



**STRONGER TOGETHER  
TEAM EUROPE**

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



## **EU – MOLDOVA: COOPERATION NEWS**

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## MOBILITY AND PEOPLE

### Results of the Erasmus+ 2023 call selection for the Republic of Moldova

The European Executive Agency for Education and Culture (EACEA) has published the results of the 2023 selection for Erasmus+ projects, such as capacity building in higher education projects (CBHE), but also in the field of vocational education and training (CBVET), and for Jean Monnet actions.

Thus, six CBHE projects, three CBVET projects, and four Jean Monnet projects were proposed for financing, including the participation of educational institutions from the Republic of Moldova. It is the best result achieved so far within an Erasmus+ call by Moldovan institutions.



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It should be noted that the Erasmus+ capacity building projects (CBHE and CBVET) support international cooperation, based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the field of higher education and vocational education and training in the countries associated to the Erasmus+ programme (EU states and 6 states associated to programme) and from third countries that are not associated to the programme (the rest of the world, including the Republic of Moldova). These projects aim to support the relevance, accessibility and adaptability of educational institutions in third countries not associated to the programme as a driver of sustainable socio-economic development.

Jean Monnet projects, on the other hand, aim to promote excellence in teaching and research in European Union studies worldwide. Through this action, the European Commission aims to foster the dialog between the academic world and the policy-makers, especially with the intention of consolidating EU policy governance. European Union studies comprise the study of Europe in its entirety with particular emphasis on the European integration process.

With a total budget of €4.2 billion for the year 2023, the Erasmus+ programme aims to continue to support inclusion, digitalisation,

green deal, active citizenship and a more dynamic participation in democratic life. In the Republic of Moldova, Erasmus+ projects have been implemented since 1994 in the field of higher education and youth. Starting from 2021, new for the Republic of Moldova within the Erasmus+ programme are capacity building projects in the field of vocational education and training, which have as main objective the modernization and internationalization of this sphere of education. In addition, starting with 2024, organisations from the Republic of Moldova will be able to participate in capacity building projects in the field of youth and sports, thus having access to a wider range of training, learning and networking opportunities.

The Erasmus+ programme has proven to be a powerful tool for promoting European unity and values, and one of the most visible success stories of the European Union. Until now, thanks to the support of the Erasmus+ programme in the Republic of Moldova, the following results have been achieved: 83 Tempus projects, over 6,000 academic mobilities and over 8,000 youth mobilities, 30 capacity building projects in higher education, 5 capacity building projects in the field of vocational education and training and 31 Jean Monnet projects.

## 30 young people carried out internships in state institutions, with the support of the EU High Level Advisers' Mission

30 young people were selected, following a competitive process, to become interns of this year's edition of the joint Internship Programme of the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Moldova. The festive opening ceremony of the Programme took place in late June, at the Government, in the presence of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Dorin Recean, and the Head of the Operations Section of the Delegation of the European Union, Magdalena Mueller-Uri.

In his address to the interns, the Head of the Government emphasized that working in the public sector involves a lot of dedication and responsibility, and civil servants contribute every day to the modernisation of the country and implementation of the European path.

*"It is symbolic that we have this meeting today, one year after obtaining the status of a candidate country. I encourage you to be ambitious and contribute, together with us, to the necessary transformations to bring Europe home, in the Republic of Moldova",*

***underlined the Prime Minister.***

***Magdalena Mueller-Uri mentioned:***

*"I hope that many of you, today's interns, will become competent and motivated civil servants. The EU is delighted to support such initiatives that bring enthusiastic young people into the public administration at this crucial moment, when many forces are needed to bring the Republic of Moldova into the big European family as soon as possible."*



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The programme, with a duration of two months, involves working side by side with civil servants from the central authorities, having the EU High Level Advisers as mentors – a fact that will strengthen the young people’s capacities and subsequently increase their chances of employment. The interns receive a monthly allowance, the programme being fully financed by the European Union.

The finalists include students, master students and recent graduates from higher education institutions in the country and abroad – young people eager to start their careers in public institutions and contribute

to the modernisation of the country.

The launch of the Program was preceded by an extensive information campaign, carried out in four of the largest universities in the country, but also online, for Moldovan students in the diaspora. The program is carried out on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the Government of the Republic of Moldova, the Council of Rectors and the EU High Level Advisers’ Mission. Details about the Program, the selection criteria, the procedure for submitting files are available at <https://www.eu-advisers.md/ro/internship/>.



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# Interns of the joint Programme of the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Moldova receive extensive training in various sectors of public administration

Over the course of two months, the interns enrolled in the joint Internship Programme of the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Moldova, received extensive training in various sectors of public administration.

They were organized as informative sessions moderated by EU High Level Advisers and representatives of the top managerial level of state institutions.



Thus, they learned about the role and responsibilities of the State Chancellery, and the process of drafting normative acts – the way from a concept to a law – in an informative session moderated by Artur Mija, Secretary General of the Government and Irina Alexe, strategic planning expert of the EU High Level Advisers' Mission.

The series of sessions continued with one in Education sector, moderated by Minister Dan Perciun and EU High Level Adviser on Education & Research Daniel Funeriu.

Later in August, interns learned about current issues in the energy sector – in an event moderated by Minister Victor Parlicov and

EU High Level Adviser on Energy Alexandru Sandulescu.

The series of events included also one in External Affairs, with the participation of State Secretary Stela Leuca and EU High Level Adviser on Diplomatic & EU Affairs Jan Tombinski.

Irina Cruceru, Programme Manager of the EU High Level Advisers Mission, opening the events, shared her professional experience with EU integration and acquis alignment, and encouraged the interns to use the unique opportunities, offered by the historically very important period Moldova is crossing, to its fullest.



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## A street in the centre of Ungheni was renovated with the EU assistance

On 28 August, on Ungheni City Day, a 0.7-kilometer road segment was inaugurated, after its rehabilitation. The modernization of Alexandru Boico Street in the municipality of Ungheni involved the renovation of the road infrastructure of 0.7 km, the application of curbs, longitudinal and transverse markings, the installation of 50 road signs, the

arrangement of six entrances to courtyards, a green area, two pedestrian crossings and the installation of lighting. The renovation works worth over €420,000 were carried out with the support of the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme financed by the EU and implemented by UNDP and UNICEF, with contributions from the Ungheni municipality.



*"The European Union supports the development of local communities in Ungheni through the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme. A significant component of the program is dedicated to improving public infrastructure. A developed infrastructure, such as Boico Street, is important for Ungheni residents, as it provides easy access, increases mobility, and cities and towns become more dynamic. It also provides opportunities*

*for economic development, increases the attractiveness of places, improving the livelihoods of the population. I am glad to see that the Ungheni region is able to attract EU funds from various sources and implements projects successfully. I congratulate the local authorities and the residents of Ungheni and I hope they enjoy the newly renovated road",*

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



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The modernized road infrastructure benefits more than 18 entrepreneurs which operate on this section of the road, as well as the more than 3,000 employees of the Free Economic Zone.

The improvement of the road infrastructure contributes to the decongestion of road traffic on the main artery of the city, provides improved conditions for car transport and access to areas with economic development. At the same time, the costs of building, maintaining and repairing adjacent roads, which were previously over-exploited, are reduced.

*"Boico Street is one of the important arteries of the Ungheni municipality which, since its construction in 1972, has never been capitally repaired. The support offered by the European Union for its rehabilitation was more than welcome. Certainly, thousands of residents and visitors of Ungheni municipality will appreciate what has been done. Thanks to the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme, we now have another street in Ungheni that meets all the rigors, for which we are grateful to both the financiers and the executors of the works",*

**said Alexandru Ambros, Mayor of Ungheni.**

By renovating Alexandru Boico Street, which represents the access road to the Free Economic Zone, it contributes to attracting new investments in the area and increasing cooperation between representatives of public authorities and the business environment.

The construction works took place between October 2022 and July 2023.

"EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme (2019-2024) supports smart, inclusive, and sustainable socio-economic development in 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](http://www.eu4cahul.md) and [www.eu4ungheni.md](http://www.eu4ungheni.md).



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## The feature film "VARVARA" screened in cinemas

On 6 June, the premiere of the feature film "VARVARA," produced by Sergiu Cumatrenco and directed by Anatol Durbală, took place. The film has been produced with the support

of several development partners, including the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme.



The premiere of the film "VARVARA" was held at the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova. From 7 June, the production [was screened in cinemas across the country](#). The film is also scheduled to be presented in Tiraspol.

In 2020, the producers of the film "VARVARA" received a grant of over €35,000 within the framework of the EU "Confidence Building Measures" Programme, implemented by UNDP. The filming took place during 2021-2022 and the cast includes over 30 actors, including six from the left bank of the Nistru river. The production team consisted of professionals from both banks.

The feature film "VARVARA" focuses on Saşa, an ordinary plumber, who is struggling to live an honest life and the film revolves around the important choices the protagonist must make.

The Confidence Building Measures Programme, financed by the European Union and implemented by UNDP, contributes to the strengthening of trust between the inhabitants of both banks of the Nistru river, by involving them in joint development projects.

# "Rock at the Fortress" - the concert that brought together music enthusiasts from both banks of the Nistru River

On 10 June, on the occasion of celebrating the completion of the restoration and conservation works at Tighina/Bender Fortress, the "Rock at the Fortress" concert was organized. The Moldovan National Youth Orchestra (MNYO) returned to the

fortress courtyard with an exceptional concert. The event took place with the financial support of the European Union through the Confidence Building Measures Programme implemented by UNDP.



60 musicians and instrumentalists from both banks of the Nistru River reinterpreted legendary rock songs. From Nirvana, AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, and Queen to Elton John, Moby, and Okean Elzy, these are just a few examples of songs that created a true sensation.

*"It's a wonderful concert in a very beautiful venue, and I'm impressed by how well the fortress looks. There's a large crowd, which is splendid and I think it's a great opportunity for everyone to gather here and listen to good, dynamic music,"*

**stated Alexandru.**



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*"I'm from Tiraspol, and it's my first time attending a concert here at the fortress, specifically the MNYO concerts. The atmosphere here is incredible. It's interesting to see how history intertwines with the modern at a cultural event: a fortress from the 15th century and rock music from our days,"*

**mentioned Olesea.**

*"I have never taken part in such a grandiose event, everything is so captivating. Thank you for coming to our city,"*

**said Elena.**

The MNYO concerts organized at Tighina/Bender Fortress have become a beautiful tradition, and as evidence, tickets were sold well in advance of the concert. The approximately 2000 people present at the concert had the opportunity to listen to the performances of special guests - Pasha Parfeni, Ana Cernicova, and Radu Dolgan.

*"The magnificent Tighina/Bender Fortress is a place where we always go with great pleasure and where we meet an extraordinary audience. It is uplifting to see how people from both banks come together in a spiritual union every year. The repertoire is largely inspired by the first Symphonic Rock event, which took place 10 years ago,"*

**mentioned Adriano Marian, the conductor of the Moldovan National Youth Orchestra.**

The "Rock at the Fortress" concert on 10 June was the 5th event organized by MNYO at Tighina/Bender Fortress, with the support of the EU and UNDP. Organizing cultural events at Tighina/Bender Fortress ensures the financial sustainability of this important historical monument.

The Confidence Building Measures Programme, financed by the European Union and implemented by UNDP, contributes to the strengthening of trust between the inhabitants of both banks of the Nistru River, by involving them in joint development projects.

# EU and UNDP announce the completion of the first stage of restoration works at Tighina/Bender Fortress

The first stage of conservation works carried out between 2021 and 2023 at Tighina/Bender Fortress have been completed. The total amount of investment for conservation

was over 1.4 million euros, from the European Union through the Confidence Building Measures Programme implemented by UNDP.



*"Over the past few years, we have witnessed a remarkable journey of intense work here. Despite all the obstacles, such as the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine, today we see these efforts materialized. By restoring the Tighina/Bender Fortress, we preserve its physical structure. At the same time, we revitalize its historical significance and cultural value. This monument will become a living testament to the rich traditions, history, and experiences that have shaped the communities on both banks of the Nistru River,"*

**mentioned Janis Mažeiks, the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.**

The technologies used for the conservation works in the first stage, including the reinforcement of the most critical areas of the Upper and Lower Citadel, comply with international standards and practices. For example, chemical and petrographic tests were conducted in Istanbul, Turkey, to determine the historical mortar, as such tests cannot be carried out in the Republic of Moldova. Over 127.2 cubic meters of historical mortar, manufactured according to historical recipes, were used for the restoration and reinforcement works.



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**The works carried out in the first stage included:**

- » Consolidation of all construction areas/elements at risk of collapse in both the Upper Citadel and the Lower Citadel;
- » Complete conservation of the Eastern wall of Tighina/Bender Fortress;
- » Full restoration of the three wall towers in the eastern area of the fortress, including the roofs, which were reproduced exactly as per the original version;
- » Modernization of the rainwater drainage system;
- » Securing the stairs and passages in accordance with international standards.

The restoration of Tighina/Bender Fortress, dating back to the 15th century, will increase

the tourism potential of this historical site, which will further benefit the local economy.

During 2019-2021, the technical expertise and detailed design of the fortress were conducted, serving as a roadmap for the launch of the conservation works in the first stage. Additionally, a detailed plan was developed for future stages of work, as well as ensuring the financial sustainability of the historical monument through the organization of various events such as fairs, concerts, or sports activities for visitors from both banks of the Nistru River and abroad.

The conservation and restoration of Tighina/Bender Fortress, along with the Chişinău Circus, are two emblematic cultural heritage sites restored with the support of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme.

The Confidence Building Measures Programme, financed by the European Union and implemented by UNDP, contributes to the strengthening of trust between the inhabitants of both banks of the Nistru River, by involving them in joint development projects.



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## The water tower in Șoldănești has been restored with the support of the EU

The water tower in Șoldănești has regained its former glory. Built in 1893 with red bricks, the tower used to supply all the water needs for the railway in Șoldănești. After over a century, the monument has been

restored, thanks to the support provided by the European Union under the Confidence Building Measures Programme implemented by UNDP.



The water tower in Șoldănești is not just a simple historical monument; it has remained functional to this day. The 50-ton capacity reservoir provides drinking water to the entire historic center of Șoldănești, serving approximately 400 beneficiaries from commercial units to 100 households.

*"We have many historical monuments in the Șoldănești district Stefan the Great's oak tree, monasteries, the Jewish cemetery, etc. But I find the water tower the most interesting because it was a utility object that later transformed into a historical monument,"*

**says Bogdan, an eighth-grade student.**



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The restoration of the water tower in Șoldănești was a complex process, ensuring its functionality while preserving all its historical and architectural value. The conservation/restoration work focused on reinforcing the tower, repairing the roof and joinery, and completely replacing the water reservoir and internal pipelines.

As a result, the water tower is divided into three levels: the upper-level housing a 50-ton water tank, the second level containing the technical department, and the ground floor which accommodates the boiler room to ensure water-system function during the winter. After the complete restoration of the water tower, the ground floor and the area surrounding the monument will be transformed into an industrial museum.

*"We also aim to open a water museum, which will be visited by locals and guests who come here. We will arrange this area in front of the water tower so that those arriving at the bus station can visit the water tower, the train station, and perhaps take a break here,"*

**mentioned Vadim Groza, the Deputy Mayor of Șoldănești.**

The water tower in Șoldănești is one of the ten cultural-historical landmarks on both banks of the Nistru River that underwent restoration works during the period of 2020-2022. The Confidence Building Measures Programme funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP contributes to trust-building between residents on both sides of the Nistru River through their involvement in joint development projects.



# Free Romanian language courses for civil society organisations from the left bank of the Nistru River, with the support of the EU

*"I realised that I was missing out on a lot professionally and personally,"*

**says Iulia Melnicenco, one of the participants in a Romanian language course held in Tiraspol.**

The course was run by the Regional Development Agency from Tiraspol, in partnership with the "SMART" Educational Center, with the support of the European Union (EU) and UNDP, and offered as part of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme.

As a result, 25 representatives of civil society from the left bank of the Nistru River studied Romanian intensively.

*"It is a useful and necessary process for them. The journey is challenging, but we are dedicated, and the results at the end of each level are visible and as expected. The students are interested in learning,"*

**says Tatiana Mazepa, Romanian language lecturer.**

*"At the end of the course, we have 25 people—representatives of CSOs who have learned Romanian from scratch up to level B1, according to European standards for foreign language learning. Romanian courses are about possibilities and opportunities,"*

**says Tatiana Yaskova, President of the Regional Development Agency from Tiraspol.**



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The organisers of the Romanian language courses did not limit themselves to the traditional teaching approach. They also provided participants with alternatives such as online lessons, thematic brunches and discussion workshops outside of classrooms focused on various topics such as history, traditions, and customs. Additionally, all the training was complemented by a glossary of terms in Romanian.

*"In our work, we constantly interact with our project colleagues from the right bank of the Nistru. Therefore, for better understanding and communication, as well as for the implementation of joint projects, knowledge of the Romanian language has become a necessity. I study Romanian intensively and it's challenging because my work schedule is packed. I believe every person should learn a new language, at least to enhance their skills. Furthermore, since we live in Moldova, knowledge of the Romanian language, the*

*state language, is necessary, and to travel through the country, you really need to know this language,"*

**says Alexandr Bomeşco, a course participant.**

Among the students of the Romanian language courses was Ludmila Burlaciuc, Vice-President of the National Karate-Do Federation of the Republic of Moldova.

*"I have wanted to study Romanian for a long time, but as a karate coach, often the study schedule coincided with my work schedule. When I found out about the new opportunity for studying, especially with the option of online courses, I enrolled immediately. At the same time, the organisation of thematic brunches, where we discuss various topics in Romanian, is a new way of studying for me, and it's also convenient. I have many*

colleagues in Romania and Moldova. When we meet at various regional and international sports competitions, I want to be understood by them. Now I have the opportunity to learn Romanian and that's what I'm doing,"

**she mentioned.**

"The role of the Romanian language in project management has increased and it is good to understand our partners from the right bank. I believe that these courses will strengthen and increase the number of partnerships between organisations on both banks Leaders will be

able to participate in joint events not only in the Republic of Moldova but also in Romania,"

**said Roman Sandu, an expert at the Social Entrepreneurs Association.**

The 25 participants were part of a pilot project through which those interested in studying Romanian managed to overcome linguistic barriers on both banks of the Nistru river.

The Confidence Building Measures Programme, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP, contributes to building trust between residents on both sides of the Nistru river by involving them in common development projects.





# The European Union and IOM Mission in Moldova continue to support people fleeing the war



On 7 August, in Chisinau, IOM Moldova, with the generous support of the European Union, donated to the Moldova Emergency Prehospital Service 300 mobile fridges for transportation of thermolabile medicines including vaccines and biological products ([VIDEO](#)).

The handover event was attended by Mr. Ion Prisăcaru, The State Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Mr. Iurie Crasiuc, director

of the National Center of Emergency Prehospital Service, Adam Grodzicki, Deputy Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova and Mr. Lars Johan Lönnback, IOM Moldova's Chief of Mission. This donation falls under the EU project "Supporting Protection, Transit, Voluntary and Informed Return and Reintegration of Eastern Partnership Citizens and Third Country Nationals Affected by the Conflict in Ukraine" funded by the European Union.



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*"Dear partners, thank you for your initiative and efforts to purchase this important equipment for the pre-hospital care service. Thanks to this donation, each mobile medical team will be able to carry thermolabile medicines",*

**said Ion Prisăcaru, State Secretary of the Ministry of Health.**

*"This donation reflects our solidarity towards the Republic of Moldova and our continuous partnership with the Ministry of Health that provides health care services for all Moldovans and Refugees that live in this country. And it is this cooperation that gave rise to a regional program in the field of facilitated migration management implemented in partnership with IOM",*

**commented Adam Grodzicki, Deputy Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova.**

**Lars Johan Lönnback, IOM Moldova's Chief of Mission:**

*"IOM plays a key role in responding to humanitarian and public health emergencies, this is an essential part of IOM's humanitarian mandate. What we are doing with this donation is to extend our support to the ambulance services in the Republic of Moldova. As we all have experienced climate change is real and is here. In this regard, refrigeration is absolutely necessary for so many interventions that are needed in emergency response. I would like to thank the Director of the National Center of Emergency Prehospital Service, the Ministry of Health, and the European Union for the great collaboration that has made this donation possible."*

The donation will enhance the capacity of the Prehospital Emergency Service which actively provides prehospital emergency treatment to Ukrainian refugees and third-country nationals. Also, it served up to 5,000 Ukrainians with emergency health care during the last six months.

IOM assisted 2,324 people with air transportation to 14 EU and EEA member states since the beginning of the war.

The IOM Moldova Resettlement and Movement Management Team is responsible for implementing various types of resettlement activities and support to all IOM movement operations which include air transportation to European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) Member States. In Moldova, RMM Team, in coordination with the Border Police of the Republic of Moldova, is continuously at work to support Ukrainian refugees and Third Country Nationals.

Thanks to the generous financial support of the European Commission's Directorate-General for EU Neighbourhood and Enlargement, IOM Moldova Resettlement and Movement Management Team transferred through air transportation 2,324 people, 107 of which happened between the recent period of June and 23 August 2023. Out of 107 people, 55 per cent are women, 26 per cent are minors, and have been displaced across 7 countries: 12 Norway, 4 Ireland, 78 the Czech Republic, 2 Italy, 1 Liechtenstein, 7 Netherlands (Kingdom of the) and 3 Spain.



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# Young people from Gagauzia established a Youth Center in the village of Dezginja, with EU support

Nestled in Găgăuzia, a village named Dezginja has become the stage for a remarkable tale of collaboration, empowerment, and the boundless potential of young minds. Thanks to the fervent efforts of the Association of Youth in Găgăuzia (AO Tineretul Găgăuziei) and the generous support of the European Union's EU4Accountability project, a Youth Centre has risen, revealing a path towards a brighter future for local youth.

This momentous achievement has not only brought to life a space, but also a profound change in the dynamics of the region. The Youth Centre, established in collaboration with People in Need (PIN) Moldova, resonates with a vision to foster the holistic growth of young individuals. It stands as an embodiment of the EU's commitment to engage, empower, and connect youth, while also enhancing the relationship between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Local Public Authorities (LPAs).

