



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



ACFC/SR/VI(2025)003

Sixth 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 1 April 2025**

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

The sixth Periodic Report of the Republic of Moldova on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has been developed pursuant to article 25, paragraph 2 of the Convention and on the basis of the Outline for the State reports to be submitted under the sixth monitoring cycle adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 6 July 2022.

The present Report includes information on the implementation of the provisions of the Framework Convention and the recommendations addressed to the Republic of Moldova within the fifth monitoring cycle¹ and the results achieved in the period from June 2023 to December 2024. Since no specific questions were addressed to the Republic of Moldova regarding particular national circumstances under COMPARTMENT III of the reporting outline the present report omits such content.

The report was drafted by the Agency for Interethnic Relations with the contribution from the following authorities and institutions: Ministry of Education and Research; Ministry of Labour and Social Protection; National Employment Agency; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Justice; National Institute for Justice; National Council for State Guaranteed Legal Aid; Ministry of Internal Affairs; Prosecutor General's Office; Bureau for Reintegration Policies; National Bureau of Statistics; Audiovisual Council; Public Services Agency; Office of the People's

¹ See the fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on the Republic of Moldova of 7 June 2023; Resolution CM/ResCMN(2024)1 of the Committee of Ministers on the implementation of the provisions of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Moldova of 10 January 2024.

Advocate; Equality Council; Cultural Heritage Institute; local public administration bodies.

In addition to inter-ministerial consultations, the report drafting process included engagements with civil society organizations. To uphold transparency and participatory principles, the report was made available for public consultation on the website www.ari.gov.md, inviting feedback from civil society stakeholders².

COMPARTMENT I

Information on measures taken to raise public awareness of the results of the fifth monitoring cycle of the implementation of the Framework Convention by the Republic of Moldova

The fifth Opinion on the Republic of Moldova of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has been translated into Romanian, Russian and Ukrainian, with the support of the Council of Europe. The Agency for Interethnic Relations published these translated versions on its official website and distributed them to relevant ministries, public authorities and members of the Coordinating Council of Ethno-cultural Organizations of National Minorities to ensure broad accessibility. The Resolution CM/ResCMN(2024)1 on the implementation of the Framework Convention by the Republic of Moldova, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 January 2024, was also made available in Romanian and Russian and published on the Agency's website as part of ongoing efforts to promote transparency and engagement with minority communities.

The conclusions and recommendations outlined by the Advisory Committee's experts in the fifth Opinion were presented and, for the first time, thoroughly discussed with representatives of national minority organizations during the meeting of the Coordinating Council of Ethno-cultural Organizations held on 25 November 2023. The meeting provided ethno-cultural organizations with their first formal opportunity to engage directly with the Advisory Committee's findings and to contribute their perspectives on the recommendations in the ongoing implementation of the Framework Convention.

To ensure systematic planning and monitoring of activities required for implementing both the Framework Convention and the recommendations from the fifth monitoring cycle, the Specialized Commission under the National Council for Human Rights – tasked with overseeing the Framework Convention's implementation and coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research – convened twice during the reporting period (March and September 2024). These meetings served as important coordination platforms, enabling stakeholders to

² See link <https://ari.gov.md/ro/raport6-conventia-cadru>

assess progress, identify implementation gaps and align strategies for strengthening minority rights protections in line with international obligations³.

On 13 December 2024, the Agency for Interethnic Relations in collaboration with the Council of Europe, organized the seminar “Dialogue Meeting on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the Republic of Moldova”. The event brought together over 145 participants, including representatives from central and local public administration bodies, international organizations and the Coordinating Council of Ethno-cultural Organizations. The broad participation underscored the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in advancing minority rights protection.

Participants examined the recommendations addressed to Moldova during the fifth monitoring cycle and discussed the effective strategies for their practical implementation with representatives of the Advisory Committee and national authorities. The seminar's agenda covered several key themes: ensuring quality education for national minorities, promoting the development of minority cultures and languages, strengthening anti-discrimination measures and institutional frameworks and enhancing effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities.

COMPARTMENT II⁴

Information on the measures taken by the Republic of Moldova to improve the implementation of the Framework Convention and to implement the recommendations of the fifth monitoring cycle

Article 3

Data collection and population and housing census

2024 Population and Housing Census

The landmark achievement in the field of national statistics in 2024 was the Population and Housing Census, which took place between 8 April and 7 July 2024, followed by the Post Census Survey between 15 July and 11 August 2024. It is the third census conducted since the declaration of independence of the Republic of Moldova.

³The Specialized Commission of the National Council for Human Rights, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, was established by the Ministry of Education and Research under Order No. 169/2024. Functioning as part of the National Council for Human Rights, the Commission serves as the institutional mechanism for coordinating and overseeing the Convention's implementation. Its members include representatives from the State Chancellery, relevant ministries and public authorities/institutions involved in treaty implementation, as well as civil society organizations. Additionally, the Office of the People's Advocate and the Equality Council participate in the Commission as observers.

⁴ Compartment II of the Report focuses exclusively on those articles for which the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the Advisory Committee have issued recommendations. For continuity and conciseness, information previously addressed in earlier reports is acknowledged as established and will not be reiterated in this document.

In order to carry out the census, which responds to the information needs of the country, as well as to ensure the active participation of the population in the census, numerous consultations and other activities were carried out with various user groups and representatives of civil society, including ethnic minorities.

