers sanitation and waste collection services for 11 thousand households and over 750 companies from Ungheni municipality and 11 other neighbouring localities. Between 2021-2023, the operator benefited from support from the European Union, UNDP Moldova and France, with a total worth of over EUR 307 000. The company received

modern equipment and advanced systems which have contributed to improving its performance and the quality of the services provided.

From her office, located on the ground floor of the Ungheni municipality city hall, the administrator of AVE Ungheni LTD, Claudia Coniuhov, is watching real-time footage from one of the 20 waste collection platforms.



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The video surveillance system, installed at the largest waste collection platforms from the municipality, is functional since spring 2022. GPS systems were installed on six garbage trucks in the same period. The implementation of these systems was carried out as part of the EU4Moldova: Focal Regions project, implemented by UNDP and UNICEF.

"The access to the platforms is open, they are not locked and anyone can use them. Regrettably, we have previously faced multiple cases of vandalism, but after the video cameras were installed, the Police have identified the persons vandalising the platforms. Also, video cameras are a useful tool in informing the company that the containers are full and an intervention is needed",

Claudia Coniuhov noted.

The video surveillance system helps maintain order and prevent littering outside the containers installed on the platforms. This ensures public and platform security, but also encourages citizens to apply selective collection and to keep the platforms clean and in a good condition.

At the same time, the implementation of GPS systems on garbage trucks has facilitated the monitoring of the working hours and the activity of the drivers, has promoted responsible driving behaviours and has enabled the automated generation of roadmaps for fuel consumption and vehicle trip logs.

"Compared to 2022, in 2023 fuel consumption decreased from 51 365 to 48 437 litres, and due to the GPS system, fuel consumption per 100 km per truck significantly decreased. This system also contributed to theft reduction and the promotion of appropriate driver behaviour."

concluded Claudia Coniuhov.

Andrei Cernei has been a driver at AVE Ungheni for almost 15 years, and since the garbage truck he is driving is equipped with a GPS system and front and rear sensors, he feels his job is easier and safer:

"It helps a lot, because when I reverse, I see what operation is being carried out by the operator and the sensors let me know if something is happening, therefore the security is enhanced".

The upgrading of AVE Ungheni LTD with the support of the EU4Moldova: Focal Regions project started back in 2021, when a new truck for transporting selectively collected waste was purchased. A year later, an area of 4 445 m² was set up to park the vehicles and to store the containers (bin washing area, drying area, storage area).

"The access for both trucks and employees was difficult, especially when it was raining, as there was mud everywhere. The paving of the premises of AVE Ungheni LTD had the benefits of improving access and mobility, creating parking spaces for vehicles, protecting the land and most importantly increasing productivity of processes, as well as reducing maintenance costs",

Claudia Coniuhov explains.

Ungheni municipality is one of the first localities in the Republic of Moldova that, starting 2008, managed to develop the necessary infrastructure for selective waste collection. Since 2017, the operator also has the right to collect waste from electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE).

Seventy-eight waste collection platforms and 1,845 containers have been installed in the municipality.



The 1,845 containers of 120 litres, 240 litres and 1100 litres that had been purchased using European funds, through UNDP, and were received in November 2023.

In 2023, the operator also received 40 new sets of protection equipment for employees (winter and summer overalls, polo shirts and winter boots).

The program also offered support for the upgrading of the water supply and sanitation operator in Ungheni. Additionally, the EU and UNDP supported the creation in Cahul of Servcom Sud, a new company responsible for waste management, public domain and green spaces.

Building the ground for a green economy: lessons learned from cooperation in the Eastern Partnership framework

The regional conference with the theme "Building the ground for a green economy: lessons learned from cooperation in the Eastern Partnership framework" took place on March 13-14, 2024 in a hybrid format in Brussels, Belgium, organized within the EU4Environment Green Economy.

This event discussed the lessons learned from the activities encouraging a green transition in the Eastern Partnership countries. In doing so, the event promoted the sustainability and national ownership of the results achieved at national and regional level under EU4Environment and ensured that future actions remain linked to both national and regional priorities.



The main objectives of the meeting were:

- » To highlight the progress made in the transition to a green economy in the countries of the Eastern Partnership;
- » To discuss how to preserve the results and accelerate further reforms;
- » To discuss the continuity of the implementation of the green agenda in the countries of the Eastern Partnership.

The event also included three thematic sessions on adapting public administration to facilitate a green transition; sustainable public procurement; as well as product policies and the EU single market.