Within the walls of the Youth Centre, a vibrant tapestry of activities will unfold. Interactive workshops will light curiosity, vocational training will arm young adults with skills for the future, and sporting events will channel their energy towards healthy race. This port of learning and creativity will not only uplift the youth, but will also become a breeding ground for community-driven initiatives designed to meet the specific needs and dreams of the local population.

***Expressing his appreciation for the active participation of young individuals, Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, said:***

*"Youth is the driver of change and democracy... It is important to involve young people at all levels of policy making."*



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*"The inauguration of the Youth Centre marks more than just a physical achievement; it represents a bond between CSOs and LPAs, a relationship that amplifies their collective impact",*

**mentioned Guillermo Llinás, Country Director of People in Need Moldova.**

**Marina Uzun, the manager of the Youth Centre, summarized the essence of this initiative:**

*"Young people have fresh ideas, innovative thinking, and creativity."*

With their infectious enthusiasm and unique perspectives, the youth bring a breath of fresh air that propels solutions for complex problems.

Behind this success lies the dedicated effort of the Youth Association of Găgăuzia, who took the initiative and made the Youth Centre a reality. Their determination, coupled with the support of the EU, resulted in the transformation of the centre into a space that fosters growth and innovation.

The Youth Centre stands as a beacon of hope, a testament to what can be achieved when hearts and minds come together. It's a reminder that with every initiative that embraces the energy and potential of the youth, a brighter, more promising future is forged.

The establishment of this platform owes its existence to the backing of European collaborators who financed the endeavour.

This support has enabled these organisations to expand their expertise to different areas and cultivate the abilities of the youth.



Engagement in youth leadership programs aids in the cultivation of leadership proficiencies among young individuals and readies them for the forthcoming responsibilities they will encounter.

EU4Accountability - a project supported by the European Union aims to increase the ability of civil society groups in Moldova to better carry out their function as governance actors to enhance the societal

accountability of public administration and the central government in Moldova. More than 50 CSOs from 10 districts across the nation are trained during the 30-month program in participatory budgeting, social accountability, participating in and monitoring the local governance process, and engaging in policy discussions with local and national governments.



# Youth empowerment and inclusive participation with the EU assistance

This summer, in the framework of the project “MYCS: Moldova Youth Civil Society – a Call for Stronger and Inclusive Youth Participation”, two important activities started at national level: the set up and the first meeting of the civil society youth organisations network, winners of

grants worth up to 60,000 euros to develop youth projects and programs and the Civic Hackathon #space3, which brought together 50 young people from 25 communities across the country, who will develop community initiatives for their peers.



## The first meeting of the MYCS network of youth civil society organisations

After a year-long mentoring process on organizational capacity building for nearly 30 youth civil society organisations around the country, Terre des hommes Foundation Moldova and its partners, the Civil Society Development Foundation (Romania) and the Partnership for Development Centre (Moldova), announced a grant call on youth projects for these organisations as part of

the MYCS project. After a rigorous process of analysis of project proposals, 12 youth organisations - national and local - were selected to receive grants of up to €60,000.

On 29th of June 2023, representatives of the 12 organisations - the MYCS network of youth civil society organisations – had the first meeting in an information and knowledge session together with the lead partner organisations of the project.



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The meeting was also attended by Giuseppe Paglione, Programme Officer, representing the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Moldova.

*"I am very thankful and happy to be today with you. It is very important indeed, also for EU, that you create and strengthen this relationship among you, actors at civil society level. EU counts a lot on your work at grassroots' level, you can do things that institutions very often cannot do, as a matter of roles, as a matter of operational capacity on the ground. What you do is extremely valuable and it's unreplaceable by anybody else"*

Giuseppe Paglione addressed the representatives of the winning organisations, saying that before becoming an officer for the EU, he worked for some time in his home country in the civil society level and thus he truly understands how important what these organisations do is and how much passion, patience and perseverance they must have to achieve their objectives.

*"This project I have developed wholeheartedly. As a fundraiser, I focus on projects that bring something new. This time, the team needed something new and this project came to bring that needed fresh air in our team. Through the planned activities we will gain a lot - they will bring us new resources, test our motivation and make us stronger. And a strong team brings impactful services",*

**Veronica Melinteanu, fundraising and communication officer at "Eco-Răzeni" organization enthusiastically recounted.**

Winning organisations will use the grants to create and develop programs and services for young people and for their

organizational development. The set up of a Youth Government, a volunteering program for young people with disabilities, new youth spaces in ATU Găgăuzia, vocational trainings, and an innovative program in the field of psychology - bio feedback - are some of the youth projects planned for next year.

### **The Civic Hackathon #space3**

The Civic Hackathon #space3 brought together, from 30 June to 1 July 2023 in Chisinau, 50 young people from 25 communities across the country, aged 14-18. The event, organised by Terre des hommes Moldova Foundation, took place under the aegis of two youth projects: "MYCS: for a Stronger Youth Society" and "JOBOTECA - Pilot Program for Preparing Young People in Moldova for the Labor Market", both co-financed by the European Union.

#space3 is a space for learning and exploration, motivation, connection and practice for active young people from the civic sector, eager to bring a local change for the better for their fellow citizens. This is an innovative concept of the Foundation for Civil Society Development in Romania (FCSD), one of the leading partners in the MYCS project, which focuses on building a strong civil society, where citizens are able to influence public decisions and work together for systemic change by mobilising communities.

The idea of the hackathon was to address local problems in an innovative way and identify novel solutions to solve them. Young participants were guided by the expert Vlad Dumitrescu, programme director at FCSD. For two days, they learned how to analyse the youth ecosystem in their community and identify creative and unconventional solutions to the challenges faced by their peers.



***One of the young participants said, delighted with the non-conformist ways of working, that***

*"this hackathon is a great opportunity for us young people to contribute to the development of our communities and make positive changes in society."*

After two months of work on the ideas of local initiatives of the young participants in the hackathon, guided by experts from Moldova and Romania, the 10 best initiatives will be selected and funded with 2,000 euros each to be implemented in their communities.

"MYCS: Moldova Youth Civil Society – a Call for Stronger and Inclusive Youth Participation" is co-financed by the European Union and implemented by Terre des hommes Moldova Foundation in partnership with Foundation for Civil Society Development (Romania) and Partnership for Development Center (Moldova).

The project runs from 2022 to 2024 and aims to strengthen the capacities of local civic actors in the youth field to deliver empowerment programmes and services and inclusive and sustainable youth participation. More details about the project: [tdh.md/MYCS](https://tdh.md/MYCS)



# Career guidance, entrepreneurial and digital skills development - innovative programmes of the EU-funded JOBOTECA project for young people in 25 schools

August 2023 was a very busy month for the beneficiaries of the JOBOTECA pilot project – teachers and pupils alike. Throughout the month, Terre des hommes Moldova organised a series of trainings for teachers and a summer school for students to strengthen and develop their knowledge and skills on career guidance, entrepreneurship and digital skills.

## Trainings for teachers

From 7 to 20 August, 80 teachers from the 25 partner schools of the JOBOTECA project took part in training sessions organised by Terre des hommes based on the three educational programmes for pupils, developed within the project: "Career

guidance", "Entrepreneurial education" and "Development of digital skills". After implementing these pilot programmes in their schools during the 2022 - 2023 school year, the teachers met again with last year's mentors to share their experience and consolidate and deepen their knowledge.



As a first step, the selected experts to develop the curricula worked last year with teachers on the basis of drafts, collecting feedback from them and then adapting the curricula.

*"Over the course of a year, teachers have had the opportunity to implement the guidelines. We are currently in a monitoring and improvement phase. We are working with them to add new clarifications, ideas, recommendations, which will contribute to improving and updating the Guide",*

***said Diana Vrabie, mentor and co-author of the "Career Guidance" course material.***



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**Teachers participating in the trainings reported on the challenges and successes in implementing the three programmes:**

- » the difficulties they have encountered and the successes they have had in helping students identify their interests and plan their careers;
- » how successful they have been in encouraging creative thinking and the development of entrepreneurial skills among students;
- » discussed the benefits and challenges of using technology in learning and debated creative ways to bring the digital into the classroom, increasing students interest and engagement.

### **Innovation and Business Summer School**

29 middle and high school students from the 25 partner schools in the JOBOTECA project had a unique educational experience during the "Innovation and Business Summer School 2023", which took place from 18 to 20 August.

During the three days, students had interactive sessions, worked in teams and explored potential business ideas. With the help of the trainers, they had the opportunity to explore the world of innovation and business, as well as to discover and develop essential skills to easily integrate into the labour market.

*"I'm 16 years old and I want to create a company that specializes in creating websites. The programme has shown me how to draw up a business plan, analyse potential clients and manage the available budget. After the training, I realized that I need to raise funds to develop the business and take courses in IT",*

**said Rusu Sergiu, a student of the "Constantin Stere" Theoretical High School in Soroca.**

*"The aim of the summer school was to help young people learn how to create a business plan and develop their ideas in local teams. We work with concrete steps, from generating ideas to evaluating and consolidating them. In addition, I encourage the adaptation of their ideas in order to avoid financial complexity,"*

**said Diana Vrabie, summer school facilitator.**

The 29 young people attending the summer school represent 25 teams from their schools. They returned home to pass on the knowledge they have gained, and for two months the local teams will participate in an online mentoring programme. In November 2023, they will participate in the Entrepreneurial Ideas Competition, with the best teams receiving financial support of €500 to implement their ideas.

"JOBOTECA - Pilot Programme to prepare young people in Moldova for the labour market" (2021 - 2024) is 90% co-financed by the European Union and implemented by Terre des hommes Foundation, Romania and Moldova offices, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova.

25 job libraries have been set up in the Joboteca project in the partner schools. These are youth-friendly spaces, fully equipped, that have been designed to make it possible to implement the pilot programmes to increase young people's skills – vocational, digital and entrepreneurship skills.



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# Building the resilience of Moldovan local journalists through comprehensive training organised with the EU assistance

In an effort to enhance the skills and resilience of Moldovan local media outlets, a dynamic two-day training event took place in Chisinau on July 6th and 7th, 2023. Hosted at the innovative Mediacor, a creative media technology hub at Moldova State University, the event was organized as a part of the activities within the „EU Support for Local Media Outlets in the Republic of Moldova“ initiative.



The training event commenced with a comprehensive exploration of legal protection, a vital concern for journalists operating in the Moldovan context. This encompassed strategies for avoiding copy-paste problems and lawsuits. Another part of this training focused on protection and support of the journalistic teams in crisis situations and motivation of employees, organization of work, or management during staff shortages.

On the following day, the focus shifted to the subject of digital security. Discussions centred around digital security risk management, acknowledging the common risks journalists encounter. Practical sessions on self-defence techniques for messenger apps and social media accounts were conducted, enabling participants to safeguard their online presence effectively.

A training dedicated to social networks drew significant interest from the participants. This training offered an in-depth exploration of the features and algorithms specific to each social media platform. Participants

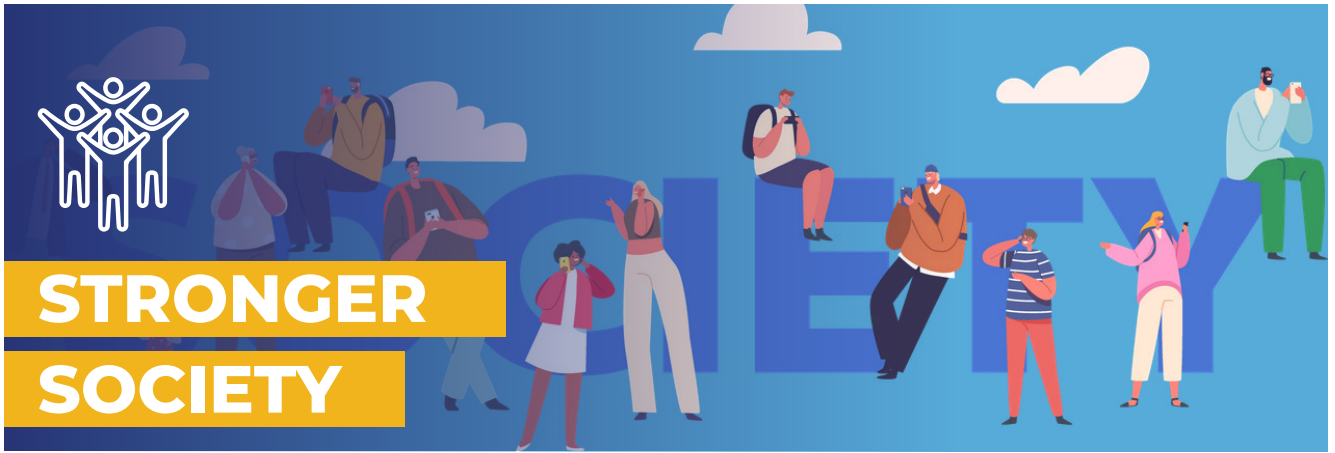
engaged in discussions on the challenges that media outlets often encounter on various social networks and collaborative brainstorming sessions generated potential solutions.

Conducting the trainings in person offered participants a unique opportunity to connect and exchange their valuable experiences. Many participants highlighted that this event was a great chance to engage in such open discussions.

Following the training sessions, a closed-door discussion was held following the Chatham House Rules, ensuring an atmosphere of confidentiality. In this setting, participants engaged in conversations about the current state of journalism in Moldova. They delved into the challenges and nuances that shape their work environment, openly sharing their experiences and insights.

The outcomes of these insightful discussions are set to be summarized concisely and soon to be shared with the donor community, as well as other stakeholders involved.





## A new EU project on youth empowerment was launched in Moldova in July 2023

The EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment project officially started its implementation in July, which represents a collaborative effort between the European Commission and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

(BMZ). This project aims to amplify youth engagement and empowerment in Moldova and other Eastern Partnership countries, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine.



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The project is co-funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) implemented by GIZ and is scheduled to run from April 2023 to December 2025. The total budget of the project is 5,67 million euro.

The central aim of this project is to enhance the impact and engagement of young people in the development of decision-making processes in the Eastern Partnership countries. The goal will be achieved through the strengthening of collaborative capabilities of both youth organisations and public institutions. The project strives to facilitate more comprehensive and organised policy dialogues, fostering a space for productive exchange of ideas. Also, one of the distinctive aspects of EU4Youth phase IV lies in its commitment to inclusivity. The project seeks to include young people from remote or less privileged areas.

Throughout the duration of the project, a series of strategic initiatives will be undertaken in Moldova to achieve meaningful youth participation. These initiatives will encompass capacity-building activities, policy dialogue events, a grant scheme for youth NGOs, and information sessions.

EU4Youth programme, launched in 2017 and led by the European Commission's Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), aims at increasing the employability and active participation of young people in the six Eastern partner countries. The flagship programme seeks to increase investment in young people's skills, entrepreneurship and employability, and to encourage their active participation in both democratic life and the labour market. The programme tries to reach in particular disadvantaged youth, with specific attention given to gender equality and women's empowerment.



## The school in Mălăiești and the kindergarten in the village of Teiul, on the left bank of the Nistru, have been rehabilitated with the support of the EU

The children of Teiul kindergarten and the students from Mălăiești school now benefit from improved conditions in their institutions. With the support of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, a series of repair works have been carried out to ensure a quality educational process.

On 22 May 2023, during a working visit, Magdalena Mueller-Uri, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation in the Republic of Moldova, and Andrea Cuzyova, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative to the Republic of Moldova, met with representatives of both institutions, including children, students, and their parents.



In its 50 years of existence, the Teiul kindergarten had never undergone major repairs. In 2020, with the support of the EU and UNDP, renovations were done on the facade, the construction and repair of 5 summer pavilions, the installation of a rainwater drainage system, and the rehabilitation of gallery-type hall, including

interior stairs. In 2022, the renovation process continued with the furnishing of classrooms, the transformation of a shed into a sports hall, and the refurbishment of the festive hall. Now, 65 children can enjoy the new conditions created in the preschool institution.



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**Magdalena Mueller-Uri, Head of Cooperation  
at the EU Delegation in the Republic of  
Moldova, emphasized that**

*"social infrastructure projects within the framework of EU Confidence Building Measures Programme are like a call to action, urging us to continue our unwavering commitment to education. The European Union, together with UNDP, will continue to strive for excellence, to provide an educational experience that empowers our students to reach for the stars, and to build a brighter future for generations to come."*

*"The cafeteria was not functional and has not been repaired since the school was inaugurated in 1982. The stadium was not arranged, and children could not enjoy proper sports lessons and activities. Now everything looks different thanks to the support provided by the European Union and UNDP,"*

**stated Tatiana Poian, the director of  
Mălăiești school.**

The EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, contributes to the trust-building between residents on both banks of the Nistru river by involving them in joint development projects.



# The regional programme "European Union for Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence" presented the results of its activities in Moldova

The results of the first phase of the regional programme "European Union for Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence" were presented on 9 June 2023. The Programme was implemented in Făleşti and Strășeni rayons.

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

*"European Union will continue to support gender mainstreaming and combating gender stereotypes. Experience shows us that communities where women are actively involved in various activities are more developed".*



*"The three years of hard work promoting equal involvement of men and women in the family, combatting stereotypes and strengthening a society based on equal rights and elections have yielded results that will be included in the second phase of the programme,"*

**said Nigina Abaszada, UNFPA Moldova Resident Representative.**

**The programme's results were illustrated through figures on the positive impact of its activities:**

» 4 CSOs implemented grant projects, covering a variety of activities on combating gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality principles.



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» 2,900 people from 12 localities participated in social theatres activities that addressed stereotypes on women and men's roles in society.

» Groups of young men and women from the two districts implemented nine local initiatives to promote gender equality and combat stereotypes.

» 40 women with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities from the two districts attended a series of trainings, psychological counselling sessions and support groups, where they strengthened their knowledge about their rights, abilities, gender equality and gender-based violence. - Were created a platform and online course.

» 22 priests increased their knowledge about domestic violence and the importance of premarital counselling as a prevention measure.

» 39 girls and 1 boy received career guidance in ICT/STEM.

» Were created Fathers' Clubs - a platform that teaches fathers and future fathers how to get more involved in their children's educations and childcare.

» 87 members of multidisciplinary teams strengthened their knowledge and skills in their work with perpetrators.

The regional programme "European Union for Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence" is funded by the European Union and implemented by UN Women Moldova and UNFPA Moldova.

At the regional level, the programme was implemented in six countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.



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# Capacity building of Moldovan civil society organisations in the field of central and local public budgets

In the period July-August 2023, 15 civil society organisations, from the 5 development regions of the country, participating in the "Civil Society for European Integration" project, benefited from 4 thematic trainings related to the analysis of budget expenditures in various fields: economic, justice and how the Europeanization agenda is correlated with the strategic planning framework for the budget process. The central subjects on which the training focused were: the main concepts regarding civic participation in the budget process at the local and central level, the basic tools in budget monitoring, the role of advocacy activities, the definition, deciphering and monitoring of budget expenditures and how the correlation takes place the budgetary process with the Europeanization agenda. The participants had the opportunity to practice, together with the experts in the field, the implementation of the data analysis tools on the spending data from various fields and analysed practical case studies.

The aim of the trainings is to strengthen the capacities of CSOs to support and promote the alignment of budget priorities with the

Europeanisation agenda at the national and local level, but also to increase their involvement in decision-making processes.

In the coming months, CSOs involved in the project will continue to benefit from expert mentoring to monitor public budgets at the central and local level and will develop independent analyses of local and state budgets, including financial resources received from development partners, with a particular focus on local and regional infrastructure projects, social services, public services and other relevant projects, contributing to ensuring a transparent, efficient budget process that is aligned with the priorities of the association agenda.

The trainings took place within the "Civil Society for European Integration" Project, financed by the European Union and co-financed by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which is implemented by the Independent Think Tank Expert-Grup, as the lead partner, in partnership with the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), AO Institutum Virtutes Civilis (IVC) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES).



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# Information sessions on "Civil Society for European Integration" were held in Moldova during summer 2023

More than 70 representatives of CSOs from the cities of Comrat, Bălți, Stefan Vodă, Cimișlia, during July-August, participated in the information sessions "Civil Society for European Integration", facilitated by the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

The Civil Society organisations, which attended the event learned about the opportunities and advantages offered by joining the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum - the largest umbrella of non-commercial organisations in the Republic of Moldova, namely:

- » The opportunity to participate in the decision-making process;
- » Involvement in promoting reforms and monitoring the European integration process of the Republic of Moldova;
- » Fundraising opportunities through grant programs available for Platform members;
- » Creating partnerships and collaboration with other member organisations.



The purpose of the information sessions was to encourage organisations to join and get actively involved in the activities of the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership

Civil Society Forum - the largest umbrella structure of non-commercial organisations in our country.

During the sessions, the accession process of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union, was also discussed, the national experts in the field presented the stages of the accession process and the progress made by the Republic of Moldova in the implementation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the 9 recommendations of the Commission European Union in the context of the application of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union.

The information sessions took place within the "Civil Society for European Integration" Project, financed by the European Union and co-financed by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which is implemented by the Independent Think Tank Expert-Grup, as the lead partner, in partnership with the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), AO Institutum Virtutes Civilis (IVC) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES).



# Young people from Moldova learned how to fight disinformation and manipulation within a summer school organised with EU support

Between 5 – 8 July 2023, the Youth Media Center, with the support of the European Union, and under the coordination of Internews, organized a Media Camp, bringing together 30 young people from different localities of the Republic of Moldova. The Media Camp agenda included media literacy sessions and content creation workshops. Over the course of four days, young people learned what disinformation and misinformation are, what the best tools and methods for fact-checking information are, how to recognize manipulation through visuals, and how to effectively identify trolls on social networks.

*“At Media Camp, we had workshops on storytelling and investigative journalism. I enjoyed it because I learned to distinguish between haters and trolls. The information was taught with both quality and seriousness, but it was also presented with a touch of humour,”*

**said Adela Munteanu, one of the Media Camp 2023 participants.**

The youth attended interactive sessions where they gained knowledge about storytelling, scenario development, and the use of photography and videography to communicate engaging and relevant

messages. They also practiced filming and editing techniques and explored various formats like VOX and reportage for TikTok.

