

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



CONTRIBUTION OF PARTNER COUNTRIES TO EU YOUTH WIKI CHAPTER II: MOLDOVA VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

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1. GENERAL CONTEXT

1.1 POPULATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The total population of the Republic of Moldova on January 1, 2020 was estimated at 2 640 438¹ people², that is: men – 1 269 166 (48.06%) and women – 1 371 272 (51.93%). The population of the Republic of Moldova has a pronounced level of ruralization, continuing to be the country with the lowest degree of urbanization in Europe. According to the data of the National Bureau of Statistics, in 2016, 42.5% of population lived in urban localities, and 57.5% - in rural areas. About 49% of the urban population lives in the capital.

Young people represent over a quarter of the country's population. Based on Article 4 of the National Youth Law,³ young people are considered those aged between 14 and 35. The number of young people on January 1, 2020 constituted 2640.4 thousand persons, of which 710.8 thousand or 26.9% are young people aged 14-34 years. The distribution of young people by sex is as follows: 49.2% - women and 50.8% - men.

Based on the National Statistical Bureau's (BNS)⁴ information, the young generation is constantly decreasing. In the period of 2015-2019, the population aged 14-19 decreased by 28.4 thousand people, and the share of this category in the total number of young people increased insignificantly from 22.5% on 01.01.2016, to 23, 5% on 01.01.2020. The number of people aged 20-24 decreased by 68.9 thousand people (by 4.3 pp), of those aged 25-29 by 56.5 thousand (or by 1.8 pp), and the number those aged 30-34 by 5.1 thousand (5 pp more).

In the 2019/20 academic year, the number of pupils and students in the 14-29 age group was 186.9 thousand people, or 14.4% less than in the 2015/16 academic year.

About 4 out of 10 young people are employed and 6 out of 10 are inactive. In relation to the status of current activity⁵ over a third of young people aged 15-34 are employed (38.4% or 274 thousand people), ie they have a job, about 2.8% (20 thousand) are unemployed and the rest, 58.8% (about 420 thousand), are economically inactive. Among the latter, over 39.0% are included in the National Education System (NIS).

Every third young person aged 15-29 does not work or study. Almost a third of the young population aged 15-29 (27.4%) is not in education, employment or training (NEET Youth). The

¹https://statistica.gov.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Anuar_Statistic/2020/Anuar_statistic_editia_2020.pdf

² Within the census (without the population of the left side of the river Nistru and the municipality Bender)

³ <http://lex.justice.md/md/366763/>

⁴ <https://statistica.gov.md/newsview.php?l=ro&id=6729&idc=168>

⁵ The status of the current activity refers to the relationship in which the person is to the economic and social activity, as well as to the way in which it ensures the source of existence necessary for living. Priority is given to employment over unemployment and unemployment over economic inactivity.

value of this indicator in women is higher than in men (35.5% for women and 19.4% for men, respectively).

Young people choose to go to work or look for work abroad for a period of less than a year in a proportion of about 15 %, mostly men and young people from villages. More than 50,000 young people aged 15-34 go abroad to work or look for work for less than a year. Of these, 79.3% are men and 84.2% are young people from villages. If young women represent 39.5% of the total number of women who went abroad to work or are looking for work for less than a year, then for men this share is significantly higher: 55.0%.

Depending on the residence, the structure of the young population by age groups reveals a predominance of young people aged 20-24 in the rural areas (36.7%), and of young people from the age group 25-29 years in the urban areas (47.7%). In the last five years there has been a concentration of young people in the urban areas, especially those aged 25-29. Young people represent a very dynamic population category, being involved both in internal migration (rural-urban, small-large cities), as well as in external migration. There are no clear mechanisms in Moldova for recording the internal mobility of the population, as many of the young people live in urban areas while having their residence in rural areas.

1.2 FREE-TIME OCCUPATION AND VOLUNTEERING IN MOLDOVA

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the Republic of Moldova were born in the context of anti-communist resistance and the national liberation movement, which were possible with the decline of the communist regime in the late 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union. That period was the starting point of the Moldovan civil society development, which evolved gradually and reached its consolidation stage at the beginning of the 21st century. Once the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova were proclaimed, Western public and private donors committed themselves to support the democratic transition and market economy in the Republic of Moldova, as well as to support the civic engagement for such an endeavour by developing CSOs. The consolidation period started with the first National Forum of Non-governmental Organisations from the Republic of Moldova, organised in 1997 by the CONTACT Centre with the help of Soros – Moldova Foundation and the World Bank. Other similar platforms were organised later on, while in 2013, the National Forum of Non-governmental Organisations from the Republic of Moldova was held for the seventh time. In the framework of the fourth Forum, the National Council of NGOs from Moldova, an umbrella structure for the NGOs promoting social balance and good governance, was established.⁶ Local civic engagement in the Republic of Moldova increased, particularly through the 1997 launch of the Moldovan Social Investment Fund Project, with the financial support of the USA, Japan, Sweden and the World Bank.

⁶ Regulation of the NGOs Council functioning [On-Line]. 2013. <http://www.consiliulong.md/?lang=en> (accessed 3 May 2018).

Different from the Soviet Union perception of organised and compulsory volunteering, at the beginning of the 2000s volunteering has started to gain more positive image, mostly the youth NGOs being the entities encouraging and providing space for volunteering. The [Law on Youth of 1999](#)⁷ made reference to volunteering by stipulating in “Article 20. Specialized bodies in the field of youth” g) supports the activity of volunteer in the realization of the programs in the field of youth that do not contravene the legislation in force. However, there were no policies, legal and regulatory framework on volunteering, neither any research.

The [COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF THE DRAFT LAW ON VOLUNTEERING](#)⁸, published in December 2007, was the first research analysis that was carried out with the aim to identify and quantify the benefits and costs proposed by the draft law and the proposal of a concrete set of policy recommendations that offered the greatest benefits to society and stimulate involvement in volunteer work. The analysis was the milestone in pivoting collective efforts of nongovernmental organisations to advocate for national legislation and mechanisms on volunteering.



⁷ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=95564&lang=ro

⁸ http://www.credo.md/site-doc/PolicyPaperLegeaVoluntariat_1.8.pdf

TOTAL TIME SPENT ON VOLUNTEERING AND MEETINGS AT RURAL AND URBAN LEVEL

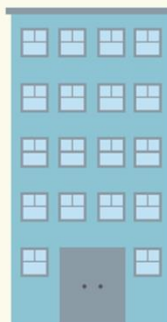


2,4 HOURS/DAY

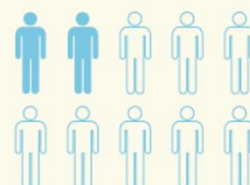


16,9%

OUT OF THE TOTAL
RURAL POPULATION



2,5 HOURS/DAY



14,2%

OUT OF THE TOTAL
URBAN POPULATION

Note: Volunteer activities and meetings include: (i) Work for/through organisations; (ii) Help offered to other households; (iii) Participatory activities, including religious activities.