The meeting brought together the National Focal Points from the Ministries of Environment and Economy of the Eastern Partnership countries, National Action Coordinators, representatives of the European Commission and EU Delegations, EU member states, civil society and

EU4Environment implementation partners (OECD, UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO and World Bank).

From the Republic of Moldova, a delegation led by Ms. Veronica ARPINTIN, State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization and Ms. Irina PUNGĂ, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of the Environment participated in the event.

The Ministry of the Environment presented the basic achievements obtained with the support of EU4Environment, among which can be mentioned:

- » National Forest Extension and Rehabilitation Program for the period 2023-2032;
- » Regulation on ecological labelling;
- » Quality control guidelines in the field of strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment;



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» the information and awareness campaigns regarding sustainable lifestyle in 2022 and within the European Green Week 2023.

During the presentation of the country's objectives and achievements, Ms. Irina PUNGĂ indicated that "Moldova's strategic objectives, as a candidate country for the EU, are outlined in the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030", which ensures the continuity of the implementation of the obligations from the Association Agreement with the EU and the international commitments of the Republic of Moldova.

The environmental policy of the Republic of Moldova is based on the objectives and targets of the European Green Deal. Moldova supports the EU's climate neutrality and also makes every effort to fulfil its commitments under the Paris Agreement.

The environmental strategy is at the finalization stage, with the elaboration of a

new policy document in the field, and the strategic documents and sectoral programs (economy, agriculture, energy and others) included the environmental and climate dimensions as an integral part of the sectoral policies to promote the green transition."

The event was organized within the EU4Environment Program, which helps the countries of the Eastern Partnership to preserve their natural capital and increase the well-being of the environment and people by supporting actions related to the environment, by demonstrating and creating opportunities for more green growth and by establishing mechanisms for better management of environmental risks and impacts. The action is implemented by five partner organizations: OECD, UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank - in the period 2019-2024, with a budget of EUR 20 million.

More information:

<https://www.eu4environment.org/events/building-the-ground-for-a-green-economy-lessons-learned-from-cooperation-in-the-eastern-partnership-eap-framework/>



Stronger Together

EU4Environment support the promotion of sound application of Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment in Moldova

The training Workshop on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment in the Republic of Moldova help the authorities and professionals in better application of EIA and SEA procedures according to the new EU requirements

The trainings took place virtually on 28 February and 29 February 2024, organized by UNECE within EU4Environment.



Meeting objectives, expected outputs and outcomes were:

- » To promote sound application of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (including transboundary EIA) in the Republic of Moldova in line with the European Union's Directive on EIA and the Espoo Convention;
- » To introduce the amended Law on EIA, its main requirements and the key steps in the EIA procedure;
- » To increase understanding of the participants on the principles of the effective EIA application and to discuss how to address potential challenges related to the EIA practice;
- » To promote sound application of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in the Republic of Moldova in line with the European Union's Directive on SEA and the UNECE Protocol on SEA;
- » To introduce the amended Law on SEA, its main requirements and the key steps in the SEA procedure;

» To increase understanding of the participants on the principles of the effective SEA application and to discuss how to address potential challenges related to the SEA practice.

The training workshop gathered around 70 participants from central governmental authorities as well as the representatives of the local governments and the environmental practitioners and experts from the environmental consulting companies active in the field of the environmental assessment.

Within the framework of the European Union-funded EU4Environment programme (2019-2024), UNECE is assisting the Eastern Partnership countries, including the Republic of Moldova, in comprehensive capacity-building and institutional building on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and transboundary Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and in finalizing legal reforms in this area.

In the Republic of Moldova, the amendments of the Law on SEA entered into force in

October 2023 expecting to improve the legal framework for the development of a sound practice and strengthening of the overall institutional capacities for strategic environmental assessment application. Also, with the UNECE assistance under the EU4Environment, the draft Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Expert Commission for the quality analysis of the environmental strategic assessment report and the analysis of the draft policy and planning document was developed in the end of 2023. Therefore, the Ministry of Environment of Republic of Moldova requested further support organize the training to explain the main requirements

stipulated by the national SEA legislation and the key steps in the SEA procedure.

The training workshop therefore served as a platform for the discussion on the key issues related to the effective SEA practice and on how to address potential challenges related to the SEA procedure outlined in the amended Law and the related Regulation. The workshop was facilitated by experts/consultants to UNECE.