**Maxim Borș, participant at Media Camp 2023:**

*“My experience is unforgettable. I met a lot of new people and learned a lot of information, including how to create better content for social media. It is crucial for young people to attend these types of schools because we are consumers of media content and need to acquire the necessary skills to produce quality content that can reach the widest possible audience.”*

Marcela Zămosteanu, a RISE Moldova journalist, explained to young people how the media works and what investigative journalism means, while the SuperLike team developed participants’ critical thinking skills and the ability to identify fake news through the media literacy board game called Media Jungle.

At the end of the summer school, the youth showcased 14 engaging and humorous videos illustrating the impact of news on public perception, exploring the nuances of misinformation and propaganda, and highlighting effective techniques for verifying written and visual content.



*"We had the opportunity to create multimedia content, and with the mentors' guidance, we managed to create interesting video materials,"*

***concluded Daniel Rusu.***



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## With the support of the EU, Moldova is advancing in discussions about the transposition of European legislation on gender equality

Upon obtaining the status of a candidate country, the Republic of Moldova also assumed the obligation to harmonize the national legislation with that of the European Union.

The team of the "Partnerships for women's leadership and good governance" project, implemented by the "Friedrich Ebert"

Foundation in Moldova and the "Institutum Virtutes Civilis" PA, with the financial support of the European Union and the "Friedrich Ebert" Foundation, complied with the request of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova to analyze the EU Directives on gender equality and what is to be transposed into the national legislation.



On 13 June together with representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the conclusions of the analytical note "Mechanisms for the transposition of EU Directive 113 of 13 December 13 2004 on the application of the equal treatment principle between women and men regarding access to goods and services and the supply of goods and services in the legislation of the Republic of Moldova", were discussed.

The purpose of the event was to provide a dialogue platform for representatives of public authorities and non-commercial organisations, where they could submit recommendations and comments on the presented analytical note and discuss the steps necessary for the full transposition of the Directive, which will ensure gender equality in the economic field and will prevent gender-based discrimination in access to goods and services.

**Some recommendations are formulated in the framework of the research:**

- » Evaluation of the operational, logistical, human and financial resources capacities of the Council for Equality in order to cover the sector of equal opportunities and treatment in the field of access to goods and services (reception/ analysis of population complaints);
- » Training of prosecutors, judges, lawyers and representatives of the Council for Equality and relevant institutions in the context of the provisions of Directive 2004/113;
- » Working with the financial sector to ensure gender equality in access to capital for self-employed workers and SMEs.

The discussions were attended by deputies, representatives of the Council for Equality, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the Ministry of Justice, the State Chancellery, etc.

**During the debate, the country director of the "Friedrich Ebert" Foundation in Moldova, Ana Mihailov, mentioned that**

*"Constant cooperation between public authorities and civil society strengthens the efforts to align the legislation of the Republic of Moldova with the European*

*one and contributes to the acceleration of the European integration of Republic of Moldova. This robust dialogue strengthens the relationships between state institutions and organisations that promote the interests of citizens."*

**In turn, the president of the "Institutum Virtutes Civilis", Liliana Palihovici, stated that**

*"Institutum Virtutes Civilis", Liliana Palihovici, stated that "Considering our status as a candidate country, it is vital to harmonize our legislation with that of the European Union. The recommendations in this analytical note facilitate this process, including the capacities assessment of the Council for Equality and training the legal staff and other relevant institutions."*

**And Felicia Bechtoldt, State Secretary, emphasized:**

*"This Directive is of crucial importance as it prohibits any form of discrimination between men and women in terms of prices, conditions of sale, access to products or services, including in the insurance sectors, financial, real estate and health services. Our efforts must focus on promoting a mentality and behaviour that ensures equal rights and opportunities in access to goods and services."*



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The analytical note was developed within the project "Partnerships for women's leadership and good governance", carried out by the "Friedrich Ebert" Foundation in Moldova and

the "Institutum Virtutes Civilis" PA, with the financial support of the European Union in the Republic of Moldova and the "Friedrich Ebert" Foundation.

## Four organisations providing social services received new means of transport, purchased with the financial support of the European Union and the Soros Foundation Moldova

Four organisations providing social services were equipped with new means of transport, thanks to the financial support provided by the European Union and the Soros Foundation Moldova. Thus, mobile teams from Cimişlia, Chişinău, Edineţ, as well as the Center for Social (Re)Integration of Young People from Ialoveni, will be able to provide social services at home to people with disabilities in these regions.

The Mobile Team service consists of a speech therapist, physiotherapist, social worker, psychologist, who visit adults and children with disabilities at home to provide them with necessary assistance according to a personalized plan. This social service

cannot be provided without a means of transport. Alexei Buzu, Minister of Labor and Social Protection, who attended the event of donation of cars on 27 July in Cimişlia, welcomed the implementation of this project, which boosts the development of 40 social services in Moldova

*"It is an important project that inspires us in the social assistance reform, among other things. We are talking about the services that will be included in the basic services package, which we will try to extend in a uniform and qualitative way throughout Moldova,"*

**he said.**



*"The European Union supports civil society efforts in the process of implementing innovative solutions aimed at promoting the social inclusion of people with disabilities and people from socially vulnerable groups. At today's event we are transmitting four*

*transport units to four social services, which will bring social services closer to the beneficiaries and will help workers in the field to streamline and modernize their activities,"*

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



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*“The partnerships we have with civil society organisations help us overcome difficult situations in the social field. The streamlining of social services will improve the quality of life and will ensure the social inclusion of families of people with disabilities,”*

**said Tatiana Aramă, Vice-president of Cimişlia district.**

Social services in the four regions were developed by civil society organisations in partnership with public authorities, with the support of the project “Civil Society Organisations Act for Better Social Services”, financed by the European Union, co-financed and implemented by Soros Foundation Moldova in partnership with Keystone Moldova and AO Institutum Virtutes Civilis.



# A social service of protected housing for persons with disabilities has been launched in Cantemir

Four people with intellectual disabilities from Cantemir district who had been in residential institutions for a while will live in a house specially purchased for them in Baimaclia commune, where the social service of protected housing was created. This service is intended for adults with mild intellectual disabilities and a high degree of

personal autonomy. Through this service, people are integrated into the community, do household chores together, and can even find a job, being guided by a social worker and a service manager. This form of assistance to people with disabilities helps avoid isolation and develop the skills of independent living.



The social service of protected housing has been developed by the public association Aachen-Moldova Partnership and Cantemir District Council as part of the project “Civil Society Organisations Act for Better Social Services”, financed by the European Union, co-financed and implemented by Soros Foundation Moldova. The project resources were used to buy the house where the beneficiaries will live, which was equipped with the necessary furniture and appliances, and the Cantemir District Council will continue financing the work of the service.

*institutions. Here we have created good living conditions for them, so that they feel they are not people with disabilities, but ordinary members of the community,”*

**said Natalia Dediu, President of Aachen-Moldova Partnership, at the launch of the service.**



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## The Mobile Team from Bălți has recorded its first results in the rehabilitation of children with disabilities

Starting with September 2022, the Mobile Team social service has been working under the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Family Protection of Bălți municipality, providing free rehabilitation and counselling services to children with disabilities at their

homes. So far, the team has helped 29 beneficiaries. The families of some of them say that they notice the positive effects of this assistance in the development and rehabilitation of children.



The team, consisting of a speech therapist, a psychologist, a physiotherapist, and a social worker, works with each beneficiary according to a personalized plan, making weekly home visits.

*"The children I work with are diagnosed with cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, severe mental retardation, and other issues. They periodically need exercise to strengthen sounds, since they have difficulties in pronunciation, in the movement of facial muscles, and require help to develop communication and socialization skills,"*

**said the speech therapist Alina Ghilețchi.**

*"For us, the fact that specialists visit us at home is a big advantage, as it is very difficult for us to go to some center for treatment. I want to tell the specialists that they put in a great effort and we have results. Alexandra pronounces the consonants B, P, M much better, communicates more easily, and interacts much better with children and educators in kindergarten,"*

**aid Vasile Ciobanu, the father of a little girl who benefited from the services of the Mobile Team.**

The Mobile Team in Bălți municipality was created as part of a project implemented by the public association CREDIS in partnership with the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Family Protection (GDSAFP) of Bălți municipality, within the project “Civil Society Organisations Act for Better Social Services”, financed by the European Union, co-financed and implemented by Soros Foundation Moldova. The service will further be financed by the Bălți Municipality Council.

*“We have over 500 children with special needs in the municipality. The Bălți Municipality Council, due to lack of resources, could not create such a service until now, because it was and is, in fact, quite expensive. Thus, in the context of establishing partnerships with civil society and with the support of the European Union, the Mobile Team social service has finally been created in Balti municipality. The local public administration will continue supporting this service and will ensure its sustainability in the future, because it is very necessary. Every day we have beneficiaries who request to be admitted to this service,”*

**explained Veronica Munteanu, head of the Bălți GDSAFP.**





# INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENT

## EU supports the development of the mapping and cadastre systems in the Republic of Moldova

In this world where spatial data gains more importance, understanding and usability every day, the good establishment and operation of the cadastral and mapping systems in a country acquire a key role, serving as an engine for its economic development. In its role as policy maker for the cadastral sector, and both policy maker and implementer for the geodesy and mapping system, Agency for Land Relations and Cadastre (ALRC) of the Republic of Moldova hosted officials from State Geodetic Administration of the Republic of Croatia during June-July 2023, in the joint endeavour of the project partners to perform a comprehensive organisational, strategic and legal overview of the cadastre, mapping, real estate valuation, land management and soil protection systems in the Republic of Moldova, and to provide recommendations for ALRC's alignment to a European-level Mapping and Cadastre Authority (MCA). The missions occurred within the framework of the EU Twinning Project "Improving Spatial Data Services in the Republic of Moldova following EU standards", implemented by a consortium made of partner institutions from Croatia, the Netherlands and Poland.

This complex activity involved numerous discussions and meetings with all departments, services and units of ALRC, as well as with other institutions, the tasks and responsibilities of which cross-cut with ALRC's legal competences. Such institutions included: State Enterprise "Institute for Geodesy, Technical Survey and Cadastre INGEOCAD", Agency for Public Services/ Department for Cadastre, State Planning Institute for Land Management "IPOT". Given the fact that the core 'horizontal' land administration functions of land tenure, value, use-planning, and development are spread across multiple departments, agencies, state enterprises, and ministries, the short-term experts analysed the legal framework with a view to identify the interconnection and clear division among the institutions' tasks and duties, as well as the main challenges and obstacles that prevent a smooth operation of these sectors in the Republic of Moldova. As a result of the missions, appropriate recommendations were provided to improve the situation in the above sectors, following a holistic approach for all the actors involved.



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Since Republic of Moldova adopted a clear pathway for its integration into the European Union and being awarded the status of candidate country in June 2022, there is a clear demand for a consolidated approach to cadastral, land registry, and real-estate information management, as well as for more fortification and development of geodesy, mapping, geo-informatics and valuation sectors, in the ultimate goal to transform

ALRC into a modern and fully-functional MCA, in compliance with European norms and standards.

The Twinning project “Improving spatial data services in the Republic of Moldova following EU standards” is financed by the European Union and implemented by the Agency for Land Relations and Cadastre (ALRC) of the Republic of Moldova.



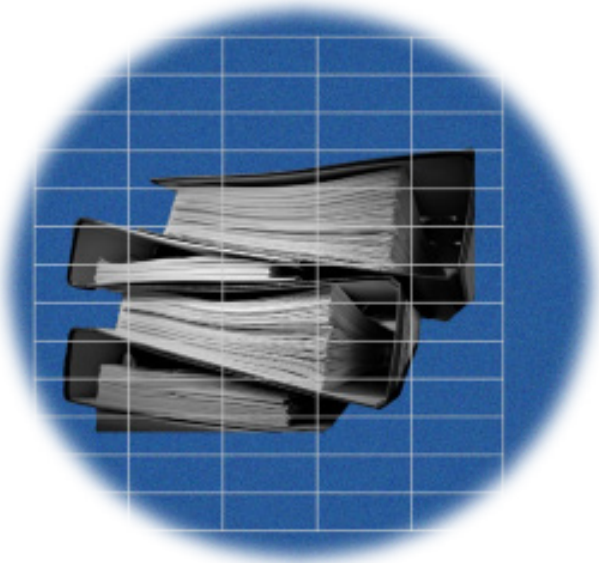
# New Law on Access to Information adopted with assistance of the EU-Moldova Association Project

Moldova presented its membership application to the EU on 3 March 2022, shortly after Russia began its invasion of Ukraine. The European Commission issued its opinion on Moldova's application on 17 June 2022 and the European Council granted Moldova the candidate country status on 23 June 2022. The European Council underlined that the future of Moldova and its citizens lies within the European Union and asked the European Commission to report on fulfilment of the nine conditions specified in its opinion. The conditions concern justice system reform, fighting corruption and organised crime, deligarchisation, reform capacities and public administration reform, public financial management including public procurement, enhancement of the role of civil society, and strengthening the protection of human rights. Commission reported on progress in spring 2023, additionally a report will be provided within the annual enlargement package, which will be published in October 2023. It is expected that, once the conditions are met, the European Council in December 2023 will authorise the beginning of negotiations, which Moldova hopes will start in 2024.

Enhancing the involvement of civil society in decision-making processes at all levels is one of key EU conditions to proceed in EU integration process and Moldova significantly contributed to its fulfilment with adopting of the new law regulating the access to public information.

The law adopted on 9 June 2023 by the Parliament of Moldova will require public institutions to publish more information proactively on their websites, shorten deadlines for processing public information requests and streamline the judicial review of decisions of public bodies relating to access to information of public interest. The law will enter into force in January 2024. The project "Support for structured policy dialogue, coordination of the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) and enhancement of the legal approximation process for the Republic of Moldova" (EU-Moldova Association Project) was the main partner assisting the Ministry of Justice in the process of preparation of the new legislative framework in this area at all stages of the legislative process.

The current law on access to information, adopted in 2000, does not meet international standards and best practices regarding the transparency of public authorities. In particular, as gap analysis provided by the EU-Moldova Association Project demonstrated, this law fails to promote proactive transparency and ensure effective enforcement of the constitutional right to information, including the mechanism for sanctioning violations of this right. Further, it does not secure monitoring of administrative and judicial practice, e.g. collection of data on the number of requests for public information, as well as inspections and regular checks on how public bodies observe their transparency obligations.



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The new legislation prepared with extensive support of the EU-Moldova Association Project, addresses most of the shortcomings. It broadens the catalogue of entities subject to transparency requirements. It contains a broader definition of public information, particularly reflecting the concept of transparency enshrined by the Trømso Convention, regulating this area at the level of international law. Further, it contains a non-discriminatory definition of entities enjoying the right of access to information. It should be noted that the current Law on Access to Information, despite the constitutional guarantee of universal right of access to information of public interest, restricts this right only to the residents of Moldova. Legal persons, as well as foreigners who are not residents of Moldova, are not included among beneficiaries of the right to information.

**It is important to underline that the new law includes a wide range of information to be disclosed proactively on the websites of public institutions. This will include, e.g. information on:**

- » data on structure and budget of the authority, the number of employees/members, data on its objectives and functions, contact data;
- » data on planning and execution of budgets by the public authority;
- » data on planned public procurements, on completed public procurements, monitoring reports on public procurement contracts, other relevant information;
- » on official visits and business trips abroad of public authority personnel, including the cost and source of financing the expenses;
- » the data regarding the employment: the list of competitions for the existing vacant positions, the contact details of

the person responsible for organizing the competitions, the qualification requirements for the candidates for the vacant positions, the competition participation form, the list of documents to be submitted and the deadline - limit for submitting them, the list of people admitted to the competition, as well as the list of people who won the competition.

Legitimate restrictions in access to information are contained in a narrow and specific list. Their application will require public bodies to conduct so-called public interest test, i.e. demonstrating that the need to restrict the access to information clearly prevails over public interest in providing access to it. The test is performed through a simplified procedure for review of decisions of public institutions relating to access to information. Providing direct access to the court combined with special measures simplifying and speeding up the court procedure should enhance the effectiveness of the judicial review in cases relating to access to information.

Finally, the new law contains a detailed list of violations of the right to information subject to legal liability combined with new regime of legal liability, according to which sanctions will be imposed by the court while reviewing complaints against decisions and omissions of public institutions regarding access to information. Currently, the effectiveness of enforcement suffers from the lack of detailed list of violations of the right to information that is subject to sanctions and ineffective mechanism for imposing sanctions, relying on the Contravention Code and Criminal Code provisions. According to the Administrative Offenses Code, deliberate violation of the legal provisions regarding the access to information shall be sanctioned with a fine applied to the person in charge.

However, this very general provision is rarely used in practice.

According to the Article 180 of the Criminal Code, intentional violation by responsible official of the right to information that caused considerable damage to the rights and interests protected by law of the person who requested information, shall be penalised with a fine, with (or without) deprivation of the right to occupy certain positions or to exercise certain activities for a period of up to 3 years. However, this provision of the Criminal Code remains a dead letter. According to data obtained by the Ministry of Justice, no cases based on Article 180 of the Criminal Code have been ever recorded.

Considering these improvements, overall assessment of the new Law on Access to Information of Public Interest is positive. It is clear that it marks a significant step forward, compared to the current legislative framework. It remains in line with the Trømso Convention and other international standards in this field.

The EU-Moldova Association Project will continue its assistance by providing support to the implementation of the new legislative framework. This will include the preparation of practical commentary to the law, as well as trainings to the public authorities and judges on the application of the new law.

The EU-funded project “Support for structured policy dialogue, coordination of the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) and enhancement of the legal approximation process for the Republic of Moldova” aims at increasing the capacities of the Moldova Government and other key national institutions in implementing the EU-Moldova Association Agreement. After Moldova’s receipt of EU Candidacy Status, the Project is ready to offer advanced assistance for strengthening the Moldovan administration to be ready for the next steps in EU integration process.



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# Roundtable with Moldovan authorities on the next steps for Republic of Moldova in EU accession process

On 12 June 2023, the EU-funded project “Support for structured policy dialogue, coordination of the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) and enhancement of the legal approximation process for the Republic of Moldova” in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European integration organised a roundtable in the Governmental complex in Holercani, for Heads and Secretaries of working groups responsible for Political criteria, Economic criteria and 33 future EU accession negotiation chapters. These working groups are set up by the Government Decision 868 on the approval of the mechanism for coordination, organisation, and preparation of the EU accession process, adopted on 14 December 2022.

The main topic presented was next steps for the Republic of Moldova in EU accession process, with special focus on roles and tasks of working groups during the process. The event was closely supported not only by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, but also by the State Chancellery/Centre for legal approximation and EU Delegation in Moldova. Over 90 participants from different state institutions participated in this event together with representatives from the EU Delegation in Moldova and Project experts.

The roundtable focused in the first part on the current situation of EU accession process of Moldova, the next steps, and documents in EU accession process. In the second part, the roundtable focused on the role of WGs, planning of EU accession process and reporting to the EU.

After the welcoming remarks and description of the current situation of Republic of Moldova delivered by the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European

Integration, State Secretary Ms. Stela Leuca and Head of EU Division, Mr. Eugen Caras, the representative of the EU Delegation Ms. Irina Cruceru and the Team Leader of the Project Mr. Primož Vehar provided information regarding the state of affairs of EU accession process of Moldova and prospects in the near future for moving to the next stage of the process, namely opening of accession negotiations. A lively discussion followed the presentations related to the EU accession negotiation process and the next steps on Moldova’s EU accession path.

In the second part of the roundtable moderated by Mr. Eugen Caras, Project experts, Mr. Primož Vehar, from Slovenia, and Mr. Vladimir Međak, from Serbia, presented steps in the EU accession negotiation process and the overall process of EU accession negotiation based on their own experience. Mr. Međak led a further description of the key steps in EU accession negotiations, the dynamics of the negotiations and the major lessons learned from the ongoing EU accession negotiations with Montenegro and Serbia which are applicable for Moldova. Additionally, the expert explained the various documents which are used in the negotiations (both EU’s and Moldova’s documents) and the impact of the newly adopted (2020) EU methodology for accession negotiations. Other topics included the Negotiation framework, General negotiation position of a negotiating country, screening process, screening reports, negotiation benchmarks (opening, interim and closing benchmarks). Lastly, Mr. Međak elaborated on national negotiation positions, what the “Fundamentals first” approach means for Moldova together with the six negotiation clusters and the way Moldova should prioritise its reforms and sequencing its next steps.

Mr. Vehar emphasized the importance of legal approximation which starts with proper planning, continues with demanding legal transposition of EU legal acts into Moldovan legal system and finally the proper implementation and enforcement is needed. "Sine qua non" for legal approximation will be to prepare and adopt the National Program for the Adoption of the EU Acquis (NPAA) as its key strategic planning document defining who does what and when regarding legal approximation and what consequences on finances and on human resources implementation of new legal acts might have. Mr. Vehar and Mr. Međak elaborated on features and multipurpose character of

the NPAA during the accession negotiations, with special focus on experiences of Slovenia and Serbia with this specific planning document.

Both experts explained their countries experience and roles the WGs had and tasks these WGs performed in the planning of EU accession process and in running the process, but also how the planning of EU accession process and reporting to the EU functioned in their respective countries during the process.

The round table finalised with questions and answers session which continued during the final informal part of the round table.



The EU-funded project "Support for structured policy dialogue, coordination of the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) and enhancement of the legal approximation process for the Republic of Moldova" aims at increasing the capacities of the Moldova Government and other key

national institutions in implementing the EU-Moldova Association Agreement. After Moldova's receipt of EU Candidacy Status, the Project is ready to offer advanced assistance for strengthening the Moldovan administration to be ready for the next steps in EU integration process.

# New training techniques taught by the trainers of the Lawyers Training Centre

In the period of June 19-23, 2023, in the premises of the Lawyers Training Centre, the training of 34 trainers of the Centre was provided by the international expert Mark Segal. The trainings were organized within the Project "Increasing transparency, accountability and access to the judicial system" (ETAAJS), implemented by the Central Agency for Project Management in Lithuania and Expertise France, financed by the European Union.



The trainings were conducted on the basis of the Guide for the training of lawyers: the training for trainers manual, developed within the ETAAJS Project by the international expert Mark Segal.