Thus, on 19 March 2024 the National Bureau of Statistics in partnership with the Agency for Interethnic Relations organized a round table entitled “Population and Housing Census 2024 and Ethno-cultural Communities in the Republic of Moldova”, organized by the National Bureau of Statistics in partnership with the Agency for Interethnic Relations, with the participation of about 40 representatives of ethno-cultural organizations (including 4 representatives of the Roma community) in order to inform national minority associations about the purpose and the way of organization and conduct of the 2024 census and the necessity of participation in this statistical exercise. In total representatives of 35 ethno-cultural organizations participated in the round table.

At the same time, targeted efforts have been made to facilitate the process of enumeration of the Roma population. To this end, in 2024 the National Bureau of Statistics undertook the following activities:

- Conducted a coordination meeting on 8 February 2024 with four representatives from key Roma organizations: the National Association of Community Mediators of the Republic of Moldova, the Roma Voice Coalition and the Roma Women Platform of Moldova. This meeting focused on preparations for the 2024 census.
- Delivered a presentation at a UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) roundtable on 26 March 2024. The presentation outlined the objectives of the 2024 census and the crucial role of mediators in promoting census participation among Roma communities. The event was attended by the President of the National Association of Roma Community Mediators along with 25 mediators from various regions of Moldova.

Following the public recruitment call for temporary census staff, 16 persons, serving as community mediators, submitted applications. Of these applicants, four were subsequently hired as census staff members.

Additionally, the National Bureau of Statistics has recruited 10 census mediators for Roma communities, assigned to the following locations: Soroca, Otaci, Rîșcani, Edineț, Chișinău municipality, as well as the villages of Vulcănești (Nisporeni district), Ursari and other localities (Călărași district), Zârnești (Cahul district) and ATU Gagauzia.

These Roma community mediators carried out essential responsibilities, including: informing local communities within their designated areas about the census

procedures; accompanying enumerators to ensure proper coverage of census zones; facilitating clear communication between interviewers and respondents for accurate questionnaire completion; and mediating any potential conflicts during the data collection process. Additionally, they contributed to public awareness efforts by participating in the creation of an informational video spot encouraging participation in the 2024 census, further supporting the campaign's outreach to Roma communities. Their involvement helped ensure an inclusive and effective census process while fostering trust and cooperation between census officials and residents.

In accordance with Article 11(1)⁵ of Law No. 231/2022 on the Population and Housing Census, the census questionnaire collected information on ethnicity, mother tongue, commonly spoken language and religion. All responses were recorded based on respondents' free self-identification. To ensure accessibility, the census questionnaires were made available not only in Romanian and Russian, but were also translated into Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian and Romani.

On 30 January 2024 the National Bureau of Statistics released the preliminary results of the 2024 Population and Housing Census. The data indicated a resident population of 2 401 200 persons as of the reference date (8 April 2024).

The preliminary census results included comprehensive demographic statistics, such as population size and structure by sex and major age groups, distribution by residence type (urban/rural) and country of birth, as well as regional distribution across development regions. Additionally, the findings covered ethno-cultural characteristics, specifically ethnic and religious affiliation, mother tongue, usually spoken language and difficulties in performing daily activities.

According to the 2024 census results, among respondents who declared their ethnicity, 77.2% identified as Moldovan and 7.9% as Romanian. The data of ethnic minorities showed Ukrainians comprising 4.9% of the population, followed by Gagauz (4.2%), Russians (3.2%), Bulgarians (1.6%) and Roma (0.4%). Other ethnic groups collectively accounted for 0.5% of responses. Comparative analysis with the 2014 census reveals notable trends: the proportion of self-declared Moldovans increased from 75.3% to 77.2%, Romanians from 6.7% to 7.9% and Roma from 0.3% to 0.4%. Conversely, decreases were recorded for Ukrainians (6.8% to 4.9%), Russians (4.1% to 3.2%), Gagauz (4.4% to 4.2%) and Bulgarians (1.9% to 1.6%).

The territorial distribution of ethnic groups maintained continuity with previous patterns, with Moldovans continuing to represent the dominant population throughout most regions. The proportion of Moldovans ranges from 87.8% in the Central Development Region to 72.9% in Chişinău municipality. Gagauzia remains the notable exception, with the Gagauz population constituting 81.9% of residents.

⁵ "Pursuant to Article 5(2) of the Census Law, in order to fulfill the census objectives, data collection shall encompass the core topics at the census unit level, such as: a) demographic and social characteristics of the population, including **ethno-cultural** and educational characteristics..."

Other ethnic groups showed distinct regional concentrations: Ukrainians (9.6%) and Russians (3.5%) are most prevalent in the Northern Development Region, while Chişinău municipality reported higher proportions of both groups (5.1% and 5.9% respectively). The Southern Development Region contains the largest concentration of Bulgarians at 7.8% of the population.

According to the 2024 census, among respondents who declared their mother tongue, 49.2% identified “Moldovan” as their native language, while 31.3% reported Romanian. Other commonly declared mother tongues included Russian (11.1%), followed by Gagauz (3.8%), Ukrainian (2.9%) and Bulgarian (1.2%). The territorial distribution revealed distinct linguistic patterns: Romanian is most prevalent in Chişinău municipality (47.9%), Gagauz in ATU Gagauzia (77.7%), Ukrainian in the Northern Development Region (6.3%) and Bulgarian in the Southern Development Region (6.7%). Russian shows higher proportions both in the Northern Development Region (13.0%) and in urban areas across all regions.