TOTAL TIME SPENT ON VOLUNTEERING AND MEETINGS BASED ON GENDER



2,3 HOURS/DAY



16%

WOMEN

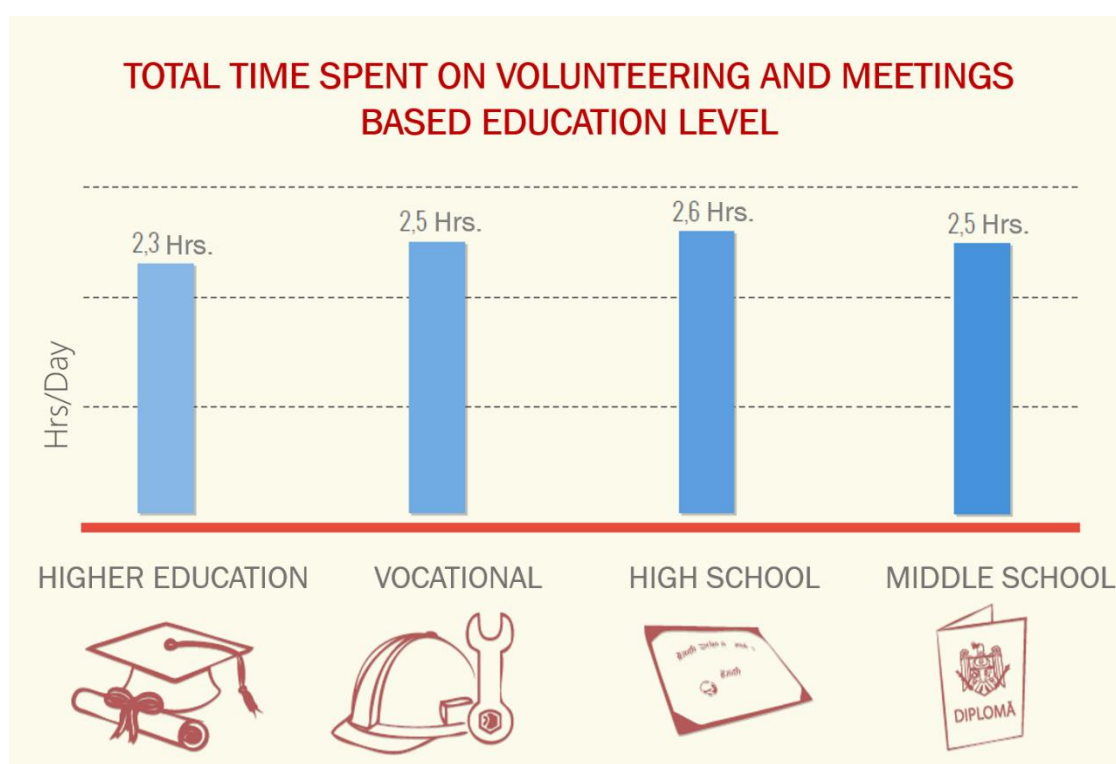
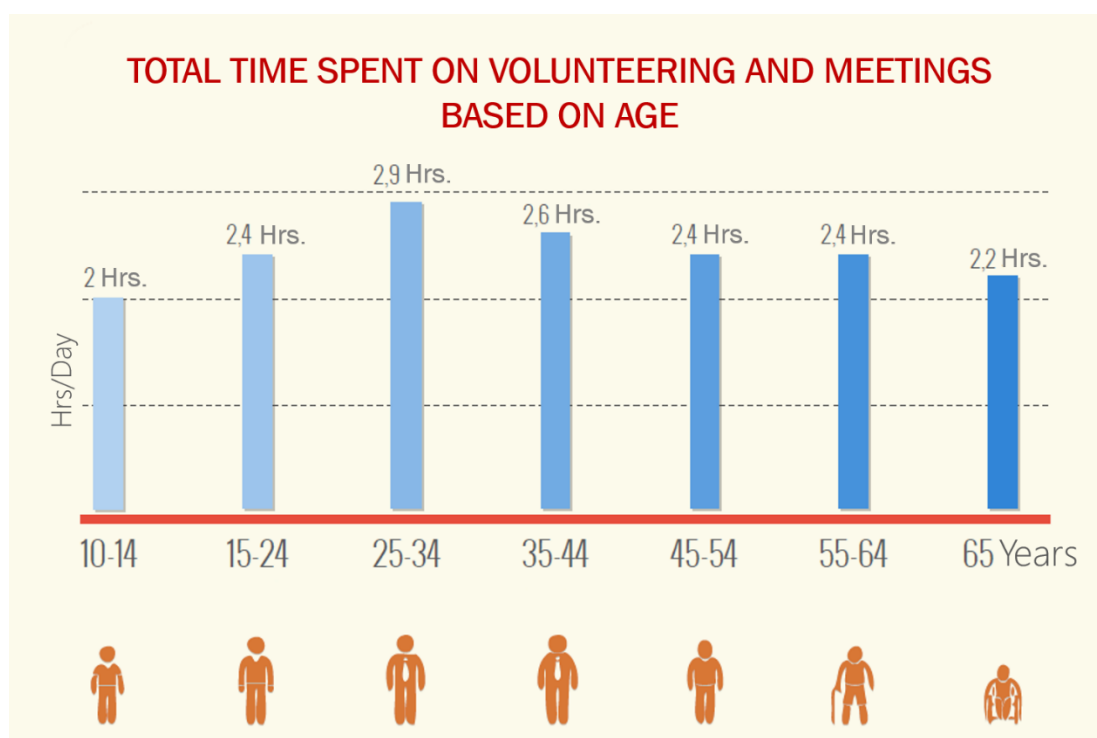


2,7 HOURS/DAY



11,7%

MEN



Figs 2-6: This material was developed on the basis of the results of the Time Use Survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) and the Government of Sweden within the UN project "Strengthening the National Statistical System".

Developed by: Independent Analytical Centre Expert-Group⁹

⁹ <https://www.expert-grup.org/en/> (accessed 5 May 2018).

1.3 CSO DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The legal framework in the Republic of Moldova favours CSO development and recognises three distinct legal forms of organisation: public associations, foundations and private institutions. Most CSOs in the Republic of Moldova are registered as public associations. Following amendments in 2010, the Law on Public Associations currently lays down more permissive requirements for public associations to be awarded public utility status.¹⁰ Currently, there are [11 820](#)¹¹ public associations, foundations and private institutions registered within the Register of non-commercial organisations; of the total, just 8 860 of them managed to publish their activity reports for the last five years, and only about 25% of them have implemented projects in the last three years. Their most important areas of activity are education/training (40%), social services (20.1%), community development (15.9%), policies and advocacy (11.2%), health (7.9%), and culture (4.9%).