During the training which lasted 5 days, the trainers of the Lawyer Training Centre acquired knowledge and skills on: how to use the learning outcomes in an effective way to improve the training; make presentations and be interactive with the audience; how to use and interpret body language. The practical part of the course represented a challenge for the trainers, who were invited to demonstrate the level of understanding and transposition in their subsequent



practice of the knowledge and skills obtained during the training course. At the end of each practical test, the performance of the participants was evaluated by the trainer Mark Segal. The evaluation included as well individual suggestions for improvement.

According to the trainers of the Lawyers Training Centre, this training course provided them with valuable knowledge and skills, which when applied, will contribute to the efficiency of the continuous training activities of lawyers and, respectively, to the development of the lawyer profession in the Republic of Moldova.



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## Partially state-funded guaranteed legal aid mechanism to be improved with EU support

On 22 June 2023 debates on a draft normative act proposing a more comprehensive and detailed regulation of the partially state-financed guaranteed legal aid mechanism were held. The event took place within the Project "Increasing transparency, accountability and access to the judicial system" (ETAAJS), implemented by the Central Agency for Project Management in Lithuania and Expertise France, with the financial support of the European Union. Representatives of the National Council for State-Guaranteed Legal Assistance, the Ministry of Justice and the Union of Lawyers from Moldova participated in the event.

The process of drafting the normative act was preceded by a deep and comprehensive analysis of the mechanism of partial state-financed legal aid system. The evaluation

was carried out by ETAAJS's international expert, Agnie Limante, who put forward a set of recommendations based on the best practices of other countries in setting up and operating a similar partial financed mechanism. The draft of the normative act was elaborated by the national expert of ETAAJS project, Natalia Roşca, who aimed the implementation of the recommendations and the creation of an efficient mechanism for partial financed legal aid guaranteed by the state. The key provisions of the draft normative act are as follows: a new methodology for calculating incomes for the purpose of granting partially state-funded legal aid, the reconsideration of the categories of persons/cases eligible for partially funded legal aid and the establishment of additional cases of refusal of legal aid.



The participants of the event welcomed the initiative, stating that it is based on the most modern international practices and will bring more clarity and predictability to the forecasting of expenses for state-guaranteed legal aid, will facilitate the process of providing state-guaranteed legal aid.

The draft normative act and the accompanying file were sent to the Ministry of Justice and the National Council for State-Guaranteed Legal Assistance, with a view to its further promotion.



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# Anticorruption Donors' Network, regular meeting held with the support of the EU High Level Advisers' Mission

The 7th regular Anticorruption Donors' Network meeting took place on 23 June, organised with the support of the EU High Level Advisers' (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.

In light of Moldova's commitment to fulfil the nine recommendations of the European Commission in the context of Moldova's EU membership application and importance of concerted initiatives aimed at strengthening

institutional capacity of national anti-corruption agencies and improving further the quality of investigations and efficiency of the prosecution leading to convictions, it was agreed to approve joint talking points to call on the international donors' community as well as the key national beneficiary institutions to focus on the main priority areas for action, like consensus on the future anticorruption institutional framework, international cooperation, integrity in public and private sectors, inter-institutional cooperation, cooperation with civil society and grassroots organisations etc.



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, to avoid overlapping.

# Management of the Ministry of Finance and its subordinate institutions learned how to communicate strategically about Public Finance Management issues

On 23 June, Civil Servants' Day, about 60 specialists of the Ministry of Finance and its subordinate institutions – Customs Service, State Tax Service, Public Procurement Agency, Financial Inspection – including top- and mid-management, learned how to communicate strategically on the topics of Public Finance Management – an activity organised jointly with the EU High Level Advisers' Mission.

In view of successful implementation of the Public Finance Management Strategy

2023 – 2030, there is need for efficient communication processes, which would ensure a constant exchange of information between the public authority, citizens and business environment. The PFM Strategy includes all stages of the budget cycle for which the Government is responsible, aiming to improve the fiscal framework, strengthening the planning, execution and reporting process, increasing revenue collection, strengthening the public procurement system and improving internal control.



a The EU HLA on Customs & Tax Policy, Rosario De Blasio, in the opening of the event emphasized the importance of strategic communication for the Ministry of

Finance, as an essential tool to respond to complex challenges faced by the institution in promoting public policies.

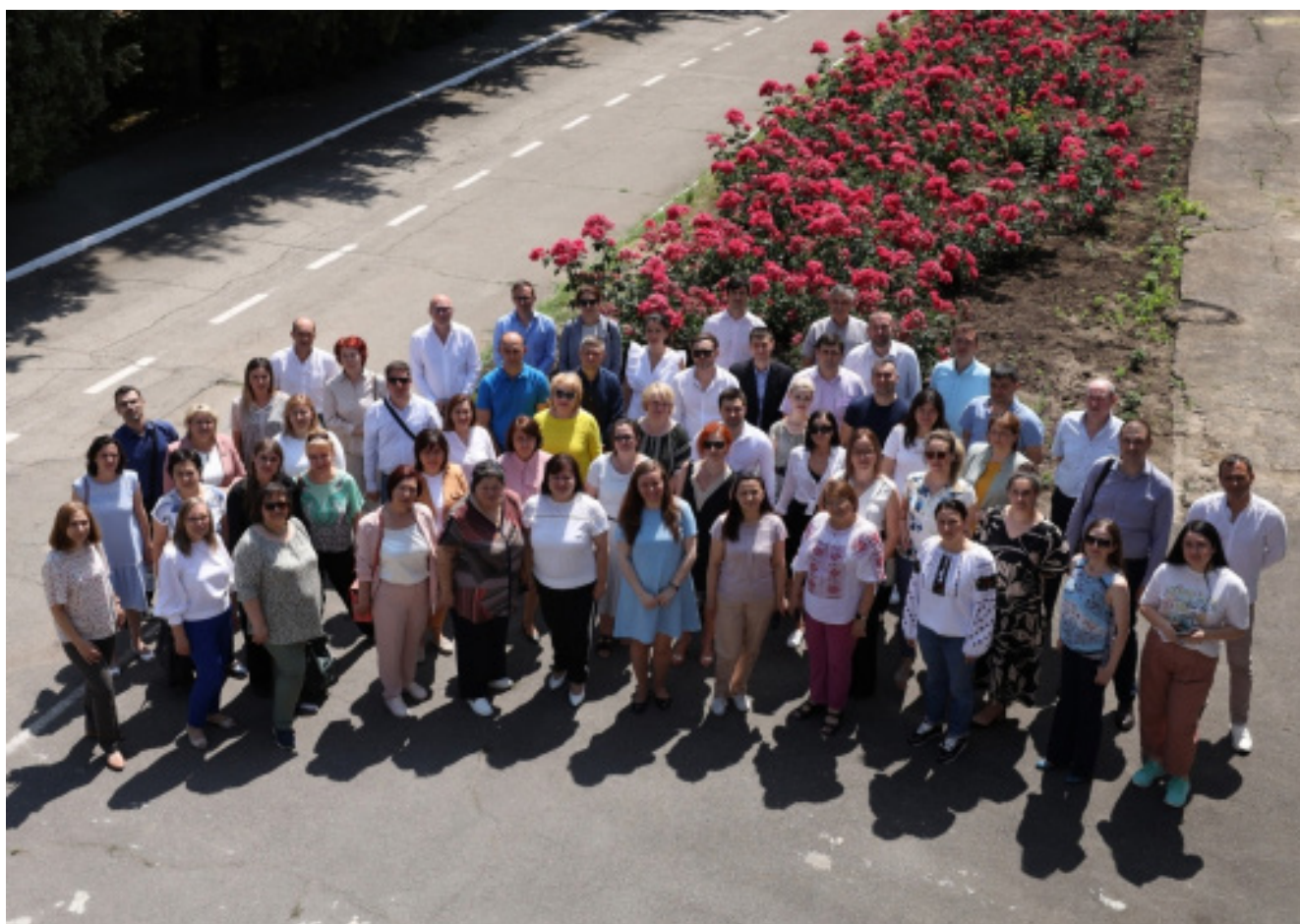


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*“Appropriate and transparent communication can help further raise awareness on the importance of the PFM strategy and reinforce buy-in from key holders and the population at large. It allows citizens to monitor state activities and engage in dialogue with public institutions in the relevant areas and to influence policy outcomes,”*

**stated the EU HLA.**

The general objective of the Strategy is to increase the efficiency, performance and transparency of public finance – as one of the foremost priorities of the Moldovan Government in the EU accession process.



# Better public services for citizens – the aim of the Law on voluntary amalgamation, adopted in final reading

The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted in the second and final reading the draft law on voluntary amalgamation – an important step towards raising the efficiency of local government in providing better services to citizens. During the drafting process, best European examples

of amalgamation which proved to be efficient over the past decades, were taken into account.

Amalgamation plays a vital role in creating more efficient local public services management centres which, in their turn, lead to higher living standards for its inhabitants.



Amalgamation contributes to a more efficient budget planning, saving and execution; better organisation, planning and implementation of public procurement centered on the needs of the citizens; integration of necessary public services – like water sanitation, electricity, gasification and others.

Amalgamation has several other advantages, among which access to two major types of grants: for investments in infrastructure

and public services and for supporting the general expenses of local budgets.

Besides, the amalgamated local government units will receive a preferential regime in all investment programs implemented by the government or international donors.

The decision regarding amalgamation is taken by all local councils involved. As a precondition, it is necessary to have a geographical continuum of local communities which want to merge, the most



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remote village of which being within 25-30 km from the centre of the new unit.

The centre of the new amalgamated local government unit will be the unit with higher population and/or higher fiscal capacity and/or providing better and extended public services. The adoption of the law on voluntary amalgamation is the first significant step in implementing the new Strategy on Public Administration Reform 2023-2030, approved by the Government in March 2023.

Both PAR Strategy and the draft law on voluntary amalgamation were developed by the State Chancellery with the technical support of EU HLA Mission, USAID/IREX Comunitatea Mea, UNDP and SDC/SKAT Mă Implic, preceded by more than one year of debates, negotiations and consultations with the citizens, civil society, and major stakeholders, including CALM. With the same technical support, the work on developing the detailed methodology on voluntary amalgamation, will start soon.



## Workshop for over 140 finance specialists, organised with EU support

On 15 August, about 140 specialists of the Ministry of Finance and its subordinate institutions – Customs Service, State Tax Service, Financial Inspection, Public Procurement Agency, Center of Information Technologies in Finance, State Chamber for Marking Supervision, External Assistance Program Management Office, gathered for the workshop “Public Finance – Driver of the European Integration” an activity organised with the support of the EU High Level Advisers’ (HLA) Mission.

The participants, including top and middle-management of the institutions, had the opportunity to review the state of play in Moldova’s EU integration process, with a special emphasis on those eight chapters of the EU acquis in which the Ministry of Finance has a leading role: Free movement of capital; Public procurement; Financial services; Economic and monetary policy; Taxation; Customs Union; Financial control; Financial and budgetary provisions.



Also, the participants had the chance to test their knowledge about the process of the country’s European integration, by engaging in a dynamic quiz with technical questions and various curious facts related to each chapter of the EU Acquis.

**Opening the event, the Finance Minister Veronica Sireteanu, stated:**

*“Accession to the EU is associated with many changes, some of them long-awaited, others painful, some courageous, and others necessary. The Ministry of Finance has a very important role in this process, ensuring,*

*at the same time, the stability and integrity of the country’s financial system in close correlation with the objectives of the Public Finance Management Strategy.”*

**The EU HLA on Customs and Tax Policy, Rosario De Blasio, underlined: “**

*“In March 2023, Moldova underwent the second assessment, building on knowledge and experience gained from the longstanding close cooperation with the European Union.*

*The results of this assessment are crucial for Moldova to further pursue the European integration path. For this, significant efforts have to be joined with strong motivation, sometimes, going beyond our own capacities,”*

**concluded the EU HLA.**

According to the event organisers, such opportunities are vital for keeping the knowledge of all those directly involved in paving the way towards EU accession fresh and up-to-date and continuously consolidating their skills, thus speeding up reforms' implementation



# The National Bureau of Statistics launches the PILOT census in 11 localities across the country, with the support of the European Union and UNFPA

Starting from August 28, 2023, the PILOT Census of the population and housing (CPH) will be conducted in 11 localities in the Republic of Moldova. For the first time, the census will be carried out using tablets, applying modern methods of data collection. The announcement was made by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) during a press conference on August 25, 2023.

The Pilot Census will be conducted in the period August 28 - October 10, 2023, and represents an important stage in the preparation process for the national population and housing census planned for the year 2024, which will be conducted

with the financial and technical support of the European Union and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The subjects of the census are: i) INDIVIDUALS with usual residence in the Republic of Moldova, including those residing abroad for up to 12 months (for work, studies, and other purposes); ii) RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS (inhabited or uninhabited) or those with other uses if they contain at least one place of residence, and iii) PLACES OF RESIDENCE located in any building, regardless of whether they are inhabited or not on the reference date of the pilot census (August 28, 2023).



The pilot census will include questions from the census questionnaires (made public) that pertain to demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the population, households, and their places of residence. In total, there will be 3 questionnaires: about the individual, the building and place of residence, and the communal living space.

To carry out the pilot census, especially data collection in the field, NBS has employed around 160 enumerators, supervisors, and temporary census staff. Enumerators will wear hats and shirts with census logos, carry identification badges, bags, and tablets with the census logo to register the

responses provided by individuals in census questionnaires.

Additionally, during the event, the project "Support to the National Bureau of Statistics in Conducting the Census of Population and Housing 2024" was launched. This project is funded by the European Union and co-funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The project commenced its activities in June 2023 and has a duration of 30 months. The overall objective of the project is to enhance the institutional capacity of NBS in preparing and conducting the 2024 census.



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The total value of the project is 2.075 million EUR, of which 2 million EUR represent the contribution of the European Union, and 75 thousand EUR come from UNFPA's contribution.

*"Accurate information about the population and housing is essential for policy development in areas such as health, education, social protection, and local public administration reform. Additionally, they are important for the proper allocation of budgetary funds. The European Union supports the census process by providing technical assistance and equipment that will contribute to the digitisation of data collection and processing, in line with European and international standards",*

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

The data provided in the census by enumerated individuals will be strictly confidential and protected in accordance with Law No. 231/2022 on the Census of Population and Housing and Law No. 93/2017 on Official Statistics. They will be used solely for statistical purposes to develop and disseminate census results, without the possibility of identifying personal data.

According to Law No. 231/2022 on the Census of Population and Housing, Article 7 (2) d), participation in the census is mandatory for individuals.

The last census of population and housing took place in the Republic of Moldova in the year 2014.

# The team of the EU-funded “Project Preparation Facility” contributes to the improvement of the Moldovan Government Securities market

The development of the Moldovan government securities market was the subject of a meeting held at the National Bank of Moldova in July 2023, with the participation of representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the EU-funded technical assistance project “Project Preparation Facility” (PPF Project).

During the meeting, PPF Project expert Constantinos Kyriakopoulos presented methods to enhance the Moldovan government securities market architecture, aiming to facilitate easier access for both international and domestic investors. Various options and mechanisms for government securities placement were explored, including the possibility of issuing securities denominated in both domestic and foreign currencies. It was highlighted that given the current conditions, characterized by a high level of liquidity and foreign currency supply in the domestic market, issuing G-Sec in foreign currency could potentially exert additional pressure on financial stability. As an alternative, the option of issuing bonds in Moldovan lei on international markets was also under consideration.

Another topic of discussion was the possibility of establishing connections between the Single Central Depository (SCD) and international central depositories, such as Euroclear and Clearstream, as well as bilateral connections with national depositories in other countries.

Both Euroclear and Clearstream allow access to the most developed capital markets in the world, at the same time, connections with these institutions depend largely on the volume and attractiveness of financial instruments of the Republic of Moldova.

The architecture of the primary and secondary government securities market was also analysed, including the role of primary dealers, G-Sec trading platforms and the Single Central Depository. It was noted that as of 2023, G-Sec with a maturity of more than one year could be admitted to trading on the stock exchange, i.e., transactions in government securities may be carried out through both primary dealer banks and non-bank brokers. In this context, the PPF Project experts proposed to examine the possibility of participation of non-bank brokers in auctions of G-Sec alongside primary dealers.

NBM Governor Octavian Armaşu, who attended the meeting, commended the initiative of the Ministry of Finance and of the PPF project experts. Mr. Armaşu highlighted the NBM's efforts to stabilise the domestic financial market and establish a solid technical infrastructure, which are crucial for attracting foreign investors. Governor Armaşu proposed forming a Task Force Team comprising relevant institution representatives to oversee and execute this ambitious project.



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# Strengthening Moldova's fight against corruption and money laundering: a transformative training initiative

In a significant stride toward bolstering the capacity of Moldovan anti-corruption institutions to combat corruption and money laundering, the GIZ's project "Strengthening the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms in the Republic of Moldova," co-funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), in collaboration with the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), initiated a comprehensive training program aimed at equipping officials and stakeholders with cutting-

edge tools, knowledge, and skills necessary to address the multifaceted challenges of corruption and money laundering. This training took place from July 3rd to July 7th, 2023. The participants of this educational event included prosecutors, investigative judges, and representatives from key anti-corruption agencies such as the National Anti-Corruption Centre, Criminal Assets Recovery Agency, Service for Preventing and Combating Money Laundering, and National Integrity Authority.



The primary objective of the course was to enhance the participants' capabilities in applying advanced investigative techniques. They were equipped with the skills to identify witnesses and evidence crucial for prosecuting money laundering and

corruption cases, while also focusing on asset recovery strategies.

Corruption and money laundering pose significant threats to a country's development, democracy, and security. Recognizing the symbiotic relationship



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between these two issues, international organisations like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) have emphasized the role of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) in addressing these crimes. In particular, FATF Recommendation 30 mandates that designated law enforcement authorities take proactive measures to investigate money laundering in cases involving major proceeds-generating offenses.

ICAR, as part of the Basel Institute on Governance, played a pivotal role in delivering this training program. Facilitated by ICAR senior advisers and specialists and in collaboration with the National Institute of Justice of Moldova, the five-day workshop held in Chisinau featured interactive lectures, mini-workshops, and a simulated corruption investigation. The comprehensive training covered topics ranging from money laundering essentials to mutual legal assistance and asset recovery mechanisms.

The simulated investigation challenged participants to conduct a complex financial and asset tracing inquiry, mirroring real-world scenarios. Each group deeply analysed a fictitious case, identified corruption and money laundering offenses, matched facts to elements, and collected evidence to support their case. Moreover, they peaked their skills in tracing illicit assets, a crucial step in obtaining forfeiture and confiscation orders.

This training program showcased a series of insightful presentations, including an overview of money laundering, a breakdown of the elements of the crime under Moldovan legislation, financial analysis using Excel, and financial investigative approaches. Additionally, participants delved into mutual legal assistance and explored the challenges in investigating and prosecuting money laundering in Moldova, presented by Mr. Octavian Iachimovschi, Deputy Chief Prosecutor of the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office.



By fostering collaboration, enhancing knowledge, and equipping participants with practical skills, this initiative is a significant step forward in Moldova's fight against corruption and money laundering.

It empowers those on the frontlines to effectively address these grave threats to the nation's well-being, bolstering the rule of law and fostering integrity within its borders.



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# Empowering local civil society organisations: Workshop on Transparency and Accountability

On July 5, 2023, the workshop "Monitoring Transparency and Accountability of Decision-Making Processes in the Republic of Moldova" was organized in Chişinău.

This gathering drew in representatives from 48 local Civil Society Organisations (CSO) across Moldova's regions and high-level delegates from GIZ headquarters.



The event's primary objective was to empower local CSOs to strengthen their watchdog role. Through a combination of plenary sessions and group work, participants acquired the skills necessary to effectively fulfil this role. They gained expertise in managing multi-stakeholder consultations and engagement, equipping them with the tools required to actively influence decision-making processes and oversight mechanisms within their communities or regions. Additionally, participants received valuable insights into the area of holding institutions accountable, ensuring transparency, and safeguarding the interests of the public in policy formulation and implementation. The workshop's agenda

revolved around two critical Assessment Reports:

**Needs Assessment Report:** This report identified areas needing attention, including transparent budget implementation, public procurement monitoring, decision-making transparency, integrity, and good governance.

**Best Practices Report:** Attendees learned from international and national best practices to support watchdog initiatives.

Corruption, acknowledged as a universal threat, distorts markets, hampers economic growth, deters foreign investment, and erodes trust in government officials. The workshop was a significant step towards addressing this menace.



The event was part of the "Strengthening the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms in the Republic of Moldova (ACT)" Project, which strives to raise awareness about the damaging effects of corruption and promote strategies to combat it. The European Union and German Cooperation through GIZ provided essential support by equipping civil society organisations with the necessary tools for transparency and accountability in decision-making processes.

Moldova's Government shares this commitment to combat corruption, aligning with the ACT Project's broader

objective. This initiative aims to increase citizen involvement in anti-corruption efforts, particularly at the local level. It also strengthens measures against corruption in high-risk sectors like education, healthcare, and agri-food.

Furthermore, this endeavour aligns with the European Commission's recommendations outlined in its Opinion on Moldova's EU accession application. The fight against corruption and enhanced civil society involvement in decision-making processes are key commitments that bring Moldova closer to the European community.



## ECONOMY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

### The Moldovan Vocational Educational and Training system improved with the Team Europe support

The “EU4Moldova: Local Communities” programme, through its objectives and actions, supports the implementation of National Strategy Education 2030 with the objective related to the improvement of vocational training and education. Within the mentioned programme, two occupational standards have been developed and approved for the most requested qualifications in the Republic of Moldova: tiler and car locksmith.

In this regard, the Moldovan Vocational Educational and Training (VET) system will ensure that future graduates are well

prepared to meet the requirements of employers and professionally able to fulfil the tasks and responsibilities associated with the job, thus, supporting the economic sector to increase productivity.

The action above represents a commitment to positively contributing to the Moldovan VET system by consolidating and aligning it with national labour market requirements and EU standards, objectives, and actions implemented by Austrian Development Agency (ADA), within EU4Moldova: Local Communities programme.