More information:

<https://www.eu4environment.org/events/training-workshop-on-environmental-impact-assessment-in-the-republic-of-moldova/>



The European Union Programme EU4Environment supports resource efficiency efforts for the greening of Moldovan enterprises

The European Union for the Environment (EU4Environment) national conference, funded by the European Union, took place at Digital Park Chisinau, within the "Made in Moldova 2024" exhibition. 70 people participated both online and physically in the event that marked the completion of activities related to the implementation of the Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production (RECP) methodology among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). In addition, the event served as a platform for forward-looking discussions on environmental impact improvement strategies and support services for Moldovan businesses.

The national conference on resource efficiency and cleaner production was organized by UNIDO within the EU4Environment Programme. The event featured a distinguished group of participants, including Government representatives, business representatives, industry experts and international institutions, who discussed:

- » RECP legacy in Moldova as a first step towards a circular economy;
- » Ways to facilitate green support and an ecological pathway for businesses;

- » Pilot experiences in adopting the framework of eco-industrial parks;
- » Designing the concept of circularity and ecological products and services;
- » Actions, future investments, and solutions for a green transition.

The conference marked the end of UNIDO's activities within the EU4Environment program in Moldova. Between 2021-2023, 31 companies were evaluated according to the RECP methodology, and 15 professionals were trained to become RECP experts in the country. 65 customized RECP measures were proposed to help companies improve their production processes, reduce resource and energy consumption, and integrate circular economy practices. In addition, UNIDO was also involved in supporting the feasibility assessment of two industrial zones, PI Tracom and FEZ Valkaneş, in the application of the Eco-Industrial Parks (EIP) framework. Here, experience shows that Moldova has made important progress in exploring EIPs as part of the sustainable development agenda.

More information:

<https://www.eu4environment.org/events/national-conference-on-resource-efficient-and-cleaner-production-in-moldova/>



EU-Moldova

Stronger Together

Progressing on biodiversity protection: EU4Environment contribution towards better action in the Eastern Partnership countries

The advancing biodiversity conservation in eastern partnership countries: regional stakeholders' meeting took place on 15-16 February 2024 in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- » take stock of progress on biodiversity protection and facilitate peer learning;
- » discuss opportunities for improved funding mechanisms in this area;
- » reflect on national ownership and sustainability of biodiversity protection activities.

The launch of the report on "Identification of High Conservation Value Forests in the Republic of Moldova" took place on 16 February 2024. The event was followed by a field trip to Nature Reserve Codrii. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- » launch a new report on "Identification of High Conservation Value Forests" and present key findings;
- » discuss the rational balance between management and conservation through ecosystem services generation;
- » knowledge sharing with a field visit to Nature Reserve Codrii.



The meeting brought together government representatives from the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, EU institutions, IFIs, CSOs, academia, and the World Bank as meeting's main organiser.

The meeting on February 15 was moderated by Mr. Fisseha Tessema Abissa, Task Team Leader for EU4Environment Result Area 4, the World Bank and Mrs. Angela Bularga, Programme Manager, European

Commission. The report launch event on February 16 was moderated by Ms. Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov, Minister of Environment of Moldova.

The World Bank is working with the EU's Eastern Partnership countries (EaP) in their implementation of the "Result Area 4: Ecosystem services and livelihoods of the European Union for Environment Action" through technical assistance and advisory services.

Within the programme, the World Bank supports the EaP governments and authorities in preserving biodiversity, conserving ecosystems and habitats. This includes the protection of forests and other natural areas that harbour biodiversity.

More information:

<https://www.eu4environment.org/events/progressing-on-biodiversity-protection-eu4environment-contribution-towards-better-action/>



Taking stock of the water sector alignment with the EU practices in the Republic of Moldova

On 20 March 2024, national and local authorities, academic and NGO communities, and Moldova's international partners reviewed the progress and discussed priorities in the water sector. As a country recently granted EU accession status, Moldova has made several institutional reforms, including modifications to its Water Law on December 2023, to align with EU water-related directives. This includes plans to prevent the deterioration of surface and groundwater, transboundary cooperation, and water management based on sound economic principles and transparency in line with the Water Framework Directive. In synergy with legal and institutional reforms on sectoral directives, the need for investments to reduce pollution from agriculture and industrial and municipal wastewater, as well as adapting the water sector to climate change are high on the policy agenda.

Chaired by the General State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, the discussion built upon the institutional reforms in water management and key findings from the Ministry's stock-take report on the implementation and approximation of the national legislation, including recent updates to the Water Law, and further implementation

of the Nitrate Directive. The discussion also highlighted the plans for the transboundary collaboration with Ukraine and Romania after recent signature of the trilateral Prut River Basin Declaration and informed about the second cycle of the Nistru River Basin Management Plan.