Based on responses from the habitually resident population surveyed, 46.0% reported Moldovan as their usual language of communication, while 33.2% indicated Romanian - representing a combined increase of 0.5 percentage points since the 2014 census. Russian remains the most prevalent minority language, spoken by 15.3% of respondents, followed by Gagauz (2.3%), Ukrainian (2.0%), Bulgarian (0.8%) and Romani (0.3%). Comparative analysis with the 2014 census reveals some linguistic shifts: Romanian showed the most significant growth, increasing by 9.5 percentage points as a usually spoken language. Russian experienced a moderate rise of 0.7 percentage points, while Ukrainian, Gagauz and Bulgarian declined by 0.8, 0.3 and 0.2 percentage points respectively.

The census data on religious identity revealed that Orthodox Christianity remains the dominant faith, with 95.0% of respondents identifying as Orthodox. Other religious affiliations represented include Baptists (1.1%), Jehovah’s Witnesses (0.7%), Pentecostals (0.5%) and Adventists (0.3%). Additionally, 0.6% of respondents identified as atheists, while 0.8% reported having no religious affiliation.

The final results of the 2024 census will be published in two phases: an initial release scheduled for August 2025 (12 months after fieldwork completion), followed by the comprehensive final results in February 2026 (18 months after fieldwork completion).

In response to the Advisory Committee’s recommendation for regular ethno-barometer surveys measuring perceptions, attitudes and beliefs among ethnic communities - along with independent qualitative and quantitative research on Roma living conditions and rights implementation to supplement census data - national authorities have undertaken the following actions.

The National Employment Agency systematically collects disaggregated data on Roma people who access employment services and benefit from labor market measures. While the Agency's automated information system currently generates only general reports on employment interventions targeting Roma population - primarily used for internal analysis of unemployment trends and job search participation - this data collection enables more informed assessment of services outcomes and evidence-based policy improvements. Recognizing the value of this information, the National Employment Agency is committed to enhancing its data infrastructure by improving collection methodologies, strengthening system interoperability and fostering active collaboration with Roma community representatives. These efforts aim to develop more targeted and inclusive employment measures.

To systematically monitor the living conditions of the Roma minority, the Ministry of Health has established a framework for regular data collection through Order No. 272/2023 on the implementation of the Programme for the support of the Roma population in the Republic of Moldova for 2022-2025.⁶ Under this framework, the Ministry of Health periodically collects disaggregated data from healthcare providers regarding Roma access to medical services. The collected information specifically focuses on disadvantaged groups, uninsured individuals, women and children, thereby enabling targeted policy interventions and improved healthcare delivery for these categories of people.

In 2024, the Equality Council with support from development partners conducted the "Study on Perceptions and Attitudes towards Equality in the Republic of Moldova". The study reveals a relative increase in acceptance levels for most ethnic communities. However, it also highlights limited interethnic communication, with respondents' social circles rarely including individuals from different ethnic backgrounds. The research found that ethnic Russians maintain the closest ties with Ukrainians, while Gagauz and Bulgarians predominantly develop strong relationships within their own ethnic groups. The Roma population faces rejection from all ethnic groups and experiences strongly negative attitudes.

Article 4

Legal, institutional and policy framework for combating discrimination and ensuring equal access to human rights of persons belonging to national minorities

Ensuring compliance with the principle of anti-discrimination and equality, excluding stereotypes and prejudices towards certain vulnerable groups of people requires a continuous effort on the part of the authorities, both on the normative and institutional dimension.

⁶ Approved by Government Decision No. 576/2022

Currently, the legal and institutional framework of the Republic of Moldova in the field of anti-discrimination and equal treatment is comprehensive and continues to be strengthened on an ongoing basis through various legislative, institutional and policy initiatives.

Development of the legal and institutional framework in the field of human rights and anti-discrimination

The major normative amendments in the field of anti-discrimination were adopted by Law no. 2 of 02.02.2023 by which amendments were operated in Law no.121/2012 on ensuring equality, the Contravention Code and Law no. 298/2012 on the activity of the Equality Council.

At the same time, in the context of the country's European integration agenda and in order to ensure high quality standards of protection of the rights of all persons irrespective of criteria, the Republic of Moldova is to fully align the national legislative framework with the EU acquis, in particular the new Directives on the standards of equality bodies as well as to incriminate the liability of legal persons for offences of a racist and xenophobic nature, according to Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008⁷.

In March 2024, the Government adopted the new **National Human Rights Programme for 2024-2027**⁸. The programme aims to ensure continuity, evolution and progress in national human rights policies, including the implementation of recommendations from international, regional and domestic human rights protection mechanisms. Its broader goal is to enhance the observance and exercise of every person's rights while effectively minimizing risks of human rights violations across the country.

The programme takes a comprehensive, cross-cutting approach to a broad spectrum of rights, incorporating both normative and institutional measures to ensure effective implementation. The NHRP 2024-2027 is designed to complement sectoral policies, with a focus on key priorities: guaranteeing human rights through participatory prioritization based on consensus among public authorities, civil society and national human rights institutions; and strengthening institutional mechanisms for implementing, coordinating and monitoring the state's commitments in this field.

By aligning with policies in education, health, justice and social protection, the program also promotes a culture of human rights and tolerance. Importantly, it

⁷ Council Directive 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies promoting equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, equal treatment in employment and occupation irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and equal treatment between women and men in matters of social security and access to goods and services, including the supply of goods and services and amending Directives 2000/43/EC and 2004/113/EC;

Directive 2024/1500 on standards for equality bodies promoting equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men in employment and occupation and amending Directives 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU

⁸ Adopted by Government Decision 164/2024

targets the most vulnerable groups in the realization of each right, applying a dedicated human rights-based approach throughout.