Moreover, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova, the other three qualification standards will be developed during the programme lifetime by a working group formed by representatives of the state institutions and private sectors.

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 Poland being implemented by the German Development Cooperation through GIZ, Austrian Development Agency (ADA), and Solidarity Fund PL in Moldova (SFPL).





## Business Consulting Centre opened in Cărpineni with the financial support of the European Union

The Cărpineni Business Consulting Centre was launched on 24 July within the "Multi-dimensional partnership for inclusive sustainable economic development in the commune of Cărpineni" project. The project is funded by the European Union through the "Mayors for Economic Growth" programme and is implemented by the Cărpineni

Town Hall and Cutezătorul not-for-profit organization.

The Business Consulting Centre in Cărpineni will provide advisory services for local and regional businesses in the areas of accounting, human resources, financing programmes, labour law, promotion and others.



*"Sustainable economic development of a country means investing in all its regions, including rural areas. For this reason, I supported the creation of the Business Consulting Centre in the commune of Cărpineni. The Centre will certainly support the economic development of the commune by providing advice and training to local*

*entrepreneurs, which will contribute to the creation of jobs and many other opportunities for the local youth, who will be able to work here, at home",*

**Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, present at the inauguration event of the Centre, stated.**

*"The mission of the Cărpineni Business Consulting Centre is to provide all the necessary support to the rural business environment. In the countryside, limited access to various legal and labour law information has a direct impact on business. We wanted to concentrate as many information and support services for entrepreneurs as possible in a single centre, where people would benefit from advice and the opportunity to apply for various funding programmes",*

**Ion Cărpineanu, Mayor of Cărpineni, said.**

The business consulting centre will provide the local entrepreneurs with much-needed services, which are not readily available in the rural areas.

This will contribute to the development of the business environment in the region by building capacities of existing entrepreneurs. The Centre's services will also stimulate new start-ups by supporting and facilitating access to financial resources, investors, service providers and partners.

Thanks to EU assistance, important results have been achieved for the community's economic development through this project. Thus, 35 entrepreneurs have been trained to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills, over 100 employees of companies in the region have been trained on enhancing entrepreneurial culture, and over 30 young people have attended training courses and activities that stimulate the development of entrepreneurial spirit. At the same time, a local brand and an entrepreneurial cluster were created with the aim of promoting local products and attracting investment.



The main objective of the EU "Multi-dimensional partnership for inclusive sustainable economic development in the commune of Cărpineni" project is to create an inclusive framework for sustainable

economic development of Cărpineni commune based on three pillars: trained human resources, infrastructure and partnership.



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The "Multi-dimensional partnership for inclusive sustainable economic development in the commune of Cărpineni" is funded by the European Union through the "Mayors for Economic Growth" programme and is implemented by Cărpineni Town Hall

and Cutezătorul not-for-profit organization. The total value of the project is 277.778,00 euro, of which 239.036 ,00 euro is the European Union contribution. The project is implemented during 2022 and 2023.



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# A modern Tourist Information Center was inaugurated in Ungheni with the financial support of the European Union

Ungheni Tourist Information Center was inaugurated on 28 August 2023, on the occasion of Ungheni City Days. It is located in the center of the municipality, in "Grigore Vieru" Square, having been built according to the best practices in the field, combining a modern infrastructure with innovative elements. Within the Center, visitors can get acquainted with attractive tourist locations in Ungheni district and the tourist routes in the region. The Center also aims to promote

tourism potential of the district, including products manufactured in Ungheni. Another innovation of the Center is cross-border tourism, subsequently tourists will be able to get acquainted with potential tourist attractions that are located across the border, in the immediate vicinity of Ungheni region. All these will ultimately contribute to the sustainable economic growth of Ungheni region.



*"Today, in Ungheni, through the inauguration of the Tourist Information Center, we have laid the cornerstone of tourism industry in the region. Thanks to the Center, tourists from the country and abroad will have the opportunity to discover the most interesting places in the Ungheni region, and discover unique tourist routes and get acquainted with local crafts and culture – all these will be offered within*

*the Center, at a level comparable to European countries. By promoting tourism, revenues will be generated and easily accessible jobs will be created, as well as markets for local services and products."*

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



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The center is equipped with modern equipment, so that tourists who visit Ungheni, benefit from quality services. From the beginning, the tourist center was also envisaged as an exhibition center, where exhibitions and master classes of manufacturers and craftsmen from the region will be organized. A digital version of Ungheni Tourist Information Center is under development and will soon be made available to tourists and visitors, thus facilitating the access of tourist offers in the region. Also, with the support of the European Union an integrated system for organizing events was procured , including a professional mobile stage and led screen, which allows organizing outdoor events in accordance with international standards.

*"It is a beautiful tradition, in the last days of august, when our city puts on holiday clothes, to organize such events, celebrate local traditions and crafts together, and support local producers. The inauguration of Ungheni Tourist Information Center on the occasion of the city days is not accidental, since we*

*wanted to make use of the participation of our partners and friends from the twin cities in order to share with them this important event, which is meant to contribute to creating a favourable environment for promoting traditional local products, attracting investors and promoting Ungheni region as a special cultural, economic and tourist destination. They are today the first visitors of the Center and certainly the promoters of tourism abroad."*

**mentioned Alexander Ambros, Mayor of Ungheni.**

In the context of Ungheni Days, with the support of the European Union, a number of other cultural and tourist activities were organized. Among them are the second edition of the "Fair of craftsmen and local traditional products", attended by over 80 local producers and craftsmen from Ungheni region and various localities from 14 districts of the Republic of Moldova, as well as craftsmen from 5 towns twinned with Ungheni Study visits of representatives of cities twinned with Ungheni: Cluj-Napoca



and Iasi (Romania), Kustaisi (Georgia), Konin (Poland) were carried out. While the discussion panel entitled "Tourism potential of towns twinned with Ungheni, seen through the eyes of tourists from the country and abroad," provided a framework for the exchange of good practices and opinions on the promotion of tourist attractions in these regions.

The project "Sustainable actions for economic growth through tourism" is financed by the European Union through the "Mayors facility for Economic Growth" carried out by UNDP Moldova, and is implemented by Ungheni City Hall in partnership with the Regional Center for Sustainable Development". The project contributes to sustainable economic development and creating a positive image of Ungheni district as a tourist destination by stimulating the tourism potential and promoting the local tourism brand.

The project also focuses on sustainable economic and social development through: development of tourist infrastructure, facilitating the creation of a Regional Tourist Information Center. The development of tourism creates opportunities for local and implicitly regional economic growth and contributes to the creation of new jobs.

Capitalizing on tourist attractions in the area will contribute to its economic growth by promoting the emergence and development of local companies, transforming areas with low economic competitiveness into attractive areas for investors, while promoting tourism potential will improve the image of the city and the municipality and boost its attractiveness for tourism and business.



# European Union and Sweden support the efforts of civil society organisations to promote social entrepreneurship in the Republic of Moldova

On 28 June 2023, the East European Foundation, in partnership with the Contact Center and Keystone Moldova, organized an event for signing Grant contracts as part of the competition "supporting non-governmental organisations in their efforts to promote the concept of social

entrepreneurship". The grant programme, with a maximum implementation duration of 18 months, is implemented with the support of European Union and Sweden. It aims to support non-governmental organisations in their efforts to promote the concept of social entrepreneurship.



Five non-governmental organisations were selected to receive grants to promote the concept of social entrepreneurship at national and local level, in the South, Center and North regions of Moldova. These organisations will run awareness campaigns at a regional level, including addressing school pupils, and promote funding opportunities for social enterprises. The organisations each received a grant worth 24,000 euros, the total amount of funding being 120,000 euros.

*„European Union actively supports the creation and development of social enterprises, which generate jobs, especially for groups of people who find it difficult to get a job for various reasons. In order to contribute to the creation of as many social enterprises as possible, it is necessary to ensure effective communication about opportunities and benefits offered by this sector, both for social entrepreneurs and for the community. Therefore, I am convinced*

*that the awareness campaigns carried out by the 5 NGOs will have a positive impact and raise awareness of the importance of social entrepreneurship in the Republic of Moldova."*

**said Aurica Butnari, Program Manager at the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.**

Non-governmental organisations, beneficiaries of grants under the program are: AO „Heart of The North”, AO „Cahul 2030”, „ AO EcoVisio”, „ AO Association for the promotion of entrepreneurship (APA)”, „LEX XXI Association”.

Keystone organisations and the Contact Center, Partners of the East European Foundation under this program, play a crucial role in promoting and supporting social enterprises, providing mentoring, consulting, and access to resources and funding. Through their actions, they created networking platforms and facilitated collaborations between social entrepreneurs and the business environment, promoting the exchange of ideas and social innovation.

This action is carried out with the financial support of the European Union and Sweden. The content is the sole responsibility of the project " we harness the potential of civil society to promote and develop social entrepreneurship in Moldova", financed by the European Union and co-financed by Sweden, carried out by the East European Foundation in partnership with the CONTACT Center and Keystone Moldova.





# European Union supports youth entrepreneurship in Moldova through new grant initiative

The Republic of Moldova is set to witness a significant boost in youth entrepreneurship, thanks to the backing of the European Union. A newly initiated project titled "Empowerment of Youth Entrepreneurship in Moldova", which is the brainchild of a consortium comprised of associations: Help-Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V., DEMOS, HOMECARE, and Pro Cooperare Regionala, has a dual focus.

Firstly, is set to benefit at least 10 local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from the North, Center, South, and Transnistria regions. Secondly, initiative is geared towards

bolstering the entrepreneurial capacities of around 200 young Moldovans, through the tailor-made assistance and provision of needed impetus and opportunities to kick-start and cultivate their own businesses.

With the European Union's substantial investment exceeding 2 million Euros, the project is poised not only to augment Moldova's entrepreneurial ecosystem but also to fortify the role of civil society in the holistic development of communities. It emphasizes the deliverance of quality services to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova.



For the prospective beneficiaries, local CSOs, open call for proposals was launched in June 2023. The details of the call have been delineated, with an earmarked budget of EUR 600,000. Prospective CSOs can anticipate grants, contingent upon their strategic needs and the merit of their proposals, up to EUR 60,000. The deadline for submission was stipulated as 16 August 2023.

To ensure transparency and equip potential applicants with essential information, a series of structured informational sessions were conducted between July 5th and 7th across the targeted regions. These sessions detailed submission protocols, stringent selection criteria, and guidelines pertinent to the project's funded actions.

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This initiative seeks to capacitate local CSOs, enabling them to contribute robustly to the broader objectives of the project. The primary focus remains the systematic and supervised provision of support to young entrepreneurs and other segments of the populace in their income-generation pursuits.

By the set deadline, the call has garnered 41 applications, distributed as follows: 14 from the North, 17 from the Central, 9 from

the South, and a singular proposal targeting all three regions. The evaluation phase is currently underway, with results anticipated in September, to be swiftly followed by the formalization of contracts.

This synergistic collaboration between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova is a testament to their shared vision of fostering economic dynamism and societal advancement, placing the youth at the forefront of this transformative journey.



## The One Stop Shop was launched in Cahul, with the support of the European Union

Starting from 23 August, residents of Cahul benefit from the services provided by the City Hall at a single access point. The One Stop Shop, located on the ground floor of the Cahul town hall, will initially provide 17 public services, with the possibility of further expansion. It will improve access to information and strengthen the transparency and responsibility of local public authorities.

The landscaping works, as well as technical assistance regarding the operation of the One Stop Shop, were carried out and provided by the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme financed by the European Union and implemented by UNDP and UNICEF, the total value of the project being over €156,900, including the contributions of Cahul City Hall.



*"Transparency, efficiency, but also the clarity of who provides a service, accessibility to information and advice on areas of public interest are essential for public administration. The launch of the One Stop Shop is only one element that boosts other administrative processes in the context of*

*digitization. We thank the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme for the support in the implementation of this important project for our citizens",*

***declared the mayor of Cahul, Nicolae Dandiș.***

Among the services provided by the One Stop Shop Cahul are: issuance of planning certificates for design, certificates of the absence or existence of arrears against the local budget, construction permits, applications of enrolment of children in preschool institutions, issuance of extracts from decisions and copies of decisions of the Municipal Council, etc.

*"We see this One Stop Shop as an important step in improving public services in Cahul, which is also in line with the overall process of digital transformation of the Moldovan society and economy. We praise the digitalization efforts of the Cahul City Hall which demonstrate its commitment to better serve citizens' needs. The European Union is committed to support such initiatives within our EU4Digital umbrella programme and the Economic and Investment Plan for Moldova",*

**said Boris Filipov, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.**

With the support of the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme, the space dedicated to the One Stop Shop was rebuilt, renovated and modernized. Customized software solutions were identified to improve the document management process and facilitate the execution of citizens' requests, and document decisions processed by the local public administration, training, technical assistance and consultancy were provided in the institutionalization of the One Stop Shop. Office furniture and IT equipment were also purchased.

"EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme (2019-2024) supports smart, inclusive, and sustainable socio-economic development in 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](http://www.eu4cahul.md) and [www.eu4ungheni.md](http://www.eu4ungheni.md).



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## On the City Day, the One Stop Shop was launched in Ungheni, with the support of the European Union

The Ungheni One Stop Shop was launched on Monday, 28 August and will initially provide 17 public services, with the possibility of further expansion. Located on the ground floor of the municipality's town hall, the One Stop Shop will improve access to information and increase transparency. The landscaping works, as well as the technical assistance

regarding the operation of the One Stop Shop, were provided within the framework of the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme financed by the European Union and implemented by UNDP and UNICEF. The total value of the project is over €179,000, including the contribution of Ungheni City Hall.



*"Ungheni City Hall, civil servants, employees have always tried to be as close as possible to the citizens, to provide the highest quality services. The arrangement of the One Stop Shop fits perfectly into this approach, which will certainly contribute to the efficiency of the institution's activity. Citizens will have greater access to information, they will*

*benefit from much better quality services, offered in a shorter time. We are grateful to the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme for the financial support and technical assistance provided",*

***noted Alexandru Ambros, mayor of Ungheni.***

Among the 17 services provided by Ungheni One Stop Shop are: the issuing of extracts from decisions and copies of decisions of the Municipal Council, planning certificates for design, certificates of the absence or existence of arrears to the local budget, building authorizations, enrolling children in preschool institutions, etc.

*"We appreciate the digitization efforts of the Ungheni City Hall, which demonstrate its commitment to better serve the needs of citizens. With certainty, the One Stop Shop will contribute to increasing the efficiency and transparency of administrative services, as it will reduce direct contact between citizens and service providers. It will also allow citizens to obtain administrative services in a single access point and in a modern space. We believe that it is essential to support the implementation of the digital transformation strategy of the Republic of Moldova and to facilitate the country's integration into the EU's Single Digital Market. And the launch of the One Stop Shop is a concrete example of this. I am glad that the Ungheni region has committed itself to moving forward in the digitization process and citizens can already enjoy these benefits",*

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

The establishment of the One Stop Shop Ungheni involved the reconstruction, renovation and modernization of the space dedicated to it. It also required the identification of customized software solutions to improve the process of managing documents processed by the local public administration, training and technical assistance, as well as the purchase of office furniture and IT equipment.

The Ungheni One Stop Shop aims to facilitate citizens' access to quality public services and utilities, by using innovative methods for the provision of public services.

"EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme (2019-2024) supports smart, inclusive, and sustainable socio-economic development in 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](http://www.eu4cahul.md) and [www.eu4ungheni.md](http://www.eu4ungheni.md).

# Access road to Beleu Lake rehabilitated with support from the European Union was inaugurated

The 650-metre-long access road to Beleu Lake has been inaugurated in Slobozia Mare village, Cahul district. The event took place during the BELEU BIO FEST festival on 13 August 2023.

The rehabilitation of the road was made possible thanks to the financial support of the European Union, provided through the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme, implemented by UNDP and UNICEF.

The €283,000 infrastructure project involved the rehabilitation of the road with concrete dressing, covered with crushed granite stone, and the construction of 487 square meters of pedestrian pavement. In addition, the Slobozia Mare town hall has covered, from the public budget, the installation of a car park of 1,300 square metres, a public toilet, four streetlamp poles and the installation of guide signs.



The renovated portion of the road contributes to boosting the economic development and touristic appeal of the region, as Beleu Lake is part of the Prutul de Jos Biosphere Reserve, included in the UNESCO World Network in 2018.

*"We thank the European Union and UNDP Moldova for the opportunity to access projects that contribute to local infrastructure development."*

*The renovation of the access road to Beleu Lake was included in the development strategy of the locality since 2016, and thanks to the 'EU4Moldova: Focal Regions' programme, this important project for our locality was completed and with it, the area of Lunca Prutului de Jos gained added value, becoming a tourist attraction,"*

***noted Valentina Carastan, Mayor of Slobozia Mare village, Cahul district.***



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Road rehabilitation supports efforts to create economic opportunities for small local producers, tourism service providers and the population at large. This will create better living conditions for local people and generate more income and new jobs.

*"This road is one of the many infrastructure investments supported by the European Union. As a result, I hope that more local citizens and international tourists will be encouraged to enjoy the natural wonders of this place. In the framework of the 'EU4Moldova: Focal Regions' Programme,*

*the European Union provides almost €23 million grant funding for a more prosperous future for the citizens of Moldova. This will be achieved through investments in quality local public services, improved infrastructure, support to employment opportunities and business development, and setting foundation for participatory & sustainable regional development,"*

**said Adam Grodzicki, Deputy Head of the Cooperation Section of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.**



The construction works took place between June 2022 and August 2023.

"EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme (2019-2024) supports smart, inclusive, and sustainable socio-economic development in 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).



## Team Europe in action: Moldovan local public authorities representatives' study visit to Albania and North Macedonia

In an endeavour to promote economic growth, encourage business development, and streamline administrative processes, local public authority (LPA) representatives from Edineț, Straseni and Leova embarked on a study visit to Albania and North

Macedonia. This opportunity, facilitated by the "EU4Moldova: Local Communities" programme – a Team Europe initiative, allowed participants to delve into the innovative strategies employed by their counterparts in these countries.



The aim was to engage in comprehensive discussions and site visits that would enable them to glean insights and ideas to foster business-friendly environments, strengthen localised policies to support enterprises, attract investments, and simplify administrative procedures for the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Throughout the visit, participants examined the methods employed by city halls in prominent urban centres such as Tirana, Vlore, and Elbasan, among other 8 cities. These cities have made substantial advancements in public service delivery to their citizens and in effectively channelling investments.

The visit to Albania and North Macedonia served as an invaluable platform for the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and experiences. Moreover, the dialogue showcased that regardless of geographical distances, local representatives across different countries face similar challenges and can find inspiration from each other's achievements.

A noteworthy practice that steered the interest of the participants was the adoption of Business Friendly Certification (BFC) in several visited communities. This certification initiative offers cities and municipalities a clear guide to create a welcoming business environment and



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adopt international standards for efficient and transparent local administration. LPAs who are certified can entice businesses to their area, thereby providing employment opportunities and economic prospects for their residents.

As the participants return to their districts and municipalities, they bring back not just memories, but actionable insights that have the potential to reshape their communities.



With the facilitation of initiatives such as the "EU4Moldova: Local Communities" programme, the journey towards prosperity becomes a shared one, transcending borders and working towards a brighter collective future.

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

# Empowering Local Communities in Moldova: a vision for sustainable development

Embracing the wisdom of the saying "where there are many, power grows," the Participatory Working Groups from Edineț, Straseni and Leova have met in a training session in which they learned and exchange about local development.

Throughout the training session, participants delved into strategies for invigorating local economic landscapes. Drawing inspiration from both local and international

experiences, they explored means to stimulate homegrown businesses and amplify economic development within their respective communities. The attendees also ventured into innovative approaches to attracting investments. Lastly, the groups discussed about ways to improve quality of life in rural areas, reducing regional disparities and fostering urban-rural linkages.



The Participatory Working Groups were established in November 2022 with the active involvement of representatives from the local public authorities, business community, and civil society. Guided by the programme team, their aim is to foster economic growth and create a sustainable environment for businesses. In the last couple of months, the groups have already analysed the economic priorities of their

cities and proposed measures to foster sustainable development. The ideas which were selected to have the biggest impact will be supported by the programme team in their future implementation. These include the development of digital platforms to promote tourist destinations, the enlargement of available business development services in the area, and the organisation of various business events such as forums and exhibitions.



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The Participatory Working Groups will sustain their dialogues in the upcoming months, with a specific emphasis on bolstering the entrepreneurial landscape in programme districts. The "EU4Moldova: Local Communities" team holds optimistic prospects that these endeavours will chart a course towards a brighter future for Edineț, Strasenii, and Leova, thereby contributing to a more prosperous Moldova.

These activities took place 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 German Development Cooperation through GIZ, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the Solidarity Fund PL (SFPL) in Moldova.



# From finance to sports - just one step away. Iulia Zgherea creates a fitness platform for new moms, thanks to EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul courses

Iulia Zgherea is 34 years old and has worked in the banking sector for more than 10 years. Being on childcare leave, the young woman decided to use this time for personal

development and enrolled in the IT and digital courses held by EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul.



*"We are in an era of technology, where everything is developing rapidly, and we have to go step by step with it. Digitization is now applied in all fields. Any business needs to reach the public through online advertising, a website, social networks. In addition, I try to understand what I like, what I am passionate about and what I can do better",*

**stated Iulia Zgherea.**

Initially, Iulia attended Web Design course within the ICT4Women programme, and later enrolled in the "Web Development" and "Digital skills" courses. Thanks to the knowledge acquired during them, the young woman managed to create the FitMama platform, intended for women who want to keep in shape.

*"Sport is one of my passions, and with the help of mentor Gheorghe Pădure and the accumulated knowledge, we managed to bring this project to life. I am going to launch the platform shortly and it will help a lot of women to get rid of the extra kilos accumulated until giving birth, the incorrect outfit or the stress accumulated at work. I want to help as many women as possible to understand that they are beautiful, to love themselves and to manage to combine a healthy lifestyle with work, childcare or household chores",*

**said Iulia Zgherea.**

The young woman encourages all those who want to develop their digital skills to constantly follow the activities of EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul and not to miss the courses held within the project.

The courses were organized by EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul, a project implemented by ATIC and financed by the European Union, in partnership with the Embassy of Sweden.



