



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

fcnm



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ACFC/SRV(2019)011

Fifth Report submitted by the Republic of Moldova

**Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities –
received on 22 May 2019**

**FIFTH PERIODIC REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
PART I.....	4
<i>Information on practical arrangements made by the Republic of Moldova to continue implementing the Framework Convention, to increase the involvement of civil society in the process and to pursue the dialogue with the Advisory Committee</i>	
PART II.....	7
<i>Information on measures taken by the Republic of Moldova to address the issues for immediate action identified in the forth monitoring cycle and assessment of other core issues that are outstanding after four cycles.</i>	
Situation in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova.....	7
Strengthening of national legal and regulatory framework.....	8
Practical measures:	
• <i>Implementation of the Action Plan for 2017-2020 for the Strategy on the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2027.....</i>	13
• <i>Measures taken to preserve the memory of the Holocaust victims, to study and to spread knowledge about the Holocaust.....</i>	14
• <i>Implementation of the Action Plan to Support the Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2020.....</i>	16
• <i>Ensuring the necessary conditions for persons belonging to national minorities, including adults, to study and to apply the State language.....</i>	20
• <i>Measures undertaken in the process of preparation for the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.....</i>	21
PART III	
<i>Information on relevant developments on an article-by-article basis, in the context of the recommendations for action made in the forth monitoring cycle</i>	
• Article 3 of the Framework Convention.....	23
• Article 4 of the Framework Convention.....	25
• Article 5 of the Framework Convention.....	30
• Article 6 of the Framework Convention.....	32
• Article 7 of the Framework Convention.....	35
• Article 8 of the Framework Convention.....	36
• Article 9 of the Framework Convention.....	37
• Article 10 of the Framework Convention.....	42
• Article 11 of the Framework Convention	43
• Article 12 of the Framework Convention.....	46
• Article 14 of the Framework Convention.....	48
• Article 16 of the Framework Convention	53
CONCLUDING REMARKS	58
ANNEX: List of abbreviations.....	60

INTRODUCTION

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”) was signed by the Republic of Moldova in 1995 and ratified by the Decision of the Parliament No. 1001 from 22 October 1996.

The fifth periodic report of the Republic of Moldova on implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was developed pursuant to article 25, paragraph 2 of the Convention and on the basis of the Outline for the State reports adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE) at the 1169th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies on 30 April 2013.

The present report includes information on application of the Convention’s provisions and the main results achieved in the period 2014-2018. Particular attention was paid to the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as “the Advisory Committee”) following the examination of the fourth periodic report¹ and reflected in the Fourth Opinion on Moldova of the Advisory Committee dated 26 May 2016 ACFA/OP/IV(2016)004.²

The fifth periodic report of the Republic of Moldova was developed by the Agency for Interethnic Relations in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research; Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Internal Affairs; Bureau for Reintegration Policy under the State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova; National Bureau of Statistics; Audiovisual Coordinating Council; Agency for Public Services; People’s Advocate Office; Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality; The National Public Broadcasting Company “Teleradio-Moldova”; Center of Ethnology at the Institute of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, local public authorities.

With a view to streamlining the process of drafting and examination of the current report, the Agency for Interethnic Relations set up a cross-sectoral working group consisting of representatives of central public authorities. On 6 December 2018 a round table attended by the members of the cross-sectoral working group, and the members of the Coordinating Council of Ethno-cultural Organizations was organized to discuss the draft report.

To ensure transparency and respect for the participatory principle, the report was published on the website www.bri.gov.md for public consultations with the civil society.

PART I

Information on practical arrangements made by the Republic of Moldova to continue implementing the Framework Convention, to increase the involvement of civil society in the process and to pursue the dialogue with the Advisory Committee

¹The fourth periodic report of the Republic of Moldova on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was submitted to the Advisory Committee on 10 June 2015.

² In this context, it should be noted that the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the implementation of the Framework Convention by the Republic of Moldova under the 4th monitoring cycle has so far not been adopted. The draft resolution elaborated by the Secretariat of the Framework Convention was consulted with the Agency for Interethnic Relations via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration in the period August-September 2017 and April 2018.

In the reporting period the Republic of Moldova continued to demonstrate a constructive engagement in implementing the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by taking a series of measures to promote the rights of national minorities.

The process of implementing the Framework Convention at the state level was coordinated by the Bureau of Interethnic Relations (hereinafter referred to as – “the BIR”). It is worth mentioning that pursuant the government policies on public administration reform³ the BIR’s structure and functions were subject to modification. According to the existing legal provisions,⁴ one of the fundamental principles of organization and functioning of central public administration is the delimitation of policy development and promotion duties entrusted to ministries from the function of policy implementation.

The analysis of normative and institutional framework in the field of interethnic relations highlighted that the BIR was responsible for the elaboration, promotion and implementation of public policies in the field of interethnic relations and functioning of languages spoken on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, as well as for the development of regulatory framework for the implementation of legislative and normative acts in the field concerned.

This situation contradicted the principle of delimitation of policy development and promotion functions from the function of policy implementation as mentioned above. In this context, a new piece of legislation on organization and functioning of the institution in question⁵ was approved. It stipulated the renaming of the Bureau for Interethnic Relations in the Agency for Interethnic Relations (hereinafter referred as to „the AIR”), a central administrative authority subordinated to the Government of the Republic of Moldova. The functions of policy development and promotion in the field of interethnic relations and the functioning of languages were transferred to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (hereinafter referred as to „the MECR”)⁶, but the task of the policy implementation in the field was retained by the re-formed institution - the AIR.

Based on its functional competences, experience, forms of activity and institutional capacities, the AIR performs its functions in the following fields of activity: 1. consolidation of interethnic relations; 2. development of intercultural dialogue and strengthening of civic identity; 3. functioning of languages and promotion of linguistic diversity.

Coordinating the process of implementing the Framework Convention, the AIR monitors the application of the document’s basic provisions; develops the periodic reports of the Republic of Moldova, provides trainings to bodies of central and local public administration, representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations of national minorities, and other institutions concerned.

Emphasis was placed on activities related to the promotion and realization of the provision of the Framework Convention and recommendations/conclusions set out in the Fourth Opinion on Moldova of 26 May 2016, ACFA/OP/IV(2016)004.

³ The Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2016-2020 was approved by the Decision of the Government No. 911 of 25 July 2016 and the Action Plan for 2016-2018 on the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2016-2020 was adopted by the Decision of the Government No.1351 of 15 December 2016.

⁴ Law No. 98 of 4 May 2015 on Specialized Central Public Authorities, art. 4 para. 1 (b)

⁵ The Government Decision No. 593 of 25 June 2018 on the Organization and Functioning of the Agency for Interethnic Relations

⁶ To carry out the functions in the field of interethnic relations and functioning of languages a new Interethnic Relations Policy Service was established within the MECR, the Government Decision No. 1243 of 19 December 2018.

In order to ensure transparency and reach out to the broader public about the content of the Fourth Opinion, the AIR translated and submitted it for examination to the Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and Interethnic Relations, the State Chancellery of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, line ministries, other central and local public administration bodies, the Ombudsman (People's Advocate Office), Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, „Teleradio-Moldova” Company, etc.

In order to raise awareness among the members of the Coordinating Council of Ethno-cultural Organizations of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as „CC”) that operates under the AIR, the Fourth Opinion was translated into the Russian language used on the territory of the republic along with the State language.

The conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee were discussed during the National Conference held on 22 December 2016 by the AIR in cooperation with the Steering Committee of the Coordinating Council of Ethno-cultural Organizations, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Law on the Rights of National Minorities and the Legal Status of Their Organizations No. 382 of 19 July 2001. As stated during the Conference, the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee contains the recommendations for actions to address issues of major importance for the national minorities in the Republic of Moldova, including those related to the amendment of certain norms / provisions of the national legislation. In addition, the participants in the event discussed points concerning policy-making and policy development in the field of interethnic relations, as well as cooperation of public authorities and civil society in the process of national minority integration.

With a view to promoting the rights of national minorities in terms of the Framework Convention implementation, the overall portfolio of activities carried out by central specialized public administrative bodies and other central administrative authorities has grown, as well as the level of their participation in the promotion of this treaty in the spheres of their competence.⁷

The activity of the national minority rights NGOs has been developed, including implementation of projects, organization of seminars, conferences, trainings on issues arising, inter alia, from the context of the Framework Convention. These actions are held in cooperation with the development partners, under various programmes of the EU, CoE, OSCE and diplomatic missions of the United Kingdom, USA, Germany, etc. accredited in the Republic of Moldova. For example, among such NGOs are the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE)⁸, the Institute for Strategic Initiatives (IPIS)⁹, which recently organized the following activities with the participation of state authorities, civil society and national minority leaders:

a) On 1 November 2018 IPRE, IPIS and the Youth Resources Center – DACIA in partnership with the Institute for European Politics based in Berlin organized a local dialogue on interethnic relations and social cohesion in the Republic of Moldova in the Soroca municipality. The purpose of this exercise was to identify the problems and measures that need to be implemented to strengthen interethnic relations in Soroca. Some of the most important conclusions made during the debates were the following:

⁷ See Part II and III of the report.

⁸The Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE) was established in March 2015 as an independent, non-partisan and non-profit action center for research and analysis. The IPRE’s mission is to accelerate the European integration of the Republic of Moldova by promoting the implementation of systemic reforms, increasing participatory democracy and strengthening the role of citizens in decision-making processes at national and local levels.

⁹ The Institute for Strategic Initiatives (IPIS) is a NGO established in 2017. One of the areas covered by the IPIS expertise is conflict settlement and interethnic consolidation.

- Education is a complicated subject in the region, it is, therefore, cooperation between the media and the education sector is to be improved.
- Ethnic diversity should be used as a tool for economic growth. In this regard, new educational programs on entrepreneurship for ethnic minorities should be developed.
- A major social problem is the lack of communication between different ethnic communities.

The event was organized in the framework of the project “Promoting civil society and interethnic dialogue in the Republic of Moldova in the context of the EU association process (CIVID)”.

The general objective of the project is to improve social harmony at regional level by encouraging public discourse and development of public policy proposals for integration of ethnic groups, as well as by supporting the implementation of the Strategy for Consolidation of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2027.

b) On 1 October 2018, IPRE and IPIS, in partnership with the Berlin Institute for European Politics organized in Chisinau a conference “Civil Society and Interethnic dialogue in the Republic of Moldova – challenges, actors and solutions”. The Moldovan and German experts underlined the role of civil society in strengthening the interethnic dialogue. The participants discussed the situation with interethnic relations and social cohesion in Moldova, the key challenges (socio-economic, educational and media), as well as solutions and approaches to ensure better integration of ethnic communities and improve social cohesion in the Republic of Moldova.¹⁰

c) On 17 October 2018 IPIS presented the first video spots produced as part of the project “We are Moldova – rediscovering ethnic communities”, which is implemented with the financial support of the US Department of State. The project aims at offering a new vision of ethnic communities in our country. The project foresees the production of 10 videos of up to two minutes targeting primarily young people in Moldova. The scenarios of the spots were developed following a series of public consultations with the representatives of ethnic communities, experts and opinion leaders. As some characters of the videos to be produced within the project belong to different ethnic groups, participants in public consultations stressed the need to respect the protagonists’ right to self-identification. Furthermore, it was suggested that the video spots would reflect activity and contribution made by various ethnic communities to the overall development of Moldova.¹¹

d) A study “Strengthening social cohesion and a common identity in the Republic of Moldova” was conducted in 2017 within the project “Consolidating the national identity in the Republic of Moldova in the context of association with the European Union”, implemented with the support of the German Federal Foreign Office in 2017. It resulted in a publication of a special edition entitled “Strengthening Social Cohesion and a Common Identity in the Republic of Moldova: Key Issues and Practical Recommendations” which appeared both in the Romanian and Russian languages.¹² The edition was prepared by the Institute for European Policies in Berlin, in partnership with IPRE and IPIS. This work is an attempt to generate constructive discussions about a possible integrationist model of society that might arise from civic identity

¹⁰ The Conference was organized as part of the “Promotion of civil society and interethnic dialogue in the Republic of Moldova in the context of association with the EU (CIVID)”. The project will last 11 months (from July 2018 to June 2019). The planned activities include public debate, workshops and TV debates in regions such as Soroca and Taraclia. By the completion of the project experts are envisaged to come up with the policy recommendations for improving the legal framework for ethnic minority integration.

¹¹ Moldovan TV channels will be invited to use these videos free of charge as local content.

¹² Strengthening Social Cohesion and a Common Identity in the Republic of Moldova: Key Issues and Practical Recommendations.- Chisinau, 2017. – 49 p.

background. A civic identity could be built around a state development and institutional modernization program that would increase loyalty for the state - the Republic of Moldova.¹³

PART II

Information on measures taken by the Republic of Moldova to address the issues for immediate action identified in the forth monitoring cycle and assessment of other core issues that are outstanding after four cycles.

The ethnic diversity of the Republic of Moldova forms a part of the country's history and culture. Pursuing an effective policy to support harmonious interethnic dialogue and to address key issues will help Moldova to become a more united country for all its citizens. Representing one of the preconditions for Moldova's democratic development, integration of ethnic communities remains to be one of the Government's priority concerns.

The ethnic diversity of the Republic of Moldova can also be seen from the figures of the latest population census. According to statistical data from 2014, apart from the majority ethnic group, representatives of more than 40 ethnic minority groups / national minorities reside on the territory of the country. Among the most numerous national minorities are: Ukrainians (6.6%), Gagauz (4.6%), Russians (4.1%), Bulgarians (1.9%), Roma (0.3), etc.

At the current stage, interethnic relations in the country can be characterized as stable, harmonious and peaceful. The reporting period brought positive changes as regards raising awareness at the State level of the need to develop interethnic relations based on equal rights of all cohabiting ethnic groups, principle of nondiscrimination, recognition of diversity, facilitation of intercultural dialogue, enhancement of civic identity.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova has managed to achieve significant progress in the process of interethnic relations development based on the principles that ensure application of good international practices while embedding in the existing context of the country. These principles represent the point of reference for the integration process, which involves development of complex policies that should take into account interests of all ethnic groups in society.

Situation in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova

Currently, it is impossible to provide relevant and conclusive data on the degree of the Framework Convention implementation in the eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova, due to objective circumstances, such as impossibility for the authorities to exercise effective control over the situation in the region and lack of Chisinau -Tiraspol information exchange mechanisms.

It is worth mentioning that the Moldovan authorities make efforts to ensure respect/restoration of fundamental human rights in the settlements on the left bank of the Nistru/Dniester River and Bender municipality. The human rights working groups with the involvement of experts from both sides of the Nistru/Dniester have been recently resumed, with the task to develop and implement a mechanism for monitoring of regional situation in this field and settlement of concrete cases. A number of priority actions to ensure respect for different categories of rights in the Transnistrian region were set out in the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2018-2022.

¹³ The opinions expressed in this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the German Federal Foreign Office.

Owing to specific nature of this matter, the possibility of establishing a cross-sectoral working group on national minority issues may be explored. An interaction at the level of relevant experts from Chisinau and Tiraspol is to be initiated within such cross-sectoral working group.¹⁴

Strengthening of national legal and regulatory framework

After proclaiming its independence and sovereignty in 1991, the Republic of Moldova has taken a number of important measures to recognize the rights of national minorities and to secure the State's commitments towards their respect. The normative and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of national minority rights within a human rights-based context is in constant development in the light of the international standards, national priorities and aspirations to the European integration. Particular attention is paid to the issue of improving the system of relevant legal norms implementation and ensuring their effectiveness. The principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment in relation to the national minorities and their integration into various spheres of public life have been strengthened through legal initiatives adopted in recent years.

The development of legislation and policies in the field of interethnic relations and national minority rights protection is a subject of constant action by the Government of the Republic of Moldova¹⁵ which entails implementation through concrete actions of balanced policy for preserving cultural diversity and creating the conditions necessary for development and expression by the persons belonging to national minorities of their ethnic and cultural identity. The appropriate legislative framework of the Republic of Moldova corresponds to the highest and most recognized international standards, containing a number of legislative and normative acts.¹⁶

Strengthening of legal and regulatory framework in the field concerned, during the reporting period, implied both adoption of new pieces of legislation and amending and supplementing of existing regulatory framework.

¹⁴Bureau for Reintegration Policy has the status of Directorate under the State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova directly attached both to the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for the implementation of the State reintegration policy and to the Secretary General of the Government (Regulations of the Bureau for Reintegration Policy No.15 of 27 July 2017). The mission of the Bureau is to promote and realize the Government's reintegration policy, directed towards territorial, political, economic and social reintegration of the Republic of Moldova, by: developing and promoting the national policy for country reintegration; conducting negotiations for the Transdnestrian conflict settlement; developing the necessary legislative framework for country reintegration; coordinating activities of public authorities on reintegration of the country.

¹⁵ The Government's Programme of Action for 2015-2018, the Government's Programme of Action for 2016-2018, approved by the Decision of the Parliament No.01 of 20 January 2016 etc.

¹⁶ The main laws within the legal framework of the Republic of Moldova that regulate the rights of persons belonging to national minorities are the following: *the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova (1994)*, *Law on Languages Spoken in the Republic of Moldova (No. 3465 of 1 September 1989)*, *Law on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and the Legal Status of their Organization (No. 382 of 19 June 2001)*, *Law on Special Legal Status of Gagauzia (Gagauz-Yeri) (No. 344 of 23 December 1994)*. 2. The laws regulating the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in different fields, as like: *Law on Publishing and Entry into Force of Official Documents (No. 173 of 6 July 1994)*, *Law on the Rights of the Child (No. 338 of 15 December 1994)*, *Law on Identity Documents in the National Passport System (No. 273 of 9 November 1994)*, *Law on Judicial Organization (No. 514 of 6 July 1997)*, *Law on Advertising No. 1227 of 27 June 1997*, *Law on Culture (No. 413 of 27 May 1999)*; *Law on Citizenship (No. 1024 of 2 June 2000)*; *Law on Access to Information (No. 982 of 11 May 2000)*; *Law on Freedom of Conscience, Thought and Religion (No. 125 of 11 May 2007)*; *Law on Ensuring Equality (No.121 of 25 May 2012)*, *Education Code (No. 152 of 17 July 2014) etc* 3. Decrees of the President and Decisions of the Government on ensuring cultural development of national minorities (*Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians, Roma, Jews*).

1) On 24 of May 2018 by the Decision No. 89, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova approved the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2018-2022 (hereinafter referred to as – “the NHRAP”), which is the third public policy document, designed for the implementation and promotion of human rights in the Republic of Moldova. NHRAP 2018-2022 was based on the recommendations addressed to the Republic of Moldova by international human rights monitoring bodies of the UN, CoE, OSCE and other international organizations. .

The document covers 16 fields of intervention, one of which is devoted to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. Since the Republic of Moldova is characterized by ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of its society, in which persons belonging to respective minorities often have multiply individual identities, at the time of the NHRAP’s drafting it was considered appropriate to contribute to acknowledging the value of this diversity as to overcome division of society on ethnic, linguistic and religious grounds.