The document is aimed at strengthening existing mechanisms for coordinating and monitoring human rights commitments by ensuring proper oversight of implementation processes; promptly operationalizing recommendations from international, regional and national human rights bodies; and systematically collecting data in accordance with human rights standards.

The program establishes two core priorities:

1. Human rights – addressed through consensus among public authorities, civil society and national human rights institutions, in a non-hierarchical yet purposefully sequenced manner to ensure each receives due attention.
2. Policy framework and institutional mechanisms for adopting, implementing, coordinating and monitoring the state’s commitments in human rights protection.

The program outlines 14 key objectives:

1. Fair justice system - Ensuring equitable legal processes and effective procedures with full respect for human rights, particularly for vulnerable groups.
2. Eradication of torture - Eliminating all forms of torture and ill-treatment.
3. Inclusive education - Establishing an education system that promotes human rights-based learning.
4. Health rights - Guaranteeing the highest attainable standard of health for all.
5. Social security - Ensuring social protection for at-risk and vulnerable individuals.
6. Basic living standards - Securing rights to adequate housing, water and sanitation, with focus on vulnerable groups.
7. Environmental rights - Progressive realization of the right to a healthy and sustainable environment.
8. Human dignity - Ensuring inherent dignity, fair and non-discriminatory treatment.
9. Labor rights - Guaranteeing equal employment opportunities and fair wages for women and men while eradicating forced labor.
10. Data protection - Safeguarding personal data, legal identity and privacy rights.
11. Fundamental freedoms - Protecting and facilitating freedom of assembly, association, conscience and religion.
12. Cultural rights - Preserving and promoting cultural rights.
13. Policy framework - Strengthening human rights policy framework by 2027.
14. Institutional mechanisms - Establishing effective human rights institutional mechanisms.

The document establishes that funding for the actions outlined in the Action Plan will be allocated from approved public authority budgets within the medium-term budgetary framework, while also drawing on external sources from partner

organizations. These include the UN Office for Human Rights, the Government of Romania, the Government of Sweden etc.

The total estimated financial resources required for implementing both the Programme and its Action Plan amount to 4 303 394 thousand MDL, with funding structured as follows: 4 033 100 thousand MDL will be allocated from the National Public Budget, while 270 294 thousand MDL will come from development partners. Of these external funds, 220 184 thousand MDL have already been identified, with the remaining 50 109 thousand MDL still to be secured through future funding commitments.

The activity of the Equality Council

The examination of discrimination complaints falls under the exclusive mandate of the Equality Council and the judicial system. Furthermore, the Equality Council maintains its pivotal role as the key institution serving as the “guarantor of compliance with and implementation of the anti-discrimination principle”.

In 2024, the Equality Council examined 279 complaints, including 45 cases involving alleged discrimination against national minorities. Among these minority-related cases, 34 complaints concerned language-based discrimination, while 11 cases involved claims of ethnic origin discrimination. The Council rendered decisions on these complaints as follows: 23 cases were declared inadmissible, 9 remain under review and 2 complaints were withdrawn by the petitioners. In its rulings, the Council issued 7 findings of discrimination accompanied by 13 recommendations, along with 4 decisions concluding that no discrimination had occurred.

All decisions and advisory opinions issued by the Equality Council are publicly available on the institution’s official website at <https://egalitate.md/>. In 2024, the Equality Council conducted a comprehensive review of the implementation status for its 2023 recommendations and directives. Of the 61 total issued 18 were fully implemented, while 29 remain under active monitoring and 8 faced legal challenges in court. The Council also identified that 6 recommendations had become obsolete due to terminated relationships with the original discrimination victims involved in those cases. Regarding legislative reforms, out of 34 recommendations concerning legal framework improvements, competent authorities only initiated amendment processes for 4 thus far.

To monitor the implementation of recommendations concerning national minority rights issued by both the Equality Council and the Ombudsman's Office, the Ministry of Justice prepares annual progress reports assessing compliance levels. In fulfilling this mandate, the Ministry of Justice tracks relevant processes, evaluates whether adopted measures align with applicable national and international standards and - where necessary, the initiates required legislative amendments to ensure full conformity.

The implementation of effective measures to prevent and combat discrimination presupposes continuous strengthening of both the Equality Council's capacities and those of law enforcement agencies responsible for case investigations. This includes improving statistical data collection mechanisms to obtain reliable and comparable information, which is essential for guiding policy decisions and monitoring the implementation of anti-discrimination measures.

To enhance the institutional and operational capacity of the Equality Council and facilitate the filling of vacant positions, the reference value used for calculating staff salaries was increased from 2100 MDL to 2500 MDL. Consequently, as of 1 January 2024, the Council's personnel received a 15% salary increase, aimed at improving recruitment and retention of qualified professionals.

Activity of the People's Advocate Office

In 2023, the People's Advocate Office of the Republic of Moldova achieved reaccreditation with "A" status by the Sub-Committee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. This recognition confirms the institution's full compliance with the Paris Principles, building upon its previous "A" status accreditation obtained in 2018.

As part of the accreditation process, the Sub-Committee on Accreditation issued several key recommendations to Moldovan authorities.

1. It emphasized the need to incorporate principles of pluralism and diversity into the legal framework governing the People's Advocate Office, specifically referencing Paris Principle B.1 and paragraph 1.7 of its General Observation on "Ensuring the Pluralism of NHRIs".
2. The Sub-Committee underscored the importance of ensuring adequate funding for the institution to enable the full execution of its mandate. This includes providing salaries and bonuses for staff that are commensurate with those of public officials performing similar functions in other state institutions.