The following day, 21 March, a workshop on "Financing Water Security in Moldova" took place. The aim of the workshop on economic instruments for water resources is to address challenges and opportunities in the sector, including the presentation of the results of the OECD assessment of national water resources financing issues and scenarios for water tax reform in Moldova.

Also, on March 21, an introductory workshop was held on the elaboration of the national sections in the European State of the Environment Report (SOER 2025).

The events were organized with the support of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Program, funded by the European Union. It aims to improve the well-being of people in the EU's eastern partner countries and enable their green transformation in line with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals.



Stronger Together

Advancing environmental monitoring: Moldova and the European Union work together for progress

On 22nd March, Moldovan and Austrian experts met at the headquarters of the State Hydrometeorological Service (SHS) in Moldova, in the framework of the EU4Environment Water and Data programme, with the aim of improving environmental monitoring capacities. Organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment, the workshop aimed to enhance cooperation in the field of environmental monitoring. The workshop was attended by representatives from key agencies including the Environment Agency, SHS, the Ministry of Environment and the Austrian Development Agency.

The workshop focused on the expansion and improvement of Moldova's air quality monitoring network. Recognizing the importance of robust monitoring systems in addressing air pollution challenges, participants discussed plans to install new software at the Chisinau air monitoring station. This initiative aims to strengthen

Moldova's capacity to effectively monitor air quality parameters and develop targeted measures to reduce pollution levels.

The workshop also highlighted the need to align Moldovan environmental legislation with European standards in order to promote a more sustainable environment. Austria's support under the EU4Environment Water and Data Programme aims to facilitate the harmonization process and enable Moldova to comply with internationally recognized environmental standards.

Discussions have also focused on institutional reforms within the SHS to restructure it into the Meteorological and Environmental Monitoring Agency. This strategic review is expected to streamline resource management and promote an integrated approach to environmental challenges, paving the way for improved environmental monitoring practices in Moldova.



A new EU-funded project “Climate Justice and Human Rights Education” at the Moldova State University

The Global Campus of Human Rights (GC) and the Moldova State University are glad to announce a new capacity development, funded by the European Union. The project is focused on climate justice and human rights education and will lead to the establishment of an interdisciplinary Lab on climate justice and human rights, involving lecturers and students from Moldova and EU enlargement countries.

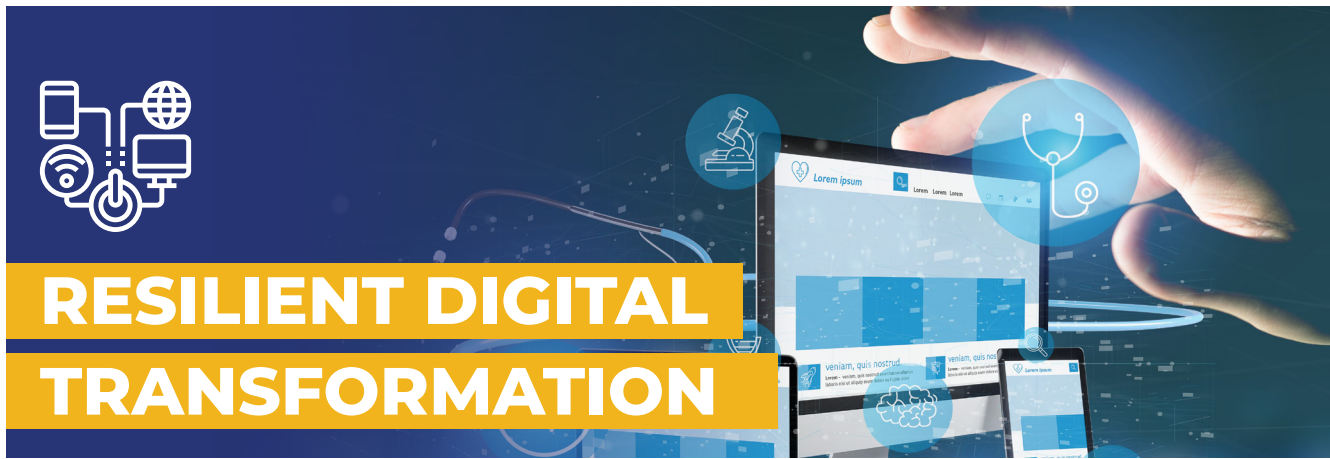
The project will contribute to the promotion and protection of environmental rights and climate justice by producing and disseminating critical knowledge for policy change in the context of the EU enlargement through curriculum and teaching tools development, teacher training, refurbishment of teaching spaces, and outreach activities.