However, there are no official latest statistics regarding the number of volunteers in Moldova. According to the latest research conducted by the Resource Centre of Moldovan Non-governmental Organisations for Human Rights (CReDO¹²), the involvement in organised volunteering activities is significantly below the average of countries with consolidated democracies (four to five times smaller than a decade ago) and it is lower than in Central and Eastern Europe (twice as small as a decade ago in the Czech Republic). The number of volunteers was set between 36 000 and 40 000 in 2015.

The national volunteer participation rate of population was 9-11%; in that case, it's hard to estimate the actual number of volunteers, but based on the number of NGOs and projects based on volunteering, we can assume there are more active volunteers in 2018.

Most volunteers are young people. There are no official statistics regarding the age groups, gender or the field where they are most active.

The main fields of activity are:

- NGO field: active participation in administrative and logistical aspects of NGO activity, organisation of trainings, seminars, events, typing of documents, translation, etc.;
- social assistance field: facilitators in the orphanages, assistance for old persons, assistance for persons with disabilities and for persons from underprivileged families;
- environmental field: sanitation activities, water cleaning, cleaning in parks, planting trees and flowers;
- faith-based volunteering: there are a number of churches and religious organisations, running projects on a volunteering basis.

The survival of NGOs depends on the involvement of volunteers in their activities. In rural areas, employees usually work on a voluntary or project basis. One of the obstacles is the wrong perception of the population on volunteering and the lack of a culture of volunteering. As there

¹⁰ <http://www.justice.gov.md/pageview.php?l=ro&id=788&idc=214> (accessed 5 May 2018).

¹¹ <http://rson.justice.md/organisations> (accessed 5 May 2018).

¹² <http://www.credo.md/?&lang=en> (accessed 5 May 2018).

is no strong volunteering culture in developing countries, including Moldova, the need for promoting civic activism and capacity building in the volunteering management is obvious. Moldova works on building its own interactive model on developing a volunteering culture in the country, which would be applicable throughout Eastern Europe.

2. ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE OF YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

The government is responsible for the development of the national framework for youth policies. From 2010 to 2016, there was a separate Ministry of Youth and Sports¹³ (MTS), which facilitated co-operation between CSOs and public institutions. Since 2016, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research¹⁴, re-named as the Ministry of Education and Research since August 2021, is the national authority responsible for the implementation of the Law on Volunteering¹⁵.

There is neither a national volunteer centre nor a resource centre for volunteering. There are several youth centres in the biggest cities of Moldova, but none in Chişinău, the capital. At this moment, there are: the National Volunteering Coalition and the National Youth Council as national umbrellas for organisations involved in volunteering. This coalition plans to create a national volunteer centre in future, but at the moment there is a lack of funding opportunities. The Volunteering Coalition was created in August 2006 by five non-governmental organisations and two networks of NGOs in partnership with the General Direction of Education, Youth and Sport of Chisinau and the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Research of Moldova.¹⁶ The Secretariat of the Volunteering Coalition is maintained by the Association "Youth for the right to live" (TDV¹⁷). The member organisations and networks are:

1. Association "Youth for the right to live" (TDV);
2. Young and Free: Training Resource Centre;
3. Resource Centre of Moldovan Non-governmental Organisations for Human Rights (CReDO);
4. Association "Service for Peace" (SFP);
5. The National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM¹⁸);
6. Social Network (represented by Association "Motivation").

At this moment, all the organisations that involve volunteers and the number of volunteers actively involved is not known. The main known volunteering organisations that work at regional level in the Republic of Moldova, operating with international volunteers, are: Association "Service for Peace" (SFP); ADVIT Moldova; Peace Corps Moldova, AVI Moldova, Creative Development Association, AIESEC Moldova, AEGEE Moldova, etc. There is no close co-operation between volunteering organisations. Also, it is known that many individual initiatives, small, newly established NGOs and faith-based organisations could increase their capacity to influence

¹³ <http://old.mts.gov.md/> (accessed 6 May 2018).

¹⁴ <http://mecc.gov.md/en> (accessed 6 May 2018).

¹⁵ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=23974&lang=ro

¹⁶ <http://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/tineret> (accessed 6 May 2018).

¹⁷ <https://tdvmoldova.wordpress.com/informatii-de-contact/> (accessed 6 May 2018).

¹⁸ <http://cntm.md/> (accessed 6 May 2018).

the problem solving. Public entities as City Halls/ mayor's office at the local level and some Police Centres are known to have gained the status of Host Organisations of Volunteering. The business sector is slightly involved in supporting NGOs, based on partnerships, offering more content or products, rather than financial support.

By 2016, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Moldova¹⁹ worked on the development and implementation of the mechanisms of the Law on Volunteering.²⁰ Simultaneously, the Association "Youth for the right to live" (TDV) develops sustainable models of promoting and encouraging volunteering (development of implementation mechanisms of the Law on Volunteering, developing policies to encourage volunteering supported by employers, public and media events involving civil society organisations, citizens and authorities on promoting the good practices and benefits of volunteering) through the project "Development and implementation of the policies for stimulating the volunteering in Moldova" made possible through the United States Agency for International Development (**USAID**), under AED's Moldova Civil Society Strengthening Program (**MCSSP**).

Other public administration bodies and political parties are not yet involved in promoting volunteering, even though they involve young people in political activities. The schools are getting more involved in promoting volunteering, even though there is no a commonly agreed subject on volunteering in schools.

2.1 CAPACITY BUILDING OF CSOs

Based on the latest study on CSOs capacity building, the surveyed entities conveyed their interest in institutional strengthening and building capacity to participate in governance. About 90% of respondents declared that their organisation (staff, members and volunteers) is interested in attending e-learning courses on organisational development, with 89% expressing an interest in organisational development concerning policy evaluation/advocacy/monitoring. The most frequently selected topics on organisational development that accumulated the highest shares of respondents were strategic planning (63.5%), developing and implementing projects and public accountability of civil society (58.3%).

The study was carried out by the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul"²¹ in co-operation with the Centre for Sociological Investigations and Marketing CBS AXA within the framework of the EU-Funded project "Strengthening non-state actors' capacity to promote reforms and increase public accountability".

¹⁹ <http://old.mts.gov.md/> (accessed 6 May 2018).

²⁰ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=336054> (accessed 6 May 2018).

²¹ <http://viitorul.org/en> (accessed 6 May 2018).

2.2 CSOs STRUCTURE

The consolidation of the civil society in the Republic of Moldova implies the existence of some platforms, alliances and umbrella organisations that contribute to CSO consolidation and efficiency. There are two major national platforms:

1. National Council of NGOs of Moldova;
2. National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

There are also a number of NGO networks involved in policy dialogue to develop the sectors they represent such as:

1. Alliance of Active NGOs in the Social Protection of Child and Family;
2. Alliance of Organisations for People with Disabilities;
3. Network of NGOs working in the area of HIV/AIDS, STIDs and drug addiction;
4. National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM);
5. Anti-corruption Alliance;
6. Forum of Women's Organisations of the Republic of Moldova;
7. Forum of Environmental NGOs, etc.