To address the issue of low salaries in 2024, several positive measures were implemented to improve the remuneration of staff within the Ombudsman Institution. Specifically, Law No. 418 of December 22, 2023, on the state budget for 2024, introduced a 30% salary increase for employees of the People's Advocate Office. Furthermore, Law No. 305 of December 19, 2024, which amended Law No. 270/2018 on the unified salary system, revised Annex 3 to adjust pay grades for public positions within the institution. Under these changes, managerial public positions were elevated by five successive grades, while executive public positions saw an increase of ten successive grades. As a result, beginning in January 2025, employees of the Ombudsman Institution started receiving salaries approximately 25% higher than before.

In 2024, the People's Advocate Office registered a total of 1001 complaints, including 76 cases filed through its four regional offices located in Bălți, Cahul, Comrat and Varnița.

An analysis of complaints received by the People's Advocate in 2024 revealed consistent patterns of alleged human rights violations. The most frequently cited concerns involved fundamental rights violations pertaining to: free access to justice; social assistance and protection entitlements; personal security and human dignity protections; workplace rights; information access; and healthcare rights, along with other essential guarantees.

Training of public servants in the field of national minority rights and anti-discrimination

The State Chancellery has continued to develop public servants' competencies regarding the rights of national minorities, in line with the 2024 Annual Training and Professional Development Plan for Public Authority Staff⁹.

Thus, the topic of national minorities was incorporated into the broader theme of "*Integrating Human Rights in Public Authorities' Activity*". A total of 600 public servants were trained in the field of national minority rights through various professional development programs, including:

- Professional Integration of Entry-Level Public Servants (Initial Training Course, 40 hours) – 200 participants;
- Performance Management in Central Public Administration (Professional Development Course, 40 hours) – 150 participants;
- Key Aspects of Public Administration Reform (Professional Development Course, 24 hours, targeting Local Council Secretaries from municipalities involved in the reform) – 125 participants;
- General Aspects of Good Local Governance (Initial Training Course, 40 hours, for first-term Mayors and Local Councilors) – 100 participants;
- Performance Management in Local Public Administration (Professional Development Course, 40 hours, for senior officials from first-level local authorities with over 5000 residents and less than 5 years of managerial experience) – 25 participants.

Between June 2023 and December 2024, **the National Institute of Justice** organized 10 continuous training activities, training 381 justice sector professionals, including: 73 judges, 77 prosecutors, 9 lawyers, 81 judicial assistants, 31 court clerks, 60 prosecutors' consultants, 5 consultants, 8 specialists, 22 court collaborators, 3 secretariat heads, 11 criminal enforcement officers and 1 NIJ trainer of the National Institute of Justice.

⁹ Approved under Government Decision No. 79/2004

The training program featured a comprehensive series of seminars, including “*Anti-discrimination and Equality: Protection Standards for Ethno-Linguistic and Religious Minorities*” held on 30 November - 1 December 2024 with 45 participants and “*Hate Crimes in Light of ECHR Jurisprudence*” conducted twice on 23-24 November for 62 justice professionals. Additional seminars focused on “*Handling Cases Involving Hate, Bias and Prejudice: ECHR Perspectives*” through four sessions in May and November, training 98 participants, while “*Practical Aspects of Investigating Discrimination, Hate Speech and Bias Crimes*” on 13 September provided practical guidance to 52 attendees.

The Autumn School session on 28-29 November 2024 deepened understanding of hate crimes through ECHR jurisprudence for 19 participants, while four training courses in June and November on “*Anti-discrimination and Equality: Minority Protection Standards*” reached 105 justice professionals across various specializations.

These initiatives successfully enhanced participants’ knowledge of international human rights standards and minority protection while developing practical skills for investigating and adjudicating hate-motivated cases. The program also fostered greater consistency in applying ECHR jurisprudence across Moldova’s justice system, contributing to more effective protection against discrimination and hate crimes.

The e-learning segment included two online courses on anti-discrimination, which recorded 87 participations and 30 certifications. Among the participants were 2 judges, 3 prosecutors, 1 prosecutor’s consultant, 11 judicial assistants, 2 court clerks, 2 court collaborators, 3 lawyers from the National Council for State-Guaranteed Legal Aid and 6 students.

These continuous training activities contribute to the professional development of justice system actors, ensuring more effective enforcement of legislation in the fields of human rights protection and anti-discrimination.

During 2023-2024 **the General Prosecutor’s Office** organized the following trainings for prosecutors and prosecutor’s counsellors as follows:

- Seminar “*Anti-discrimination and equality. Standards of protection of ethno-linguistic and religious minorities*” - 5 seminars, trained 73 prosecutors;
- Regional trainings “*The principles of anti-discrimination and tolerance in the context of the refugee crisis in Ukraine: their applicability in the professional activity*” - 2 trainings, 34 prosecutors trained;
- *The particularities of dealing with cases involving hate, prejudice or contempt offences in the light of ECtECJ case law* - 15 prosecutors trained;
- *Anti-discrimination and equality. Standards of protection of minorities (ethno-linguistic, religious, sexual, etc)* - 15 prosecutors trained.

These initiatives strengthened prosecutors' capacity to effectively address discrimination cases and apply international human rights standards in their daily practice.

Between February and July 2024, **the General Police Inspectorate (IGP)** organized and participated in a series of training activities and workshops focused on combating discrimination, hate speech and bias-motivated crimes. These initiatives aimed at improving inter-agency co-operation, raise awareness and build the capacity of law enforcement professionals.