The project is innovative in its interdisciplinarity and cross-regional approach, involving three GC hubs, GC Caucasus, GC Europe, and GC Southeast Europe. The MSU was accepted as a new GC member by the General Assembly in September 2023.

The flagship of the project is the creation of the [European Cross-Regional Spring School in Climate Justice and Human Rights](#), which first edition will be implemented in May 2024.

The project was inaugurated in a public event on March 1st, with participation from Minister of the Environment Ms Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov, the University leadership, representatives of the EU Delegation, delegates of the Global Campus, and the project team.





Erasmus+ National Seminar on embedding Artificial Intelligence in education

The National Erasmus+ Office in Moldova, in cooperation with the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry of Education and Research, organised on March 14 - 15, 2024, at the Technical University of

Moldova, the seminar for higher education institutions with the generic title "**Embracing Artificial Intelligence in Education: New Programs, Disciplines, and Methods**".



The Technical Assistance Mission seminar was organized with the support of [Higher Education Reform Experts](#) (HERE) in Moldova, namely by Dr. Dumitru Ciorbă, dean of The Faculty of Computers, Informatics and Microelectronics at the Technical

University of Moldova. It should be noted that the [Higher Education Reform Experts in Moldova](#) work under the Erasmus+ Programme, with the support of the SPHERE Consortium. It includes experts from the European University Association (EUA) that

involves more than 800 universities from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), as well as 33 national rectors' councils.

*Expert within the seminar "Embracing Artificial Intelligence in Education: New Programs, Disciplines, and Methods" was **Dr. Diana Andone**, director of the e-Learning Center at the Politehnica University of Timișoara, Romania, responsible for planning and implementing digital education and associate professor in multimedia, interactive and web technologies, member of the Steering Committee for Digital Transformation of the Association of European Universities.*

Generative AI holds immense potential and dangers to transform education, revolutionising the way we educate, learn, and engage with knowledge. The transformation brought by Generative AI into higher education has driven educators to rethink and adjust methods of teaching and evaluation, as well as to acquire new skills and adapt to an evolving digital ecosystem. What skills will be expected from educators and students in the future? How can generative AI be used creatively by educators and students? How can Generative AI enhance the creativity and critical thinking of both students and educators or to be included into curriculum? How open education and

science practices are changed by Generative AI? Several experiments which showcase the integration of the use of Generative AI into project development and assessment on different subjects in education and research were presented from both educators' and students' perspectives. Additionally, the talk has critically examined the ethical considerations and security implications of embedding Generative AI tools within the academic framework. Participants have also practiced how to integrate Generative AI Technologies in education and discussed different methods of AI-driven teaching and learning during hands-on sessions.

The seminar brought together over 80 representatives of higher education institutions from Moldova, IT companies, the Ministry of Education and Research, EU Delegation, as well as the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research.

During the period of 2015-2024, the National Erasmus+ Office in Moldova together with SPHERE consortium organized 13 Technical Assistance Mission seminars, together with international experts in various fields related to the modernisation and internationalisation of higher education.



EU-Moldova

Stronger Together

Cyber Security Forum kicked off the new Cyber Security Agency in Moldova

The Moldova Cyber Security Forum was held on 09 February 2024. The forum set up the cybersecurity horizon in Moldova, and served as a launch of the new Cyber Security and the National Institute of Innovations in Cybersecurity 'Cybercor'.

The forum discussed good practices for building resilient national cyber architectures. Particular focus was given to key capacities and competencies needed for a comprehensive and resilient cyber eco-system. Moreover, the forum raised awareness about the evolving cyber threats and the importance of a proactive approach to cybersecurity, as well as fostered collaboration to tackle shared challenges.

EUPM Moldova hosted and moderated a panel on 'Building National Cyber Architectures – Capacities'. During the panel, the experts from Austria, Belgium and Romania, as well as representatives from European External Action Service and European Security & Defence College discussed good practices for building resilient national cyber architectures.

The Forum was organised by the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Technical University of Moldova and Tekwill, with the support of EUPM Moldova, European Union, the e-Governance Academy (EGA), Sweden, the United Kingdom and USAID.



New EU4Digital activity helps harmonise Moldova and EU telecommunications legislation

EU4Digital Facility has launched a new activity to help harmonise the Republic of Moldova's electronic communications legislative framework with that of the European Union. Because approximating national law with EU law is considered the most important

task in EU integration, this activity reflects and assists Moldova's efforts towards EU accession following the [European Council's December 2023 decision](#) to open accession negotiations.