# Young entrepreneurs from both banks of the Nistru, supported by the EU

The final conference dedicated to the "Start for Youth" project took place on 22 May 2023 in Tiraspol, bringing together over 60 young entrepreneurs. Since 2020, the European

Union, through the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, has supported 39 business ideas with over €440,000.



*"The European Union recognizes the importance of addressing societal challenges and promoting sustainable practices. Therefore, we have encouraged young entrepreneurs to develop businesses that have a positive impact on the environment, society, and communities. It not only nurtures economic growth but also fosters a culture of responsible entrepreneurship,"*

**stated Magdalena Mueller-Uri, Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.**

The new businesses launched or sustained with the support of the EU-UNDP cover a wide range of services and products, such as tailoring services, cooking studios, veterinary clinic, delivery, or food production (biscuits, cheese, wine, vinegar, smoked meat), and industrial manufacturing (furniture, 3D-printed items, eco-friendly bags, or toys).

During the conference, the young entrepreneurs who benefited from grants shared their experience and journey in the business world.



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In the context of the new work realities imposed by the multiple crises, the EU and UNDP have supported the processes of maintaining/creating jobs in sustainable and future-ready economic sectors, while also encouraging young people to choose to stay at home rather than going abroad.

One of these young individuals is Oleg Gorshenev. In 2020, he launched his own business and started producing bicycles and carbon fibre parts for them.

*"Due to challenging economic conditions, our fellow citizens often face the choice of staying in the country or leaving. I enjoy living in my city. I am a part of this city, of this country. I will work to improve the lives of people in the region."*

*"With the grant I obtained, I was able to provide a few jobs, thus keeping three individuals and their families at home. I believe that without the support of my business, even I would have left,"*

**shares the young entrepreneur.**

The "Start for Youth" grant competition had two editions. In 2020, 26 young entrepreneurs received funding and in 2022, another 13 were awarded grants.

The Confidence Building Measures Programme, financed by the European Union and implemented by UNDP, contributes to the strengthening of trust between the inhabitants of both banks of the Nistru river, by involving them in joint development projects.



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# The second edition of the Business Barometer shows a growth trend

The second edition of the Business Barometer was launched on 14 June 2023, providing relevant analytical insights for the business communities on both banks of the Nistru river. Despite the ongoing war in Ukraine, which continues to impact most sectors of the economy, all indicators of the barometer show a growth trend compared to the data from December 2022.

The barometer was developed at the initiative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry France-Moldova and the Association of Investors from Romania in the Republic of Moldova, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Tiraspol. The European Union co-financed this initiative through the Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP Moldova.



The Business Barometer is based on seven criteria: turnover, investments, profit, increase or decrease in the number of employees, perception of the dialogue with authorities, and general perception of the economic situation in the country. Analysing the data for the second quarter, the overall index of the barometer stands at -19, an improvement from -33, recorded in December 2022. Several companies have reported increases in their investment volumes. However, there are still companies that report decreases in investment volumes rather than increases.

Similar to December 2022, more companies on the right bank of the Nistru river report

having made a profit compared to those mentioning losses. On the left bank of the river, more companies declare decreases in profit rather than increases, as value chains continue to be affected by the war in Ukraine.

The Business Barometer of the Republic of Moldova (<http://www.barometru.md/>) is a platform that consolidates the responses of 461 surveyed economic agents from both banks of the Nistru river. The use of a business barometer can be useful in anticipating economic trends, identifying opportunities and risks, making strategic decisions, and business planning.

# Tourism organisations from both banks of the Nistru river united in a cooperation platform supported by the EU

One year after its establishment, the Tourism Platform, supported by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), counts 45 active members from both banks of the Nistru River and over 200 beneficiaries, including representatives of tourism operators and tourism focal points from district councils.

They have inventoried 1,800 tourist destinations, certified ten guides through the School of Tourism and Hotel Services at the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, organized study visits and promoted tourism services at thematic exhibitions.



These are some of the results achieved by the platform, which were presented on 21 July at the conference "Opportunities for institutionalizing Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) on both banks of the Nistru River."

During the event, functioning models of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) from Ukraine, Austria, Romania, and Georgia were presented. These models will serve as a reference for conceptualizing DMOs in the Republic of Moldova and will ally stakeholders interested in tourism at the local level.



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*"The Tourism Platform has facilitated communication with stakeholders on the left bank and the formulation of an integrated model of cooperation and development of the tourism sector,"*

**says Viorel Miron, a member of the platform.**

The Tourism Platform is one of the six sectoral platforms (health, environment, sports, education, and culture) created under

the European Union Confidence Building Measures Programme and implemented by UNDP. Through its activities, the Confidence Building Measures Programme, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP, contributes to building trust between the inhabitants on both banks of the Nistru River by involving them in joint development projects. The program was launched in 2009 and, in 2017, sectoral platforms were established as a result of the good cooperation between NGOs from both banks.



## European investment in the future of water supply and sewerage in Cahul: two new cars for S.A. "Apă-Canal" Cahul

The main objective of the Project Water Supply and Sewerage in Cahul District is to improve the safety and access of the population of Cahul District to quality drinking water supply and sewerage services. To achieve this objective, the Project focuses on implementing measures to rehabilitate and expand the water supply and wastewater disposal infrastructure in the Cahul district.

These measures include modernisation and extension of water and sewerage networks, construction of water treatment plants, installation of modern equipment and technologies, and improvement of operational and management capacities of the service provider S.A. "Apă-Canal" Cahul.

To achieve the objectives of the Project Water Supply and Sanitation in Cahul district, the team of S.A. "Apă-Canal" Cahul received on 8 June 2023 two cars: Renault Express Van Zen Daily and Iveco Daily 35C16H, financed by the European Union. The delivery of the two vehicles is an integral part of the Project. It aims to support the S.A. "Apă-Canal" Cahul team in maintaining the water supply and sewerage systems. S.A. "Apă-Canal" will use these cars in various activities related to the maintenance and repair of water and sewerage networks, moving and transporting equipment and materials needed in the daily work of the service operator.



The Cahul Project Water Supply and Sanitation receives financial support from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of the Federal Republic of Germany and is implemented through

the German Development Bank KfW by the signed Memorandum of Understanding. Additionally, the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova provides significant financial support for the project.



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# EU4Accountability - social responsibility in the Republic of Moldova and the first completed projects

Promoting the active participation of citizens in the decision-making process and involving civil society in the development of local communities is the overall objective of EU4Accountability.

From 2021, EU4Accountability actions support civil society to implement their projects to increase social accountability by increasing local engagement and transparency.

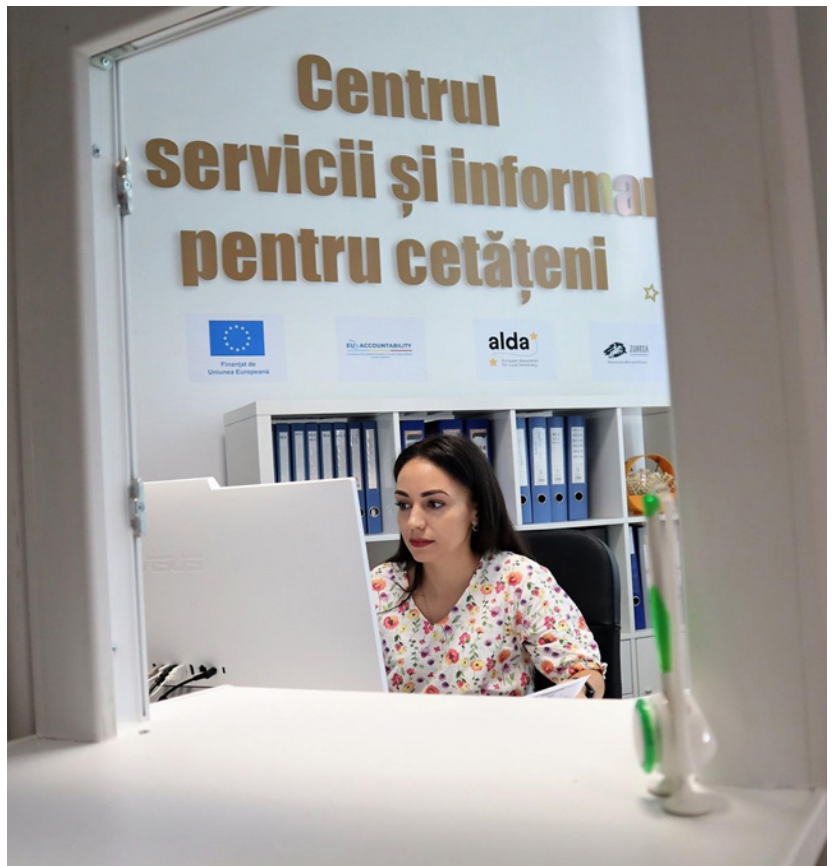
Out of a total of 50 EU4Accountability projects, 5 of them were successfully completed between July and August 2023.



The ProEntranse organisation, responsible for the implementation of the project in Vorniceni and Micleușeni, in the Strășeni district, together with active citizens and the town halls of each locality, managed to increase transparency in local public administration through a series of trainings to optimise the information process of LPAs, provide local councils with the necessary technology and involve the population in the decision-making process. As a result of these activities, citizens' trust in local authorities has increased considerably.

The project's performance, however, was the involvement of young people in local decision-making processes and as a result, Alternative Youth Councils were formed in Vorniceni and Micleușeni. The young people have signed a regulation for the functioning of these Councils and are going to submit a medium-term action plan to the LPA.

In the same district, the Association of the Zubrești Native People "Zubrea" and the Zubrești Town Hall, have put a lot of effort and enthusiasm into the creation of an Information Centre for



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citizens, which will facilitate the provision of public services, obtaining permits and other documents issued by the Zubrești LPA. At the test stage of the Centre, 500 documents were already completed, thanks to the modern technology and software within EU4Accountability.

The project has ended in Zubrești, but it is certainly an example where the active involvement of civil society and the openness of the LPA contribute to great and sustainable actions and solve the pressing needs of the community.

In the locality of Gura Galbenii in Cimișlia, civil society has also shown social responsibility. AO ADER, together with the local town hall and the inhabitants of the village, contributed to the implementation of priority actions for the locality.

Through the EU4Accountability project more than 40 citizens learned about participatory budgeting and monitoring of public procurement at local level and technical needs were provided to broadcast

live the meetings of Gura Galbeni Local Council. Also, at the initiative of citizens, the courtyard of the "Guguță" kindergarten was landscaped, trees and shrubs were planted, an irrigation system was installed, benches were installed and other improvements were made with the voluntary involvement of citizens.

In the village of Volintiri, in the district of Stefan Voda, at the beginning of the project, actions and activities seemed unfeasible, but with a lot of ambition and confidence of the initiative group formed, the Public Association Speranta Voliniri and the village Mayor's Office, capacities in the field of social responsibility were strengthened for 40 people and the infrastructure for meetings and public hearings was considerably improved. Residents have expressed their willingness to be involved in the decision-making processes of the LPA in the future, and already know what are the next projects involving civil society for the benefit of the locality.



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Young people from Dezginja, Comrat, have also been very active in EU4Accountability. Their achievement is the creation of a Youth Centre in the village. This project marks a significant step towards strengthening cooperation between the “Молодежь Гагаузии” Public Association and the local Town Hall.

The youth centre aims to provide an environment conducive to the holistic development of young people, offering access to a range of educational, recreational and cultural opportunities. It will serve as a space for discussion and creation of proposals for social engagement, interactive

workshops, vocational training, sports events and community initiatives that meet the needs and aspirations of local young people.

EU4Accountability runs from 2022-2024, is funded by the European Union, implemented by a consortium of three organisations: ALDA - European Association for Local Democracy, European Partnership for Democracy and People in Need Moldova, extends to 10 districts (Cahul, Comrat, Cimişlia, Făleşti, Floreşti, Glodeni, Rîşcani, Străşeni, Ştefan Voda, Teleneşti) and provides for a total budget of EUR 1.6 million.



# Moldova LEADER IT Software, developed with the EU assistance, undergoes the testing phase among stakeholders

The prototype for the Moldova LEADER IT Software (MLIS) has been successfully developed and is now being tested with key stakeholders. The testing phase enables

all LEADER actors to engage in a hands-on evaluation exercise that enables them to analyse firsthand the efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the entire system.

MLIS was developed as an IT solution to facilitate the operational synergy between all actors involved in the LEADER Program, launched in 2022 and managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI) and the Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture (AIPA). Given the amplitude of the Program, the IT software was developed to simplify the overall management of the LEADER approach and to help LEADER actors in the process of application, evaluation, monitoring and financing of Local Action Groups (LAGs). To ensure a smooth transition to the digital platform, a series of nearly 35 video tutorials is being developed to showcase the benefits of MLIS for different user profiles - including MAFI, AIPA, LAGs, applicants to LAGs - and to guide them through the digital platform functionalities. In addition, an informative video will be developed to inform the larger public about the digitalization of LEADER.

*The LEADER approach is a European Union initiative to revitalize rural areas and support rural development projects, initiated at the local level. The implementation of the LEADER approach in the Republic of Moldova started in 2016 with the creation of 8 Local Action Groups (LAGs). As of June 2022, the LEADER approach has been scaled up to a national LEADER Program, managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI) together with the Agency for Payments and Intervention in Agriculture (AIPA). In 2022-2023, 37 LAGs will receive grants of up to 5% from the National Fund for Agriculture and Rural Development, managed by AIPA.*

Throughout the months of July – September 2023, representatives of MAFI, AIPA, LAGs and its beneficiaries participate in interactive demo sessions to explore various functionalities of the system and test their efficiency in line with the specific needs of each of the key stakeholder. The feedback provided by the LEADER actors will be used by the software developers to improve the final version of MLIS and ensure proper operation of the system at different stages of the LEADER Program implementation.

The launch of the MLIS is planned for November 2023. Once developed, the

software will enter the property of MAFI and will be administered by AIPA. During the maintenance phase, set up to last 15 months following the launch of the MLIS, the software developers will continue to adjust the system with additional functionalities based on the LEADER actors' feedback. Currently, the MLIS concept is under evaluation by the key institutions responsible for approving Government-owned software products. The approval of the concept will serve as a key step to integrate MLIS in the Moldovan Government's cloud infrastructure.



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The development of the software is financed within the “EU4Moldova: Local Communities” programme, while its’ maintenance will be ensured with money from the state budget allocated within the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework 2023-2024 and other sources allowed by the national legislation.

*The MLIS platform is supported 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 co-financed within the “Innovative and digital solutions to support Moldovan rural development”*

***project implemented by Tartu County Development Association, financed by ESTDEV.***

# The National LEADER Network fosters networking and partnership opportunities for Moldovan Local Action Groups to enhance innovation and economic growth in rural areas

On 27-31 July 2023, the Local Action Group (LAG) “Trei Coline” participated in a study visit to Croatian LAG “Bura” as part of the 3rd edition of the EU Partnership Fund launched by the National LEADER Network (NLN). During the visit, representatives of the Moldovan LAG explored local projects focused on ecological sustainability and gained more insights about the social impact of waste sorting and recycling. At the same time, the LAG representatives learned about a local project supported by the Croatia LAG, which focuses on the manufacturing of eco-based soaps and essential oils produced

from traditional medicinal plants cultivated in the Dalmatia region. Through the 3rd edition of the EU LEADER Partnership Fund, the NLN aims to strengthen the collaboration among Moldovan and international LAGs and foster an exchange of ideas and experience that enables Moldovan LAGs to broaden their knowledge and build the necessary competencies to stimulate innovation and economic growth in Moldovan rural areas. As part of the 3rd edition of the EU LEADER Partnership Fund, Moldovan LAGs will conduct a total of 11 study visits, including to Polish, Romanian and Bulgarian LAGs.



Networking plays an important role in stimulating and supporting partnerships and cooperation by creating a platform for all actors involved to disseminate and share knowledge, ideas and innovations, while also developing peer support and building capacities. As such, the NLN acts as a guarantor of the implementation of the LEADER approach in Moldova, linking Moldovan LAGs with important local, national and international actors in the development chain.

*The LEADER Partnership Fund is supported 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.*





## European Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) was marked throughout Moldova

The European Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW), the largest annual event dedicated to renewable energy and energy efficiency in Europe was held in a number of Moldovan localities - signatories of the Covenant of Mayors in Moldova. Celebrating its 17th edition in Europe, EUSEW engaged approximately 7,000 citizens of all ages across 17 localities.

Budești, Bălți, Anenii Noi, Copceac, Cucoara, Floreni, Lozova, Putinței, Sireți, Strășeni, Suhuluceni, Talmaza, Văleni, Vorniceni, Albinețul Vechi, Țarigrad, and Nișcani emerged as the most active communities, marking EUSEW and Energy Days. They promoted the significance of sustainable energy and encouraged local citizens and businesses to adopt energy-saving habits.

Over 45 events included a wide range of activities, including thematic discussions on renewable energy and energy efficiency, exhibitions featuring children's drawings on energy-related topics, film screenings addressing environmental protection and climate issues, as well as sports activities like football matches and bicycle marathons. Thematic excursions and flash mobs were also organized to engage the community.

Furthermore, the CoM-East project team in

Moldova organized two competitions for the signatories. The first contest focused on identifying the best local practices that had a significant impact on citizens' lives. City halls were encouraged to reflect on the impact of their projects over the past five years and submit a description of their achievements. Nine city halls participated, and five were selected to receive recognition through short video spots showcasing their localities and the results they achieved.

The second contest was dedicated to the most active communities during EUSEW and Energy Days, held from June 15th to July 15th. An appreciation ceremony for their outstanding results is scheduled for September, coinciding with the Week of Climate Diplomacy.

During #EUSEW2023, young people from Talmaza, a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors in Moldova, gathered at the Unified Youth Services Center in their locality to discuss solar energy. They explored the benefits of solar energy, funding opportunities for households and businesses, and shared information on establishing eco-friendly businesses, emphasizing the importance of transitioning to environmentally friendly energy sources for a sustainable future.



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In Strășeni, the Museum of History and Ethnography organized an exhibition titled "Archaic and Modern," showcasing old candles, indoor and outdoor lamps, chandeliers, and more. At the end of the exhibition, visitors were informed about modern methods for efficient energy use and climate protection.

Activities were also held in Sireți to mobilize young people and adults in promoting sustainable energy and responsible environmental practices. In Lozova, the municipality organized the fourth edition of the "EcoEnergy" Velomarathon, and in Floreni and Suhuluceni, football matches took place under the EUSEW.



In the city of Balti, summer camps, kindergartens, and schools hosted dozens of practical activities, thematic discussions, and exhibitions of drawings to raise awareness about sustainable energy.

Undoubtedly, the events of EUSEW 2023 in Moldova made a significant contribution to promoting sustainable energy and a clean and secure energy future.

# Local sustainable energy and climate action plans: training and knowledge transfer in Ungheni

Representatives from eight municipalities that are signatories of the Covenant of Mayors and are at an advanced stage of implementing Local Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans learned more about project management and the establishment

of project implementation units as a result of the two-day training session. Organized by the Covenant of Mayors-East project office, the first day of training was hosted by the city of Ungheni.



The choice of this location was not accidental. Ungheni is an active and committed city in promoting sustainable development, having been an active signatory of the Covenant of Mayors since 2012 when it set its goal to reduce CO2 emissions by 20% by 2020.

In March 2023, Ungheni renewed its commitment, now aiming for a 35% reduction in emissions by 2030. Additionally,

Ungheni has successfully developed and implemented a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP), with a strong focus on the use of renewable energy sources and climate change adaptation. Participants also visited several projects in the city of Ungheni, which have benefited from various investment initiatives.

# Moldovan experience in sustainable energy and climate change, gained with the support of the EU, inspires Armenian mayors

Representatives from five municipalities from Armenia visited signatory towns in the Republic of Moldova under the European initiative known as the Covenant of Mayors for Energy and Climate, as part of a program "City to City."

During the visit organized by the Covenant of Mayors - East project, the delegation toured the city of Chişinău, as well as the towns of

Cantemir and Călăraşi, and the commune of Sipoteni, among others.

In Chişinău, Armenian mayors were introduced to municipal projects related to energy efficiency, transportation, urban mobility, environmental sustainability, waste management, and new technologies in water accounting and management.



In Călăraşi, the Armenian delegation learned about the experience of developing a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), a strategic document elaborated within the Covenant of Mayors. Special attention was given to the process of identifying key sectors, collecting and analysing initial information on energy consumption, and implementing measures to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions in municipal, residential, transportation, and street lighting sectors. After monitoring the SEAP implementation, the accumulated data served as the basis for the development of a new action plan till 2030, which includes an assessment of climate risks and adaptation measures.



Following the visit to Călărași, the delegation travelled to another Covenant of Mayors signatory in Moldova - Sipoteni, to see the results of a climate change adaptation project.

Cantemir is another city visited, and it is among the most active signatories of the Covenant of Mayors, having joined the European initiative in 2013. It is a model city in terms of innovative solutions in energy

efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources, known for its demonstrative project "CanTREB," supported by the European Union through the Covenant of Mayors - Demonstration Projects program.

The City2City program represents a valuable platform for collaboration and mutual learning among cities and communities that are signatories of the European Covenant of Mayors for Energy and Climate initiative.



# Ten Republican hospitals will benefit from energy efficiency measures with the EU assistance

More than one million people from the Republic of Moldova will benefit from modern health care facilities thanks to the assistance of the European Union, its bank, European Investment Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Ten Republican hospitals will be improved from the energy efficiency perspective and, therefore, rehabilitated so that the patients and employees can benefit from the modernised hospitals.

The assistance offered by the EIB, EBRD and EU valuing EUR 75 million will increase the energy efficiency of public buildings throughout Moldova, will reduce energy consumption and cut energy costs. As a result, about 40% less energy will be used, which will allow savings of around EUR 2,8 million per year. Aside from these benefits, the support offered within the Moldova Energy Efficiency Project will contribute to the country's resilience and boost its energy security.