In the light of preparation for the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages the NHRAP provides for the following actions:

to ensure effective social, cultural and economic integration of persons belonging to national minorities; to ensure sufficient budget for the implementation of the policy framework in the field; to strengthen institutional capacities of public entities involved in monitoring of the overall situation of persons belonging to national minorities; to adjust school curricula to the discipline “Religious instruction” aiming at reflection of religious diversity and ensuring independence from religious ideologies and dogmas. Furthermore, additional measures to reduce social distance of minority groups will be focused on ensuring effective investigation of offences and incidents based on prejudice, contempt or hatred by revising criminal and contravention legislation, by consolidating capacities of relevant justice stakeholders, by providing victims with required support and collecting disaggregated data on the incidence of such offences.¹⁷

2) Following the adoption of the NHRAP and in pursuit of objectives set out in the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the RM-EU Association Agreement for 2017-2019¹⁸ Ministry of Justice (hereinafter referred to as “the MoJ”) elaborated a draft Government Decision on National Human Rights Council with the objective of establishing an efficient national mechanism to coordinate development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of human rights policy documents and realization of international treaties on human rights to which the Republic of Moldova has acceded. This coordinating mechanism is to be put in place at two levels: at the level of central cross-sectoral strategic coordination, by means of the National Human Rights Council, which will monitor realization of the State policy on human rights as well as relevant international treaties; and at the technical level, by means of the Permanent Secretariat for Human Rights under the State Chancellery, which will perform administrative duties and will link together the Council and its local structures, on the one hand, and the Council and the implementing public authorities, on the other hand. The project has been subject to the endorsement procedure by the competent authorities, public consultations, anti-corruption expertise and was submitted to the Government for further examination on 14 December 2018.

3) As the current criminal law does not regulate all detrimental acts that are likely to be committed for reasons of prejudice, contempt or hatred, the MoJ created a working group¹⁹

¹⁷ Likewise, the human rights issues of Roma are included in Objective II within the respective field of intervention of the NHRAP „Roma population benefit fully and without any discrimination from their rights”.

¹⁸ Art 4(b), SL8, Chapter II of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the RM-EU Association Agreement, approved by the Government Decision No. 1472 of 30 December 2016.

¹⁹ The working group was set up by the Decree of the MoJ No.431 of 8 October 2014 composed of representatives of the Council on Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, Chisinau Court of Appeal, Supreme Court of Justice, General Prosecutor’s Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, ABA ROLI (The American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative), Legal Resources Center of Moldova, Soros Foundation – Moldova and other stakeholders concerned.

which drafted an act for amending and supplementing some legal acts (the Criminal and Contravention Codes) in terms of offences motivated by prejudice, contempt or hatred. The General Policy Recommendation No. 7 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI); Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and Concluding Observations on the Republic of Moldova from the 78th session of the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (14 February - 11 March 2011) underlay the draft law in question.

The draft law provides for a precise, comprehensive definition insusceptible to double interpretation of acts committed for reasons of prejudice, contempt or hatred as well as criminalizes all these illegal acts. The innovative element that was supposed to complement the criminal and contravention legislation pertaining to the acts motivated by prejudice is that pursuant to the definition offender is found liable if he/she acts for motives both real or perceived as real, even if these are found to be erroneous. At the same time, another innovation of the draft law stipulates the completion of the Contravention Code with a new chapter (Chapter V¹), similar to the Criminal Code, which aims at defining some terms or expressions. When drafting the law, an account, first of all, was taken of offenses or contraventions against bodily and/or psychological integrity, but also of other offenses or contraventions against property or other patrimonial right which may be motivated by prejudice, contempt or hatred. The draft law was approved by the Government Decision No. 814 of 30 June 2016 and has already been passed in its first reading in the Parliament on 8 December 2016. In the context of preparations for the second reading, the present draft law was merged with another corresponding legislative initiative and, thus, the subject regulated by the draft to be proposed for discussion under the Parliament's plenary session has been extended.

4) On 3 April 2014, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted the Law No. 52 on the People's Advocate (Ombudsman), in force from 9 May 2014, which strengthened capacities of the former institution (Human Rights Center) and the Ombudsman institution in the Republic of Moldova with a prospect of re-accrediting by the Accreditation Subcommittee of the International Coordinating Committee for National Human Rights Institutions. Subsequent, in order to make the Law No. 52 from 2014 functional, the Parliament adopted the Regulation on Organization and Functioning of the Ombudsman's Office No.164 of 31 July 2015, which specifies basic duties and tasks of the People's Advocate Office in order to guarantee effective discharge of its mandate.

5) By the Law No. 70 of 13 April 2017, Title II of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova was supplemented by Chapter III¹ entitled "The People's Advocate." Structurally, the Chapter contains Article 59¹ ("The Statute and role of the People's Advocate") and set out provisions on the authority that appoints the People's Advocate, on its mission, immunities and guarantees, aspects relating to independence and incompatibilities of function of the People's Advocate. Amending of the Constitution was caused by the necessity to align national legislation to the recommendations of the Venice Commission²⁰ which state that "in order to protect the institution of an independent ombudsperson from political fluctuation, it would be preferable to guarantee its existence and basic principles of its activity in the Constitution". Furthermore, in order to enhance the Ombudsman's role and to promote human rights, it was found essential to publicize them, thereby proposing constitutional regulation of the Ombudsman's activity.

6) Subsequently, by the Law No. 224 of 2 November 2017 some amendments and supplements were introduced in the Law No.335 of 23 December 2005 on the remuneration

²⁰Compilation on the Ombudsman Institution of the Venice Commission, December 2011 CDL(2011)079).

system in the budgetary sector, thereby increasing the salary of the People's Advocate, in line with international standards and recommendations.²¹

7) On 30 July 2015 the Parliament approved the Law No.151 on Government Agent which established a mechanism to ensure compliance with the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and execution of the judgments and decisions of the European Court. Innovation introduced by the Law relates to the Governmental supervision of national authorities involved in the execution of the European Court judgments and decisions in relation to the execution of general and individual measures, that is to be exercised by the Government Agent. Thus, the Parliament is informed periodically or upon its request by the Government Agent about the judgments and decisions of the European Court, the measures to be taken or that have been already taken for the execution thereof, as well as about any relevant correspondence with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on execution of judgments and decisions of the European Court.

8) Having in mind the principle of social solidarity and being firmly committed to the promotion of concepts protected by the European and international structures, the MoJ promoted the Law No. 137 on rehabilitation of victims of crimes adopted by the Parliament on 29 July 2016. The objective sought was to eliminate or at least minimize negative consequences on the lives of people who became victims of crimes, especially those committed with violence. Hence, the law is a regulatory legal act stipulating the minimum conditions for rehabilitation of the victims of crimes; establishes a national system for rehabilitation of victims of crimes; regulates the mechanisms for providing victims of crimes with the support services (competent actors, beneficiaries of support services, conditions for benefiting from these 2 services, etc.); strengthens the role of non-commercial organizations and volunteers in providing support to victims of crimes; facilitates social rehabilitation and reintegration of people who became victims of crimes. According to the law, the financial compensation to be paid from the State budget amounts to 70% of the assessed damage, but shall not exceed 10 average monthly salaries estimated for the year when a compensation claim was put forward.

9) In compliance with the Opinion of the CoE on the Law No.298/2012²² and the Law No.121/2012²³, the MoJ developed a draft Law on amending and supplementing some legal acts aiming at strengthening the legal framework governing activity and competencies of the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality (hereinafter referred to as "the Equality Council"). The aim of the project is to specify and to provide clearer regulation of the Equality Council's competence; to extend the number of non-discrimination criteria (national origin and social status, gender identity, health, political and any other opinion, property, birth); to improve data collection on equality, non-discrimination and diversity; to enhance monitoring, evaluation and annual reporting on the results; to strengthen institutional framework in the field concerned so as to ensure the better implementation of equality and non-discrimination principles. The draft law provides for amending of some legislative acts: (Law No. 317 of 13 December 1994 on the Constitutional Court, Constitutional Jurisdiction Code No. 502 of 16 June 1995, Law No.5 of 9 February 2006 on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Law No. 121 of 25 May 2012 on Ensuring Equality, Law No. 298 of 21 December 2012 on Activity of the Council on Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality).

²¹ It is also important to note that a new Law No.270 of 23 November 2018 on the unified remuneration system in the budgetary sector which regulates establishment of the unified remuneration system and represents a general framework containing principles, rules and procedures for guaranteeing wage rights in relation to the hierarchy of positions in the budgetary sector. At the same time, the Law No. 270 of 23 November 2018 repeals the Law No. 335 of 23.12. 2005 referred to in point 6).

²² Law No. 298 of 21 December 2012 on Activity of the Council on Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality

²³ Law No. 121 of 25 May 2012 on Ensuring Equality

Additionally, indicated legislative initiative proposes to extend the list of actors entitled to refer the cases to the Constitutional Court. It implies empowering the Equality Council to initiate proceedings before the Constitutional Court in order to assess constitutional or legal nature of general laws, deemed to contain discriminatory regulations by the Equality Council. This will contribute to the Equality Council becoming more proactive in ensuring standards of non-discrimination in national legislation. The draft law was approved by the Government Decision no. 635 of 5 July 2018 and awaits consideration by the Parliament.²⁴

10) A noticeable progress in the process of improving national minority protection system was the adoption of the **Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2027**.²⁵ This significant step affirms the Government's determination to take adequate measures to ensure national minority rights protection in integrated and multilingual society, based on respect for diversity. The Strategy aims at facilitating interethnic harmony, encouraging inclusive diversity of the Moldovan society by integrating national minorities into various spheres of state life, ensuring equality of citizens regardless of ethnic, cultural, linguistic identity etc., respecting national legislation and international standards. At the same time, the document intends to contribute to the realization of national minority rights, to the consolidation of society and harmonious development of interethnic relations. The Strategy provides clarity, consistency and convergence to the state policy and practices, facilitating national minority integration in four priority areas: 1. Participation in public life. 2. Language as a means of integration: policies in relation to the state language and minority languages. 3. Intercultural dialogue and civic belonging to the State of the Republic of Moldova 4. Mass media.

The impact of the Strategy will be creation of favourable framework for strengthening of interethnic relations, development of civic belonging to the Republic of Moldova, promotion of diversity in society, facilitation of intercultural dialogue and linguistic integration, inclusion of national minorities in various spheres of state life.²⁶

11) The Action Plan for 2017-2020 on the Implementation of the Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova (2017-2027) was adopted by the Decision of the Government No.1019 of 19 November 2017. The structure of the Action Plan reflects the overall concept of the Strategy and includes four chapters that cover four priority areas of action set out in the Strategy. In general terms, the document includes a wide range of measures, concrete actions, and joint projects in order to meet the basic objectives of the Strategy. Both public authorities and civil society came with proposals of activities that should have been included in the document.

Along with the organizational measures, the Action Plan provides for a series of studies geared to analyzing current situation in the sphere concerned and to identifying pressing problems and risks. Hence, it is planned to study the situation in the field of representation and participation of various ethnic groups in public service, to consider enforcement and compliance of national legal and institutional framework to the principles of integration policy, to carry out biennial studies of ethno-linguistic situation etc. Sufficient attention will be given to the development of competence and awareness-raising among representatives of NGOs, journalists and civil servants through trainings, seminars and consultations. In the meantime, the Action Plan reaffirms continuity of traditional national-cultural activities such as festivals, round tables, conferences, summer camps and other events focused on intercultural dialogue, education and interaction.

The financial resources necessary for the implementation of the Action Plan were estimated with the support from international and national experts at the development stage of the document.

²⁴ The draft was registered with the Parliament No. 235 of 6 July 2018.

²⁵ Approved by the Decision of the Government No. 1464 of 30 December 2016.

²⁶ Objectives outlined in the Strategy are to be put into practice gradually, in three stages, on the basis of action plans approved by the Government. Stage I: Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for 2017-2020; Stage II: Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for 2021-2024; Stage III: Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for 2025-2027.

So, implementation costs of the Plan will be met from budgetary resources of relevant implementing bodies, as well as from external financing. Pursuant to the Government Decision No. 1019 from 29 November 2017 the budgetary resources will amount to 2 570 795 MDL, but external financing is estimated at 2 101 822 MDL.

12) A new Roma Action Plan for 2016-2020 was adopted by the Decision of the Government nr.734 from 9 April 2016, following the expiration of the Roma Action Plan for 2011-2015.²⁷ The new Roma Action Plan for 2016-2020 comes as a continuity of the Government's commitments to enhance Roma social inclusion laid down in the preceding Roma Action Plan and complements existing regulatory framework for improving of Roma situation. The Action Plan is to be financed from the State budget with eventual financial support from the European funds, technical assistance projects/programmes, public-private partnerships and other acceptable sources under the national legislation.

Annual local Roma Action Plans are expected to be elaborated by local authorities with a view to ensuring proportional and concrete implementation of activities envisaged in the national Roma Action Plan for 2016-2020 as well as allocation of adequate financial resources from the State budget.²⁸

Practical measures

- ***Implementation of the Action Plan for 2017-2020 on the Implementation of the Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova (2017-2027)***

An immediate step undertaken after adoption of the Action Plan for 2017-2020 was information of general public about the Strategy, its structure, general aims, guiding principles and expected outcomes. This was fulfilled by the AIR through active dialogue with mass-media, during meetings and field visits to districts, through the participation in seminars, conferences and debating clubs.

The bilingual Romanian/Russian publication of the Strategy and the Action Plan was produced with circulation of 3000 copies.²⁹ It was disseminated among ministries and other public administration bodies, local authorities and NGOs.

In order to achieve more efficiency in the implementation of the Action Plan, the AIR coordinates cooperation with important partners: international organizations, public sector and civil society. To this end, the AIR set up a cross-sectoral working group on realization of this Action Plan.³⁰

²⁶ Approved by the Government Decision nr.494 of 8 July 2011 and amended by the Government Decision No. 56 of 31 January 2012.

²⁸ However, decentralization reform, which shifted responsibility of implementing a large number of activities envisaged in the Roma Action Plan to local public authorities, and, inter alia, lack of sufficient funds, resulted in poor implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Roma Action Plan for 2011-2015.

²⁹ The publication was prepared by the ARI with the financial support from the OSCE Mission to Moldova.

³⁰ The first meeting of the working group was held on 1 March 2018. The meeting was attended by representatives of ministries and other central public administration bodies, representatives of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, leaders of ethno-cultural organizations accredited under the AIR. The participants discussed measures necessary to be undertaken to ensure full implementation of the actions stipulated in the Plan as well as identified key objectives for 2018. On 17 September 2018 the working group met at its 2nd meeting with the focus on the study on national minority participation in public life, planned to be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2019.

On 22-24 May 2018 the AIR in partnership with the OSCE Mission to Moldova organized a training for the cross-sectoral working group. During the training sessions international and national experts shared with the working group experiences and best European practices in the field of interethnic relations consolidation.

On 1-2 October 2018 representatives of the AIR, the Ombudsman's office and the Equality Council participated in a two-day training course on issues of national minority rights protection held in Chisinau. The training was organized by the OSCE Mission to Moldova in partnership with the AIR and was aimed at enhancing capacities and co-operation among the state stakeholders in charge of implementing of the Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations for 2017-2027. The representatives of state bodies identified ways to boost co-operation in the field of national minority rights protection and elaborated upon a mechanism to jointly identify and address drawbacks of the State policies in the field concerned.

On 15 November 2018, a Memorandum of Co-operation among the AIR, the Ombudsman's office and the Equality Council was signed. It sets forth a framework for improving cooperation mechanisms between these three national human rights institutions through regular meetings, information exchange, joint research and mutual support. The Parties will give attention to the realization of the rights of national minorities to education, access to information, participation, and other cultural, religious and linguistic rights enshrined in the Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations for 2017-2027, applying fair and professional approach in addressing the problems faced by ethnic minorities. The signing of the Memorandum was facilitated by the OSCE Mission to Moldova following an assessment of competences of national human rights institutions, which recommended establishment of a coalition of government actors promoting and protecting the rights of national minorities in Moldova.³¹

• ***Measures taken in the field of Holocaust remembrance, study and raising awareness about the Holocaust***

In their efforts to preserve the memory of the Holocaust, to study and raise awareness about the Holocaust, the Moldovan authorities are guided, inter alia, by the commitments made by the Republic of Moldova in its capacity as observer to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (hereinafter referred to as "the IHRA"), status received in 2014. Adherence to the IHRA of the Republic of Moldova gave an extra impetus to the legislative initiatives, activities and programs in this field carried out in the republic.

On 26 November 2015 the Parliament adopted a Decision No. 210 on enactment of 27 January as the National Commemoration Day of the Holocaust Victims. This served as a turning point for the Republic of Moldova that demonstrated determination and strong political will to unite efforts of the State bodies and civil society in the fight against anti-Semitism, as well as any manifestations of racism, xenophobia, racial discrimination and intolerance.

In July 2016 the Parliament accepted by a Declaration³² the Final Report of the International Commission for the Study of the Holocaust, chaired by Elie Wiesel. The Declaration condemns systematic persecution and extermination of Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators in 1937-1944 on the present territory of the Republic of Moldova. The political declaration also condemns any attempts to ignore and deny the Holocaust and pays tribute to the victims and survivors of this tragedy. The document aims at strengthening national policies aimed at cultivating tolerance and combating all forms of discrimination, anti-Semitism and intolerance,

³¹ For more information on the implementation of the Action Plan for 2017-2020 on realization of the Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations see Part III. Art. 9/ Audiovisual Coordinating Council

³² HP nr. 190 din 22 iulie 2016. Decision of the Parliament No. 190 of 22 July 2016.

as well as contributing to the assumption of historical facts in order to consolidate social cohesion and human values.

Furthermore, on 22 May 2017 by the Decision No. 313 the Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted an Action Plan for 2017 – 2020 on the Implementation of the Declaration concerning the acceptance of the Final Report of the International Commission for the Study of the Holocaust, chaired by Elie Wiesel. The Action Plan is unprecedented for Moldova and is in line with the practice of the European states regarding the Holocaust education, research and commemoration. The document includes many specific actions in the field of the Holocaust education, research and commemoration, as well as promoting knowledge about this tragedy in order to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance.

By the Decision No. 1019 of 17 October 2018, the Government of the Republic of Moldova decided to set up the public institution “Museum of Jewish History from the Republic of Moldova”. The museum will be founded by the MECC. The primary objective of the Museum is to highlight contribution of the Jewish community to the development of the Moldovan society at various historical stages, to promote Jewish historical figures, to preserve the memory of the Holocaust, to combat anti-Semitism and intolerance. In the same context, a comprehensive Action Plan was developed aimed at rehabilitation, restoration, preservation and promotion of the Jewish Cemetery in Chisinau to anchor the Jewish history, heritage, and cultural center which will include an exhibition on Jewish history and also serve as a Holocaust memorial. Several institutions are envisaged to be involved in the implementation of the Action Plan: the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Finance, National Archives Agency, the National Agency for Inspection and Restoration of Monuments, the AIR, the Institute for Cultural Heritage, the Jewish Community of the Republic of Moldova etc.

The Decision on Condemning anti-Semitism and Promotion of Tolerance adopted by the Government on 18 January 2019 is the most recent important progress made by the Moldovan authorities to develop a legal framework in the field concerned. The general provisions of this Decision unequivocally confirm the position of the Republic of Moldova with regard to condemning, preventing and combating any manifestations of hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination. Furthermore, the Decision on Condemning anti-Semitism and Promotion of Tolerance endorses and recommends the public authorities to take into account the working definition of anti-Semitism adopted at the plenary meeting of the IHRA in May 2016.³³

During the reporting period the following significant practical actions were taken in the Republic of Moldova the field of preventing racial discrimination and intolerance, combating all forms of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, the Holocaust commemoration, education and research taken:

It has already become a tradition for the Republic of Moldova to organize the Holocaust Remembrance Week dedicated to the National Holocaust Remembrance Day – 27 of January, at the beginning of each calendar year. It is highly appreciated by the society, including the Jewish community. As part of the Week, school lessons and student conferences on the Holocaust and tolerance are usually conducted; commemorative demonstrations, youth forums, various theater shows, press conferences, photo exhibitions, and other commemorative and educational events are held. On 22-29 January 2019 the next Holocaust Remembrance Week was held in Moldova organized under the patronage of the Parliament and the Government of the Republic of

³³ “Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and their religious facilities.”