Main activities included:

1. Training courses:
 - In February 2024, 80 of IGP's employees attended courses on the collection of disaggregated data on bias-motivated offences in Chisinau, Comrat and Balti.
 - In April 2024, 42 police officers were trained in the use of the computerized system "Register of Forensic and Criminogenic Information".
 - In June and July 2024, courses were held for trainers and the General Police Inspectorate's employees on topics such as hate speech and the particularities of documenting bias-motivated offences.
2. Creating support networks:
 - In March and May 2024, support networks for vulnerable groups were created in the districts of Soroca, Calarasi, Dubasari and Cimislia. These networks bring together local authorities, police, social workers and NGOs to provide support to victims of discrimination and bias-motivated violence.
3. Workshops:
 - In April and May 2024, workshops were organized to discuss under-reporting of cases, complaint procedures and the development of information materials for vulnerable groups.
4. International co-operation:
 - The Council of Europe has provided support and guidance in the implementation of these initiatives, including through the projects "Combating discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes" and "Strengthening diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova".

Results and objectives achieved:

- Improved system for collecting and analyzing data on bias-motivated crime;
- Increased awareness and co-operation between authorities and civil society;
- Providing specialized support and assistance to vulnerable groups;
- Harmonization of the legal and institutional framework with international standards.

These activities contributed to building a more inclusive policing system and to facilitating the effective prevention of bias-motivated incidents, ensuring better protection for vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova.

In 2024, **the People Advocate's Office** intensified its awareness-raising efforts in its strategic areas, organizing 235 information activities. Through these initiatives, 5243 rights holders¹⁰ and 2261 duty bearers¹¹ benefited from essential information aimed at strengthening respect for and implementation of fundamental rights. In total, 7504 people received information and training.

Among these, the most sessions were conducted in the field of torture prevention, where 42 activities took place, informing 238 rights holders and 851 duty bearers. Additionally, a significant number of sessions were organized in the field of human rights education, with 37 activities impacting 1030 rights holders and 173 duty bearers.

The justice access sector included 34 activities, reaching 478 rights holders and 180 duty bearers. Regarding children's rights, 90 activities were conducted, informing 2759 rights holders and 596 duty bearers.

In the social protection segment, 10 activities were organized, benefiting 103 rights holders and 142 duty bearers. Simultaneously, within sessions on the national human rights protection mechanism in Moldova, 10 activities took place, informing 141 rights holders and 53 duty bearers.

In the healthcare protection field, 7 activities were held with participation of 82 rights holders and 179 duty bearers. Regarding other related fields, 5 awareness sessions were organized, involving 412 rights holders and 87 duty bearers.

The implementation of these initiatives was reinforced by a comprehensive communications strategy. Over 40000 informational materials – including leaflets, brochures and guides – were developed and disseminated in both Romanian and Russian. These resources addressed critical topics such as healthcare rights, protections for refugees and procedures for engaging with the People's Advocate Office.

In 2024, **the Equality Council** organized 6 training and awareness sessions for public officials from local authorities to strengthen their capacity in managing discrimination cases. Approximately 118 employees were trained to identify, document and report discrimination cases, as well as to prevent interethnic tensions and promote intercultural cooperation.

Free legal counseling and assistance services for persons belonging to national minorities, in particular Roma

¹⁰ Rights holders (general population and vulnerable groups)

¹¹ Duty bearers (civil servants, law enforcement, judiciary, educators, etc.).

Under Law No. 198/2007 on state-guaranteed legal assistance, all persons whose income is below the established minimum monthly wage set by the Government qualify for these services. The law also unconditionally guarantees legal assistance – regardless of income – to victims of domestic violence, victims of human trafficking, children, persons with disabilities, victims of sexual assault and asylum seekers. These provisions apply without discrimination to all eligible persons, including those belonging to national minorities.

Legal awareness-raising and education for the population, including the Roma ethnic group, regarding access to state-guaranteed legal assistance services, is carried out through the national network of community paralegals. This constitutes the primary mechanism for legal empowerment within the state-guaranteed legal aid system. Unlike occasional information campaigns, this population-wide legal empowerment through paralegals runs on a permanent basis.

At the same time, to provide remote legal information to the population, the online platform parajurist.md was developed. This platform addresses the need for legal education among the population of the Republic of Moldova while also serving as a self-training tool for paralegals. The website is freely accessible to the general public without restrictions. The portal assists citizens of the Republic of Moldova through a media library where they can find information on the most frequently asked legal questions and answers across various fields of interest, as well as monthly legal updates. The entire team of paralegals is connected to the platform to provide initial legal assistance.

Furthermore, the National Council for State-Guaranteed Legal Assistance, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme Moldova (UNDP Moldova), has established mobile multidisciplinary teams that provide citizens with free legal counseling. These teams travel to communities without paralegals, offering primary state-guaranteed legal assistance and support to socially vulnerable people who lack access to lawyer or legal professional services to resolve their issues.

Public education, training and awareness-raising on human rights and combating racial discrimination

To enhance public awareness about human rights, existing national anti-discrimination legislation and available remedies against discrimination, relevant authorities carry out various awareness-raising activities.

Throughout 2024, **the National Public Security Inspectorate**, following the generalization and systematization of results achieved by its subordinate units (Territorial Police Inspectorates), reports improved interaction efficiency with Roma communities. This was accomplished by enhancing collaboration with Roma community mediators and specialists in education, public health, social assistance,

as well as representatives of the National Employment Agency. These efforts specifically aim to eliminate all forms of abuse and discrimination against Roma community members.