Nine hospitals to be refurbished during the project are in Chisinau and one - in Balti. After thorough assessment of the

16 hospital buildings, the energy audits revealed the needs and opportunities to reduce energy consumption and decrease buildings' operating costs. Companies responsible for the technical design for seven hospital buildings of the first four projects (Cardiology Institute, Neurology and Neurosurgery Institute, Republican Medical Diagnostic Center/Phthisiopneumology Institute and Psychiatry Clinical Hospital) will be selected. The tender process will be announced by late September 2023 in order to ensure completion of the renovation works by the end of 2026. The health care facilities selected will be equipped with cutting edge technologies in terms of energy efficiency and undergo internal modernization works.

The project is implemented by the Moldova Energy Project Implementation Unit (MEPIU) in cooperation with the Energy Efficiency Agency, both under auspices of the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Moldova. The project is financed by the European Union, European Investment Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.



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# 112 students learned how to be environmentally friendly and save energy at ENERTEL summer camp



For ten days, in a camp located in the heart of Moldovan forests, 112 students aged 15 to 17 learned about the benefits of renewable energy and the sustainable use of resources. ([VIDEO](#)).

They were participants in the ENERTEL summer camp, run by Gutta-Club with the support of the programme "Addressing the impacts of the energy crisis in Moldova", funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP Moldova. The camp took place in two shifts: 29 July - 8 August and 11 - 21 August.

Students are now equipped to adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle, saving energy, recycling waste and urging their family and friends to do the same.

The camp programme included a visit to Moldova's largest photovoltaic park—a \$4 million investment in the Criuleni district,

and a sanitation activity in Răculești village.

The children calculated their own climate footprints and put on a climate-themed show. They also took part in practical workshops on reusing objects.

On 17 August, the young participants in the second round of the camp held an Open Day, where they presented prototypes of eco-friendly devices to guests, using materials such as bottles decorated with cloth and rope, paper, etc.

A young inventor from the village of Boldurești, Nisporeni district, presented a prototype demonstrating the transmission of energy through a single wire, trying to repeat the experiments of the famous Nikola Tesla at the end of the 19th century. This mode of energy transmission would cut transport costs substantially.



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*"Programs that reinforce our knowledge and make us eco-responsible are very important, especially since the trainings were interactive and interesting. Now we will be able to promote this knowledge in our communities and in our daily lives. Every step we take counts and the planet depends on our efforts,"*

**said Vitalina Rusu from Sculeni village, Ungheni district.**

Mihai Grecu presented to colleagues at the ENERGEL camp a design for a mobile photovoltaic system that changes position

according to the movement of the sun, thus increasing the efficiency of the installation. Photovoltaic panels are used to recharge batteries, electrical devices, etc.

*"Photovoltaic panels are increasingly popular in the Republic of Moldova, but most of them are fixed on roofs or on the ground. If they were equipped with such photo elements, a relay and an electric motor, they would automatically change their position in relation to the sun and operate all day long at high efficiency,"*

**explains Mihai Grecu.**



*"My generation did too little to prevent climate change, and now you have the task of catching up. But at this camp, I saw a lot of enthusiasm and knowledge. I am confident that you, young people, future citizens of the European Union, will succeed in saving our*

*planet from global warming. The European Union, a leader in the fight against climate change, will continue to stand by you,"*

**said Solomon Ioannou, Programme Manager at the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.**



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*"In recent years, energy has been associated with high tariffs and crises. But the energy of the future is green and sustainable, and technologies are evolving so fast that they become affordable in a short time. The Ministry of Energy has set an ambitious target of becoming the first carbon-neutral developing country by 2050.*

*We are a small country, and with your enthusiasm and knowledge, this is possible,"*  
**said Constantin Borosan, State Secretary at the Ministry of Energy.**

The ENERCEL Summer Camp is in its ninth edition and was started in 2011 with the support of the European Union and UNDP.





## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE



### EU4Environment Water and Data Programme assists Moldovan national institutions to improve surface water monitoring

Under the framework of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme, on 17-21 July 2023, in Moldova was conducted a field training on biological monitoring of the surface water of small rivers from Prut River Basin.

The field survey was organized jointly by Austrian Development Agency and the Austrian Environmental Agency, which are working together with the national institutions in the Republic of Moldova to support them in order to further comply with EU Water Framework Directive.



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The field survey was conducted by the representatives of the Environmental Agency from Moldova and it was focused on taking biological samples together with abiotic and chemical analysis. It is very important to know the water quality in the rivers since water plays a vital role in human life. We all use water daily, and these rivers are used for irrigation, watering animals, and various other purposes.

Ecological monitoring is so important because it does not only look at abiotic parameters, but at the ecosystem in total. If only analysing abiotic parameters, like for example chemistry, it will only show something about the moment when taking the sample. But all the animals and plants that are living inside the water are there every day, every month, the whole year. So, if there is a pressure occurring in the ecosystem, they will be submitted to this pressure and they will react. Thus, every pressure will change the species composition and the abundance of these animals and these plants.

The EU4Environment Water and Data Programme is helping national institutions to

understand and apply the correct monitoring of surface waters. This field survey was focused on the rivers which have not been studied previously. The results of the survey will lead to accurate results for the River Basin Management Plans, especially for the Prut River Basin, so that measures can be taken to improve the water quality in the river.

The new gained knowledge will help national authorities to develop the Methodology on biological monitoring.

EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme aims at improving people's wellbeing in EU's Eastern Partner Countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and enabling their green transformation in line with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals. The programme's activities are clustered around two specific objectives: 1) support a more sustainable use of water resources and 2) improve the use of sound environmental data and their availability for policy-makers and citizens.

# Conserving Emerald Sites in the Republic of Moldova with the EU assistance

An Awareness-Raising Event on Management Plans and Conservation Measures organized with EU4Environment support by the World Bank, the Ministry of Environment and PA

EcoContact took place on 21 July 2023 at the Natural Scientific Reserve “Codrii” in Lozova village, the Republic of Moldova.



The awareness-raising event was organized as a part of the EU4Environment Program sub-component 4.1, which is led by the World Bank and aims to support the protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems, particularly advancing the establishment and management of the Emerald Network in the Eastern Partner countries. In Moldova, the activities of this sub-component aim to enhance national capacities to ensure the

long-term survival of species and habitats listed in the Bern Convention Resolutions by improving the national legal framework and promoting effective communication in line with European standards and best international practices. This involves providing training sessions and raising awareness among stakeholders responsible for managing Emerald sites in the Republic of Moldova.

# The Republic of Moldova has its own eco labelling system in accordance with EU requirements

The eco-label symbol, developed with the support of EU4Environment, has been registered within the State Agency for Intellectual Property. Thus, products and services conforming to the primary environmental criteria will be easier to identify, facilitating the implementation of best practices for the protection of the environment and public health, as well as the recycling of products.

The ecological label is a graphic symbol applied to the product, packaging, in a brochure or other informative document, which accompanies the product/service and which provides the necessary information regarding the criteria for granting the ecological label to products and services on the market.

The ecological label system is voluntary, and will be granted to some groups of products, from major production fields to tourist accommodation services, and aims to: promote environmental protection and reduce the impact of products or services on

the environment; informing and encouraging the production of ecologically labelled products and services; encouraging and applying environmental principles in the design and development of products and services; improving the sales and/or image of a product as an "eco-marketing" strategy and a strategy to distinguish them from non-distinctive products.

The development of the normative framework regarding eco-labelling was carried out with the support of A.O. "EcoContact" within the project "European Union for Environment" (EU4Environment Green Economy), financed by the European Union. The Government approved the Regulation on ecological labelling on April 12, 2023 (Government Decision no. 204/2023), at the initiative of the Ministry of Environment, a document that will enter into force in April 2024. For the application of the ecological label, the Ministry of Environment is to develop the normative framework on the eco-label sign and the requirements for the use of the eco-label.





# Enhancing skills for a green transition in the Eastern Partnership countries

This year EU Green Week focused on skills for sustainable, resilient, and socially fair communities. As part of this campaign, EU4Environment organized an online regional meeting “Enhancing skills for a green transition in the Eastern Partnership” on 8 June 2023.

The 2023 EU Green Week, in the framework of the European Year of Skills, aimed to create a new momentum to reach the EU 2030 social targets of at least 60% of adults in training every year, and at least 78% in employment. To contribute to these ambitious targets, the EU4Environment implementing partners were called to focus this year on *skills for sustainable, resilient and socially fair communities*.

The purpose of this campaign was to raise awareness and educate people in the region about the importance of protecting the environment and promoting sustainable living practices, highlighting the importance of “green” skills – skills which will empower people to join and contribute to a green transition.

**Thus, within the EU Green Week 2023, EU4Environment’s event targeted both the public authorities and business sector. A distinguished panel of speakers from international institutions and the region presented for government officials:**

- » e-learning course on green economy for civil servants;
- » overview of capacity building events on environmental compliance assurance systems;



» trainings on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) with a special session on Ukraine in support of greening the post-war reconstruction of cities.

Representatives from business sector learnt more about:

- » eco-labelling and introduction of a new course;
- » circular economy principles and practices.

Since 2019, EU4Environment has been supporting the civil servants, experts, businesses from the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries to boost their awareness, knowledge and build skills on green economy through a variety of targeted trainings and regional knowledge sharing.

# EU Green Week 2023 marked in the Republic of Moldova under the theme delivering a net-zero world

The EU Green Week was marked in the Republic of Moldova during 3-11 June 2023, via a large-scale information and awareness campaign, creative contests for children and outdoor events promoting green lifestyles.

With the general theme “Delivering a net-zero world”, the edition of EU Green Week 2023 offered an opportunity to learn the most recent information about the EU environmental policies in the field of biodiversity, circular economy, zero pollution, etc. In 2023, the EU Green Week was dedicated to the competences for sustainable, resilient and inclusive communities.

## The main objectives of EU Green Week 2023 were to:

- » Highlight the EU Assistance to the Republic of Moldova in the area of sustainable energy, including renewable energy and energy efficiency, climate, environment, etc.
- » Raise awareness about the results achieved so far through the EU assistance to the Republic of Moldova on sustainable energy, climate, environment;
- » Raise awareness about the REPowerEU plan – a plan to rapidly reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels and fast forward the green transition and its impact on the Republic of Moldova energy security measures.

Overall, the EU Green Week is an annual opportunity to debate, become familiar with, and celebrate EU environment policy. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the progress made, and to encourage individuals, communities and organisations



to take stronger action in future – to protect, preserve and restore the environment, for now and for future generations, while constantly promoting sustainable development.

In the field of environment and climate change, the European Union is supporting the Republic of Moldova through a number of initiatives, including the following:

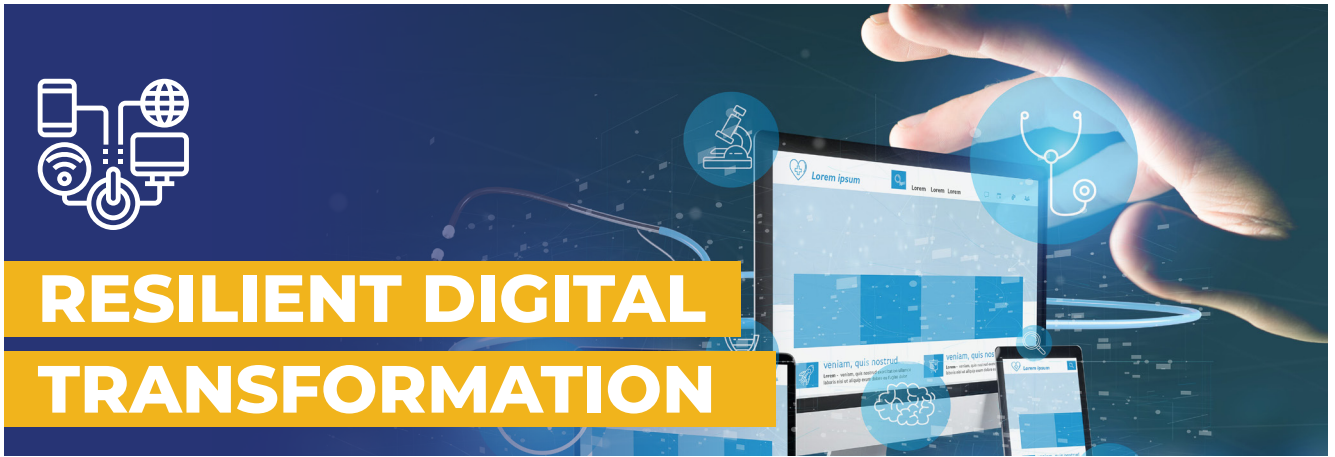
- » **EU4Environment - #Water Resources and Environmental Data in the Republic of Moldova** continues to support the Republic of Moldova in conserving its natural resources in line with the European Green Deal and a post-COVID-19 environmental recovery. For more details: <https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/>
- » **EU4Environment - #Green Economy** works with partner countries in the East to achieve policy and legislative change, to green planning and investment, to stimulate the adoption of innovative technologies, to adopt new business models and to create green jobs. For more details: <https://www.eu4environment.org/>

» **#EU4Climate** supports the development and implementation of climate policies by the Eastern Partnership countries, contributing to low emission and climate resilient development, as well as to their commitments to the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. For more details: <https://eu4climate.eu/>

» **#LIFE Programme** is the only EU funding programme exclusively geared towards

the support of environmental projects aiming at contributing to the transition to a sustainable and efficient economy based on renewable energy sources and circular economy principles, as well as protecting the nature, improving the quality of air and water, increasing treatment of wastewater. For more details: [https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life\\_en](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en)



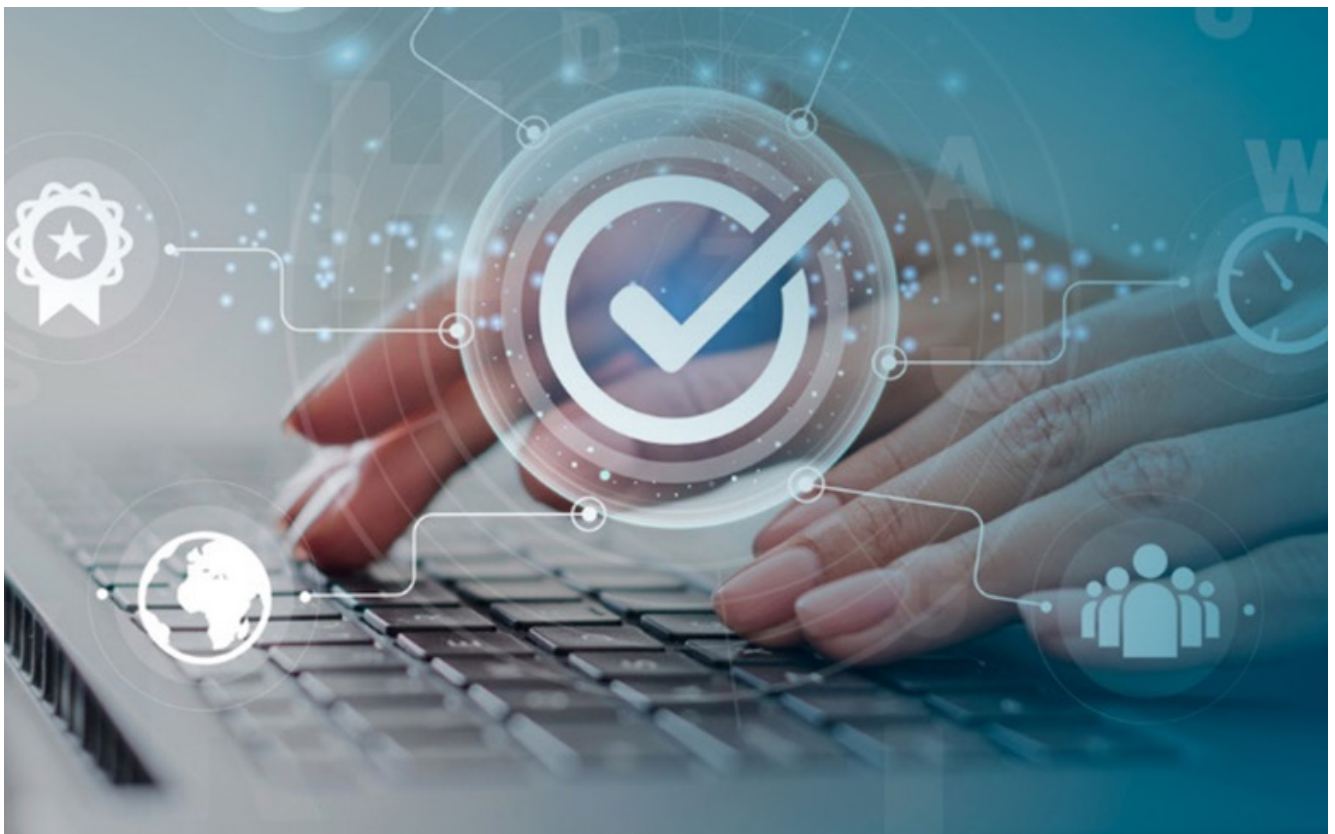


# RESILIENT DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

## Making digital security more accessible for human rights defenders and civil society representatives with EU support

How to secure your email and social media accounts, which communication systems and applications to use for better security of transmitted information, how to assess the level of risk to your organisation's or

your personal digital security – these are just some of the topics and information that need to be constantly updated in this digital age.



  EU-Moldova  
Stronger Together

In mid-August, the Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM) organised an online training session for around 30 civil society representatives and human rights defenders. With the help of an international expert, the training participants got essential tools and tips on digital security and safe keeping of personal data. Together, they analysed the risk matrix to understand how likely it is that the organisation or someone in the team could face hacking attacks on the website or social media pages, and what the effects of such situations would be.

The training session is part of the training programme for human rights defenders and representatives of the associative environment, within the project “Shields for Human Rights Defenders – Supporting Human Rights Defenders in the Republic of Moldova”, implemented by the LRCM in

partnership with EcoContact Association and the International Commission of Jurists – European Institutions, with the financial support of the European Union.

In order to make the training more interactive, the international expert proposed to the participants some short online surveys, through which they expressed their opinions about the need to conduct a digital security audit in NGOs and the categories of objects that need to be protected, e.g. servers, business correspondence, electronic documents, etc. The main lesson that the participants left the training with is that it is important to limit the number of places where information requiring digital protection is stored, so that the organisation’s resources can also be used efficiently in case of a cyber-attack.



# Ukraine, Moldova and Azerbaijan selected for electronic freight transport information (eFTI) exchange roadmap development

The EU4Digital Facility has selected Ukraine, Moldova and Azerbaijan as the Eastern partner countries that will receive tailored roadmaps for deploying electronic freight transport information (eFTI) exchange. The roadmaps will be created in line with the European Union's eFTI Regulation, set to come into effect in December 2025,

which will simplify and digitise information exchange between shippers, carriers, authorities and other stakeholders involved in the transportation of goods. Implementing an eFTI-like approach in Eastern partner countries will aid their integration into the EU eFTI ecosystem and benefit their authorities and business operators.



When selecting the priority countries, EU4Digital evaluated the current freight transport information exchange environment regarding road, rail and inland waterway transport. This covered various categories such as current progress in electronic logistics, application of international

standards, the existing legal basis for e-freight information exchange, and relevant ongoing initiatives. The size of trade flows with the EU were also considered. Ukraine, Moldova, and Azerbaijan were selected as the most willing and ready candidates for the eFTI deployment exercise.

### Examples of these commitments are:

- » Ukraine is currently implementing a national electronic consignment notes management system in road transport (eTTN).
- » Moldova launched e-Transport Authorization in 2022, for issuing road transport authorisation requests for both local and international freight transport.
- » Azerbaijan is gaining importance as a multimodal logistics hub between Asia and Europe and is actively developing roadmaps for international standards implementation in data digitalisation and document exchange, including eFTI and UN/CEFACT recommendations.

The EU eFTI Regulation requires the use of a standard format for electronic freight transport information and establishes a legal framework for its exchange. The EU4Digital Facility eTrade stream will closely work with the selected Eastern partner countries to carry out a current state of play assessment. Based on this assessment, recommendations in regulatory, technical and organisational areas will be outlined. A roadmap will then be created, outlining how to implement an eFTI-like approach in order to establish multimodal electronic freight transport information exchange, tailored to the current freight transport information exchange environment in each country.

More information: <https://eufordigital.eu/ukraine-moldova-and-azerbaijan-selected-for-electronic-freight-transport-information-efti-exchange-roadmap-development/>



# Telecom operators in the EU and Moldova to reduce roaming tariffs from 2024

Telecoms operators from the European Union and the Republic of Moldova have signed a joint declaration, to lower roaming charges for businesses and citizens travelling between the two areas. The European Commission and Moldovan authorities facilitated the voluntary declaration, published on 31 May

2023, reflecting the shared goal to ensure a long-term roaming arrangement and bring Moldova closer to the [EU Single Market](#). The EU supports this process and Moldova's integration into the [EU roaming](#) regime through the EU4Digital Initiative.



The joint declaration will ensure lower roaming tariffs between the EU, the [European Economic Area](#) (EEA) and the Republic of Moldova in the short term. As a result, citizens and businesses in the EU Member States, the EEA and the Republic of Moldova will be able to travel across borders while staying connected at affordable rates. This means they will soon enjoy lower charges on their calls, data and texts. They will be able to stay in touch with friends and family more easily, and businesses will also benefit from reduced costs.

The European Union's [EU4Digital Initiative](#) has been supporting efforts to achieve a secure and sustainable digital and [telecommunications](#) infrastructure across the countries in the Eastern Partnership since 2019, noted Andrejs Dombrovskis, EU4Digital Telecom Rules Stream Leader. He was delighted at the news of the joint declaration.



**The European Commission welcomed the declaration. President Ursula von der Leyen said**

*"This is a significant step, which will benefit people and companies alike in the EU and of the Republic of Moldova, bringing us closer together as the Republic of Moldova continues its candidacy journey."*

The declaration will apply until 31 December 2025 and could be renewed after that date. The declaration is voluntary and remains open for EU/EEA and Moldovan operators who wish to sign at any time.

Among the first signatories on the EU side are Orange group, DT group and Telefonica group, covering several Member States in the EU. On the Moldovan side, signatures include Orange Moldova, Moldtelecom and Moldcell.

Further information

» [Summary and download of Joint Declaration](#) from EU and Moldovan telecom operators.

» [News from the European Commission](#), including further background and quotes.