Working within its [Telecom Rules](#) stream of activities, EU4Digital's support includes technical and legislative assistance, particularly within the telecommunications sector. This will help to ensure that Moldova's legislation approximates to EU law in the field of electronic communications. To achieve this aim, EU4Digital is working in close collaboration with local stakeholders from both public and private sectors.

In November 2023, EU4Digital organised an initial meeting to engage with representatives of the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation, as well as the National Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communications and Information Technology (ANRCETI). As updates to the legislative framework will also impact market participants, their involvement from the very beginning is also important to ensure a smooth, successful process.

Thus, EU4Digital encourages active participation of market participants in a series of technical workshops, where EU experts share relevant experience and knowledge. The next workshop, focusing on EU roaming rules, is planned for 19-20 February in Chisinau.

This activity embodies Moldova's commitment to align with the EU 'acquis' – the collection of common rights and obligations that constitute the body of EU law – amid EU accession negotiations. EU4Digital will continue to support Moldova in its transformation of the telecommunications sector, ultimately promoting innovation and advancement in the digital sphere.

Find out more about activities in the EU4Digital Telecom Rules thematic area in our question-and-answers 'Explainers'.



Stronger Together

Moldova to join €7.5 billion Digital Europe Programme

On 19 February 2024, the accession agreement of the Republic of Moldova to the '[Digital Europe Programme](#)' was signed by Dumitru Alaiba, the Moldovan Minister of Economic Development and Digitalization and Thierry Breton, the Commissioner of Internal Market for the European Union. Moldova's admission to

the Digital Europe Programme will permit businesses, town halls, NGOs and central authorities in Moldova to access EU funding for digitalisation projects with a budget of €7.5 billion for 2021–2027. Moldova will be able to benefit from financial support and expertise to improve its digital infrastructure and promote innovation and digital inclusion.



The country's strategy for digital transformation is outlined in its [Digital Transformation Strategy for 2023-2030](#), which aims at the development of an innovative and inclusive digital society with a developed infrastructure, digital governance and a business community that utilises digital technologies. Moldova will be able to accelerate the digitalisation of business transactions and public administration with the assistance offered by the Digital Europe Programme, which, in turn, will support start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the public sector in their efforts to increase competitiveness and improve business models using advanced digital technologies.

Moldova intends to actively contribute to developments in the digital field, focusing on four areas: supercar technology; artificial intelligence; the advancement of digital skills; and the implementation and optimal use of digital technologies and interoperability.

Moldova's accession agreement to the Digital Europe Programme will become retroactively effective from 1 January 2024. The Digital Europe Programme aims to accelerate economic recovery and shape the digital transformation of European society and economy, particularly focusing on SMEs.

The European Union has become the main commercial partner of Moldova, representing 53% of total trade and 65% of exports. The European Union offers its support to the country by being a reliable partner in promoting reforms, digital transformation and stability and prosperity.

Details are available in a [Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization article in Romanian](#) as well as a [EU Neighbours East news article](#).

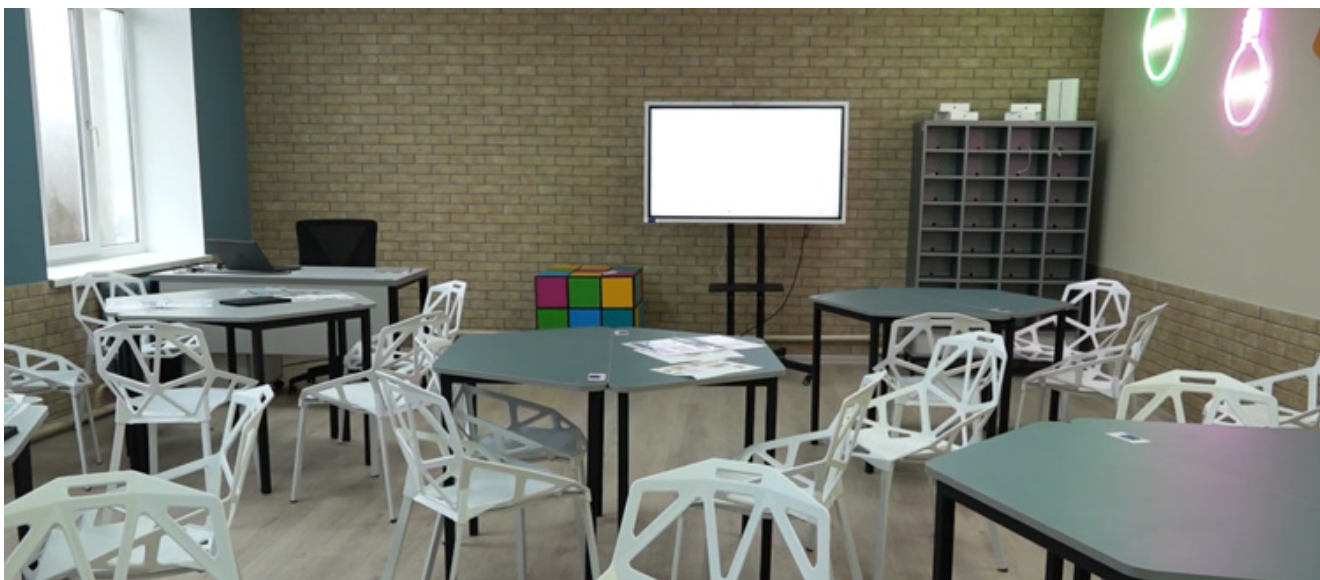
Implementation of Smart Lab in "Mihai Eminescu" Theoretical High School in Edineț: a step towards the education of the future