Moldova. The Agenda of the Week included the following commemorative and other events: “Meeting-requiem” held at the monument to the Victims of Fascism (Chisinau municipality), roundtable “The Holocaust Remembrance in the Republic of Moldova” (Europe Hall, Parliament of the Republic of Moldova), inauguration of the exhibition “The Holocaust in Bessarabia” (Hall of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova), Youth Forum of the Republic of Moldova “Future belongs to us” (House of Nationalities) etc.

On 14 July 2017 the bilateral Cooperation Agreement was signed between the MECR and the Jewish Community of the Republic of Moldova. The Agreement was based on the need to establish a partnership for the implementation of joint projects, programs and other initiatives to develop educational policies on teaching the Holocaust. The agreement also provides development by the MECR of the new training programs for teachers of general and university educational institutions on teaching the Holocaust, and history, culture and traditions of ethnic communities in the Republic of Moldova.

On 27 January 2018 a first Centre-Museum dedicated to the history of the Holocaust in the Republic of Moldova entitled “Memory of the Holocaust and Interethnic Tolerance” was inaugurated within the House of Nationalities. It was established by the AIR with the support, including financial, from the Government of the Republic of Moldova. The Centre-Museum displays historical documents and books, monographs, photographs and documentary films. It was meant, inter alia, to serve as an educational tool enabling teachers, students, representatives of academic circles and any other interested persons to meet, discuss and study the tragedy of the Holocaust, aiming at making historical memory relevant most notably to the younger generation. A separate exhibition devoted to the memory of the Roma victims of the Holocaust became a distinguishing feature of the Center-Museum. It was made as part of efforts to pay tribute to all Roma people suffered from the National Socialist regime during World War II.

• ***Implementation of the Action Plan to Support the Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2020***

The Moldovan authorities are fully conscious of the need to ensure a comprehensive approach to the social integration of the Roma population and continue to adhere strictly to the policies and instruments used for this purpose in the EU countries following their good practices, as well as the relevant recommendations of the international organizations addressed to the Republic of Moldova.

Upon finalization of the previous Roma Action Plan for 2011-2015³⁴ a new Action Plan to Support the Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2020 was adopted in June 2016³⁵. The Roma Action Plan for 2016-2020 represents a continuation of the Government’s commitments to the promotion of Roma social inclusion and included all pending or partially implemented actions from the previous Action Plan.

The main objectives set out in the Roma Action Plan for 2016-2020 are as follows:

- to create an inclusive and effective educational system based on the principles of equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity, which will contribute to the integration of the Roma population in society;
- to increase employment of Roma people in the labor market, as well as their economic well-being to a significant extent;

³⁴ Approved by the Decision of the Government No.494 of 8 July 2011 and amended by the Decision of the Government No. 56 of 31 January 2012.

³⁵ Government Decision No. 734 of 9 June 2016.

- to improve the health status of the Roma population and to ensure their non-discriminatory access to medical services;
- to ensure decent living conditions for Roma people and to improve the quality of their live;
- to improve Roma participation and to reduce discrimination.

One of the results of the 2011-2015 Roma Action Plan implementation was the establishment of the Roma community-based mediator position in 40 localities densely populated by Roma.

At the same time, recognizing the role and added value of the Roma community-based mediator service, the Moldovan authorities make efforts to ensure its functionality, in particular to supplement the reduced number of employed Roma community-based mediators.

The situation with the employment of Roma community-based mediators has deteriorated since 1 January 2015 when the new provisions on decentralized funding entered into force at national level, according to which local public authorities are to allocate funds from their budgets for a number of local services, including for the activity of the Roma community-based mediators; thereby, the hiring process of mediators by local authorities was stopped due to lack of finance.

In order to cope with the situation, it was decided to amend the Government Decision No. 557 of 17 July 2013 on approval of the framework regulations on the organization of the activities of Roma community-based mediators (in the part related to the funding from the State budget and not from the budgets of the level I administrative territorial units, which, as expected, should have boosted the process of their employment at local level).

The corresponding amendments to the Government Decision No.557 / 2013 were introduced in May 2018. At the same time, the AIR took over the competences to elaborate proposals regarding the number of the Roma community-based mediators employed by local public authorities and to calculate financial means necessary to ensure that they are functional. Thus, according to the Law on the State Budget for 2018 No. 289 of 15 December 2017 2239.6 thousand MDL were envisaged in the State budget for the remuneration of Roma community-based mediators. This amount was estimated based on the cost of one Roma community-based mediator (46.6 thousand MDL), as well as the number of localities benefiting from the services of these mediators (48 localities).

Taking into account that one of the reasons for the failure in employment of the Roma community-based mediators is underestimation of their role in facilitating Roma access to public services offered by the State (social assistance, education, healthcare, employment etc.), the AIR maintains a dialogue with local public authorities in order to further develop the Roma community-based mediator service, based on local needs.

In December 2017 and 2018 respectively the 1st and the 2nd Forum of Roma Community-based mediators were held in Chisinau (with the participation of the Roma community-based mediators, leaders of Roma ethno-cultural organizations, Mayors of localities densely inhabited by Roma, representatives of local public administration and international organizations etc). The events provided the participants with a common and extensive space for communication and interaction, in order to jointly find solutions to the problems faced by Roma community-based mediators in the Republic of Moldova, as well as to encourage their active participation in the community life. Throughout 2018, 31 Roma community-based mediators were employed and performed their duties.

Another important field of intervention of the Roma Action Plan for 2016-2020 is Education. Currently, a large network of pre-university educational institutions is in place in the republic providing access to free pre-university education for all children, including Roma. The MECC,

in partnership with a number of stakeholders, including representatives of civil society, on permanent basis organizes information and awareness raising campaigns for parents on the necessity of children enrollment in the education system, the importance of compulsory primary and secondary education and the need to pursue studies. In 2017, 35 information and awareness raising campaigns were organized for parents to register and enroll children in the compulsory education. The number of informed parents reached over 876 pers. In 2018, 21 information and awareness campaigns were held for parents in all districts of the country. The number of informed parents was over 567 people.

In order to involve the Roma community in solving the problems related to enrollment of children in the educational process, to develop a mechanism for identifying Roma children who do not attend school or have a high level of absenteeism, the MECC actively cooperate with the local public authorities and non-governmental organizations promoting Roma inclusion. Among the causes of non-schooling are listed poor material condition, homelessness, resettlement, refusal of the parents, etc.

The main ongoing activities undertaken by the MECC in the context of the 2016-2020 Roma Action Plan implementation are as follows:

- Provision of free travel for children from localities mainly inhabited by Roma to the nearest educational institution, if it is located not less than 3 kilometres away;
- Introduction of after-school programmes for Roma children to help them do their homework and engage in additional activities;
- Involvement of teaching and managerial staff of the educational institutions in the continuous training on intercultural education;
- Cooperation with Roma NGOs and voluntary organizations with a view to their inclusion in deciding on issues relating to the inclusion of children in the educational process;
- Organization of trainings on cultural differences within pre-school and general education programmes in partnership with Roma organizations;
- Accommodation of Roma students in student residences under technical and higher education institutions, according to normative acts in force etc.

In the field of Labour and Social Protection:

From the information provided by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection, during 2014-2018 the National Employment Agency (hereinafter referred to as “NEA”) together with its territorial structures took a series of measures to remove barriers that impede Roma access to employment. Respectively, the Roma registered as unemployed became beneficiaries of various measures and respective services according to the legislation in force. The low level of training is one of the main obstacles to the employment of Roma registered with the NEA.

During 2017, the NEA jointly with the mobile teams conducted 170 field visits to 173 localities across the country, including settlements predominantly populated by Roma to provide corresponding help with seeking employment. In 2018, 154 such visits were made to 164 localities of the Republic of Moldova.

All job seekers, including Roma, may apply to local employment agencies and obtain services providing for integration into the labour market.

Job seekers, including Roma, are entitled to request free practical information about employment agency’s database listing services and vacancies from employment call centre, Labour Market Information Centre or accessing the websites www.angajat.md, www.anofm.md and on-line fair platform www.e-angajare.md.

Labour intermediation services, vocationally oriented courses, information, guidance and occupational counseling services, opportunities of engagement in the remunerated public works are services offered by the NEA to all jobseekers, including Roma.

Table No.1. Measures involving Roma people registered with the NEA.

Persons	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Roma people registered as unemployed:	723	1138	1453	1599	1902
Beneficiaries of information and occupational counseling services:	689	925	722	1584	1398
Graduates from vocationally oriented courses	8	7	16	15	16
Engaged in the remunerated public works	25	40	48	54	45
Employed in the labour market	90	70	125	152	203
Beneficiaries of unemployment benefits	2	6	9	2	7
Beneficiaries of professional integration/reintegration allowance	16	38	32	42	42

In the field of healthcare:

The National Health Insurance Company (hereinafter referred to as “NHIC”) annually collects data in order to bring a larger number of people, including Roma, into the compulsory medical insurance system. To this end, territorial agencies of the NHIC organize informative meetings with the population in rural areas, including Roma, on a regular basis. The issue of healthcare insurance persists among the Roma population due to the lack of registration at the place of residence and registration of residence, lack of identity documents, etc.

Seminars, informative sessions, workshops are widely held; information and educational materials are developed and disseminated to raise public awareness in the field of health promotion and disease prevention. National and local media outlets broadcast various TV and radio programmes, reports and shows. Medical staff delivers lectures and conducts individual conversations. Among the problems requiring interventions are: children and adults with disabilities, lack of medical insurance, access to expensive surgery services.

Currently, sustainable development of non-government sector can be observed in Moldova, which is also represented by a significant number of Roma public organizations. The professional and effective work that is performed by Roma leaders and members of their associations in the field of youth education, research and publication activities, efforts aimed at supporting Roma community-based mediator service is a powerful incentive for authorities to further develop cooperation with Roma civil society to improve their situation substantially and to overcome the problems faced by them. The AIR collaborates with 11 Roma ethno-cultural organizations with the republican status, supporting their statutory activities, various projects implemented by them. The AIR also supports and encourages Roma to participate in the programs and projects related to improving and monitoring the socio-cultural situation of Roma and their integration into society. Besides, it organizes various roundtables, trainings, festivals, actions to promote cultural values and the Romani language with the participation of senior leaders of the country, representatives of central and local public authorities. Following the established practice, the AIR provides funding for events organized to celebrate the International Roma Day in close cooperation with Roma associations.

- ***Ensuring the necessary conditions for persons belonging to national minorities, including adults, to study and to apply the State language***

One of the strategic directions of the Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations for 2017-2027 in the field of ensuring efficient approach to policies on the State language promotion is to improve linguistic competences and the process of the State language study.

Table No.2 According to the 2014 Population and Housing Census the share of national minorities proficient in the State language is the following:

	Total	Urban	Rural
Total ethnic minorities	31,3	36,7	25,8
Ukrainians	38,3	45,5	32,8
Russians	41,2	42,5	37,4
Gagauz	8,7	13,1	6,5
Bulgarians	31,3	26,3	36,5
Other ethnic groups	50,4	43,5	67,5

Despite efforts made over the years to facilitate the study of the State language by minority adult population, pure command of the official language continues to pose a barrier to the integration in society. In this respect, complex educational measures needed to be taken with, focusing young people all over the country, as well as specific measures for adult population, especially in settlements densely inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities.

During the reporting period, some progress has been made in the field of socio-linguistic and professional integration, promotion of interethnic tolerance and creation of linguistic environment favourable to the national minorities. Since 2009, under the partnership agreement with the National Association of European Trainers in Moldova (ANTEM)³⁶, the AIR has remained involved with the project “Language training programme for national minorities in the Republic of Moldova” supported by the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities. The programme encompasses various activities, linguistic training modalities, linguistic situation monitoring, addressing the needs of the Romanian language study on the territory of the republic, especially in the regions densely populated by national minorities, including in ATU Gagauzia (Comrat and Ceadir-Lunga), in the municipalities of Edineț and Bălți, in the regions of Taraclia, Briceni, Ocnița, Dondușeni, etc.

The State language learning programme is targeted towards youth and children that want to study the Romanian language. It was launched through the following projects:

- Socio-linguistic and professional integration of youth in the Republic of Moldova (2015-2017)
- Youth integration in society by means of distance learning (2012-2020)
- E-learning is an instrument of youth social integration in the Republic of Moldova (2013-2017). The project beneficiaries are 100 learners (young people from age 16 to 35) from different localities of the country. The courses are intended for specialists in the field of public administration, teachers and specialists in the field of public relations and journalism.
- A new module of the Romanian language distance-training was elaborated within the platform “Distance learning of the Romanian language” (invat.antem.org) which allows young people to study the State language free of charge with a view of personal development and

³⁶ Created in 2005 and registered in 2008 ANTEM has become a promoter of the State language study by the national minorities in the Republic of Moldova, developing professional competent and responsible approach towards integration of national minorities by stimulating communicative competences. ANTEM renders the following services: 1. Linguistic instruction. 2. Linguistic immersion. 3. Cultural immersion. 4. Methodological advice on teaching adults and children.

professional advancement. The platform covers Levels A1-A2, B1-B2, C1 for social workers, teachers according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

- Integration with respect for diversity – simultaneous learning of the Romanian and Gagauz languages for the years 2016-2017. The beneficiaries of the project are 10 kindergartens from Comrat, Congaz, Ceadir-Lunga, Beschioz, Vulcanesti. The project aims at addressing the lack of Romanian and Gagauz language teaching materials in the kindergartens of ATU Gagauzia and at providing the necessary language training in the region to encourage socio-linguistic integration of national minorities.³⁷

It should be noted that simultaneous learning of two languages is a new and effective method applied in the kindergartens in the Republic of Moldova. The number of ethnic minority kindergartens wishing to become a part of it is steadily increasing. In this respect, the MECC is to elaborate curriculum for the study of the Romanian language in pre-school educational institutions with education in the Russian language.

Table No.3. Number of beneficiaries from the ANTEM programmes during 2015-2018:

2015	2016	2017	2018
<p>A. Traditional training. Traditional training courses were organized in 11 localities in the southern, northern and central regions of the Republic of Moldova. 918 students participated in the language training at Levels A1-A2, B1-B2.</p> <p>B. Distance Learning - 191 young national minority representatives benefited from this service free of charge completing Levels A1-A2, B1, C1 by using platform invat.antem.org</p>	<p>A. Traditional training. Traditional training courses were organized in 11 localities in the southern, northern and central regions of the Republic of Moldova. 621 students participated in the language training at Levels A1-A2 and B1.</p> <p>B. Distance learning – 132 young national minority representatives from 17 localities became beneficiaries of this service competing Levels A1-A2, B1 and C1 by using platform invat.antem.org</p>	<p>A. Traditional training. Simultaneous learning of the Romanian and Gagauz languages. Training courses were attended by 230 children from 10 kindergartens and 181 parents. 5 localities of Gagauzia were involved.</p> <p>B. Distance learning – 288 young national minority representatives from 20 rural settlements, including from Transdnistria benefited from this service completing Levels A1-A2 and B1 by using platform invat.antem.org</p>	<p>A. Traditional training. Simultaneous learning of the Romanian and Gagauz languages. Training courses were attended by 239 children from 10 kindergartens and 218 parents. 5 localities of Gagauzia were involved.</p> <p>B. Distance learning – 200 students from all parts of the country, including Transdnistria and ATU Gagauzia, benefited from this service completing Levels A1-A2, B1-B2.</p>

- *Measures undertaken in the process of preparation for the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*

³⁷ The project is implemented with the financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Aware of the importance to respect its international obligations and to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereinafter referred as to “the ECRML”), the authorities of the Republic of Moldova have taken some steps towards ratification of the treaty.

The measures aimed at the ratification of the ECRML were included in the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the RM-EU Association Agreement for 2017-2019,³⁸ Title II Political dialogue and reforms, cooperation in the field of foreign and security policy, Objectives of the political dialogue (Article 3 of the Agreement), implementing measure no. 118 “Identification of options for the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages”.

Furthermore, the NHRAP for 2018-2022 also includes activities on ratification of the Charter. In particular, Part 1, Intervention field: Harmonization of national legal framework with international standards, Objective I: Accession to the international instruments in the field of human rights includes priority action No.11 “Identification of options to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages” as well as sub-actions: 11.1. To revise and clarify the State commitments in relation to the languages supposed to be covered by the Charter; 11.2. Implementation of the pilot project on application of the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 7 settlements densely populated by persons belonging to national minorities and approval of the commitments to be assumed; 11.3. Ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (deadline - 2021).

The actions for ratification of the ECRML by the Republic of Moldova are also foreseen in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova. In particular, Compartment II, Specific Objective 2: Ensuring protection and development of national minority languages and promotion of linguistic diversity, Priority Action 2.2.1: Continue the process of preparing and identifying the State’s potential to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Practical Action 2.2.1.1.:The Study on the options for the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages ratification by the Republic of Moldova and its legislative impact (deadline - 2020).

Efforts taken to this end contributed to the following results:

- A research into the cost/expenditure figures involved in the ratification of the Charter by the Republic of Moldova was carried out under the ECORYS project “Support to Policy Management Capacity” between June and August 2012 at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and with the support of the State Chancellery. According to the findings of the study at the time of estimating (2012) in addition to MDL 947,534,811 annually allocated from the State budget to support minority languages, the Republic of Moldova would need at least another MDL 34,034,485 to meet commitments under the Charter in the field of education and use of minority languages. At the same time, as a large part of cost/expenditure figures for the Charter’s implementation (in the following fields: Judicial Authorities, Administrative Authorities and Public Services, Media, Cultural Activities and Facilities and Economic and Social Life) could not have been estimated without field trips the authors of the study suggested that for the implementation of commitments in specified areas the State should allocate about MDL 70 000 000.

- In 2016 at the initiative of the Council of Europe Office in Moldova, in partnership with the AIR and the State Chancellery, a project was launched which implied involvement of some pilot municipalities of the Republic of Moldova in application of the Charter at local level. 7 localities were selected for the participation in the project, among them: municipalities of Chisinau, Balti, Ceadar-Lunga, and Soroca, Taraclia city, Ciobanovca village of Anenii Noi district, Vulcanesti village of Nisporeni district. The selected locality is expected to adopt

³⁸ Approved by the Decision of the Government No. 1472 of 30 December 2016, amended in the first half of 2018 following the reform of the Government.

objectives and principles of the Charter and to select the concrete measures from among the Charter's provisions in order to promote the use of the national minority's (-ies') language (-s) that reside compactly on its territory. The Council of Europe's experts, the AIR and the State Chancellery provide support to the local authorities throughout the whole process. The project is in progress.

- In 2018 within the CoE/EU Partnership for Good Governance (PGG) Project "*Protecting national minorities and minority languages in Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Belarus*" the Municipality of Chisinau as one of 7 chosen pilot localities for the Charter's application was provided a grant for the production and installation of multilingual street signs indicating touristic objects in the Romanian and English languages, as well as in a minority language (Russian, Ukrainian, German, Bulgarian or Yiddish). The aim of the project is to increase the visibility of minority languages in the Republic of Moldova, to promote multilingualism, national cultural heritage, and tourist infrastructure in Chisinau. The total cost of the project amounts to 24500 EUR, of which 14700 EUR was allocated by the CoE. The project involves installation of 23 street signs of 71 tourist destinations in the central part of the city. An inauguration ceremony of the installed multilingual signs was held on 13 November 2018. The event gathered all relevant stakeholders, including local authorities and representatives of minority associations.