## EU4Digital DESI Accelerator launched on 30 May



EU4Digital Facility launched its Digital Economy and Society Index ([DESI](#)) acceleration activities on 30 May 2023. The DESI Accelerator one-day kick-off event raised awareness about the activity, its benefits, and plans for DESI implementation in the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

DESI is a tool for evaluating the degree of digitalisation of economies and societies in the European Union. It is used to track the evolution of five major areas: connectivity, human capital, internet use, integration of digital technology and digital public services. The topic is highly relevant and important in the context of the implementation of the digital transformation process.

During the EU4Digital DESI Accelerator kick-off event, Atis Migals, [Digital Skills](#) Stream leader of EU4Digital Facility, presented the action plan and benefits. He introduced and provided guidance on the materials to support EaP representatives in proceeding with the DESI Accelerator activity. These

include a survey for collecting information about DESI measurement in Eastern partner countries and the DESI implementation methodology.

The second part of the event was dedicated to introducing DESI itself, with a focus on the peculiarities of its implementation in Eastern partner countries. Mara Jakobsone and Vita Vitola-Lapina, senior experts of the EU4Digital Digital Skills Stream, provided valuable insights on the DESI state of play, interconnection with the European Union's [Digital Decade](#), and methodological nuances, including the potential challenges in practical implementation of DESI in Eastern partner countries.

The event established a basis for upcoming cooperation with the representatives of five Eastern partner countries and their involvement within the framework of the EU4Digital DESI Accelerator.

The [event presentation](#) slides (pdf) are available to download.



EU-Moldova

Stronger Together

## EU4Digital at Moldova Digital Summit 2023

EU4Digital Facility and European Commission DG NEAR representatives participated in the [Moldova Digital Summit 2023 – The Future of Digital](#) on 15-17 June 2023. The event was organised under the patronage of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova and marked

a new stage in the country's digital transformation. Under the theme 'Evolve towards our borderless future', the summit aimed to re-position the ICT field on the regional economic map and build a new image of digital Moldova, with potential for sustainable development.



The summit gathered ecosystem players in Chişinău to discuss the challenges and opportunities of the digital future in the Republic of Moldova and beyond. It connected over 2500 people from 30 countries, including 68 speakers, public officials, experts and leaders of technological and business communities. The event's agenda included a meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission for the creation of a common digital space and a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of digital transformation between Moldova and Romania.

Experts from Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Belgium, the UK, Sweden, Romania, Georgia, Armenia, the US and others shared their views on a range of topics. These included progress in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the opportunities and controversies related to its widening use, experiences in digital transformation and technological innovation based on data and AI, the importance of cross-organisation and cross-border collaboration, and the challenges faced by the educational sector to foster future-proof skills.



EU-Moldova

Stronger Together

## Moldova's digital transformation

During the [opening of the Moldova Digital Summit](#), the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Dorin Recean emphasized the ongoing progress in Moldova's digital transformation and the new opportunities it brings for society and the economy. He stressed the importance of putting users at the centre of attention when re-engineering all digital transformation processes, in government, in business, in government-to-business (G2B) and government-to-citizens (G2C) relations.

*"Everything that can be digital should be so. It should work remotely, including cross-border, doesn't matter where the person is – in Moldova or in Silicon Valley. If they want to open a company in Moldova, or obtain a document from the state, we must give them the opportunity to do so without requesting physical presence and hard copies. Payments, documents, communication – everything should be digital."*

**Dorin Recean, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova**

## Data and Artificial Intelligence

During the first day, EU4Digital Facility Team Leader Arturas Piliponis participated in a [panel discussion on 'Partnerships for digitalisation – exploring for AI and data science'](#). He touched upon topics regarding the right use of data and the need to put AI regulation in place.

"Data is a basic for everything, we can forget AI if we don't have data," he said. Making data accurate, full, accessible and secure is the key priority of any government or organisation, he explained. The trend is that European institutions are increasingly getting the point of good data management and governance, and are putting data analytics solutions in place. He cited an increasing number of projects in diverse sectors from agriculture to finance, where big data platforms, analytical platforms or data models are put in place not just on the institution level but across sectors and across institutions. And progress in AI has been developing very fast, he continued: "Some recent applications are now already seen as 'business as usual'. In March alone, more than one thousand AI applications were developed, and some researchers say that the latest kind of AI will significantly impact more than 300 million jobs, both positively and negatively."

The first day culminated with the Moldova Innovation Awards. In the ceremony, five local startups were appreciated for outstanding achievements in the following categories: Best Product Innovation and Best Service Innovation, Rising STARTup, Impactful Initiative, and Special Jury Award.

The Moldova Digital Summit concluded with [Tekwill Expo Day](#), showcasing achievements in the implementation of educational technologies and innovative engineering projects.

# EU4Digital and DG NEAR visit Moldova: fostering digital development and innovation

To strengthen digital development and innovation in Moldova, representatives of the EU4Digital Facility and the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) visited the country on 14-16 June 2023. The visit provided an invaluable opportunity to engage with key stakeholders and explore

initiatives that are advancing the Republic of Moldova's digital landscape.

During the country visit, EU4Digital Team Leader Arturas Piliponis and other EU4Digital representatives joined DG NEAR Programme Manager for Digital Economy and Development Thibault Charlet in meeting notable local stakeholders.



During the country visit, EU4Digital Team Leader Arturas Piliponis and other EU4Digital representatives joined DG NEAR Programme Manager for Digital Economy and Development Thibault Charlet in meeting notable local stakeholders.

The delegates reiterated the need for collaboration between the European Union and Moldova in areas such as e-trade, e-governance, digital infrastructure and trust services. The discussions highlighted the importance of aligning policies and strategies to ensure a conducive environment for digital growth.

## Moldova's digital future

The visit to Moldova provided a unique opportunity for the EU4Digital and DG NEAR representatives to gain first-hand insights into the country's digital landscape, engage with the stakeholders actively driving digital development, and to discuss collaboration, knowledge sharing and capacity building to advance the digital agenda.

EU4Digital Team Leader Arturas Piliponis was impressed by the variety of impactful initiatives and programmes currently running in Moldova.

*"A country's wealth doesn't dictate its capacity for digital growth and innovation; instead, it's the energy and creativity of its people that matter," he said.*

*"Talent and innovation development is crucial for future success. Moldova is fully aware of its digital gaps and objectives, with a Digital Strategy ready to launch."*

The insights gained during the visit will contribute to ongoing EU4Digital efforts to advance digital transformation, enhance digital skills, support entrepreneurship and stimulate innovation in Moldova.

More information: <https://eufordigital.eu/eu4digital-and-dg-near-visit-moldova-fostering-digital-development-and-innovation/>



EU-Moldova

Stronger Together

# East meets West at 'Startup Bridge' ICT Innovation networking event

Startups from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine met with representatives of the innovation ecosystem in France and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) at the event '[Startup Bridge: East meets West](#)'. EU4Digital Facility organised the ICT Innovation networking event in partnership with [Expertise France](#). Held in Paris on 16 June 2023, the event was hosted by [Wilco](#) – an innovation accelerator dedicated to

creating value for both startups and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The 'Startup Bridge' welcomed more than 30 representatives of EaP startups as well as EaP and French ecosystem builders and investors. During the event, startups had an opportunity to introduce their value propositions, exchange experiences and get a better understanding of the EU markets and expectations of venture investors.



The representatives of EU innovation investors and ecosystems that expressed interest in meeting Eastern partner countries' startups included: Crosspring, Heritage Holdings, Omnes Capital, Techmind, Bpifrance – EuroQuity, Kerys.co, Schoolab, Agoranov Incubator and Wilco Accelerator. Many registered organisations specifically support Ukraine in reconstruction of its

innovation ecosystem: La French Tech Kyiv/CCI France-Ukraine, Ukraine-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce, Ensemble Ukraine, and Business France Ukraine.

Before and during the event, senior ICT Innovation expert Jesus Lozano shared tips and tricks for startups to successfully pitch to investors. EU4Digital Team Leader



Stronger Together

Arturas Piliponis invited the participants to explore and exploit the powerful tools of the [EaP Startups ecosystem platform](#) that was launched by EU4Digital Facility in 2022 in partnership with Dealroom. This platform helps in seeing the whole palette of startups investment opportunities and mapping particular ecosystem landscapes.

The EU4Digital [ICT Innovation](#) stream organises networking events to facilitate the establishment of communities and networks in the EaP region. The events build bilateral and multilateral bridges between EaP organisations and EU stakeholders to enable deeper understanding of relevant EU best practices by stakeholders in the EaP region, as well as the transfer of those practices to Eastern partner countries via joint activities and projects. The events target topic-specific audiences, selected from ministerial level representatives and agencies, associations and networks of relevant policy areas, ICT infrastructure organisations as well as other ICT innovation ecosystem actors.

Previous ICT Innovation networking events have bridged EaP stakeholders (during Phase I, 2019-2022) with:

[European Cluster Collaboration Platform \(ECCP\)](#), [European Business Angels Network \(EBAN\)](#), [Business Angels Europe \(BAE\)](#), [European Business & Innovation Centre Network \(EBN\)](#), [European Crowdfunding Network \(ECN\)](#), [European IP Office \(EUIPO\)](#), [European IP Helpdesk](#), [Digital Innovation Hubs Network \(DIHNET\)](#), [I4MS](#), [European Digital SME Alliance](#), [Startup Europe Regions Network \(SERN\)](#); and (during Phase II 2022-2025) with [Women Go Tech](#), [WEgate](#), [Women Business Angels](#), [WINGATE](#), [Female founders](#), [International Association for Trusted Blockchain Applications \(INATBA\)](#) and [EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum](#).



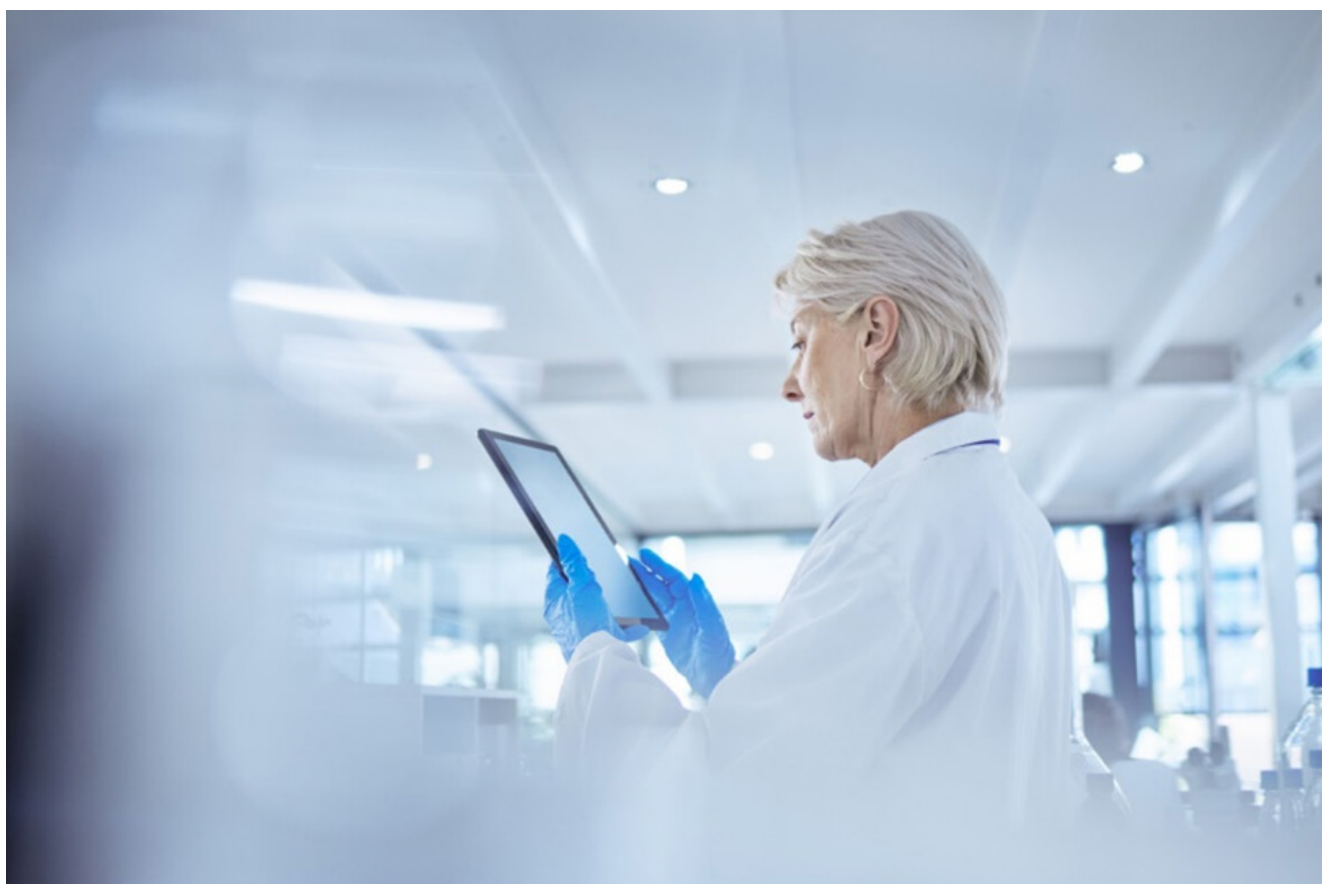


## EU4Digital events highlight priorities to boost innovation and start-ups incubation

To boost the performance and growth of the innovation and start-up incubation ecosystem in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region, EU4Digital Facility identified key priorities and presented them in two events. These online awareness sessions concluded intense study of Eastern partner start-up ecosystems' performance, gaps and needs. Participants in the two events heard from regional ecosystem actors

and discussed the key needs: Eastern partner countries should prioritise the empowerment of ecosystem builders and capacity building of incubators.

The **first** event, 'Importance of supporting national ecosystem builders' actions through donor funding' took place on 18 July 2023. This event explained the essential role of ecosystem builders and the need to empower them.



EU4Digital has analysed 24 Eastern partner organisations that are adopting the role of ecosystem builder to create, empower and boost the ecosystem. Jesús Lozano explained that this study revealed a need for further specialisation of ecosystem builders by specific sectors or target groups. Though ecosystem builders can be both from the

public and private sector, they mostly have been acting as non-profit organisations. This is why they need support from governmental and international donors, but also from the conscious private sector – given that creating organisations and developing strong networks are resource and time consuming.

Donor funding plays a critical role in capacity building and empowering of the national ecosystem builders, Jesús highlighted. He emphasised that support should be channelled in a way that: involves national organisations in collaboration and the implementation of actions; builds expertise at the national level; and generates continuity in any ecosystem development actions. The mission of government and donors is to empower the capacity of specialised actors to support innovations in the country.

The second event, 'The role of the private sector in the development of the high-performance incubation in the EaP countries' took place on 8 August 2023. This addressed the need to rethink the concept and advance the efficiency of innovation incubators in the Eastern Partnership region. It specifically targeted large corporations, banks, representatives of academia and incubators, and gathered more than 100 participants.

Talking about best practices, the EaP roundtable speakers shared the need to support team building, for example by concentrating on matchmaking and the mutual discovery of different potential founders. They also highlighted the value of using a problem-oriented approach in generating new support programmes, a hands-on approach and learning by doing in educational programmes, understanding the inner motivation of each start-up founder, and taking an individual approach to mentoring and accelerating of each start-up team.

Both awareness-raising sessions highlighted the role of partnerships between innovation ecosystem actors in building high-performing ecosystems with efficient and impactful innovation and business development 'pipelines' or 'highways', as well as service toolkits for start-ups and scale-ups.

More information: <https://eufordigital.eu/eu4digital-events-highlight-priorities-to-boost-innovation-and-start-ups-incubation/>

# EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul celebrates successful graduation of Southern Locals from adult digital skills courses, showcasing top projects to donors

37 residents of the Cahul region completed one of two Digital Skills and Web Development courses, thanks to which they advanced in the IT field. The courses lasted three months, during which the beneficiaries learned to keep up with

digital technologies. After completing the courses, the graduates presented their projects in a retrospective event attended by representatives of the Swedish Embassy and the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.



*"The purpose of this project is to contribute to the economic development of the Republic of Moldova by implementing new programming policies and innovative technologies. In a context where digitization is becoming increasingly necessary, it influences practically all fields of use. The European Union attaches great importance to ensuring that no one is left behind in this journey towards digitalisation.*

*It is essential to improve our digital skills, no matter what age we are. This allows us to remain competitive on the international market in a constantly changing environment, to adapt to new requirements and to fully exploit our potential",*

**said Boris Phillipov, Program Officer at the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.**



**Also, Thomas Alveteg, First Secretary, Deputy Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden in the Republic of Moldova mentioned:**

*"We live in an era of digitization where technological changes take place at an astonishing speed. To remain competitive in career and entrepreneurial activity, it is crucial to continuously adapt to these changes and stay abreast of new technologies and trends."*

The beneficiaries also had the opportunity to talk with representatives of several companies in the field of information and communication technology. The delegates of the Moldcell company and those from the Power IT company encouraged them to continue their path in the IT field.

At the same time, the company Halley Soft brought up the advantages of a career in IT. Also, the best projects made by the course graduates were presented to the public.

*"When I attended this course, I found that I have good knowledge of the digital field. However, I felt it was important to help the team in order to understand each other as well as possible in the digitization process. Therefore, I came to motivate colleagues and help them acquire new knowledge,"*

**said Tatiana Ivanova, entrepreneur in Cahul.**

The courses were organized by EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul, a project implemented by ATIC and financed by the European Union, in partnership with the Swedish Embassy



Stronger Together

# Digital solutions integration grants empower 10 SMEs in Southern Moldova through EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul

In an era where technology plays an increasingly vital role in the economy, the EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul project launched a grant programme to support the digitalization of small and medium-sized businesses in the southern region of the country.

It is intended for the ten small and medium-sized enterprises from Cahul, Cantemir, Leova and Taraclia districts that have completed the Digital Upgrade programme and are ready to accelerate the digitization process of their own businesses.



The purpose and objectives of the funding programme are intended to contribute to the economic development of the southern region by integrating digital solutions and increasing the automation of work processes. Beneficiaries submitted funding applications for digitization solutions, such as electronic order management system at the shawarma stand, web pages for travel agency, tourist guesthouse and museum in the region, leisure area and logistics enterprise, subscription to pyn-booking, creation of online stores of advertising materials and furniture store and Bitrix CRM system integration for an extracurricular activities institution.

This programme represents an opportunity for small and medium-sized enterprises in the southern region of the country to adapt to new market requirements and increase their competitiveness. Each beneficiary contributed with at least 20% of the total

value of the digitization project, and the grant amount is transferred directly to the IT service provider company after confirming the transfer of the beneficiary's financial contribution to the digitization service provider company. The implementation period of the projects financed under this grant programme is between three and six months.

Thus, the ten beneficiaries in the fields of tourism, public catering, logistics and education benefit from grants worth up to MDL 20,000 to accelerate their digitization process. The programme implementation period is June-October 2023.

The Small Grants programme is organized within EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul, a project financed by the European Union in partnership with Sweden and implemented by the National Association of ICT Companies (ATIC).

# Students from Cahul become Web Development Champions in the "Tekwill Junior Ambassadors" competition

In June, the 'Web Fox' team from 'Iulia Hașdeu' College in Cahul achieved the top position in the Web Development category at the 'Tekwill Junior Ambassadors' competition. This competition, which

is considered the largest in the country dedicated to technology for middle and high school students, attracted a record number of participants this year - 2500 students from 333 educational institutions.



Coordinated by teacher Gheorghe Pădure, the "Web Fox" team began its journey in September 2022, when two of the students of the third year, Aurica Apareci and Savelie Babaianu, showed a special interest in programming. Impressed by their potential, the teacher proposed that they form a team and participate in the competition.

Aurica and Savelie, aged 18, accepted the challenge and worked hard for about eight months on their own project. Initially, they planned to create a simple landing page, but realized they were capable of tackling a

more complex project. Thus, they decided to develop a functional website for a pizzeria in Cahul.

The project development process ended in February, when the "Web Fox" team participated in the first regional stage of the competition and won. Later, they competed with 18 other teams at the final stage, which took place in Chisinau. Although initially there were more than a hundred submitted projects, the "Web Fox" team impressed the jury with their work and the innovative solutions proposed.



Stronger Together

The teacher Gheorghe Pădure is delighted with the performance achieved together with his students in the "Tekwill Junior Ambassadors" competition. He believes that this experience will have a positive impact on their professional future. Students learned to work as a team and developed a product from planning to launch. Winning this competition will add professional value to them, making it easier for them to get hired in companies.

Although there are many opportunities in the field of IT abroad, students from the "Iulia Hașdeu" College in Cahul want to build their careers in the Republic of Moldova.

*"I think that in the field of IT you can accumulate a solid base of knowledge in the Republic of Moldova and for this reason I will remain in my country",*

**said Aurica Apareci.**



The "Tekwill Junior Ambassadors" competition offers young people the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in the IT field and develop projects with social and economic impact. "Tekwill Junior Ambassadors" is organized by EU4Moldova:

Startup City Cahul and "Tekwill in Every School", in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research, with the support of external development partners the European Union and Sweden.

# Young minds can explore future professions at Camps in Cahul, hosted by EU Innovation Center Cahul - Inotek

Tekwill Academy Kids held the programs of six camps for children between the ages of 7 and 14 in Cahul between June and August. These camps are perfect for those who are passionate about technology and digital art, offering the opportunity to learn through interactive and fun activities.

These camps take place within Inotek, which is a center that aims to provide children with access to educational resources and opportunities.

The six camps offer children the opportunity to learn Brain Game, Robotics, Animaker, Scratch Programming, Digital Skills and Graphic Design.



The launched camps are led by technology experts and offer children the opportunity to develop their technological skills and learn the professions of the future.

Inotek aims to provide the unique opportunity for children in Cahul and the surrounding areas to learn and have fun at the same time, developing technological skills. These camps are an interactive and


fun educational experience for children, preparing them for the digital future.

The robotics and programming camps for children in Cahul are organized within EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul, a project implemented by the National Association of ICT Companies and financed by the European Union in partnership with the Swedish Embassy.



Stronger Together





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