As part of the project "Edineț - insights into tomorrow cities", "Mihai Eminescu" Theoretical High School in Edineț has been equipped with an innovative laboratory - Smart Lab. This modern space is equipped with tablets, computers, and special programs for creating cutting-edge digital products, offering students unique learning opportunities.



The Smart Lab has proven its effectiveness, becoming a central point of attraction and inspiration for students. The intensive use of the laboratory has demonstrated the interest and enthusiasm of young people for technology and innovation. Students have the opportunity to engage in energy efficiency projects, create smart models, and apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts.

Teachers have played an essential role in guiding students, ensuring that they make the most of the available resources. The implementation of Smart Lab was accompanied by the development of an adapted curriculum, which included essential concepts and notions for understanding and using modern technologies.



Artificial intelligence is making its way into the Moldovan education system - teachers learned to use AI in the teaching-learning process

In the context of rapid technological advances and significant changes in the educational environment, the "AI in Education: Transforming the teaching-learning method in the Republic of Moldova" conference provided the 300 STEAM teachers from the Republic of Moldova with an essential platform to understand, explore and implement artificial intelligence. According to the organizers, the purpose of the event was to explain to teachers how they can improve the study process and ease their work through AI tools.

Teachers learned more about a series of AI tools such as Notion, CHAT GPT, Perplexity,

Google, Stable Diffusion or Magic Eraser. They were presented in an interactive way so that the participants could understand how they can be integrated into the teaching activity.

The participants of the event also had the opportunity to visit an exhibition with artificial intelligence projects developed by students and teachers from the Republic of Moldova. The conference "AI in Education: Transforming the teaching-learning method in the Republic of Moldova" was organized by "Startup City Cahul", "Tekwill in Every School" and Sigmoid.



A young talent from the Leova district won first place at the Algorithm Programming Marathon in C/C++

Andrei Arseni is 17 years old and is a student in the 11th grade at the "Mihai Eminescu" Theoretical High School in the city of Leova. The young man discovered his passion for IT three years ago, when he started attending the robotics club and participating in the First Lego League competitions.

"I noticed that the Lego EV3 robot can also be programmed in the Python language, not only with a program similar to Scratch. Thus, in the summer I studied the Python language, which opened many doors to new opportunities. For example, participation in the web design and development contest organized by Tekwill",

Andrei mentioned.



In school, Andrei has been studying Algorithm Programming in C/C++ and Web Design and Development for a year, being guided by computer science teacher Irina Iftodi. He states that he enjoys programming because it develops his logical thinking.

"Even though C/C++ languages cannot easily build interactive programs with beautiful designs, they can help solve problems in mathematics and everyday life. The most impressive thing is that these languages can solve a problem with a speed and precision that humans cannot achieve",

says the young man.

Recently, Andrei participated in the Algorithm Programming Marathon in C/C++, High School Level, National stage, where he got 1st place. He solved all 4 problems in the competition in the shortest time and got the maximum score. The teenager says he wants to pursue a career in IT.

"I would like to study embedded systems, web3 technologies and machine learning, because they represent the future and I will be able to build something useful for people with them. I think I will continue my studies at UTM, not only because I am close to home, but also because I don't see the point of studying at another university abroad in the field of IT, which is in constant change",

said Andrei.

The C/C++ Algorithm Programming Marathon took place on January 27. The competition was organized by the "Tekwill in Every School" Project in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova and the Technical University of Moldova, with the financial support provided by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova and Sweden.