PART III

Information on relevant developments on an article-by-article basis, in the context of the recommendations for action made in the forth monitoring cycle

Article 3 of the Framework Convention

Housing and Population Census of 2014

The 2014 Population and Housing Census contributed to the process of improving the system of collecting and analyzing data on interethnic relations, use of the languages, and other criteria that can facilitate development of sectoral integration policies, respecting international standards on protection and collection of personal data.

The population size

The Population and Housing Census held during from 12 to 25 May 2014 covered people with usual residence (people living on the territory of the Republic of Moldova for more than 12 months, regardless of citizenship) and those absent from the country for a period of more than 12 months. Thus, the total number of population in the Republic of Moldova amounts to 2 804 801 persons. Out of this number, 209 000 were non-residents (living predominantly outside the country for more than 12 months), which represent 7.5%, and 2 595 77 were persons with a residence in the Republic of Moldova.³⁹

Ethnic and linguistic structure of the population

³⁹ It should be noted that in the 2014 census, non-coverage of 193 434 persons in the Chisinau municipality was established. This estimate was based on the results of the post-survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics between 16-29 of June 2014, with the application of methodology recommended by the United Nations Statistics Division (Post Enumerations Surveys - Operational guidelines, UN, 2010).

The results of the 2014 census were disseminated in March 2017 being summarized in informative notes, Excel tables, maps and info graphics.⁴⁰ At the same time, aiming at facilitating access to the 2014 census results the National Bureau of Statistics (hereinafter referred to as “the NBS”), with the support of the United Nations Population Fund, an application has been developed in order to visualize the results of the census⁴¹ in an easy-to-view and understandable way. This tool allows exploiting the vast amount of collected data with disaggregation by, inter alia, nationality/ethnic affiliation but also in terms of territorial aspect at the level of commune. The application is linked to the primary census database. The results of the population and housing census were disseminated in three languages: Romanian, Russian and English.

In the 2014 census information on ethno-cultural characteristics, such as a) nationality/ethnic affiliation; b) mother tongue; c) language of communication; d) religion, being optional, was collected at the respondent’s free declaration in accordance with the Recommendations of the Conference of European Statisticians for the 2010 Population and Housing Censuses, Chapter IX.⁴² In accordance with Article 10 of Law no.90 / 2012 on the 2014 Population and Housing Census in the Republic of Moldova in localities predominantly inhabited by ethnic minorities recruited enumerators were representatives of relevant ethnic group. The enumerators were trained to fill in the census questionnaires strictly what the respondents had declared, ensuring, thereby, their right to self-identification.

Thus, 2,754.7 thousand people (98.2% of the population covered by the census) declared their ethnicity. A share of 75.1% of Moldova’s population stated they were Moldovans, 7.0% – Romanians, 6.6% – Ukrainians, 4.6% – Gagauz, 4.1% – Russians, 1.9% – Bulgarians, 0.3% – Roma, while other ethnicities represented 0.5% out of the total population. Compared with 2004, the share of people who identified themselves as Moldovans decreased by 1.0 percentage point, while the share of people who declared themselves Romanians increased by 4.8 percentage point. Over the past 10 years, the share of the Russian and Ukrainian population decreased by 1.9 and 1.8 percentage point, respectively, while the share of Bulgarian, Gagauz and Roma people did not change significantly.

It is noteworthy that Moldovans, Romanians, Ukrainians, and Gagauz people live mostly in rural area, whereas Russians – in cities. The ethnic groups accounting for more than one thousand people are: Belarusians (2.8 thousand people), Jews (1.6 thousand people), Poles (1.4 thousand people), and Armenians (1.0 thousand people).⁴³

In the territorial profile, the population distribution by ethnicity shows that the Moldovans constitute a majority population in most districts/municipalities of the country, but in 16 districts the share of Moldovans is higher than 85%, except in Taraclia district where the Bulgarians predominate (66.1%) and in ATU Gagauzia where 83.8% Gagauz people live. Most of the Ukrainians and Russians live in Chisinau and Balti municipality, thus the share of Russians is 37.7% and 13.6% for Chisinau and Balti, but the share of Ukrainians is 14.9%, and 9.6%, respectively.

⁴⁰ <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=479>.

⁴¹ <http://recensamant.statistica.md/ro>.

⁴² <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Recomandari-Conferinta-statisticieni-europeni.pdf>

⁴³ The number of representatives of numerically smaller national minorities, which are scattered throughout the Republic of Moldova, is the following: Azerbaijani - 667 persons; German - 914 pers.; Greek - 332 pers.; Georgian / Georgian - 313 pers.; Latvian - 77 pers.; Lithuanians - 218 people.; Tatars - 527 people, etc.

According to the free declaration of 2 723.3 thousand people who indicated their mother tongue (97.1% of the total number of respondents), the *Moldovan* language is the mother tongue for every second person (56.7%) of the population that declared their mother tongue while 23.5% consider Romanian to be their mother tongue. The Russian language is considered to be the mother tongue of 9.7% of the population, but the Gagauz, Ukrainian and Bulgarian languages are the mother tongues of 4.2%, 3.9% and 1.5% of the population, respectively.

Also, compared with 2014, the share of persons who declared Romanian as their mother tongue increased by 6.9 percentage point, while the share of persons who declared Moldovan as their mother tongue decreased by 3.5 percentage point. A decrease by 1.6 percentage point has been observed in the share of persons who reported the Russian and Ukrainian languages as their mother tongue.

The 2014 census also provided information about the respondents' usual language of communication. Out of the total number of people living in the country who declared the language they usually speak (2,720.3 thousand), 54.6% indicated that they usually speak Moldovan, 24.0% – Romanian, 14.5% – Russian, 2.7% – Ukrainian, 2.7% –Gagauz, and 1.0% usually speak Bulgarian. A share of 0.5% of the population usually speaks other languages than those mentioned above. Other 3.0% of the population did not report their usual language of communication.

Although the majority of Ukrainians, Bulgarians and Gagauz people declared the language of their nationality to be their mother tongue, every second Ukrainian, Bulgarian and Gagauz usually speaks Russian. Moldovans who usually speak Russian constitute 5.7%.

Article 4 of the Framework Convention

Table No. 4 Statistical data of the 2014 census on major occupational groups disaggregated by ethnicity, including national minorities (%):

Ethnic origin	Moldovans/ Romanians	Ukrainians	Russians	Gagauz	Bulgarians	Other ethnic groups	Undeclared
Legislators, executive members, other senior officials and heads of public administration, senior managers and senior officials	5.7	7.0	9.1	5.8	7.9	12.1	4.4
Specialists in various fields of activity	14.3	14.1	19.1	12.6	16.8	18.5	13.8
Technicians and other average-skilled specialists	6.1	7.0	7.1	6.9	8.1	5.6	4.8
Administrative officials	1.9	2.4	2.9	1.9	2.4	1.9	1.9

Workers in the field of services and commerce	12.1	13.2	15.0	12.9	12.4	12.9	10.8
Qualified workers in agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, fish farming and fisheries	19.8	15.5	7.6	15.2	11.1	7.6	10.7
Qualified and assimilated workers	10.7	11.0	12.3	12.2	11.9	10.2	9.4
Machine and installations operators; machine and equipment assemblers	6.4	7.1	5.3	8.3	8.0	4.4	4.2
Unqualified workers	9.8	9.3	7.8	11.1	10.8	7.7	9.4
Armed Forces	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3
Undeclared	12.6	13.1	13.5	12.9	10.3	19.0	30.2

Legal framework relating to the equal access to rights of persons belonging to national minorities

In order to prevent and reduce unemployment and its social effects, to ensure a higher level of employment and to adjust the labor force to the requirements of the labor market, on 14 July 2019 the Parliament adopted the new Law no.105 / 2018 on Promotion of Employment and Unemployment Insurance.⁴⁴ The Law will enter into force on 10 February 2019. Art.2, par. (4) of the new Law provides for prohibition of any discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, belief, sex, age, disability, opinion, political affiliation, wealth, social origin or any other criterion.

Acknowledging its international commitments in the field of ensuring gender equality on 28 April 2017, the Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted a new policy document - Strategy for Ensuring Equality between Women and Men in the Republic of Moldova for the years 2017-2021 (Decision of the Government No.259).

The necessity and importance of implementing such Strategy has been also reaffirmed in the new Human Rights Action Plan for the years 2018-2022, which is aimed at supporting public authorities in reshaping the policy-making process at central and local level to ensure that public policies incorporate and are focused on the needs of the population, but also to take into account the obstacles to the full enjoyment of fundamental rights faced by marginalized and vulnerable groups. The Strategy includes ten areas of intervention: women's participation in decision-making; labor market and gender pay gap; social protection and family policies; health; education; climatic changes; institutional mechanism; stereotypes in society and non-violent communication; gender equality in the security and defense sector; gender-sensitive budgeting. Enumerated areas of intervention are reflected in five general objectives: 1. Ensuring a comprehensive gender equality approach; 2. Strengthening the institutional arrangements

⁴⁴ Published in the Official Gazette No. 295-308 of 10 August 2018, Art.447.

for support of gender equality; 3. Combating stereotypes in society and promoting non-violent communication; 4. Promoting gender equality in the security and defense sector; 5. Integrating gender-sensitive budgeting into the budgeting process.

Article 8 of the Law No. 102 of 13 March 2003 on Employment and Social Protection of Job Seekers provides that all people have an access to public employment services excluding any discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, political affiliation, wealth or social origin. This provision is also contained in the new Law no.105 / 2018 on Promotion of Employment and Unemployment Insurance.

The Law No. 60/2012 on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities seeks to ensure respect for the rights of persons with disabilities and facilitate their participation in all spheres of life without discrimination on equal terms with other members of society, based on observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Law enshrines respect for the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with other citizens, to: social protection, healthcare, rehabilitation, education, labor, public life, physical environment, transportation, information technologies and systems, communication and other utilities and services, available to the general public. Art.8 para.(3) of the Law provides for guaranteeing equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities and the inalienable right to respect for human dignity irrespective of disability or other state of health, irrespective of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, sexual orientation, opinion, political affiliation, wealth, social origin or any other reason.

By the Decision No.723 / 2018 the Government approved the *National Program for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for the years 2017-2022*, which provides for a cross-sectoral approach to the social inclusion of people with disabilities and ensuring respect for their fundamental rights on an equal basis with other citizens in all areas of social life.

The National Program of Deinstitutionalization of People with Intellectual and Psychosocial Disabilities from Residential Institutions managed by the National Social Assistance Agency for the years 2018-2026 and the Action Plan for its implementation were approved by the Decision of the Government No.893/2018. The Programme supports deinstitutionalization of people with disabilities and provision of alternative community-based services.

In 2016, the National Agency for Employment concluded the Cooperation Agreement with the MoldSolidarity Public Association in order to strengthen labor market partnerships in the field of Roma inclusion. The agreement provides for joint implementation of activities related to the promotion of Roma rights to access vocational training and employment.

Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality

According to the art. 11 of the Law No. 121/2012 on Ensuring Equality, the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality was established to ensure protection against discrimination and to ensure equality of all persons who consider themselves to be victims of discrimination.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ In the opinion of the Equality Council expressed during the elaboration of the present report, the Equality Council cannot reach its full potential due to the following reasons: insufficient number of units (20) set out in Art. 1 of the Law No. 298/2012; inappropriate salary of the executive personnel; enormous volume of work to be carried out with a view to achieving effective realization of its functional responsibilities at national level, etc.

From 2015 to October 2018, 677 complaints / self-referrals were submitted to the Equality Council. During the reporting period, the Equality Council issued 510 decisions, among them 32% - decisions establishing discrimination, 20% - decisions disproving discrimination and 48% - decisions of inadmissibility. Most of established cases of discrimination were about access to goods and services available to the public, a tendency that has been continued over the last few years. These are followed by cases on discrimination in labor relations, access to justice, and discrimination against human dignity. Of a total number of examined discrimination cases the Equality Council established that discrimination was on grounds of disability in 31.25% of cases, gender - 14.77%, age - 12.5%, language - 11.36%, ethnicity - 6,82%, religion or beliefs - 1.7%, nationality/national origin - 1.7%.

Training activities in the field of combating discrimination for civil servants

During 2015-2016 the Equality Council together with the People's Advocate Office conducted a training on "The concept and forms of discrimination and protected criteria in terms of the Law No. 121 on Ensuring Equality" envisaged for a number of central and local public administration institutions: Department of Penitentiary Institutions and its subordinated institutions - 185 pers.; Ministry of Health - 50 pers., Ministry of Internal Affairs - 20 pers., Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family - 23 pers., State Labor Inspectorate - 30 pers., Ministry of Education - 11 pers., representatives of local authorities and territorial offices of the State Chancellery - 26 pers. In addition, trainings for mass media, civil society and judicial assistants – (the total number of participants amounted to 63 pers.) were held.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the Equality Council organized training activities on types of discrimination, including those that contribute to propagation, instigation and promotion of intolerance, such as racism and xenophobia, for employees of both the National Patrol Inspection (held in Chisinau on 19 May 2015 with the participation of 40 pers.), and the Northern Patrol Regiment of the National Patrol Inspection (held in Balti municipality on 27 May 2015 and with the participation of 23 pers.).

Trainings courses on national framework in the field of non-discrimination, objectives and powers of the Equality Council, forms of discrimination, discriminatory criteria and case law of the Council were carried out with the support of the following partners:

Association for Foreign Policy - 35 training sessions for local public authorities, social assistance departments, civil society and media representatives from 26 districts of the Republic of Moldova, municipalities of Balti and Chisinau - 1180 pers.;

Non-Discrimination Coalition - training activities for 334 experts of District Departments for Social Assistance and Family Protection from 20 districts of the Republic of Moldova were organized from September to November 2015.

Association for Foreign Policy - training activities in the field of prevention and elimination of discrimination for representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and its territorial subdivisions from 16 districts of the country (Briceni, Edinet, Comrat, Vulcanesti, Balti, Drochia, Taraclia, Falesti, Leova, Hincesti, Orhei, Ungheni, Cahul, Anenii-Noi) were held from July 2015 to March 2016 with the participation of 504 pers. Besides, training activities were also carried out for representatives of the Public Prosecutor's Office from municipalities of Balti, Anenii Noi and Orhei - 33 pers.

Association for Foreign Policy - 21 training sessions for educational staff from 14 districts of the Republic of Moldova and the municipalities of Chisinau and Balti - 802 persons.

⁴⁶ The ministries are referred to by their old names used prior to the public administration reform.

Moldovan Public Policy Institute - 6 training sessions for social workers, teachers, representatives of local public authorities and civil society from the districts of Cimislia, Leova, Ungheni, Glodeni, Briceni, Nisporeni - 320 pers.

During 2016-2018, with a view to increasing legal capacity of the population from the point of view of equality and non-discrimination, the Equality Council organized several awareness-raising campaigns. Thus, on 6 June 2016 a campaign "GOOD PEOPLE" was launched to promote the Law No. 121 on Ensuring Equality. The campaign implied development and promotion of graphic materials. One of them was focused on promotion of proper understanding of the purpose of the Law on Ensuring Equality, while others presented the Council's performance in figures. Besides, four spots developed came to fight prejudices and stereotypes towards certain vulnerable groups and highlight true human values amidst small differences we are born with or acquire. The campaign had as a message presentation of four nationally or internationally known people from different areas of social life. One of the people presented in the campaign was an actor who played the role of a Roma man in a movie.

At the beginning of October 2016, an on-line information campaign, „BE YOURSELF. HAVE A RIGHT”, was launched. It aimed at informing general public of Moldova about discrimination, how it is found and where to address if you become a witness or victim of a supposed act of discrimination. In this sense, a social spot „What is discrimination?” was developed. Another campaign NON-DISCRIMINATION caravan was run from 30 September to 14 October 2016. All of the video clips developed within the campaigns were broadcasted during October-December 2017 by 20 television channels.

In order to stimulate the general public to claim the right to non-discrimination, the Equality Council together with its partners, , elaborated in 2018 an easy to read and understand manual on the Law on Ensuring Equality as well as translated the Petitioner's Guide into 5 minority languages (Russian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Ukrainian and Romani).⁴⁷

Police activity in the field of combating discrimination

In meetings with citizens, labor unions and youth, police officers raised public awareness of the consequences that may arise from incitements to racial hatred or discrimination, existing remedies in this area, tolerance and intercultural dialogue.

National minority representatives were invited to participate in the working session to convey the outcomes of the Public Security Departments' work, highlighting the problems they face in their relations with different members of the community.

With a view to strengthening partnership with the civil society and building up the capacities of public authorities, the following information campaigns were conducted: „Strengthening Police-community Cooperation”; „Prevention of Physical Violence and Victimization among the Youth”; „Safety Week”; „Enhancing Police Visibility in Community”; „Preventing Violence through Art”; „Together for Life”; „Be the Master of Your Safety” etc.

A training course on protection of national minorities attended by 35 employees was organized at the “Stefan cel Mare” Police Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 26-27 March 2018.

In August 2018, 3 persons within the General Police Inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were appointed responsible for conducting information campaigns for the Roma community on employment opportunities with the public order services.

⁴⁷ The publications are available on the official website of the Equality Council, www.egalitate.md under the heading „Publications”, „Guides” section.

Article 5 of the Framework Convention

Policies in relation to national minorities in terms of culture

The Republic of Moldova pursues a balanced policy to preserve cultural diversity and to create necessary conditions for the development of cultural identity by national minorities as part of national cultural heritage.

Between 2014 and 2018, the MECC⁴⁸ took certain actions aimed at integrating national minorities into cultural life, as well as promoting their culture and traditions. The organized events have the purpose of promoting cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova, including by integration and enhancement of heritage of national minorities living on the territory of the country. The underlying objectives of such cultural actions are to ensure access to culture irrespective of race or nationality, to promote intercultural dialogue, to encourage citizens to know traditions and cultural heritage of all nationalities.

The following important cultural events can be referred to in this respect:

- A *Folk Costume Day* was established by the Decision of the Parliament No. 194 of 19 November 2015. Its overarching objectives are enhancement of authentic Romanian folk costume and costumes of cohabiting ethnic groups, familiarization with national costume pieces and symbols, promotion of traditional costume manufacturing techniques at national and international level. The exhibitions held within all three editions of the Folk Costume Festival featured the museum collections of authentic folk costumes from communities densely populated by national minorities, such as the History and Ethnography Museum in Tvarditsa, the National Gagauz Museum of History and Ethnography in Comrat, as well as the costumes from private collections, for example belonging to the Ukrainian Women's Community of the Republic of Moldova etc. On this occasion, similar events took place in other districts of the republic, including in ATU Gagauzia, and the Folk Costume Parades, promoting national-minority costumes, were also held.