To accomplish the proposed objectives, 290 actions were organized and carried out to improve interaction with Roma communities. Community mediators participated in 164 meetings attended by 2702 individuals of Roma ethnicity.

During the reporting period, employees of the territorial police inspectorates subordinate to the General Police Inspectorate conducted activities focused on preventing trafficking of Roma children and women. These efforts reached a total of 4564 individuals (2865 children and 1699 Roma women).

During 2024, **the subdivisions of the Police of the Republic of Moldova** organized six recruitment campaigns and activities, with a focus on the involvement of the Roma communities and young people. These initiatives are aimed at informing and attracting potential candidates, as well as promoting employment opportunities within the Police.

Main activities included:

1. 26 February 2024: Soroca Police Inspectorate conducted a recruitment campaign in the Roma community in Soroca, but no candidates were recruited.
2. 29 March 2024: Soroca Police Inspectorate organized the "Open Doors Day" event, involving young people, including Roma.
3. 14 May 2024: Ocnita Police Inspectorate took part in an organizational meeting in the town of Otaci, where Roma citizens were informed about the benefits and procedures for employment in the Police.
4. Edinet Police Inspectorate: Sent a request to the Directorate of Employment for the promotion of vacant positions, informing Roma representatives and distributing information leaflets.
5. 20 June 2024: Riscani Police Inspectorate organized a meeting with Roma citizens, presenting opportunities for employment in the Police and admission to the "Stefan cel Mare" Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The event was attended by 21 Roma people.
6. 19 September 2024: Police employees participated in the "Job Fair" at the Palace of the Republic, presenting vacancies, employment conditions and interacting directly with job seekers.

Aim of activities:

- Promoting employment opportunities within the Police.
- Attract candidates from Roma communities and young people.
- Inform the public about benefits and recruitment procedures.

These campaigns and activities demonstrate the Police's efforts to increase diversity and inclusion among employees and to strengthen relations with local communities.

During the reference period, **the Equality Council** conducted 30 training sessions to promote equality, tolerance and democratic values, with participation from 961 individuals (Ukrainian refugees, community mediators, Roma women and girls, NGO representatives, public officials, local government representatives, police officers, social workers, teachers, students and pupils).

Additionally, as part of three awareness campaigns – “*Zero Discrimination*”, “*United Through Tolerance*” and “*Human Rights Caravan 2024*” - the Council organized 10 public awareness activities to enhance understanding of discrimination, its manifestations and ways to combat it. Furthermore, six training sessions held by the Council in 2024 involved representatives from non-governmental organizations.

The **People’s Advocate Office** actively commemorated 15 international human rights days throughout the year, transforming each observance into a strategic platform for public education, solidarity building and civic mobilization. The institution developed specialized awareness campaigns, organized public events and convened expert discussions to mark significant dates including the International Day of the Child, World Refugee Day, and the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and International Women’s Day.

Notably, the #EuNUaplic166/1 – EuRespectDemnitateaUmană (IRespectHumanDignity) campaign organized by the Ombudsman Office successfully mobilized multiple institutional stakeholders around a unified stance against inhuman or degrading treatment.

The institution’s outreach efforts included:

- The Human Rights Caravan initiative, which directly engaged communities in 16 localities spanning the country's Northern, Central and Southern regions;
- “Human Rights Town” programming conducted in Cahul, Ungheni and Drochia, featuring interactive educational activities that attracted hundreds of participants across age groups.

Situation in the Transnistrian region

The human rights situation in the Transnistrian region remains alarming and continues to deteriorate under policies imposed by Tiraspol’s de facto authorities, which enforce severe information censorship and systematically violates fundamental freedoms guaranteed by international law—including freedom of movement, expression, petition rights, education in one’s native language, private property rights and access to fair trials.

Access for journalists, human rights defenders and public officials performing their duties remains restricted in the Transnistrian region. Due to the temporary lack of effective control by constitutional authorities, existing communication channels within the Transnistrian settlement negotiation process are being utilized. These include political representatives, sectoral working groups and the Joint Control

Commission, which handles matters related to security zone monitoring and peacekeeping.

The ongoing, sweeping russification campaign promoted by Tiraspol's geopolitical actors in the region violates not only the rights of other ethnic minorities but—more alarmingly—systematically targets Moldovan citizens with particularly intense intimidation and persecution. Authorities enforce a ban on Latin script and Romanian language in public spaces and inter-institutional communications (with the exception of eight educational institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Research). They disrupt broadcasts of multiple media outlets licensed by the Audiovisual Council (excluding only Moldova 1 channel), impose Russian as the sole language for education and professional activities despite claims of three officially recognized local languages and promote relentless hostile propaganda against Moldova's constitutional authorities.

Given the existing technical platforms of the human rights and education working groups, which involve experts from both banks of the Nistru river the authorities consider it prudent to periodically include on these groups' agendas topics related to protecting the rights of all citizens without discrimination based on various criteria (citizenship, nationality, linguistic affiliation, etc.), avoiding excessive politicization while ensuring compliance with the universal and European human rights standards to which the Republic of Moldova has adhered.

Article 4

Policy and institutional framework for the protection of national minorities

Implementation of 2023 - 2025 Programme on the realization of the Strategy for Interethnic Relations Consolidation in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2027

The Republic of Moldova continues to implement its 2023-2025 Programme for realization of the Strategy for Interethnic Relations Consolidation (2017-2027)¹². This comprehensive policy document addresses several key challenges facing the country's diverse society, including notably low participation rates of national minorities in public affairs and ineffective collaboration between advisory bodies and minority representatives, particularly at local levels.