The European future of the Republic of Moldova discussed at the sixth edition of Innovation Talks in Cahul

Dozens of entrepreneurs, IT specialists, teachers, students and pupils participated in the sixth edition of the "Innovation Talks" Cahul. The event was dedicated to constructive dialogues regarding the European future of the Republic of Moldova, and the special guest was Iulian Groza, the Executive Director of the Institute for European Policies and Reforms.

"Each of us, whether we are in Chisinau or Cahul, in the public or private sector, we have a role that we must capitalize on. In this way, our European path will be much simpler and safer. Cahul is the southern capital of the Republic of Moldova and already benefits from many European programs and funds, and the Inotek center is a clear example, which gathers young people, mayors, activists and businessmen. It is an example that such opportunities help us advance

much more safely and quickly in our goal of joining the European Union",

concluded Iulian Groza, Executive Director of the Institute for European Policies and Reforms.

The participants of the event discussed the initiation of accession negotiations between the Republic of Moldova and the EU, the advantages of European integration and ensuring effective negotiations.

"From Sweden's perspective, Moldova belongs to the European family and we will do our best to support it to become a member of the European Union,"

said Axel Lundell, deputy secretary at the Swedish Embassy.



Stronger Together

Another topic addressed during the discussions focused on the role of the regions in the process of joining the European Union. According to the organizers, "Innovation Talks" gave the guests the opportunity to better understand the process of accession of the Republic of Moldova to the EU and its benefits. At the same time, the event represented an opportunity for those interested in creating new connections and possible collaborations.

"The accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union would have many benefits for the country, including for the Cahul region. Among them are access to European markets, the promotion of democratic reforms and respect for human rights, support for the modernization of infrastructure and the economy, as well as the development of programs and courses in the IT field",

said Nicolae Mocanu, the administrator of the Inotek foundation.

"Innovation Talks" is organized by the Inotek Foundation and the EU4Moldova project: Startup City Cahul in partnership with Europe Café, with the support of the European Union and Sweden.



DG NEAR and EU4Digital visit Moldova, confirming startup ecosystem development support in accordance with EU requirements

Representatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and EU4Digital Facility met important Moldovan stakeholders and attended Startup Moldova Summit 2024 on 12–14 March 2024. DG NEAR Programme Manager for Digital Economy and Development Thibault Charlet confirmed ongoing European Union support for tech ecosystem development, and announced the upcoming EU4Innovation East regional initiative.

The visit provided an opportunity to engage with local key stakeholders as well as regional ecosystem representatives. They shared views on technology trends and provided invaluable insights regarding plans for developing the country's digital area. During the visit, meetings were held with Moldova Innovation Technology Park ([MITP](#)), Invest Moldova Agency, Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation, representatives of the Digital Transformation for SMEs (DT4SMEs) project funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit ([GIZ](#)), [Artcor](#) Creative hub, [Dreamups](#), [Startup Moldova](#) and other major stakeholders.

Thibault Charlet also took part in the [Startup Moldova Summit 2024](#). In a panel session, he discussed how opportunities for Moldovan start-ups and ecosystem players are growing, in connection to the Digital Europe programme as well as other important initiatives supported by the EU.

The Startup Moldova Summit marked a significant moment for innovation and entrepreneurship in Moldova. The opening of the event featured Moldova's President, Maia Sandu, who emphasised the importance of entrepreneurial development and the Moldova start-up ecosystem. She highlighted the crucial role of innovation, education and Moldova's technological evolution, in the context of European integration.


Startup Moldova Director Olga Melniciuc underlined that, through innovation and collaboration, the aim is to transform Moldova into a fertile ground where bold ideas meet the necessary resources for start-ups to grow and thrive.



Dave Parker, a serial entrepreneur, book author and start-up ecosystem development consultant, emphasised the need for founders to understand and accept failure as an integral part of the innovation and growth process. He highlighted the crucial importance of identifying and attracting talent, as well as building a strong community, as central pillars for the long-term success of any start-up.

Six promising Moldovan start-ups pitched their products during the event – Baby Medy, Crebase, MySportLink, SengEnergy, Fagura Moldova and EatingAI – showcasing the diversity and dynamism of Moldovan tech entrepreneurship. Success stories from start-up founders such as Mihaela Kawinska ([Bloomcoding](#)), Viorica Vanica ([SelfTalk](#)) and Nicolae Guzun ([Sumboard](#)) inspired aspiring innovators. In total, the event hosted more than 500 attendees, 30 venture capitalists and angel investors, and facilitated over 200 networking meetings organised via the [Brella](#) app to establish potential collaborations.





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