- National Carpet Fair "*Covorul Dorului*" has been organized since 2014. The event is dedicated to the inscription of Traditional wall-carpet craftsmanship (2016) and Men's group Colindat, Christmas-time ritual (2013) on the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It aims at promoting carpets, including Bessarabian, and other wool articles at national and international level. Annually organized feast traditionally includes, inter alia, presentation of carpets made by other ethnic groups. Thus, the Gagauz carpets from private collections and the Bulgarian carpets offered by the History and Ethnography Museum in Tvarditsa and the Chirsovo Village Museum were exposed. The National Carpet Fair program held on 15 December 2018 at the National Museum of History of Moldova involved, inter alia, promotion of national minority traditions and maintenance of intercultural dialogue and was attended by representatives of Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Polish and other communities.

- *European Heritage Days* are marked annually in September. On this occasion, various events intended to celebrate cultural heritage are carried out in many districts and localities of the country, including in localities densely inhabited by ethnic minorities. In 2014,

⁴⁸ As part of the public administration reform (2016-2020) according to para.3 of the Decision of the Government No. 594 of 26 July 2017 the Ministry of Culture was renamed in the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and absorbed the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, becoming the successor of their rights and obligations. Accordingly, the MECC develops and promotes the State policy in the following areas: education, culture and national heritage, research and innovation, youth, physical culture and sport, interethnic relations and functioning of languages spoken on the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

the closing ceremony of the European Heritage Days was held on 27 September in the village of Avdarma, UTA Gagauzia. The 2017 edition was entitled „Cultural Heritage and Nature: the Landscape of Possibilities”. Between 18-25 of September 27 relevant activities were organized in Gagauzia.

In 2014-2018, institutions subordinated to the MECC conducted events and activities aimed at contributing to the integration of national minorities into cultural life and ensuring promotion of their culture, traditions and languages. Among the most important activities should be mentioned:

- *Celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Ethnological Folk Ensemble „Văglence”*, on 23 of November 2018, the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History hosted the anniversary event of the „Văglence” band, organized in collaboration with the Centre of Out-of-School Activity from Chisinau „Rainbow”, attended by many Bulgarian ensembles such as: „Îzvorce” from Victorovca village, Ciobalaccia commune, Cantemir district; „Plamăce” band, Stoianovca village, Cantemir district; „Rada” band, Constantinovca village, Causeni district; „Tvardiceanca” band, Tvardita city, Taraclia district.

- *International Scientific Conference „Polish-Moldovan Relations marking Centennial of Recovering Independence by Poland”*, 22 October 2018, organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in the Republic of Moldova in collaboration with the National History Museum of Moldova. One of the objectives of the event was to highlight and promote the Polish culture in the Republic of Moldova.

- *An exhibition of the Gagauz painters*, 17-25 January 2018, organized by the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, in partnership with the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in the Republic of Moldova and the Union of Fine Artists from ATU Gagauzia. Notorious Gagauz painters, members of the Union of Fine Artists from ATU Gagauzia, exhibited artistic creations inspired by nature and the Moldovan society.

- On 17 October 2017 the National History Museum of Moldova hosted the opening ceremony of the *13th World Meeting of the Bulgarian media*, a professional forum held annually in a country where ethnic Bulgarians are present. The 13th meeting was attended by the Bulgarian journalists representing written press, audiovisual and online media from Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Vatican, the Netherlands, Hungary, Czech Republic, Greece, Cyprus, Israel, USA and Canada. The purpose of the forum is to communicate, to build a network and establish cooperation networks between the Bulgarian journalists around the world, as well as to provide an autonomous space for their communication with the representatives of state institutions.

- *Exhibition entitled „Ethnic Communities and Diaspora in Time and Space”*, held from 29 June to 10 September 2017 at the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History. The exhibition featured the geographic maps of the territorial distribution of ethnic communities in the Republic of Moldova and Moldovan citizens around the world, as well as creations representing culture of different ethnic groups in our country.

- On 21 April 2016, a *roundtable dedicated to the Poles of Soroca* was held at the National History Museum of Moldova. The participants in the roundtable discussed various aspects of the history of Poles from Soroca, between the early Middle Ages to the contemporary period. The archaeological discoveries in the fortress of Soroca, reports on architecture, art, social and church history of the Polish community from this locality were presented during the event. The purpose of the roundtable was to scientifically confirm the presence of Poles in Soroca and to fill in the ethnic map of the Republic of Moldova.

- The exhibition *„Traditional German Costume - European Identity Heritage”*, organized by the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History in partnership with the German House “Hoffnung” of the Republic of Moldova, 14 October 2016. The exhibition included traditional costumes and accessories, along with photos and films dedicated to the German population.

Article 6 of the Framework Convention

Situation of non-citizens

Tabel No. 5 Statistical data:

Indicators	2014	2015	2016	2017	By 31 September 2018
Foreign nationals granted residence permits for:	18521	18718	18921	18723	18166
work	1364	1083	1088	1056	-
family reunification	3399	4058	4541	4951	-
studies	2299	2272	2431	2446	-
Humanitarian activities	96	96	89	95	-
Medical treatment	0	0	3	0	-
religious activities	184	240	286	326	-
voluntary work	44	55	41	41	-
Foreign investment activities	502	606	637	525	-
other reasons	631	632	753	758	-
Permanent residence	10002	9674	9052	8525	8095
Temporary residence	8519	9044	9869	10198	10071
Foreign nationals granted identity documents valid in the Transdnestrian region	7131	3455	3273	3158	2987

Tabel No. 6 Distribution of foreign nationals granted residence permit by country of origin (top 10 countries):

Country	Number of persons granted residence permit - Total	Residence permit	
		permanent	temporary
Ukraine	5241	3016	2225
Russian Federation	4407	2662	1745
Israel	1544	44	1500
Romania	901	210	691
Turkey	825	149	676
Azerbaijan	321	114	207
Belarus	227	124	103
Italy	464	53	411
Armenia	194	86	108
Kazakhstan	161	75	86

Legal framework development

By the Decision No. 23 of 10 March 2017 the Parliament adopted the draft Law on amending and supplementing some legislative acts (in particular the Law No. 180-XVI of 10 July 2008 on Labor Migration, the Law No. 200 of 16 July 2010 on Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova) that aimed at developing of national legal framework for transposing commitments stemming from the Asociation Aggrement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova. Thereby, with a view to improving business environment and developing services and service providers, adoption of the above-mentioned Law No. 23 contributed to the establishment of preferential trade relationships based on mutually favorable conditions, affording each Party preferential market access against conditions offered to other trading partners as well as facilitating procedures of entry and temporary stay on the territory of both Parties for certain categories of people.

Pursuing the objective of setting up unique framework for the activity of foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Moldova as well as in order to attract foreign investments, by applying facilitating conditions and optimal procedures of issuing documetns to certain categories of foreigners, stipulated in the RM-EU Association Agreement and DCFTA,⁴⁹ on 29 November 2018 the Parliament adopted the Law No. 314 of 24 September 2018 on amending and supplementing some legislative acts, which envisaged merging of the Law No. 180-XVI of 10 July 2008 on Labor Migration with the Law No. 200 of 16 July 2010 on Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova and put in place simplified procedures and optimal terms of documentation for foreigners willing to work or conduct bussiness in the Republic of Moldova.

Furthermore, the procedure of issuing documents to the seconded foreigners was modified and simplified by the adoption of the Law No. 165 of 21 July 2017 on amending and supplementing the Law No.180-XVI of 10 July 2008 on Labor Migration and the Law No.200 of 16 July 2010 on Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova. The adopted amendments simplified procedure of granting temporary stay for work purposes, excluding, meanwhile, the necessity of obtaining favorable opinion by the National Employment Agency. Simultaneously, under the new terms, the seconded staff is no longer granted the right to work, except for those seconded for more than 90 days.

In 2018, in accordance with the provisions of the Law No. 165 of 21 July 2017 on amending and supplementing the Law No.180-XVI of 10 July 2008 on Labor Migration and the Law No.200 of 16 July 2010 on Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova 2536 foreigners were granted temporary and permanent residence permit. 65 of them obtained permanent residence permit and 2471 - temporary residence permit. 571 documented foreigners came to work, 1104 sought family reunification, being entitled to employment under the national legislation.

Realization of the Action Plan on implementation of the National Migration and Asylum Strategy (2016-2020)⁵⁰

⁴⁹ The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area is an agreement between the EU and the Republic of Moldova that implies preferential trade relationships.

⁵⁰ The National Strategy on Migration and Asylum for 2011-2020 adopted by the Government Decision No.655 of 8 September 2011 represents a national legal document developed to regulate movement and mobility of citizens, to contribute to prosperity of the country, its socio-economic development and to guarantee the migrants' rights and social security. It serves as a unique tool to integrate existing strategic framework, to mainstream policies dealing with migration and asylum management into strategic planning in the Republic of Moldova.

The 2016–2020 Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Migration and Asylum Strategy was developed in accordance with the Government Decision No. 655 of 8 September 2011 and within the framework of the realization of Art. 14 (3) of the RM-UE Association Agreement under the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the RM-EU Association Agreement for 2014-2016, approved by the Decision of the Government No. 808 of 7 October 2014. It was elaborated by the Bureau for Migration and Asylum (hereinafter referred as to “BMA”) together with an interdepartmental working group and approved by the Government Decision No. 736 of 10 June 2016. Achievement of objectives envisaged with respect to foreign nationals should help prevent xenophobia and uphold the human rights provided for in the Constitution and international agreements to which the Republic of Moldova is a party. At the same time, given the negative consequences of the mass flows of foreigners into the countries of the European Union, relevant measures should lessen social instability, security risks, threats to public order and other aspects involving social and cultural differences between the members of various countries.

The Plan of Action includes 30 goals and 121 actions, which are divided into 6 sections: Section I — Stabilization and development of the framework for international cooperation in the area of migration and asylum; Section II — Legal migration; Section III — Migration and development; Section IV — Management of migration in case of an increase in the flow of foreigners (migrants, refugees); Section V — Fight against illegal migration; Section VI — Migration control instruments. In this context, it is worth mentioning section II, Legal migration, which includes the following main subsections:

- *Immigration*, a subsection covering measures to facilitate the entry and stay in the Republic of Moldova of foreign investors and managers of foreign investments, the admission of foreign nationals for the purpose of employment in accordance with the needs of the domestic labour market that have been identified and access of highly skilled foreign nationals, to protect the rights of foreign nationals lawfully staying in the Republic of Moldova and to build the capacity of staff working in the fields of migration and asylum;
- *Asylum and statelessness* is a subsection designed to develop an asylum system, build the capacity of staff with respect to asylum procedures, strengthen institutional capacity for stateless persons and standardize procedures for recognizing the status of stateless persons;
- *Integration and reintegration policies* is a subsection that includes measures for the development at the central level of a policy framework for the reintegration of Moldovan migrants and the integration of foreign nationals, the introduction of a proper framework at the local level, the effective implementation of measures to reintegrate Moldovan citizens and the creation of conditions conducive to the integration of foreign nationals.

In the period 2017–2018, a number of measures were taken to carry out this Plan, as follows.

- 1) With a view to implementing the Law on the Integration of Foreign Nationals in the Republic of Moldova (No. 274 of 27 December 2011), the Action Plan for the Integration of Foreign Nationals for 2018 was approved pursuant to the Decision of the Government No. 71 of 23 January 2018. The Action Plan sets priorities for the activities and combined efforts for the achievement of the main goals, which will help ensure access to rights, improve the regulatory and legal framework and build the capacity of institutions involved in the process of providing foreign nationals with services throughout the country.
- 2) The Government approved decision No. 533 of 12 July 2017 on the establishment of integration centers for foreign nationals. Pursuant to the decision, three integration centers for foreign nationals were established under the BMA, complete with the necessary facilities, with support from the International Centre for Migration Policy Development and Embassy of Romania, and budget support from the European Union. The centers conduct their activities in

three areas, namely the north, in the municipality of Balti, in the centre, in the municipality of Chisinau, and in the south, in the municipality of Cahul, as follows: 1. *Integration Centre for Foreign Nationals of the North Regional Service (Balti)*, which serves the municipality of Balti and 14 districts; 2. *Integration Centre for Foreign Nationals of the Centre Regional Service (Chisinau)*, which serves the municipality of Chisinau and 12 districts; 3. *Integration Centre for Foreign Nationals of the South Regional Service (Cahul)*, which serves the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia and 6 districts. The activities of the centers are funded from the State budget allocations approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other sources of funding in accordance with current legislation.

3) The centers were established to provide long-term support for the integration of foreign nationals and constitute a single point of contact for the processing of applications to participate in integration activities or programmes, serving as a referral mechanism and ensuring interdepartmental coordination at the local level. Furthermore, the centers are a long-term service focusing on the local majority population. Thus, in 2018 560 foreign nationals were involved in various integration activities and programmes.

4) With a view to ensuring continuous and constructive dialogue with the civil society and the effective management of migration and asylum processes as part of cooperation agreements between the BMA and partner NGOs, a number of workshops and training sessions were jointly held. They include:

- Round table entitled “Aspects of integrating foreign nationals in the Republic of Moldova”, organized in cooperation with the Lawyers Legal Centre, with 23 persons involved in the training;
- Exhibition of drawings by refugee children held in collaboration with the Charity Centre for Refugees on the occasion of International Children’s Day;
- Summer school 2017, organized in cooperation with the Charity Centre for Refugees;
- Workshop for judges and prosecutors on the rights of migrants, organized in cooperation with the National Institute of Justice;
- Presentation of teaching material for refugees, entitled “Curriculum for the study of the Romanian language and Romanian distance learning module”, developed by the ANTEM.

5) The “Ion Creanga” Pedagogical State University runs a centre that organizes courses for the study of Romanian for foreigners who have received a form of protection in the Republic of Moldova. In 2017, some 40 foreign nationals took training courses in Romanian at the centre. At the request of the BMA, the centre holds workshops on social and cultural integration once or twice a year.

Article 7 of the Framework Convention

During the reporting period, persons belonging to national minorities actively fulfilled their right to associate in public organizations. The number of ethno-cultural organizations increased from 76 organizations in 2015 to 100 organizations in 2018, representing almost 40 ethnic minorities. It is worth mentioning their role in preserving, maintaining and expressing ethnic, cultural, linguistic identity as well as traditions and customs of national minorities. Young ethnic minority people showed stronger interest and willingness to join the process of establishing public associations. 12 public organizations of young Ukrainians, Russians, Gagauz, Bulgarians, Poles, Jews, Roma, Greeks, Belarusians etc. are accredited under the AIR.

The AIR manages activity of the Coordinating Council of Ethno-cultural Organizations (hereinafter referred to as - CC) as a public advisory body intended to provide a platform for dialogue between the State authorities and national minorities. Representing and advocating for national minority rights the CC engages leaders of ethno-cultural organization in the decision-making process on issues that affect ethnic minorities.

Approximately 120 local public ethno-cultural organizations were registered and perform their activity in municipalities of Chisinau, Balti, Soroca and Comrat, in the districts of Taraclia, Edinet, Cahul, Drochia, Criuleni, Glodeni, Ungheni, Riscani, Orhei, Calarasi, Straseni and Floresti etc.

Pursuant to national legislation, public organizations of persons belonging to national minorities are well supported by the authorities, including substantial support received from the AIR. Within its competence and objectives the AIR facilitates their inclusion in the social-cultural life of the state, in activities aimed at extending of intercultural dialogue, and consolidating of civic belonging to the Republic of Moldova etc.

Support to national minority organizations is provided through the House of Nationalities (hereinafter referred as to “HN”),⁵¹ which operates under the AIR. Between 2016-2018, about 1000 events, including: exhibitions, book presentations, homage and remembrance events, festivals, conferences, roundtables, seminars, concerts, shows, competitions, national holidays, etc., were held at the HN.

The aforementioned associations benefit from financial support provided by the AIR out of its budget for the organization of different ethno-cultural activities aimed at promoting and developing culture, languages, traditions of national minorities, ensuring intercultural dialogue and strengthening society. Thus, for 2015 relevant expenditures from the AIR’s budget amounted to 371.7 thousand MDL; for 2016 they showed rise to 403.8 thousand MDL (by 8.6%). In 2017 expenditures increased compared to 2015 to 901.4 thousand MDL (by 142.5%); in 2018 respective expenditures rose to 740.3 thousand MDL as compared to 2015 (by 99,2%).

Article 8 of the Framework Convention

According to the 2014 Census 2,611.8 thousand people declared their religion. Out of this number, 96.8% consider themselves Christian Orthodox, by 1.3 percentage point more than in 2004. Among other religions should be mentioned, Baptists (Evangelical Christian Baptists) – 1.0%, Jehovah's Witnesses – 0.7%, Pentecostal Christians – 0.4%, Seventh-day Adventists – 0.3%, Catholics represent 0.1%, while 0,5% of the population indicated confession different from those mentioned above. The share of persons identified themselves as atheists and non-religious (agnostics) was of 0.2%, by 1.2 percentage point more than in 2004. 193 thousand persons (6.9% of the population) did not identify their religious affiliation.

By the Decision of the Government No.314 of 22 May 2017 a Public Services Agency (hereinafter referred as to “PSA”) was set up.⁵² According to the Law on amending and supplementing some legal acts No. 31 of 16 April 2018 responsibility to register non-profit organizations, including religious denominations was transferred from the MJ to the PSA.

Pursuant to art. 19 (7) of the Law No. 125 of 11 May 2007 *on Freedom of Conscience, Thought and Religion* “if the constitutive documents submitted by the religious denomination do not

⁵¹ In accordance with the Decision of the Government No. 593 of 25 June 2018 on the Organization and Functioning of the Agency for Interethnic Relations, point 17 “The Agency manages activity of the following entities: the House of Nationalities - cultural and documentation center of ethno-cultural organizations in the country; the Centre-Museum “Memory of the Holocaust and Interethnic Tolerance”; the Coordinating Council of Ethno-Cultural Organizations, composed of Director General and Deputy Director General of the Agency, the Head of the Agency’s Department, leaders of national minority associations”.

⁵² The PSA is a public institution established by the Government that delegates the functions of founder to the State Chancellery. The mission of the PSA is to facilitate and streamline the delivery of public services (The Statute on Creation of the Public Services Agency, approved by the Government Decision No.314 of 22 May 2017)

comply with the provisions of the present law and/or performance of some of its religious practices and rites affects interests of society, state security, human life and physical and mental health, endangers public order, seriously contradicts the principles of morality and the rights and freedoms of other persons the PSA shall refuse the registration of that denomination, indicating the reasons". Following the entry into force of the Law No. 31 of 16 March 2018 none of the religious denominations was refused registration. In this context it is relevant to note that pursuant to modification of Art.19 (4) the registration period for religious denominations was reduced up to a maximum of 15 days.⁵³

Currently, 40 religious denominations are recorded in the State Register of Legal Entities of the Republic of Moldova, among them: 1. The Union of Baptist Evangelical Christian Churches 2. The Jehovah's Witness 3. The Roman-Catholic Bishopric of Chisinau 4. The Reform Movement Seventh Day Adventist Church 5. The Full Gospel Christians of the Republic of Moldova 6. The Moldovan Orthodox Church 7. The Bishopric of the Old Rite Russian Orthodox Church of Chisinau 8. The Union of Messianic Jews 9. The Society of Krishna Consciousness of the Republic of Moldova 10. The Union of Communities of Spiritual Christian Molokans of the Republic of Moldova 11. The Armenian Christian Apostolic Cult of the Republic of Moldova 12. The Bible Church of the Republic of Moldova, 13. The Church of the Last Testament 14. The Baha'i cult 15. The New Apostolic Church of the Republic of Moldova 16. The Union of Free Christian Churches (The Charismatic Cult) of the Republic of Moldova 17. The Union of Pentecostal Churches of the Republic of Moldova 18. The Islamic League of the Republic of Moldova 19. The Orthodox Diocese of Eastern Moldova Kiev Patriarchate and all Russia-Ukraine 20. The Lutheran Church of Augustan Confession of Moldova 21. The Movement of Christian Communities 22. The religious denomination of Evangelical Christians "Salvation Army" of the Republic of Moldova, 23. Traditional Orthodox Church of Moldova 24. The Church of Unification 25. The Metropolis of Chisinau and Eastern Moldova 26. The Presbyterian Evangelical Christian Church 27. The Gregorian Armenian Church of the Republic of Moldova 28. The Pentecostal Religious of Evangelical Christians "The Temple of the Holy Spirit" 29. The Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Moldova 30. The Metropolis of the Old Rite Orthodox Church of Moldova 31. The Jewish religious denomination of Moldova "The Federation of Jewish Communities "Chabad Lubavitch" 32. The Union of Independent Baptist Churches 33. The Local Autonomous Christian Church within the Romanian Patriarchate (The Metropolis of Bessarabia) 34. The Seventh-day Adventist Christian Church of the Republic of Moldova 35. The Federation of Jewish communities of the Republic of Moldova 36. The Independent Catacomb Church of the Republic of Moldova, 37. The Orthodox Church between the Dniester and Prut Rivers 38. The Orthodox Religious denomination "The Family Hearth of the Homeland Faith", 39. The True Orthodox Church of the Slavonic Diaspora of the Republic of Moldova 40. The True Orthodox Church of Moldova.