Youth participation in decision making at local level is done through 258 local councils and youth consultative bodies, created by Local Public Authorities. At the central level there is the Youth Advisory Council, which includes the most important networks of young people through which the non-governmental youth sector participates in decision making.

3. NATIONAL STRATEGY ON YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

In 2014, the Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted the National Strategy for Youth Sector Development 2020²² and an Action Plan for its implementation. Their purpose is to develop and consolidate the youth sector over six years, contributing to the creation of an adequate environment that ensures the evolution of each young individual both professionally and personally, including youth from groups with reduced opportunities. The Ministry of Education and Research has primary responsibility for the effective implementation of the strategy objectives. In the process of elaborating the action plan and the monitoring and evaluation framework, Ministry of Education and Research and its partners found that there are no data sources that would allow an adequate evaluation of the youth situation in several areas, making it impossible to measure the strategy's impact on those areas in the future. An important aspect to implement the strategy is partner involvement. The expertise and experience of the development partners in attracting different funds and external financing can greatly contribute to reaching the strategy goals.

The Ministry of Education and Research became a partner in the framework of the EU-OECD Youth Inclusion project, implemented by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and co-financed by the European Union (EU) (2014-2017). The project aims to analyse policies for youth in ten developing and emerging economies. The project adopts a

²² https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=49195&lang=ro

multi-sectoral approach to support countries in better responding to the aspirations of young people and strengthening youth involvement in national development processes. The project will shed light on what determines youth vulnerabilities and successful transitions into adulthood. It will also strengthen national capacities to design evidence-based policies that promote youth inclusion and youth well-being.

There is no systematic and reliable research on volunteering and its contributions in Moldova. Data relating to volunteering and the impact of volunteering are not measured in any way. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) of the Republic of Moldova does not mention anything about volunteering in the Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Moldova.²³ According to Article 10(3) of the Law on Volunteering, NBS should organise statistical research on volunteering topics every four years. The study “Cost-benefit Analysis of the Draft Law on Volunteering” drafted by CReDO in Moldova shows that the economic value of volunteering activity is estimated between 0.07% and 0.16% of GDP and that there is no data or information to evaluate the total positive effect of volunteering.

Every five years Moldova adopts a new Strategy on Youth²⁴. The last adopted strategy is for the 2014-2020 period, and is described as follows:

The goal of the strategy is to develop and strengthen the youth sector over the next six years, thus contributing to the creation of an adequate environment to ensure the personal and professional development of each young person, including those in low-income groups.

In order to achieve the proposed goal, four general objectives were defined:

- 1) increase the involvement of young people in the process of strengthening participatory democracy;
- 2) contribute to the formation of the knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes and behaviours necessary for the successful integration of young people into society, including those with fewer opportunities;
- 3) develop entrepreneurial and employment opportunities among young people, especially for those with fewer opportunities;
- 4) develop the youth sector infrastructure and support mechanisms to ensure the quality of youth work.

Strategic vision of the strategy is that the youth sector is recognised as an important area in the development and prosperity of the Republic of Moldova, which ensures the valorisation of the maximum potential of all young people and the improvement of the quality of their life.

In order to achieve the proposed strategic vision, four priority intervention directions have been identified:

²³ <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=263&id=2193> (accessed 6 May 2018).

²⁴ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=356215> (accessed 6 May 2018).

PRIORITY I. Youth participation

PRIORITY II. Youth services

PRIORITY III. Economic opportunities for young people

PRIORITY IV. Strengthening the youth sector.

For each strategic priority, an analysis of the existing situation and the rationale for the respective priority was carried out. Within each strategic priority, several sub-priorities have been identified and formulated to contribute to the overall achievement of the priority. For its part, each sub-priority, in the light of the specific objective set, must be achieved in accordance with the results on the basis of which the activities contained in the Action Plan on the implementation of the Strategy are formulated. The strategy will have a major and long-lasting impact on young people, as it involves their responsibility, enforcing them as active citizens, with full rights and obligations, capable of deciding and directing their own lives.

The social impact is manifested by improving the living conditions of young people, including those from low-income groups, by creating the conditions for participation and the development of their leadership skills, economic skills, meanwhile offering various opportunities of formal and non-formal education. All categories of disadvantaged young people are offered equal opportunities for: involvement in the decision-making processes, provision of goods and services, social and economic assistance, education and training, employment.

The economic impact is aimed at developing the country's economy by involving economically skilled young entrepreneurs and their families. As a result of implementing economic empowerment programmes, young people become more financially independent and able to manage their own businesses.

The administrative impact is manifested by strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant ministries in co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan. Thus, the central and local public administration authorities develop and consolidate specific structures for the youth sector and intersectoral collaboration in the youth field.

The fiscal impact is manifested by the total expenditures needed to implement the strategy and the sustainability of these investments. Investing in the youth sector from the state is an investment in a healthy and working generation.

This National Strategy on Youth also provides the main framework for national volunteering activity, establishing clear goals to be achieved in the field. These goals are developed in the Civil Society Development Strategy.

3.1 CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR 2018-2020

On 22 December 2017, the Civil Society Development Strategy for 2018-2020²⁵ and its Action Plan were officially submitted to the parliament. The strategy reflects Moldova's commitment to systematically strengthening the conditions for the dynamic development of the civil society.

The planned activities in the strategy include:

- the creation of a structure responsible for the co-operation with the civil society (within the government);
- supporting the enforcement of the 2% law;²⁶
- amending the sponsorship and philanthropy mechanism and adjusting the possibilities for donation deductions;
- supporting opportunities for CSO contracting of public services and works;
- ensuring CSO access to public funds;
- adjusting the legal framework for volunteering, etc.

The official introduction of the CSO Strategy and its Action Plan is a successful completion of more than a year of efforts in preparing a new CSO development strategy after the expiration of the previous one. The strategy was developed in a participatory manner by three cross-sector working groups, made up of representatives of the civil society, line ministries, the State Chancellery, Public Administration Academy, Prime Minister's Office, Moldovan Parliament, and development partners. In the last months of 2017, European Centre for Non-profit Law and the organisation FHI360 actively advocated for the strategy.

4. LAWS AND REGULATIONS ON YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

At national level, there are several public policies targeting young people, including those in low-income groups. In the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2020",²⁷ young people are presented as beneficiaries through the relevant studies for the career (priority I), taking into account youth unemployment and the level of their training in the educational system in order to integrate into the labour market. Thus, the state is trying to link the educational system to the requirements of the labour market in order to increase labour productivity and increase the employment rate in the economy. Moreover, the Ministry of Education has developed a sectoral document – the Education Strategy²⁸ for 2014-2020 "Education - 2020" – which provides for the development of the educational system through the access, relevance, quality and use of ICT, whose beneficiaries are the young people, treated as part of the formal education system. At the level of non-formal education, the Ministry of Education proposed the Concept of Validation of Non-Formal Education,²⁹ approved by the Government Decision of 2016.