Article 9 of the Framework Convention

Reinforcement of legal framework

In November 2018 the Parliament adopted the Code of Audiovisual Media Services of the Republic of Moldova No. 174 of 8 November 2018 which creates the framework required for implementation of the EU's Audiovisual Media Services. The new code regulates the principles of audiovisual communication, by which all media service providers should be guided, including: freedom of expression, editorial independence, provision of correct information, protection of minors and persons with disabilities, gender balance, protection of national

⁵³ Art. 19 (4) was modified by the Law of the Parliament No. 31 of 16 March 2018.

audiovisual space, transparency of media ownership, access to major events, protection of journalists etc.⁵⁴

Separate chapters, inter alia, refer to the languages of broadcasting, including the languages of national minorities; audiovisual programmes broadcast proportion, compliance with orthographic, orthoepic, morphological and syntactic language rules etc. which relate to some provisions of the Framework Convention:

Article 4. Local programmes

(8) Media service providers, whose audiovisual media services are addressed to communities from administrative-territorial units in which an ethnic minority makes up a majority share, must transmit local audiovisual programmes in a proportion of at least 25% in the Romanian language, as well as their own audiovisual programmes in the language of the minority concerned.

Article 11. Respect of fundamental human rights and freedoms

(1) Media service providers and media service distributors shall respect fundamental human rights and freedoms within their activities on provision of audiovisual services.

(2) The following audiovisual programmes are prohibited:

a) that are likely to propagate, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance or discrimination on the ground of sex, race, nationality, religion, disability or sexual orientation;

Article 12. Access to audiovisual media services

(1) All people are entitled to access audiovisual media services.

(2) With a view to ensuring the right provided in paragraph (1), the Audiovisual Council shall establish regulations on the right to access the linear audiovisual media services:

a) reflecting the ideological, political, social, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity of society;

Article 19. Cultural responsibilities

(1) Audiovisual media services shall reflect the diversity of the national and European cultural space.

(2) Media service distributors shall ensure the observance of the orthographic, orthoepic, morphological and syntactic norms of the Romanian language and of other languages in which the audiovisual programmes are broadcasted.

Article 33. Public media service providers

(1) Public media service providers pursue the following aim in their activity:

a) distribution of news, informational, educational, cultural, sports and entertainment, linear and non-linear audiovisual programmes produced in Romanian, as well as in the national minority languages or in other languages of international communication for various audience categories;

Article 55. Retransmission of audiovisual media services

(6) In localities where an ethnic minority represents at least 25% of the population, media service distributors shall provide retransmission of at least one free audiovisual media service in respective minority language.

Radio and television broadcasters in national minority languages: current situation

Six radio broadcasters function on the territory of the Republic of Moldova in localities densely populated by ethnic minorities, among: GRT FM, Bas FM, Albena, Pro 100 radio, Bugeac FM,

⁵⁴ The Code has come into force on 1 January 2019 (Art.88). On the date of entry into force of this Code, the Audiovisual Code of the Republic of Moldova No.260/2006 (Art. 92) was hereby repealed.

Romano Patrin FM and nine TV channels: TV Gagauzia, TV Bizim DALGAMIZ, NTS, Eni Ai, BIZIM AIDINIC, BAS TV, ATV Coguk, ATV and Zona M.

NTS TV channel broadcasts programmes in the Bulgarian, Romanian, Russian languages and retransmits programmes of BNT TV channel from Bulgaria. TV Gagauzia broadcasts the Turkish TV channel TRT. Other TV channels produce programmes in the Gagauz, Romanian, Russian, Bulgarian languages. Along with above-mentioned private radio and television, the National Public Broadcasting Company “Teleradio-Moldova” offers several audiovisual programmes in minority languages. At the same time, the regional public company “Teleradio Gagauzia” provides TV and radio services targeting the Gagauz population residing on the territory of Gagauzia.

Audiovisual Coordinating Council

Audiovisual Coordinating Council (hereinafter referred to as “the ACC”)⁵⁵ has become fully involved in the process of implementing the Action Plan for 2017-2020 on the Realization of the Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova (2017-2027). Pursuant to Action 3.2.1 of the Plan the ACC organized in Comrat and Balti two training seminars on reflection of diversity and non-discrimination in mass media for radio broadcasters, journalists, TV and Radio publishers. The representatives of the Equality Council, National Center for Personal Data Protection and Center for Journalistic Investigations were invited to the events as experts. They made recommendations to the radio broadcasters and journalists on how to avoid ethnic discrimination, combat and prevent stereotypes, and prejudices, in particular towards Roma people. Furthermore, experts raised the issue of interactions with relevant stakeholders, meanwhile emphasizing the role of mass media in facilitating intercultural dialogue.

For realization of the above-mentioned Action Plan, the ACC announced by its decisions⁵⁶ two Contests for selection of audiovisual programme projects with allocation of necessary financial resources for their production from the Broadcasting Support Fund for 2017. The programmes were to be produced in the first half of 2018. Following the Contest for selection of audiovisual programme projects launched by the Decisions 30/223 of 01 December 2018 and 33/237 of 19 December 2018 the ACC granted subsidies in the amount of 338,260 thousand MDL for the audiovisual programmes production in national minority languages, such as: Bulgarian, Russian, Polish and Gagauz. These were programmes with/about/for national minorities, programs aimed at awareness raising among families and the community about the signs of danger to children’s life and health and programmes promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Hence, the following audiovisual programmes were subsidized, namely: „Historical cultural portrait”, made by National FM Cultural radio station, „As it is” by Elita TV station; „That is my home” by TV Prim television channel; „The Road to Health” by Radio Albena radio station; „It is worth preserving in history” by NTS television channel; „Halk Zengini” performed by Bugeac FM radio station; „Wise old man” by ATV Coguk television channel; „The Gagauz cuisine” by ATV television channel, and „Identity stories” by Canal Regional television channel. These programs were produced in the national minority languages accompanied by translation into the Romanian language and vice versa by means of subtitling.

The 2018 Contest for selection of audiovisual programme projects with allocation of necessary financial resources for their production from the Broadcasting Support Fund was launched by the

⁵⁵The Audiovisual Coordinating Council was created in 1996 by the Audiovisual Law no. 603 of 3 October 1995 and the Decision of the Parliament No. 988 of 15 October 1996 as an autonomous public authority, in the quality of a legal entity under public law responsible for the field of audiovisual communication.

⁵⁶ Decisions no. 23/160 of 27 September 2017 and 31/226 of 1 December 2017

ACC by the Decision No. 24/166 of 28 September 2018. The following topics of public interest were identified: Prevention and fight against all forms of exploitation (including child labor) abuse, negligence and violence against children; Promotion of positive image and rights of people with special needs; Programmes with/about/for national minorities (in the languages of national minorities with subtitles in Romanian); Contemporary approach and solutions of environmental problems in the Republic of Moldova in the context of the UE integration process; Promoting awareness raising among families and community about the signs of danger to children's life and health; Promoting domestic tourism (in compliance with the Law No. 1227 of 27 June 1997 on Advertising); The importance of parental involvement in children's education; Discrimination, xenophobia, homophobia, ethnic stereotypes, racism, interethnic tensions and segregation used to justify restriction of rights and freedoms; Healthy lifestyle against vices. According to the findings of a preliminary report, the projects for production of audiovisual programmes in national minority languages submitted by broadcasters covered all topics of public interest.

In terms of thematic monitoring in 2018 the ACC was particularly involved in the realization of the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the RM-EU Association Agreement, namely in activities on monitoring radio broadcasters with regard to respect for the rights of people with visual and hearing impairments, the rights of children, as well as with regard to compliance with the provisions of the Audiovisual Code on domestic production.

At the same time, within the contests for access to terrestrial radio frequencies in localities densely populated by ethnic minorities, the ACC gives priority and supports all the proposals containing programmes in minority languages. Thus, by the Decision No. 23/158 of 27 September 2017 the ACC supported the project by the Roma Awareness Foundation dedicated to Roma and non-Roma communities in Soroca district and granted a broadcasting license to the "Romano Patrî FM" radio station from Soroca at 103.6 MHz frequency band. Furthermore, upon issuing rebroadcasting authorization the CCA insists that as many TV channels in minority languages as possible are included in the channel list.

The National Public Broadcasting Company "Teleradio-Moldova" (hereinafter referred to as "Teleradio Moldova Company")

Moldova 1 Public TV channel

In 2018 Moldova 1 Public TV channel underwent restructuring that also implied optimization of human resources. However, the former editorial office "Community" has been maintained in the structure of the channel within the new editorial office entitled "Socio-Economic, Diaspora and Ethnic Issues".

While distributing the broadcasting volume reserved for the programmes in the national minority languages the results of the 2014 Population and Housing Census were taken into consideration. Based on the statistical data in 2014-2018 Moldova 1 Public TV channel continued broadcasting the following audiovisual programmes in national minority languages, particularly: "Svitanok" (in Ukrainian, on a bimonthly basis), "Gagauz Occa" (in Gagauz, on a bimonthly basis), "Russkii Mir" (in Russian, on a bimonthly basis), "Unga Bugeacului" (in Bulgarian, on a bimonthly basis). "Petalo Romano" programme (in Romani) appears only once a month. This is because there are different statistical data on Roma population in the Republic of Moldova. The life and activity of other numerically smaller ethnic minorities is reflected in a monthly TV project "Under the same sky".

Table No. 7. The analysis of the 2014-2018 broadcasting volume reserved for the programmes in national minority languages shows slight fluctuations during this period, but an increase compared to 2014 is still present:

Year	Total emission volume (hours)	Emission volume in the national minority languages (hours)	%
2014	8665 and 50 minutes	555	6,40
2015	8668	702	8,09
2016	8692	831	9,56
2017	8665	750	8,66
2018 (January – October)	„Russkii Mir” „Sub același cer” „Unga Bugeacului” „Gagauz Occa” „Svitanok” „Petalo Romano”	7,5 4 8 10,5 7,5 5	

The number of programmes in national minority languages also includes newscasts in the Russian language, Russian-language version of “Pur si simplu” TV project, Studio Art Plus” and „Dimensiunea Diplomatica” programme.

The Teleradio Moldova Company is the only broadcasting institution in the country broadcasting a TV project in the Romani language. The “Petalo Romano” programme of 30 min. duration appears monthly. Given to the Roma community’s particularities different issues are addressed within the programme, such as: promoting civic and community activism, building leadership; Roma rights, fight against violence; promoting success stories about Roma women, men and young people. Several editions of “Petalo Romano” and “European Vector” programmes covered the issue of Roma mediators’ employment, number of which has not yet reached the established quota.

A special edition dedicated to Holocaust commemoration and the Moldovan-Israeli project “World Creation” was prepared in 2018.

The Teleradio-Moldova Company while pursuing objectives of a public audiovisual institution seeks to ensure that the broadcasted programmes do not contain any form of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred and to discrimination on ethnic or other grounds, or generalizing defamatory statements against a group or communities. Through its programs Moldova 1 Public TV channel contributes to the education of tolerance in society. Thus, in several editions of the “Good Evening” talk show, topics such as tolerance in society (December 2017) and hate speech (December 2018) were addressed.

Radio Moldova

On Radio Moldova station production of programmes in languages of ethnic minorities living in the country is carried out by a national minority editorial office. Contributing to the realization of the State policy in the field of interethnic relations, the editorial team has a strict obligation to ensure that broadcasted programmes are not inciting towards hatred or tendentious, but are fair and objective. The programmes are broadcasted in eight languages: Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Yiddish, Belarussian, Romani. In pursuance of the right and willingness of the representatives of minority ethnic communities to have information sources in their mother tongues, the editorial office has the obligation to reflect this topic without detriment to other languages and ethnic cultures of the Republic of Moldova.

Article 10 of the Framework Convention

The use of minority languages in public life

On 26 September 2018, electoral education materials adapted to various groups of voters were launched in the context of future parliamentary elections to ensure a fair and accessible electoral process. Apart from the booklets “Democracy counts - Participate!” and “Learn Democracy”, edited in Braille format, and the Voice Guide, in easy-to-read and easy-to-understand version printed in Romanian, Russian and English, informative materials in the Gagauz language were also presented. This was an innovation for both the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova and the Electoral Commission of ATU Gagauzia. The following informative materials were disseminated in the Gagauz region: the booklet “Democracy counts - Participate!”, explanatory poster on the mixed electoral system in three languages: Romanian, Russian and Gagauz. The events were organized by the Central Electoral Commission within the framework of the Project “Strengthening Democracy in Moldova through Inclusive and Transparent Elections” implemented by the UNDP Moldova with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development, the British Embassy in Chisinau through the Good Governance Fund and the Embassy of Netherlands through the Matra Programme.

In 2016, the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova was, for the first time, edited in 5 national minority languages: Ukrainian, Russian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Romani, as well as in the Braille format. The edition was made by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova with the financial support of the UNDP Moldova as part of the project “Strengthening the Rule of Law and Protection of Human Rights in Moldova” and the EU Project “Support for the Constitutional Court of Moldova”. The launch of this edition took place on 21 February 2017 and was held in conjunction with the celebration of the International Mother Tongue Day, organized by the AIR.

Amendments to legislation

By the Decision No. 17 of 4 June 2018 on constitutional review of some provisions regarding the use of languages spoken on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and of Art.4. (2) of the Constitutional Jurisdiction Code⁵⁷ the Constitutional Court found as obsolete the Law no. 3465 of 1 September 1989 on the Use of Languages Spoken on the Territory of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (point 3). This decision was taken on the following grounds (Decision No. 17 of 4 June 2018, Section “In Law. A. Admissibility”, paras. 30-35).

- [...] The Court noted that the name of the Law is obsolete: the name “Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic” ceased to exist since 23 May 1991, when the name of the State has been changed to the “Republic of Moldova”.
- [...] The Court observed that preserving the same name for the Law induces a paternalism for the use of languages overall, inconsistent with the current European reality in the field of fundamental rights.
- [...] The Court also found in the preamble of the Law another proof of the obsolete nature thereof: the obligation to use the Russian language as a language of communication between the nations of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics collapsed on 26 December 1991. [...];
- [...] The Court quoted as an example Article 12 of the Law, which stipulates the use of the state language for record keeping in enterprises, institutions and organizations, located on the territory of the Moldovan SSR. Since this provision does not make a distinction between public and private entities, it, hence, is also overcome by the current reality. The managerial and

⁵⁷ Constitutional Jurisdiction Code/Law No. 502 of 16 June 1995

organizational issues of private entities constitute priority of their management boards and are not a matter of the State's concern;

- According to the Court, the transitory nature of this Law, valid solely for the times it was passed, is proven also by numerous subsequent laws taking over provisions thereof. Thus, the Law No. 382 of 19 July 2001 on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and on the Legal Status of Their Organizations that contains certain guarantees regarding minority languages, the Law No. 344 of 23 December 1994 on the Special Legal Status of Gagauzia and the Law No. 173 of 22 July 2005 on the Basic Provisions of the Special Legal Status of the Region of the Left Bench of Dniester River, the Law No. 1227 of 27 June 1997 on Advertisement, the Law No. 220 of 19 October 2007 on the State Registration of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs, the Law No. 160 of 22 July 2011 on Regulating the Authorization of Entrepreneurial Activity and the Law No. 125 of 11 May 2007 on the Freedom of Conscience, Thought and Religion develop or even radically change the provisions of the Law on the Use of Languages on the Territory of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic. However, the civil and criminal procedural laws come out with an approach differing from that of the Law on the Use of Languages Spoken on the Territory of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic as what regards the language of the applications and the language of judicial procedures taking place in the Republic of Moldova;

- All these considerations made the Court find the obsolete and useless nature of the Law on the Use of Languages Spoken on the Territory of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic. On the one hand, it is not its provisions that produce effects, but the provisions of subsequent special laws. On the other hand, the community of the Republic of Moldova lives in another state, a new, democratic, independent, rule of law based state, where the *raison d'être* of the Law on the Use of Spoken Languages, at the time of its adoption, makes no sense anymore [...].

Article 11 of the Framework Convention

Personal data in civil status documents and identity cards

A mechanism for transcription or transliteration of names or surnames of persons belonging to national minorities has been developed in order to facilitate spelling of names and surnames (patronymics) in official documents, in particular in civil status documents and identity cards.

Following identification of problematic issues faced by Civil Status Registration Services in providing correct spelling of names and surnames of foreign origin or names of persons belonging to other ethnic groups it was decided to elaborate general rules and procedure for amending civil status documents which subsequently were transposed to the Rules of spelling family names and surnames in civil status documents following their change, rectification or transliteration approved by the Decision of the MJ No.566 of 26 May 2016.

According to point 13 of above-said rules, while transliterating proper names of foreigners or names with foreign origin it is allowed to make some exceptions to the grammar rules of national onomastic as to ensure correctness of proper names phonetic transcription (by using characters typical just for these names – Spivakov; by allowing the doubling of letters – Anna; or by using female gender - Kuzneţova).

As regards the objections about adaptation of national minority names to the grammatical rules of the State language, what eventually results in considerable change of their spelling, such as transcription of “Sergey” into “Sergiu”, it can be assumed with a degree of confidence, that the adopted transliteration rules do not in any way require modification of the name in accordance with the State language onomastics.

Transcription and modification of personal names are considered to be two distinct processes, the first (ex. Сергей into Serghei) being made in accordance with the transliteration rules mentioned above, and the second (ex. Сергей into Sergiu) being made just at an individual's request and in accordance with the provisions of Art.66 of the Law no.100 of 26 April 2001 on the Civil Status Acts.

At the same time, in the context of ensuring national minority rights protection and in particular their right to ethnic self-identification, starting with 2013, following the promulgation of Law no. 248 of 24 October 2013 on amending and supplementing the Law no. 100-XV of 26 April 2001 on the Civil Status Acts, the heading "nationality and/or ethnic origin" was inserted in the birth certificates.

In the same vein, a specific reference should be made to the introduction of the term "Roma" into the classification of ethnicity in the State Population Register, while the term "Gypsy" was also retained. This development made it possible for Roma people to identify themselves as such and to record respective ethnic identity in civil status documents.