²⁵ <http://www.parlament.md/ProcesulLegislativ/Proiectedeactelegislative/tabid/61/LegislativId/4044/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx> (accessed 11 May 2018).

²⁶ <http://www.justice.gov.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=214&id=3226> (accessed 11 May 2018).

²⁷ Eng. http://particip.gov.md/public/files/Moldova_2020_ENG1.pdf (accessed 11 May 2018).

²⁸ <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/strategia-educatia-2020-evaluare-la-mijloc-de-termen> (accessed 11 May 2018).

²⁹ <http://particip.gov.md/proiectview.php?l=ro&idd=4098> (accessed 11 May 2018).

These policies are needed to analyse the phenomenon of youth unemployment. Thus, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family developed the National Strategy on Employment Policies³⁰ for 2017-2021. The goal proposed in this strategy is to be achieved by increasing the number of jobs, improving quality and increasing labour productivity, and by enhancing social cohesion and inclusion. Employment policies will help combat the effects of structural unemployment, encourage labour participation, including young people, and increase the efficiency of integration and reintegration policies into the labour market by applying a specific set of measures.

Young people's access to reproductive health and sex education services is regulated by Law No. 1338 of 15 June 2012 on Reproductive Health,³¹ which stipulates that sex education is compulsory and that preparation for family life must take place in educational institutions and in other institutions where adolescents or young people, including those with special needs, are in accordance with specially developed programmes, which are part of the compulsory curricula of educational institutions, taking into account the age, sex and particularities of psychosexual development.

The strategy development took into account Article 125 of the Association Agreement³² between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union. This agreement provides for strengthening co-operation on youth policy and non-formal education for young people and youth workers and facilitating the active participation of all young people in society. It also supports the mobility of young people and youth workers as a means of promoting intercultural dialogue and the accumulation of knowledge, skills and competences outside formal education systems, including through volunteering, and promoting co-operation between youth organisations in support of civil society.

The other documents underpinning the development of this strategy in a transversal way (at all levels) was the Action Programme of the Government of the Republic of Moldova³³ (2016-2018), the Sectoral Decentralisation Strategy for Youth and Sport³⁴ as well as the National Decentralisation Strategy³⁵ and Action Plan for its Implementation for 2012-2018. They aim to ensure a local and democratic public administration that has the capacity and resources to provide public services in accordance with the needs and requirements of the beneficiaries, in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, equity, including people with special needs, as well as financial

³⁰ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=369765> (accessed 11 May 2018).

³¹ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=344838> (accessed 11 May 2018).

³² English version accessible at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2014.260.01.0004.01.ENG (accessed 11 May 2018).

³³ English translation accessible at https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/government_of_republic_of_moldova_-_action_programme_of_the_government_of_republic_of_moldova_for_2016-2018.pdf (accessed 11 May 2018).

³⁴ <http://www.parlament.md/LegislationDocument.aspx?Id=96154968-91d4-4374-a56b-67460d4f70e5> (accessed 11 May 2018).

³⁵ <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=344005&lang=1> (accessed 11 of May 2018).

discipline. The document is useful through its visions of youth services at local level and the role of youth centres.

The Law on Public Associations (NGOs),³⁶ No. 837-XIII of 17 May 1996, regulates the social relations relating to the realisation of the right of association of the citizens and sets the principles of establishing, registering, developing and terminating the activity of the public associations, including those of youth. Article 11(3) provides that "the public associations of youth and children benefit from the material and financial support of the state. The state grants to children's organisations the right to use free of charge or in preferential conditions the premises of schools, lyceums, colleges and extra-curricular institutions, cultural homes, palaces and houses of culture, sports facilities". Article 15 stipulates in paragraph (6) that members of public youth associations may be citizens who have reached the age of 14 and in paragraph (7) that members of public associations of children may be citizens who have reached the age of 10 years.

The [National Youth Law](#) in Article 4(a) states that youth are "young people, citizens of the Republic of Moldova, aged 14 to 35". The new Youth Law was adopted in 2016, with major changes, based on the [recommendations for the latest National Strategy on Youth](#).

Still, the main law for the volunteering is the National Law on Volunteering.

4.1 MOLDOVAN LAW ON VOLUNTEERING

The Law on Volunteering aims to acknowledge the importance of this activity in promoting the values of civic solidarity through the participation of Moldovan and foreign citizens. This law tries to promote the active participation of every citizen in the community's activities, to strengthen the civic responsibility and to capitalise the human capacity in order to fulfil the needs of the society. The law establishes a regulatory framework for voluntary activities in Moldova.

Despite the fact that the subject has been debated for the last 10 years, volunteering activity is not yet well developed in the Republic of Moldova. While it is no longer a priority, there are a lot of achievements in this field. The Moldovan Law on Volunteering³⁷ defines, at Article 2, volunteerism as "voluntary participation at the offering of services, knowledge and skills or provision of activities in public utility domains, on their own initiative, by the individual called volunteer. Volunteering can take place under the voluntary contract or outside it." This is an old definition developed during the first public discussions between 2006 and 2007, but actually often used even today.

The Moldovan definition of volunteerism defines the followings principles of volunteering:

- Volunteering addresses human, environmental and social needs.
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not-for-profit sector only.

³⁶ English text available at <http://www.e-democracy.md/en/legislation/publicassociations/> (accessed 12 May 2018).

³⁷ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=336054> (accessed 12 May 2018).

- Volunteering is always a matter of choice.
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community.
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers.

The Moldovan Law on Volunteering presents, at Article 3, the following basic principles of volunteering:

- a) participation as a volunteer on the basis of the freely expressed consent;
- b) active involvement of the volunteer in community life;
- c) carry out volunteering without any financial or material compensation from the beneficiary of the volunteer or host institution, except for covering the costs related to the action;
- d) recruiting volunteers on the basis of equal opportunities without any discrimination;
- e) knowledge by the volunteer of rights and obligations;
- f) knowledge of relevant activity involving voluntary contribution;
- g) participation in international volunteering.

Through the mechanisms to motivate volunteers, the Republic of Moldova is the state with one of the best laws on volunteering in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and some European Union countries. The volunteers will benefit from a range of incentives for volunteering:

a) Stimulating the accumulation of professional abilities:

Article 14(3) – the recognition of volunteering as work experience when seeking employment; its' certification and promotion;

Article 14(6) – five transferable educational credits are awarded annually for practical stages in areas related to public utility and specialty study of the volunteer;

Article 14(7) – volunteering will be considered initiation practice or license practice if they have confirmed at least 40 hours.

b) Stimulation of civic activism and recognition of the voluntary contribution:

Article 14(4) – volunteering taken into account at the enrolment in higher educational institutions, to provide scholarships or accommodation in a student hostel, in the case of the accumulation of equal score by two or more candidates.

c) Stimulation of host institutions:

Article 16(1) – local authorities may give exemptions and facilities to host institutions to pay local taxes under the Tax Code;

Article 16(2) – NGOs that have the public utility status will benefit from a preferential right to purchase public social services.

Based on the law, in 2016 the Commission for Certification of the Host Institutions on Volunteering was adopted.³⁸ Now, any legal entity governed by public or private law, non-profit organisations or foundations, can request the Commission to certify their entity as a host institution for voluntary activity. This status entitles them to use the following tools for working with volunteers: Volunteer Contract, Volunteering Certificate, Volunteer Card, and Referral Letter, as officially recognised by the government.

The Law is being implemented by the Ministry of Education and Research ³⁹. Over 60 non-governmental organisations, public institutions, faith and community based organisations hold the status of Host Organisations of volunteering.

5. CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY PROGRAMMES

5.1 YOUTH VOLUNTEERING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union has a set of policies and strategies targeting young people. These policies promote the integration of young people both from a social and economic point of view, as well as the personal achievement of young people, social cohesion and active citizenship. At the same time, young Europeans face a number of challenges: unemployment, limited access to education or training, poverty, low participation and representation of young people in the democratic process, and various health problems. Therefore, a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field has been designed in order to provide better opportunities for young people in Europe.

In the context of European co-operation in the youth field, this strategy guides the principles, objectives and areas mentioned in the EU Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on the renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-2018) and sets two important objectives to be reached by 2018:

- 1) creating more equal opportunities for all young people in education and the labour market;
- 2) promoting active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity among all young people.

The priority areas for intervention with reference to young people are: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, volunteering, social inclusion, youth in the world, creativity and culture. In the context of the EU accession policy and the Moldova – EU Association Agreement and the Action Plan for its implementation, national youth policies are in the process of adapting to European youth policies. Young people in Moldova have the opportunity to access a range of mobility programmes and to exchange

³⁸ http://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_cu_privire_la_instituirea_comisiei_de_certificare_a_igav.pdf (accessed 12 May 2018).

³⁹ <https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/voluntariat>

experiences in the European environment such as "ERASMUS+", "Erasmus for all", "FP7", "Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions", "CEEPUS" etc.

5.2 INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS IN MOLDOVA

In 2024-2018 about 450 volunteers from 26 countries came to Moldova. Most of these volunteers are part of the EVS (European Voluntary Service)⁴⁰ project implemented through Erasmus+. Between 2014 and 2017, most international volunteers were from Spain, the UK, Italy, France and Germany. Also, we had a few volunteers from Ireland, Japan, Sweden and the Netherlands.

Most international volunteers come to Moldova via the European Solidarity Corps program hosted by organisations as [ADVIT, "MilleniumM" Training and Development Institute](#)⁴¹ which is also hosting the Info Centre in Moldova for Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps.

6. RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT YOUTH VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Since Moldova's independence in 1991, the issues of youth participation and youth development gained increasing attention on the political agenda of the government. The National Youth Policy defines as its major goal "the involvement of young people in the decision-making process in the areas of social, economic, cultural and political development of the country, by creating local youth councils and other forms of participation". Indeed, structures and forms of youth participation have expanded, including youth councils, youth NGOs, youth teams of peer-to-peer educators, youth volunteering groups, youth parliament and Scout Groups. The National Law on Youth highlights the importance of the National Law on Volunteering, providing a legal platform to volunteering activities, and the establishment of Youth Resource Centres all over the country, giving youth access to information and services, activities related to non-formal education, vocational trainings and leisure-time activities. Local and National Youth Councils facilitate dialogue among young people and different community actors, in order to foster their involvement in the design and implementation of youth policies at the national and local levels.

There is not yet a database of all volunteers from Moldova and volunteer opportunities. There is just an online document⁴² of those young people who are now official members of national NGOs. Most available opportunities can be found on www.civic.md, the best known page, or on www.youth.md. Different sites of different organisations are also a good source for youth opportunities; here we can mention also www.cntm.md.

The Law on Volunteering, at Article 10(2), mentioned that central administrative authorities will co-ordinate databases containing information on offers and requests for volunteers. The

⁴⁰ https://europa.eu/youth/EU/voluntary-activities/european-voluntary-service_en (accessed 12 May 2018).

⁴¹ <http://millenium.md/>

⁴² http://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/registru_de_evidenta_al_carnetelor_de_voluntar_eliberate_1.pdf (accessed 12 May 2018).

Volunteering Coalition promoted volunteerism through various activities including the National Week of Volunteering (SNV) “Come join our volunteers!” and annual National Volunteer Festival “Hats off to the volunteers”.

December 5 - the National Volunteer Festival, celebrates volunteering promoters and volunteers themselves. The event brings together around 1 500 people. NGO and public authority representatives and individuals are awarded prizes, and receive special certificates which confirm their engagement in voluntary activities. Also, every August, the National Youth Council of Moldova organises the National Youth Festival.

7. VOLUNTEER SKILLS RECOGNITION

There is no possibility of verifying the non-formally and informally gained knowledge and skills leading to a professional qualification in Moldova. The only relevant information you can get for volunteering activity is based on the number of hours you were involved as a volunteer and the main responsibilities and results you achieved. This information is signed in the volunteer’s “card” - “In Romanian – carnet de voluntar” (see Fig. 7 below) like the official employment card “In Romanian – carnet de muncă” (see Fig. 8 below). Based on the National Volunteer Law, experience gained as a volunteer is equal to work experience. In this way young people are encouraged to be active as volunteers and gain relevant experience that could be applied in future as an employee.

Still recognition of non-formal and informal learning is a priority for the national policy agenda. Although learning, as a rule, takes place in a formal context, a bigger part of the learning is done either non-formally or informally. The experience and skills required in a job obtained this way cannot be used in employment because of the lack of official regulations on this. Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning contribute to increasing the visibility of human capital, a benefit to the whole of society.



Fig. 7: “Volunteer card”, “carnet de voluntar” Moldova, 2016.



Fig. 8: “Employment card”, “carnet de muncă”, Moldova.

8. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

The latest annual USAID’s CSO Sustainability Index⁴³ lists financial sustainability as the main problem of civil society in the Republic of Moldova.

Financial viability did not change significantly in 2017, although CSOs increasingly sought domestic funding at national and local levels and corporate donors were more motivated to make donations to CSOs, as they are now eligible for larger deductions, thereby setting the stage for improvements in 2018.