Thus, by virtue of legislative regulation of the right to ethnic self-identification, a person over the age of 16 is entitled to request inscription of his/her nationality in the birth certificate, upon his/her declaration on honour. Therefore, the full spectrum of civil status services as set out in the Civil Status Services classification is provided to all categories of citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin or nationality.

With a view to adjusting identity documents form and content to the international requirements set for machine readable identity documents, namely for putting into circulation the card model of identity documents of ID-I format, by the Law No.187 of 11 July 2012 on amending and supplementing of some legislative acts modifications have been introduced to Art.3 of the Law No.273-XIII of 9 November 1994 on identity documents of the National Passport System, but paras. (6) and (7) of Art.3 were set forth in a new wording. Hence, according to Art.3 (6) "Identity documents and residence permits are filled out in the State language" and in line with Art.3 (7) „The titles of information fields in the identity document of the citizen of the Republic of Moldova are written in the State language and in the Russian language”.

The previous version of Art.3 (6) of the Law on Identity Documents of the National Passport System stated that „Identity documents are filled out in the State, Russian and English languages, except the identity documents issued to refugees and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection, which are filled out only in the State language”. And Art.3 (7) of the Law stipulated that „Upon filling in identity documents in the Russian language at the request of an individual, belonging to a national minority, his/her middle name is recorded in accordance with the norms of his/her native language”.

Currently, according to Art.3 (5) letters (g) and (h) and Art.3 (6) the name and surname of identity document holder are indicated only in the State language.

At the same time, as a consequence of amendments introduced by the Law No.187 of 11 July 2012 to Art. 3 of Law No.273-XIII of 9 November 1994 on identity documents of the National Passport System, since 7 March 2013 identity documents and residence permits of generation II (ID-I format) have been introduced. Their models were approved by the Government Decision No.53 of 17.01.2013 „on approval of models and application of the new type of identity documents”.

While developing new models of identity documents and residence permits the practice of the EU member states in the field was followed that affirms rationality of using machine readable identity documents of the format ID-I, which by dimension are identical to bankcards what proves to be very practical.

New models of identity documents and residence permits have been elaborated in accordance with the provisions of Moldovan pre-standards SMV ISO/CEI 7501-3:2012 „Identity Cards. Machine readable travel documents. Part 3: Machine readable official travel documents”, developed strictly in compliance with the Technical Instructions of the International Civil Aviation Organization (Doc 9303 ICAO) and approved by the decision No.873-ST of 24 April 2012 of the National Institute of Standardization and Metrology.

According to the ICAO Guidelines the visual control zone of the machine readable identity documents of card type in the ID-I format include both mandatory and optional fields of information depending on requirements of the states and document issuing authorities.

Regulations on spelling of personal data of the document holder, stated in the ICAO Guidelines, provide that the State or the document issuing authority determines which element of this data shall be considered as primary identifier. This may be the surname (family name), one of the first names and in some cases full name and surname. Thus, according to consecutiveness of elements constituting the data that identify the document holder, which are placed on the recto of ID-I, the family name serves as a primary identifier and the surname comes as a secondary one, followed by sex, citizenship, date of birth and other optional personal data.

In order to diminish the role of a sheet accompanying the identity card, which has proved to be inefficient, one of its optional element, namely “the citizen’s permanent place of residence” was put on the back side of the new identity document in place where the holder’s name and patronymic in English and Russian were put in previous identity cards of ID-II format.

It is important to mention that in the identity cards of generation I (ID-II format), issued since 01.06.1996 in the English language using the Latin script, the Father’s name was indicated and in the Russian language using the Cyrillic script patronymic appeared. These two notions were often confused.

According to the Republican Commission for Regulation and Protection of the National Onomastic and the Institute of Philology of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, national onomastic formula of the Moldovan people follows the Romanic pattern: name + surname (ex. Dorin Marcu). On Romanic territory, the patronymic means „a name that all members of a family bear (paternal surname) which is a family name" (e.g. Niculescu, Țurcanu, Stere etc.). From etymological point of view, patronymic exactly means “father’s (family) name”. However, for some nations, the patronymic means „a name given to the family members comprising of a father's name supplemented by a particular suffix (a patronymic suffix – e.g. Петров- ич, Иванов - ич etc.)”.

From the scientific point of view:

- in the national system of the Moldovan people, the onomastic formula comprises a name + surname and patronymic which is a synonym of „a family name”;
- in the system of Slavic languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Polish, Belarusian, etc.) the onomastic formula consists of a name + „patronymic” (made with adding a specific suffix) + surname.

Thus, introduction of an additional field (optional element) „Patronymic / Отчество” to the identity cards of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova will generate the situation when patronymics of persons of Russian and Moldovan origin are written differently, causing confusing interpretations and complaints from the document holders.

However, returning to the model when personal data were introduced to identity cards, inter alia, in the Russian language (which is only one of many minority languages spoken in Moldova) aiming at correct indication of patronymics of persons belonging to Russian ethnic group, may affect the rights of other national minority representatives to use the name and surname (patronymic) in the form accepted in their mother tongues, fact that eventually contradicts the principles of ensuring national minority rights, as well as the principle of equality of all citizens before the law, enshrined in Art.10 and Art.16 of the Constitution.

It is worth mentioning that according to Section 12 of the “Regulation on issuing identity documents and evidence of the inhabitants of the Republic of Moldova” approved by the Decision of Government No.125 of 18 February 2013, personal data of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova are introduced to the identity cards basing on civil status certificates.

By the Decision No.28 of 30 May 2002 on reviewing constitutionality of some provisions of the Law No.100-XV of 26 April 2001 on the Civil Status Acts and the Law No.382 of 19 July 2001 on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and the Legal Status of Their Organization, the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the phrase „... and the Russian language” in Art.5 (4) of the Law No.100-XV of 26 April 2001 on the Civil Status Acts. As a result of amendments made to this legislative act, upon issuing civil status documents any designations shall be made only in the State language.

Currently, issued civil status certificates do not include the holder’s patronymic. Taking into account diverse ethnic background of the Republic of Moldova (according to the State Register of Population there are attested over 150 ethnic groups) and proceeding from the fact that patronymic is characteristic not to all onomastic systems of different ethnicities, but in case if they do have it, it may have different meanings, as well as aiming at avoiding introduction of confusing / distorted information into the identity documents of generation II (format ID-I), it was considered unreasonable to include the individual’s patronymic in the identification document of the citizen of the Republic of Moldova that since 7 March 2013 has been issued only in the State language.

Article 12 of the Framework Convention

Studies in the field of culture, history, national minority languages

During the period under review, the Center of Ethnology (hereinafter referred to as „the CE”) under the Institute of the Cultural Heritage within the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research continued its activities.⁵⁸

The CE⁵⁹ is a scientific institution with the potential of 48 scientific researchers which consists of 2 sections (General Ethnographic Issues, Ethnic Minorities), 4 Sectors (Ethnology of

⁵⁸ The Institute of Cultural Heritage within the Academy of Sciences of Moldova was transferred under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and was included in the List of public organizations in the field of research and innovation, for which the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research is the founder approved by the Decision of the Government No.50 of 16 January 2018 under the public administration reform.

⁵⁹ The Center of Ethnology was created on 9 August 2006 at the Institute of Cultural Heritage within the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, after reorganization of three academic institutions: the Institute for Interethnic Research, the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography and the Institute of Art Studies; (following the Decision of the Government No. 1326 of 14 December 2005 “On measures to optimize the science and innovation infrastructure”).

Moldovans, Interethnic Relations, Ethnology of Russians, Ethnology of Gagauz) and 4 Groups (Ethnology of Ukrainians, Ethnology of Bulgarians, Ethnology of Roma, Ethnology of Jews).

The CE's mission is to conduct theoretical researches and elaborate practical recommendations ensuring the state policies with scientific rationale and contributing to preservation of material and immaterial ethnographic heritage of ethnic communities co-habiting in the Republic of Moldova.

Theoretical relevance. The ethnological researches carried out so far have shown that the territory between the rivers of Prut and Dniester represents a zone of cultural and demographic interferences and confluences of local elements with the eastern, central and south-eastern European cultural and historical fluxes. The comprehensive elucidation of these processes in the given area, their ethno-cultural character and consequences will complement the European historical and cultural image of the Republic of Moldova.

Practical relevance. In the context of the Moldova's European aspirations, it is necessary to estimate the country's capacity for integration into the European multicultural space. The results of the ethnological researches provide scientific foundation for the State policies in the field of ethno-cultural relations, and contribute to facilitation of national and European identity of the Moldovan citizens.

During 2015-2017, the CE coordinated the scientific research within the institutional project 14.06.199F „Multi-dimensional enhancement of ethno-cultural heritage as a factor of harmonization and development of society of the Republic of Moldova”, which contributed substantially to the appreciation of ethno-cultural diversity as a component part of the national patrimony of the Republic of Moldova, ensuring, meanwhile, that the research process was based on promotion and respect for the cultural dialogue.

The CE has achieved the following research performances in the field of national minority history, cultures and languages in the Republic of Moldova: 1). Scientific publications - 587, including: national monographs - 15, international monographs - 2, national compendiums - 7, manuals - 9 etc.⁶⁰ 2). Participation in scientific events - 601. 3). Promotion of achievements in the field of science and innovation in mass media - 296.

Over the past 25 years, pursuant to international legal norms, the national legal framework in the field of interdisciplinary study of history, culture and language of the national minorities in the Republic of Moldova has evolved in line with the processes of society's democratization and domestic political system alignment with the perceptions of the EU integration:

- The Law No. 382 of 19 July 2001 on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and the Legal Status of Their Organizations /Art.5(2): “The State ensures that scientific research in the field of history, language and culture of the national minorities shall be conducted”.
- The Action Plan of the Government of the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2018 (approved by the Decision of the Government No.890 of 20 July 2016)/ Chapter XVII. National Minorities: Action No.5: „Encouraging knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of both national minorities and ethnic majority”.

⁶⁰ During 2017-2018 the CE's scientific staff developed a series of textbooks for the following school subjects, in particular: Bulgarian literature and language (grades 4,5,6,7), Ukrainian literature and language (grades 1,2,4, 6,7). The publication on “History, culture and traditions of Roma people in the Republic of Moldova”, curriculum for the discipline and the Guide for its implementation have been elaborated and edited for the first time. Primary Education Chisinau: Liceum, 2018, 64 p., author Ion Duminița, PhD, Head of Ethnic Minority Section.

- The Action Plan for 2017-2020 on the Implementation of the Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova (2017-2027) (approved by the Decision of the Government No. 1019 of 29 November 2017)/Priority Action No.1.3.1 “Conduction of studies and researches on interethnic relations in the Republic of Moldova”.

Under the auspices of the CE, the Ethnology and Culturology Newspaper is published. The newspaper includes scientific papers: monograph studies, synthesis articles, reviews, information materials reflecting internal and external scientific life (congresses, conferences, symposiums, seminars, colloquia), as well as chronicles, archive documents on innovative subjects from humanitarian field: ethnological and culturological aspects. The newspaper accepts for publication scientific papers by local and foreign scientific researchers in English, Romanian and Russian.⁶¹

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Legal framework consolidation

On 17 July 2014 by the Decision No. 152 the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted a new Education Code. The present Code establishes the legal framework of relationships for the design, organization, implementation and development of the education system in the Republic of Moldova (Art.1). Article 2(2) of the current Education Code provides the legal framework of education among which the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is, inter alia, referred to. Meantime, the document defines the languages of instruction. In line with Art. 10 (1) “In the education system, the education process shall be carried out in the Romanian language, and within the possibilities of the education system - in one of the languages of international circulation, or under paragraph (2), in the languages of the national minorities. (2) In areas inhabited traditionally or by substantial number of persons belonging to national minorities, if there is a sufficient demand, the State shall ensure within the possibilities of the education system that persons belonging to these minorities have adequate conditions to learn their minority language, or to receive education in this language, at the compulsory education level. (3) The study of the Romanian language shall be compulsory in all educational institutions of any level and shall be regulated by the state educational standards. (4) The state shall ensure the necessary conditions for the Romanian language study in all educational institutions, including by increasing the share of subjects studied in the Romanian language in the general education institutions with another language of training [...]”.

Creation of the optimum conditions for the organization of the educational process in the children’s mother tongue - is one of the essential requirements for the educational policy in relation to the national minorities in the Republic of Moldova. For this reason, the education aims at:

- preserving and developing national minority culture, educating national identity;
- recognition and appreciation of cultural values of other peoples, in particular of the Moldovan culture, as well as facilitating integration of national minorities into the Moldovan people’s cultural background as a result of their social and economic activity;
- education of a person with, at least, dual linguistic and cultural identity.

Education of national minorities is under permanent monitoring of the MECC. In order to ensure the rights of national minorities to education, the MECC is responsible for:

- creation of a network of institutions at all levels of education;

⁶¹ The Ethnology and Culturology Newspaper appears once per semester in a circulation of 200 ex. and is distributed free of charge upon request to all public libraries and humanitarian scientific centers. It is also available online free of charge on the web page <http://ethnology.asm.md>.

- development of curricula for pre-university educational institutions with instruction in the national minority languages;
- initial and continues professional training of teachers;
- promotion of international standards and best practices of multilingual and multicultural education.

Access of national minorities to primary and secondary education

The pre-university educational institutions of the Republic of Moldova for the 2017-2018 academic year included 1291 educational institutions (primary schools, gymnasiums, high schools).

Three models of minority language teaching have been developed in the Republic of Moldova, which are applied in 243 gymnasiums and high schools.

- **schools with instruction in Russian** where representatives of national minorities, traditionally, do their studies.
- **schools with instruction in Russian:** the Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, etc. languages are studied as a discipline 3 hours per week; the discipline “History, culture and traditions of Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz and Bulgarian people”, is taught 1 hour per week;
- **gymnasium**, providing education in the Bulgarian language in separate classes at primary level (Theoretical Lyceum “V.Levski” , municipality of Chisinau).

Tabel No.8 Number of schools offering the study of national minority languages:

Studied language	2017-2018 academic year
Ukrainian	41 schools
Gagauz	42 schools
Bulgarian	28 schools
Polish	3 schools
Hebrew	2 schools

Teaching materials

At present, the respective educational institutions have different teaching materials at their disposal for the teaching of the Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian languages, including:

- Language and Literature teaching standards (grades 1-12; all minority languages);
- Language and Literature Curriculum (classes 1-12);
- Methodological guidelines for curricula implementation (classes 1-12);
- Language and Literature textbooks (grades 1-9);
- Programs and tests for national testing (grades 1-9);
- Language and Literature Baccalaureate Programs;
- curriculum for the subject “History, culture and traditions of the Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian and Gagauz people” (grades 1-4);
- Curriculum for the subject “History, culture and traditions of the Roma people in the Republic of Moldova” and a Guide for its implementation (classes 1-4, 2018).

Initial training and continuing education of teachers

The teachers of national minority languages receive initial training in the following educational institutions of the country:

- educators of kindergartens with instruction in and teaching of the Gagauz and Bulgarian languages (colleges in Comrat municipality and Taraclia city);
- teachers of Russian language and literature (State University of Moldova)
- teachers of Romanian-Ukrainian philology (“A. Russo” University in Balti municipality);
- teachers of Russian-Romanian, Romanian-Gagauz and Romanian-Bulgarian philology (“I. Creanga” Pedagogical University, Chisinau municipality);
- teachers of Gagauz-Romanian, Bulgarian-Romanian philology (Comrat State University);
- teachers of Bulgarian language, history, literature, culture and traditions – “Grigorii Tambalak” Taraclia State University.

Access of national minorities to the State language study in pre-university educational institutions

A National Program on Improving Quality of the State Language Teaching in the Educational Establishments with National Minority Languages of Instruction for 2016-2020 and the Action Plan for its implementation was adopted by the Decision of the Government No. 904 of 31 December 2015. The Program is aimed at improving Romanian language competences of children and pupils from education institutions with instruction in national minority languages.

Tabel No.9 The program budget within the medium-term budgetary framework for 2016-2018 is as follows:

Budgeted activities	Medium-term budgetary framework, thousand MDL			Budget program
	2016	2017	2018	
National Program on Improving Quality of the State Language Teaching in the Educational Establishments with National Minority Languages of Instruction	605,6	579,4	512, 9	General education services

Financing is made from the State budget, local budgets, and through grants, sponsorships and other legal sources.

The achievement of the Program’s objectives by means of the Action Plan implementation in the period 2016-2018 contributed greatly to the improvement of the quality of the Romanian language study by the national minority representatives.

The progress accomplished includes the following. The educational project “Socio-linguistic integration of pupils belonging to national minorities by increasing the number of school subjects studied in Romanian”⁶² has been extended. At the moment, the project is piloted in 45 pre-university educational institutions over the country; 94 teachers teach 6 school subjects in the Romanian language to pupils from 171 classes who benefit from this opportunity to improve their knowledge of Romanian. The project in question is effectively implemented in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (ATU Gagauzia). As part of this project, in the “G.A.Gaidarji” High School in Comrat the discipline “Moral-spiritual education” has been taught in the State language in classes I - III for eight years. In the “Mihail Guboglo” Lyceum in Ceadir-Lunga, the discipline “The Culture of Good Neighborhood” is studied in the State language by pupils in the 3^d grade and the optional course on “Intercultural Education” - by the pupils of the 7th grade.

⁶² The project was launched in 2011 by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova and approved by the Decree No. 751 of 20 August 2011.

During the 2017-2018 school year, in Taraclia district, 13 educational institutions were involved in the above-mentioned project with 857 pupils becoming its beneficiaries. The disciplines in the State language are taught by 24 teachers with a higher degree, mostly in “Romanian Language and Literature” field of specialization. The following subjects are taught in the State language under the project: “Moral-spiritual Education”, “Technological Education”, “Musical Education”, “Physical Education”, “Civic Education”.

The State language study in pre-university educational institutions of ATU Gagauzia

47 educational institutions with 14,814 pupils function on the territory of Gagauzia. All students study the State language. In Gagauzia there are 2 high schools with tuition in the State language; 1 of them is a mixed high school, having classes in Romanian and Russian. At present, all educational institutions are provided with qualified teachers of the Romanian language and literature by 98 %. The number of teachers is 168.

The requalification of Romanian language teachers is ensured on an ongoing basis, i.e 30 teachers attended the requalification courses in Romania in 2016, and 27 teachers - in 2017, respectively.

Various interactive forms of extracurricular activities, such as: celebration of Romanian language weeks, literary evenings, folkloric sessions, quiz games, creative contests, scientific and practical conferences etc. used to create a Romanian linguistic environment, facilitate the children’s interest in the Romanian language study.

Furthermore, „Integration with respect for diversity - simultaneous learning of the Romanian and Gagauz languages” project by ANTEM is also implemented in the region. The overall objective of the project is to create conditions for simultaneous study of the Romanian and Gagauz languages for at least 300 children between 5 to 6 years of age and their parents, which will foster their cohesion and linguistic, social and professional integration and will contribute to the preservation of ethnic identity and cultural heritage.⁶³

However, some problems exist in the field of improving the Romanian language teaching, which the Gagauz authorities, in collaboration with the MECC keep under permanent review and which are dealt with by all the necessary measures. The lack of Romanian literature in school libraries and poor technical facilities are among the most pressing problems.

The State language study in pre-university educational institutions in the Taraclia district

In the Taraclia district, the State language is taught 4 hours per week in all general educational institutions with Russian-language instruction. The classes with more than 25 students are usually divided into subgroups. The teaching staff consists of 54 teachers with a high degree.