According to the study *Fundraising by Moldovan Civil Society Organisations from Domestic Sources: Opportunities and Perspectives*, published in 2016 by CONTACT Centre, approximately 17% of CSOs’ income comes from local and national sources, while the rest comes from foreign grants. Key international donors include the EU Delegation to Moldova, UNDP and other UN agencies, USAID, Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida), and the Swiss Co-operation Office in Moldova. Several embassies, including those of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Slovakia, also play an important role in financing CSOs. Important private international donors include Soros Moldova Foundation, the East Europe Foundation (EEF), the Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief (SOIR), and Swiss Interchurch Aid (HEKS). At the end of 2016, the European Union restarted its financial support for programmes in Moldova, which was stopped in 2015 due to the political crisis and lack of progress in making necessary reforms. As part of this support, the EU provides €8 million for a programme to develop and strengthen the capacities of civil society in Moldova. The programme is focused on developing the capacities of civil society to ensure the active participation of CSOs in decision-making and policy-making processes, as well as the implementation of the Moldova-European Union association processes.

The Youth Banks programme – implemented by EEF, with financial support from Sida and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with the Moldovan Ministry of Youth and Sports

⁴³ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/CSOSI_Report_7-28-17.pdf (accessed 19 May 2018).

– concluded in 2016. The programme raised US\$10 375 in 2016, about the same amount as in 2015, including US\$2 205 from the Ministry of Youth and Sports. This funding was distributed to 107 youth projects in 59 communities.

Local government support for CSOs is still moderate due to local governments' limited resources and capacities to establish programmes to support CSOs. Notably Ungheni, Ialoveni, and Soroca districts organised open and transparent funding competitions for youth CSOs in 2016. A few national government agencies also provide support to CSOs. For example, in 2016 the Ministry of Youth and Sports provided financial support to 23 youth CSOs after the budget was increased and the National Health Insurance Company contracted 10 CSOs to provide health services.

The state provides some fiscal benefits to the civil society. Following an amendment to the Tax Code, income tax exemptions were extended to all non-commercial organisations. Prior to this, only associations and foundations with public utility status were exempt from income tax. Currently, to be eligible for this exemption a CSO must submit a request to the local subdivision of the State Tax Inspectorate for subsequent approval by the Ministry of Finance. Neither public associations nor foundations enjoy fiscal benefits on VAT and, with few exceptions regulated by law, do not benefit from other fiscal benefits. Moldovan legislation allows income-generating activity by and within CSOs only if this action meets the organisation's statutory goals. Otherwise, it requires that CSOs register themselves as economic agents. The legal framework on philanthropy and sponsorship is made up of the relevant provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, the Civil Code, the Law on Philanthropy and Sponsorship (2002) and other legislative acts. Article 36 of the Tax Code provides that the resident taxpayer is entitled to the deduction of any donations made during the fiscal year for philanthropic or sponsorship purposes of up to 10% of his taxable income. However, studies carried out within civil society show that the legislation on the civil society funding: "does not encourage philanthropy and sponsorship by economic agents".

Table 3: Sources of civil society organizations funding¹⁴

| | I | | II | | III | | Multiple | |
|---|----|-------|----|-------|-----|-------|----------|-------|
| International organizations, foreign donors | 91 | 70.0% | 9 | 9.8% | 7 | 10.8% | 107 | 82.3% |
| Membership fees | 16 | 12.3% | 13 | 14.1% | 15 | 23.1% | 44 | 33.8% |
| Public administration funds | 5 | 3.8% | 19 | 20.7% | 6 | 9.2% | 30 | 23.1% |
| Economic agents | 3 | 2.3% | 10 | 10.9% | 11 | 16.9% | 24 | 18.5% |
| Donations | 6 | 4.6% | 18 | 19.6% | 12 | 18.5% | 36 | 27.7% |
| Service provision | 5 | 3.8% | 18 | 19.6% | 9 | 13.8% | 32 | 24.6% |
| Their own account | 4 | 3.1% | | | | | 4 | 3.1% |
| Grants | | | 2 | 2.2% | 4 | 6.2% | 6 | 4.6% |
| National environmental fund | | | 2 | 2.2% | | | 2 | 1.5% |
| National organizations | | | 1 | 1.1% | | | 1 | 0.8% |
| Assistance projects | | | | | 1 | 1.5% | 1 | 0.8% |

Table 3: Source: Data of survey and face to face interviews with civil society leaders, conducted by CBS AXA, in co-operation with IDIS 'Viitorul', 2016.

This table shows not only a significant difference compared to other countries, where incomes are balanced between own resources, government support and philanthropy,⁴⁴ but also a sustainability problem of the civil society from the Republic of Moldova. Financial sustainability issues are invoked by CSOs in self-evaluations. Over 66% of organisations surveyed consider the legal framework on CSO funding as “bad” or “non-existent” in the Republic of Moldova, with only 7.7% deeming their financial sustainability as “good”.

The USAID Sustainability Index reveals large discrepancies between the organisational capacity of CSOs in Moldova and Transnistria, though this gap has decreased slightly in recent years. There are limited opportunities to attract grants in Transnistria, while local fund-raising potential is virtually non-existent. The financial sustainability of CSOs is therefore reduced, particularly when Transnistrian banks charge CSOs an additional fee for receiving international grants. In 2012, Transnistrian CSOs developed a legislative initiative for the allocation of funds from regional budgets for small initiatives at local level. Although this initiative has not yet been approved by the authorities, in 2012 many social CSOs obtained small grants and support from local public administrations. For now, Transnistrian CSOs depend significantly on support from foreign donors.

8.1 CSO FUNDING BY FOREIGN DONORS FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

Eighteen development partners⁴⁵ of the Republic of Moldova were among the main donors of organisations interviewed. The USA, the Czech Republic, Sweden and the Netherlands provided support for more than half of the CSOs surveyed. A third of those surveyed listed PNUD Moldova among the first three donors. Other important donors named were: East Europe Foundation, Soros Foundation, UNICEF, World Bank, ILO, IOM and other international organisations and foundations from different countries operating in particular areas. 25% of surveyed CSOs received financial assistance from the European Commission; nearly one third of organisations interviewed said they had applied as the main applicant, while just over one third (35.4%) participated as a partner in EU-funded projects.

Almost half of the organisations (43.8%) had never applied for any EU funding, and less than half of the organisations surveyed said they had been invited by the EU Delegation to participate in consultations, with about 40% invited several times. The most popular programme – European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) – involved over half (51.4%) of the organisations surveyed. Significant shares of respondents reported participating in the

⁴⁴ Lester M. Salamon, “The state of Global Civil Society and Volunteering”, Comparative nonprofit sector working paper, Johns Hopkins University: CCSS, March 2013, p. 10.

⁴⁵ Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, European Union, Estonia, EBRD, IMF, Hungary, Germany, Japan, Liechtenstein, Poland, Romania, Sweden, UN, Switzerland, United States, World Bank. Based on the 2016 study commissioned by the State Chancellery of Moldova, “Moldova Development Partners 2014-2016”.

Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility calls (24.3%), in EU thematic programmes: Non-state actors and local authorities (20%), Investing in people (12.9%), Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP) (10%) and Migration and Asylum (57%). A range of other programmes with the participation of one or two organisations were also mentioned: ENP EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY, Technical Assistance Project, Regional projects, ECHO, TACIS, Project to develop rural extension service, Thematic programme in preventing trafficking, Programme with Austria, Partnerships with international organisations, Programme with Romania, Ukraine and Moldova, TEMPUS, EASTINVEST, Voice of the people, Governance in education, PHARE, Integration into society, Vocational Training, CBC Programme, Joint Operational Programme, Contests of the Foreign Ministry, ERASMUS+.

8.2 2% LAW: A MILESTONE TOWARDS CSO SUSTAINABILITY IN MOLDOVA

On 21 July 2016 the 2% Law was adopted in parliament. Starting 1 January 2017, physical taxpayers are able to contribute 2% of their income tax calculated for the previous year upon their own choice to a non-commercial organisation or religious organisations. This law has improved a similar law adopted in 2014. The mechanism became a reality thanks to a joint effort and good co-operation with local CSOs and authorities.

At this moment there are [511 public associations](#), foundations and private institutions and [83 religious cults](#) registered at the Ministry of Justice as beneficiaries of the 2% Law.

9. CURRENT DEBATES AND REFORMS

The policy dialogue in the Republic of Moldova is slowly evolving in the context of the national transition to democracy and a market economy. State and social partners have gradually institutionalised dialogue, intending to streamline public policies and boost the sustainable development of the Republic of Moldova. Policy dialogue implies direct or indirect communication and seeks to develop consensus among public, private and non-profit sectors on recommendations for improving public policies. Social dialogue in the Republic of Moldova was institutionalised recently, after 2010. This implied tripartite interaction between the state, employers' organisations and trade unions aimed at reshaping the social and economic policies of the Republic of Moldova. Law No. 245 of 2006 on the functioning of the National Commission for collective consultations and negotiations at branch level and territorial level⁴⁶ provided for the development of social partnership by establishing a legal framework for national, regional and industry commissions. According to this law, the objectives of the National Commission, sector commissions and territorial commissions are: tripartite consultations between social partners on issues related to labour and socio-economic problems of national, business and territorial interest, promotion of social partnership at all levels; maintaining cohesion, peace and

⁴⁶ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=317186> (accessed 24 May 2018)

social stability in the Republic of Moldova; and support for the participation of civil society in promoting national policies.⁴⁷

At this moment the Ministry of Education and Research (MECR) on the youth component does not have a subordinate structure (institution) that would be responsible for the implementation of youth policies. In January 2018, MECR launched an initiative on the organisation and functioning of the National Agency for the Development of Youth Programmes and Activities.⁴⁸

10. CONCLUSIONS

The Republic of Moldova is a part of the international and European agreements guaranteeing and protecting fundamental human rights and freedoms. The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova as well as its national laws and legislative acts guarantee and protect the freedom of assembly, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to information and freedom of association. CSO sustainability in the Republic of Moldova has seen a steady increase, and the sector has undergone a qualitative change due to significant legislative reforms, strengthening of technical skills and enhanced advocacy capacity. Moldovan CSOs still face a number of problems that greatly impede the efficiency of the entire civil society, the most relevant being limited financial sustainability and a lack of social confidence and civic engagement among the population.

However, due the political and economic crisis, increased corruption at the administrative level, high migration of the young people, and the merger of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture into one institution, the CSOs are becoming less involved in national issues, focusing on smaller projects in more specific topics.

The state does not see youth policies as a high priority, investing less financial resources to fund CSOs, and there is a lack of facilitation to establish partnership between CSOs and the business sector. The state provides some tax benefits for CSOs, such as income tax exemptions for organisations with public utility status, but CSO activity is 80-90% funded by foreign donors, mostly the European Union and its member states: over a quarter of the organisations receive financial support from the EU. Policy dialogue has become institutionalised in the Republic of Moldova through reforms related to democratic consolidation and European integration. CSOs in the Republic of Moldova have evolved into important social partners, forging various public-sector relations and participating in the public policy cycle.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

⁴⁷ Law No. 275 of 21.07.2006 on the organisation and functioning of the National Commission for consultation and collective bargaining, committees for consultation and collective bargaining at industry and local level, Monitorul Oficial No. 142-145 of 08.09.2006.

⁴⁸ <http://particip.gov.md/proiectview.php?l=ro&idd=4900> (accessed 24 May 2018).

EU Neighbourhood financial instruments should be open to Moldovan NGOs on equal footing with the EU-based ones, hence creating equality, stimulating cross-border cooperation and an enabling volunteering infrastructure in the Republic of Moldova. Current policy suggests a spirit of superiority that blocks and offends the partnership with NGOs from neighbour countries of the EU.

Strengthening CSOs for participation in a complex dialogue on sustainable development policies requires a lasting commitment focused on five major activities as follows:

CSO institutionalisation

- Promote a new "social contract" ensuring social cohesion in the Republic of Moldova and clearly defining public, private and non-profit sector competences, as well as legitimising non-governmental organisations in the collective consciousness.
- Improve the legal framework regulating CSOs, including by simplifying the registration procedure of organisations and reducing the term from 30 to 15 days.

Strengthening the financial sustainability of CSOs

- Actively promote and use the Law of 2%, which was negotiated between CSOs, Government and the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and adopted in 2016.
- Grant CSOs access to governmental programmes on science and innovation.
- Negotiate and establish lasting partnerships between CSOs and the private sector to achieve corporate social responsibility.
- Establish partnerships between CSOs, universities and local and European research institutions to apply for Horizon 2020⁴⁹ innovation and EU research programmes.

Strengthening CSO engagement in policy dialogue

- Improve the legal framework for CSOs engaged in policy dialogue, including:
 - Law 64/2010 on freedom of expression;
 - Law 239/2008 regarding transparency in decision making and its implementation;
 - regulation;
 - Law 98/2012 on specialised central public administration;
 - Law 436/2006 on local public administration.
- Develop institutional mechanisms for co-operation between public authorities and CSOs.
- Develop institutional mechanisms for co-operation between CSOs and the business sector.
- Improve national and sector platforms to strengthen CSOs and increase intra-sector collaboration.
- Implement a training programme for CSOs on topics such as advocacy and activism, problem analysis and policy implementation monitoring.

Improving CSO dialogue with foreign development partners

- Develop institutional mechanisms of co-operation between foreign development partners and CSOs.

⁴⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/> (accessed 24 May 2018).

- Establish a platform for dialogue that brings together foreign development partners, public authorities, the business sector and CSOs.
- Set up a separate expenditure category in the State Chancellery, which would accurately reflect external assistance to civil society.

Promoting the public image of CSOs and increasing communication with citizens

- Conduct a wide campaign to promote CSOs and disseminate information about their activities.
- Develop national and regional strategies on improving communication between CSOs and citizens.
- Engage citizens in CSO activities and decision making at the local and central levels.

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