At the request of parents and pupils, teaching of some preferentially selected disciplines is also delivered in the State language, in particular: course on “Economic and Entrepreneurial Education” taught in “Ivan Vazov” Theoretical Lyceum from Taraclia city, course on “Intercultural Education” studied in the “Ivan Vazov” Gymnasium in Taraclia city, course on

⁶³ For detailed information on this project see also, Chapter II/Practical measures/ *Ensuring the necessary conditions for persons belonging to national minorities, including adults, to study and to apply the State language.*

“Harmonious Family Relations” taught in “St. Paisie Helendarsch” Theoretical Lyceum in the village of Corten. These disciplines have already been taught in the State language for many years and are requested consciously by children wishing to improve their knowledge and communication skills in Romanian. The teachers apply different interactive methods during the teaching process to create the Romanian linguistic environment.

The local public administration bodies in Taraclia also contribute considerably to creation of conditions necessary for ensuring ethnic minority access to education, mother tongue and State language study. At the same time, educational institutions and teachers face a certain lack of provision with educational literature, textbooks, visual materials and learning equipment.

Access to technical and higher vocational education ⁶⁴

Tabel No. 10. Number of students in secondary vocational-technical educational institutions, by language of instruction:

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Total number of students	17508 (100%)	16098 (100%)	18980 (100%)
Romanian	15107 (86%)	14162 (88%)	16642 (88%)
Russian	2401 (14%)	1936 (12%)	2338 (12%)

Tabel No. 11. Number of students in post-secondary vocational-technical educational institutions, by language of instruction:

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Total number of students	29810 (100%)	30428 (100%)	29811 (100%)
Romanian	25836 (87%)	26445 (87%)	25824(87%)
Russian	3568 (12%)	3566 (12%)	3591 (12%)
Other languages (Gagauz-Russian, Bulgarian-Russian)	406 (1%)	417 (1%)	396 (1%)

Currently, the network of higher educational institutions in the Republic of Moldova is comprised of 30 universities (19 public and 11 private) with 74,726 students.

Tabel No.12. Number of students in higher educational institutions, by language of instruction:

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Total number of students	89529 (100%)	81669 (100%)	74726 (100%)
Romanian	75065 (83,8%)	69181 (84,7%)	63665 (85,2%)
Russian	12554 (14,0%)	10429 (12,8%)	9242 (12,4%)
English	1103 (1,2%)	1400 (1,7%)	1217 (1,6%)

⁶⁴ Number of secondary vocational-technical educational institutions in the Republic of Moldova is 43.

French	603 (0,7%)	512 (0,6%)	401 (0,6%)
Other (Italian/German)	204 (0,2%)	147 (0,2%)	141 (0,2%)

Article 16 of the Framework Convention

Protection of national minority rights in the administrative-territorial units

The issue of respecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is one of the priorities in the activity of local public administration bodies in areas with substantial number of national minorities. The review of activity performed by local public authorities of Balti and Chisinau municipalities, taking into account the multiethnic composition of the population, shows some relevant developments in the field.

Municipality of Bălți

According to data from the 2014 census, in Balti municipality of 94,427 people who declared ethnicity, Moldovans constitute 60.6%, Romanians are 2.9%, 18.5% - Ukrainians, Russians - 16.0%, Gagauz - 1%, Bulgarian - 0.2%, Roma - 0.2%, other ethnicities (including Jews, Hungarians, Chuvashes, Belarusians, Armenians) - 1.5%.

Ethno-cultural organizations

The Culture Section of Balti City Hall, work jointly and actively co-operate with the local civil society, including ethno-cultural organizations functioning in the municipality with a view to ensuring harmonization of interethnic relations and understanding and to promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the region. The Co-ordinating Council of Ethno-Cultural Organizations - a consultative body under the auspices of the City Hall continues its activity. The Culture Section is responsible and manages the Council's work. Meetings of the Coordinating Council, are held as needed, but at least once a quarter.

Since 2007 funding for ethno-cultural organizations has been included each year in the budget of the Balti municipality. Therefore, in 2015, 90.0 thousand MDL were allocated from the municipal budget for this purpose, in 2016 - 30.0 thousand MDL, in 2017 - 60.0 thousand MDL, in 2018 - 60.0 thousand MDL.

Annually, representatives of ethno-cultural organizations actively participate in such activities as: Republican Ethnic Festival „Unity through Diversity”, different municipal and national cultural events dedicated to Winter Holidays, “Martisor” celebration, Balti City Day (May 22), Days of Slavic Writing and Culture, International Day of Child Protection, Folk Costume Day, Independence Day of the Republic of Moldova (31 August) etc.

There are 14 ethno-cultural organizations on the ground in the Balti municipality, of which 7 function both at municipal and national levels. The most numerous ethno-cultural organizations include the following:

- The Russian Community from the Balti municipality. It has been active since 1993. Over 30 cultural, educational and socio-cultural events are organized by the Russian Community every year.
- The Polish Culture Society “The Polish House” founded in 1994. The organization annually holds about 80 cultural and educational events for its members and other representatives of

Polish Diaspora, including the Polish Language Republican Olympiad and the Republican Declamation Contest named after Adam Mitchevici.

- The Jewish Charity Center “Hasad Iaacov”. It has been active since 1998. Each year, the Center organizes about 40 cultural, educational and socio-cultural events for its beneficiaries from age 1 to 3. The Center collaborates with the Education, Youth and Sport Directorate of the Balti City Hall on the basis of the Cooperation Agreement, approved by the Decision of the Balti Municipal Council No. 7/20 of 27 July 2016.

- The Ukrainian Community of Moldova “Zapovit – Heritage”. It has been active since 2004. The community of Ukrainians annually organizes over 10 cultural and educational events in cooperation with the Ukrainian Language and Literature Center of the “Alecu Russo” State University in Balti.

Religious organizations

The religious organizations are significantly represented in the municipality of Balti, namely: The Diocese of Balti, 16 Orthodox Churches; The Roman Catholic Bishopric Chisinau: Roman Catholic Parish of the Archangels; The Diocese of the Old Rite Russian Orthodox Church of Chisinau: The Church of the Archangel Michael; The Union of Churches of Evangelical Baptist Christians: 5 churches; The Seventh-day Adventist Church: 4 churches; The Jehovah’s Witnesses Religious Organization: 15 communities; The Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith: 5 churches; The Federation of the Jewish Community of the Republic of Moldova: The Jewish Religious Community, The Synagogue; The Religious Society of Krishna Consciousness.

Study of national minority languages

The following educational institutions function in the Balti municipality: 1 bilingual gymnasium (Gymnasium № 10 with instruction in the State and Russian languages); 7 high schools and 8 gymnasiums with education in Russian, including: Gymnasium № 9 with teaching of Ukrainian language and literature and of the course „History, traditions and culture of the Ukrainian people”; since 2017 the Polish language has been learnt in primary classes in Gymnasium № 3 and “N.Gogol” Lyceum.

Since 2016, the public association “Hungarian community” in the Republic of Moldova has conducted free Hungarian language courses; the Polish language is taught within “The Polish House” under the Polish Culture Society; The Jewish Charity Center “Hasad Iaacov” provides teaching of Hebrew and Yiddish. Russian Center, Center of Ukrainian Language and Literature and Polish Center operate under the aegis of the “Alecu Russo” State University in the Balti municipality.

Roma people situation

In order to ensure school enrollment of all children in the municipality of Balti managers of educational institutions annually (in April, August) pay visits to all families with children between 6 and 16 years old living in the municipality – a number which translates into about 10 000 families, of whom over 50 are Roma families. For the same purpose, the community mediator, who was employed with the Balti Town Hall within the Social Assistance and Family Protection Department in 2014, takes certain measures to raise awareness among Roma families. About 80% of Roma children attend Gymnasium no. 4, providing instruction in Russian; other Roma children go to different educational institutions in the municipality.

A majority of Roma parents do not identify themselves as Roma. According to data from the 2014 census collected by the Balti Statistical Service, 154 Roma representatives are recorded in the municipality. At the same time, according to data from the Balti City Hall Health Service

since January 2018, 261 Roma have been on the register of the family doctors, of whom 154 are insured and 107 are uninsured.

With a view to ensuring the Roma population with adequate living conditions para. 4.1.1. „Examination of living conditions of Roma people” and para. 4.1.2. „Inventory of non-residential houses” were introduced in the Municipal Action Plan to support the Roma population in Balti 2017-2020 (approved by the Decision of the Balti Municipal Council No. 12/3 of 08 December 2016):.

Ensuring transparency in decision-making

According to the findings of the 2017 Monitoring Report on Transparency of Activity by Local Public Administration developed by the Promo-LEX⁶⁵ Association, the Balti City Hall was declared as the most transparent one.

Between January 2016 and September 2018, 40 draft decisions were submitted to public consultations with none of them being withdrawn. The meetings of the Balti Municipal Council are announced on the City Hall’s web-site, are open to participation of all citizens of the municipality and are broadcasted by municipal media outlets.

Under the law provisions and in order to ensure equality and non-discrimination of citizens on the grounds of ethnic affiliation, the candidates of the contests for filling vacant civil service positions announced by the City Hall do not indicate nationality in the questionnaire. All vacancy announcements, lists of candidates, contest results are published on the Balti City Hall’s website in Romanian and Russian.

Municipality of Chisinau

Aiming at developing and promoting the national state policy on national minorities, at ensuring effective communication of local public authorities and ethno-cultural public associations with local status, Chisinau local authorities facilitate consolidation of relations with the cohabiting ethnic groups by:

- providing logistic support to ethno-cultural public associations in realization of cultural actions;
- granting financial support from the municipal budget, at the request, for organization of cultural actions promoting national culture, history, customs and traditions of cohabiting ethnic groups;
- promotion of cultural activities held by ethno-cultural public associations by providing premises for event organization free of charge ;
- organization of the Republican Ethnic Festival „Unity through Diversity” as well as other mass actions that do not contravene the legislation in force in cooperation with ethno-cultural public associations;
- encouraging the Romanian language study and enrollment of persons belonging to national minorities living on the territory of the Chisinau municipality in language courses, if they so desire.

Support for ethno-cultural public associations

Pursuant to the Decision of the Chisinau Municipal Council (hereinafter referred to as – “CMC”) No.13/12 of 22 July 2004, the Municipal Commission for the coordination of activity by ethno-cultural organizations with local status was set up within the Chisinau City Hall. Its mission

⁶⁵ The Promo-LEX Association was established in 2002 and represents a non-governmental organization that aims to advance democracy in the Republic of Moldova, including in the Transdnistrian region, by promoting and defending human rights, monitoring the democratic processes, and strengthening civil society.

consists in strengthening relations between local public administration bodies and ethno-cultural public associations.

24 ethno-cultural public associations with local status are registered at the Chisinau City Hall. Each organization performs its activities over the year according to the Action Plan approved by the General Mayor of Chisinau, which provides for organization of various activities aimed at promoting culture, study of history, language, traditions of cohabiting ethnic groups. Annually, the CMC allocates financial resources for the implementation of this Action Plan.

In such a way, ethno-cultural associations, performing various cultural programs participate in the most important cultural events organized in the city i.e: Christmas celebrations; Independence Day of the Republic of Moldova; National “Our Language” holiday; Republican Ethnic Festival „Unity through Diversity; Chisinau City Day etc.

Tabel No. 13. During 2014-2018 the ethno-cultural associations with local status held the following activities:

Period	Number of public associations	Number of activities	Allocated financial resources/ thousands MDL
2014	24	256	400000
2015	24	270	500000
2016	24	276	300000
2017	23	254	300000
2018	21	230	300000

Multilingual educational system, education in minority languages, linguistic diversity promotion

As of the development of multilingual educational system, including education in minority languages, the Chisinau local public administration pays particular attention to the creation of conditions for training and education of children belonging to ethnic minorities in their mother tongue or at their choice.

The course „History culture and traditions of Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, Roma and other people” is included in curriculum for students of Russian/Ukrainian/Bulgarian origin in schools with Russian-language education, being taught in their mother tongue.

Tabel No. 14. School subjects taught in national minority languages are studied in the educational institutions with the Russian language of instruction,⁶⁶ as follows:

Nr. d/o	Minority languages	Total number of pupils		The name of the institution
		2017-2018	2018-2019	
1.	Ukrainian language	429	397	T.L. ⁶⁷ „Petru Movilă”, T.L. „I.Neciui-Levitchi”, T.L.„M.Kotiubinski”, „Taras Shevenco”

⁶⁶ In the Chisinau municipality, in the educational institutions with instruction in Romanian, the national minority languages are not studied.

⁶⁷ T.L. – Theoretical Lyceum

				Gymnasium
2.	Bulgarian language	191	182	T.L. „Vasil Levski”
3.	Polish language	50	46	T.L. „N.Gogol”
4.	Hebrew language	1093	1112	T.L.„Rambam” ORT, T.L.R.E.T.T.(ORT) „B.Z. Hertli”
5.	Russian language and literature	21859	21874	44 institutions (national minority schools + mixed)
6.	Russian language and literature	20914	20914	86 institutions (national schools)
7.	Turkish language	1763	1364	T.L. „ORIZONT”

Members of the Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, Jewish, Polish, Turkish ethnic minorities study Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, Hebrew, Polish and Turkish language and literature. In T.L. „Vasil Levski” the subject „Geography of Bulgaria” is studied in Bulgarian.

Enrollment in educational institutions is organized depending on the school district. At the request of parents, children can be enrolled in the educational institutions intended to the national minorities, hence, equal opportunities for education are ensured.

As regards the Romanian language study in the national minority schools, it should be mentioned that, pupils and teachers are well informed about the role of this school discipline for the education of the young generation and for the achievement of the curricular objectives thanks to constant development of students’ motivation during classes and extracurricular activities. The students of these institutions learn the Romanian language to the extent necessary for being able to use it both at the level of perception and message rendering, including in writing. Classes with 25 and more pupils in national minority schools are divided into subgroups to study the Romanian language.

Romanian language study by adult population belonging to national minorities

With a view to extending the use of the Romanian language in the Republic of Moldova, including by elaboration and realization of effective teaching methods, the linguistic centers have been founded under the Chisinau City Hall, thereby facilitating climate of tolerance among citizens of different ethnic origin. Different social categories of people and national minorities attend these centers.

Tabel No. 15. The Municipal Company „The „Nichita Stanescu” Romanian Language House offers free State language courses for adults as follows:

Year	Number of attendees	Sources allocated from the municipal budget
2014	197	396,6 thousands, MDL
2015	247	422,1 thousands, MDL
2016	350	467,9 thousands, MDL
2017	312	470,8 thousands, MDL
2018	264	420,3 thousands, MDL

Situation of Roma population

The Chisinau local public authorities provide assistance, as far as possible, if requested by local Roma ethno-cultural organizations. According to data from the 2014 census, 236 Roma citizens live in the Chisinau municipality. In the cities: Durlesti - 67 Roma, Vatra - 61 Roma, Cricova - 6

Roma - 134 persons. Distribution of Roma people in five sectors of Chisinau city is the following: of 102 Roma living in Chisinau, 26 live in Botanica sector, 13 – Buiucani sector, 27 – Center sector, 6 – Ciocana sector, 30 – Riscani sector.

Pursuant to the Government Decision No. 734 of 9 June 2016 on approval of the Action Plan for the support of the Roma population in the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2020, the Municipal Action Plan for the support of the Roma population in the municipality of Chisinau for 2016 – 2020 was developed and adopted by the Order of the Mayor of Chisinau No. 878-d of 1 August 2016. Under the Municipal Plan during 2016-2017 some achievements were made. With respect to the Roma children enrollment in the compulsory education: 304 informative sessions with the participation of 182 Roma parents were organized; 72 children were involved in the counseling sessions; 75 children benefited from free textbooks, 44 – from free food. As regards social assistance for Roma families: 32 families benefited from social services / consultancy; 5 families benefited from compensation for transport services; 8 families benefited from social services: free lunch, admission to rehabilitation/recovery services, humanitarian aid. As part of ensuring protection in case of unemployment, 20 Roma families are registered and monitored within the territorial directions of social assistance.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Following recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe, the fifth periodic Report of the Republic of Moldova on the implementation of the Framework Convention was based on the information presented by central and local public authorities, public associations of national minorities, as well as from other information sources.

The Republic of Moldova, as a State-Party to the Framework Convention has achieved some positive results in the field of national minority rights. Hence, the Moldovan authorities made considerable efforts to develop and bring national legal framework in line with international standards in the field of national minority rights protection, in particular with the EU standards. In doing so, normative framework, achievements and gaps of previously developed state policies, obligations assumed in the field concerned and good practices were taken into consideration and tailored to the particularities of the Moldovan context. Awareness of civil servants about national and international standards on minority rights has risen; public authorities, law enforcement bodies and civil society sector have strengthened their capacities both at central and local level in the field of national minority rights protection in the context of integration and interethnic relations policy in the Republic of Moldova. The national policy on integration of ethnic minorities has been implemented with the support of international partners, in particular with the support of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities and the Council of Europe.

Among the outstanding results achieved during the reporting period we may in particular refer to:

- adoption of the *Strategy on the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2027* and the 2017-2020 Action Plan for its realization. These two legal acts regulate a new for the Republic of Moldova sphere of national minority integration, which requires strengthened joint efforts by the State authorities and civil society;
- adoption of the *National Human Rights Action Plan for 2018-2022* that includes an extended chapter devoted to the measures on national minorities;
- efforts to preserve the memory of the Holocaust, to study and raise awareness about the Holocaust that gave an extra impetus to legislative initiatives, activities and programs in this field carried out in the Republic of Moldova;

- establishment of a Roma community-based mediator service aimed at contributing to the Roma people social inclusion. Its mission is to act as an intermediary and to improve communication between Roma communities, local public administration and other competent state institutions;
- release of the results from the 2014 Population and Housing Census, which is one of the official sources of disaggregated statistical data on the grounds of ethnic affiliation. In this respect, ensuring collection and analysis of data on national minorities will allow development of well-substantiated policies.

On the assumption that the Republic of Moldova wasn't invited to answer specific questions that might arise from specific national circumstances, as indicated in Part IV of the Outline for the State reports that are to be submitted, the present report does not contain this sort of information.

Annex: List of abbreviations

ACC	Audiovisual Coordinating Council
Advisory Committee	Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
AIR	Agency for Interethnic Relations
ANTEM	National Association of European Trainers in Moldova
ATU Gagauzia	Autonomous Territorial Union of Gagauzia
BMA	Bureau for Migration and Asylum
BRI	Bureau for Interethnic Relations
CC	Coordinating Council of Ethno-cultural organizations
CE	Centre of Ethnology
ECRML	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
CMC	Chisinau Municipal Council
CoE	Council of Europe
CPA	Central public authorities
EC	European Commission
ECHR	European Court for Human Rights
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
Equality Council	Council on Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality
EU	European Union
HN	House of Nationalities
ICH	Institute for Cultural Heritage
IHRA	International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance
IPIS	Institute for Strategic Initiatives
IPRE	Institute for European Policies and Reforms
JCRM	Jewish Community of the Republic of Moldova
LPA	Local public authorities
MECR	Ministry of Education, Culture and Research
MHLSP	Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MJ	Ministry of Justice
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NEA	National Employment Agency
NHRAP	National Human Rights Action Plan
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PSA	Public Services Agency
Teleradio-Moldova Company	National Public Broadcasting Company “Teleradio-Moldova”
UN	United Nations Organization
UNDP Moldova	United Nations Development Programme in Moldova