The Programme specifically tackles systemic issues such as the lack of disaggregated data on minority populations, limited Romanian language proficiency among ethnic minority groups and insufficient public awareness about the cultural, linguistic and historical richness of national minorities. A key focus area also remains promotion of diversity and multilingualism in mass media.

¹² Adopted by Government Decision nr. 169 din 29.03.2023

In 2024, the authorities made some progress in the implementation of the Programme, through training activities, promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity, monitoring the discrimination and involvement of young people in public life. Approximately 600 civil servants received training in human rights and minority protections under programs coordinated by the State Chancellery, enhancing institutional capacity to address minority issues. Youth engagement received special emphasis through programs such as the Public Administration School - an initiative organized by the Institute for European Policy and Reform (IPRE) with backing from both the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Moldova, which brought together 25 young representatives from various ethnic minority communities. Awareness campaigns reached over 2,150 young people, including Roma students, with activities such as visits to Moldova's Parliament to foster civic participation.

Efforts to strengthen civil society included 38 training sessions for ethno-cultural organizations, attended by 820 participants, covering project development, NGO management and minority rights advocacy. Local-level collaboration was reinforced through 31 meetings between authorities and civil society actors, engaging 300 participants in public policy monitoring. Education reforms saw the publication of 31 textbooks for minority languages (Bulgarian, Gagauz, Ukrainian, Russian), while a pilot curriculum for Gagauz language instruction in grades I–IV was rolled out in 48 schools, benefiting 1351 pupils. Teacher training initiatives, including seminars for 125 educators, further supported these efforts.

Cultural initiatives expanded under the National CRIn Programme, with 31 events attracting 73000 participants to celebrate diversity and interethnic tolerance. The Equality Council played a pivotal role in combating discrimination, reviewing 45 complaints related to minority rights and issuing 7 rulings affirming discriminatory practices. Complementary actions included 12 public awareness campaigns, 8 training sessions for 200 officials on identifying and addressing discrimination and the establishment of support networks in Soroca, Călărași and Dubăsari districts to assist vulnerable groups.

Media diversity was advanced through 460 hours of TV/radio programming in minority languages (Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, Russian), alongside capacity-building workshops for 40 journalists in Balti, Chișinău and Comrat, focusing on press freedom and the Ombudsman's role.

Through these coordinated efforts, the Moldovan authorities aim to establish more inclusive frameworks that foster meaningful interethnic dialogue while strengthening social cohesion nationwide. The initiative represents a sustained commitment to building a society that values and leverages its diversity as a national asset.

Article 4

National Strategy and action plans for Roma inclusion¹³**Article 5****Support for the preservation and development of minority identities and cultures**

The Republic of Moldova is implementing a balanced policy aimed at preserving cultural diversity and creating the necessary conditions for the development of cultural identity among persons belonging to national minorities, as an integral part of the national cultural heritage.

The policies regarding national minorities from a cultural perspective

In 2024, the Ministry of Culture carried out a series of actions aimed at strengthening interethnic relations, promoting cultural diversity and supporting national minorities in expressing and preserving their cultural identity. These efforts were implemented in accordance with the 2023-2025 Programme for the realizations of the Strategy for Interethnic Relations Consolidation in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2027, with the primary objective of ensuring a favorable climate for inclusion and mutual respect among the country's ethnic communities. In this context, several key regulatory acts were adopted, including measures to support the culture of national minorities:

- The Regulation on the selection, editing and acquisition of national books using funds allocated from the state budget (approved by Government Decision No. 256/2013);
- The Regulation on the funding mechanism for cultural magazines from the state budget (approved by Government Decision No. 256 of April 12, 2013);
- The Regulation on the funding mechanism for the translation and editing of national books abroad using state budget funds (Government Decision No. 256/2013);
- The Regulation on the calculation, allocation, use and accounting of special-purpose transfers to support young specialists in the cultural field (approved by Government Decision No. 392/2024);
- Law No. 12/2024 on the National Culture Fund, which includes measures to support cultural and editorial projects;
- The Regulation on conducting competitions to identify, evaluate and select local cultural development projects and programs (approved by Government Decision No. 808/2024);
- The national program “Cultural Voucher” (approved by Government Decision No. 774/2022).

¹³ See Compartment II, Article 12 “Equal access of Roma to education” and Article 15 “Information on the progress in the implementation of the Programme for the Support of the Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova for 2022-2025”

A significant step taken in 2024 was the development and approval of *the Regulation on the Non-Repayable Funding Mechanism for Cultural Projects Implemented by Non-Commercial Organizations*.¹⁴ This document established criteria for supporting cultural initiatives by NGOs, including representatives of national minorities, encouraging their active participation in the country's cultural life.

Following the launch of the 2024 call for proposals for non-reimbursable funding of cultural projects implemented by non-commercial organizations, the Ministry of Culture registered a record number of submissions over the past five years, totaling 170 cultural project applications. These were submitted by 126 non-commercial entities, comprising 108 community associations, 8 creative unions, 7 foundations and 3 private institutions. Consequently, the budgetary allocation for the cultural project funding competition in 2024 experienced a nearly twofold increase compared to 2023, rising from 7.4 million MDL to over 14 million MDL. Among the 84 approved annual and multi-annual cultural projects, 26 initiatives - encompassing thematic domains such as culture-based education, cultural diplomacy and creative residencies—will specifically target measures to support and promote the cultural expression of national minorities, including enhanced access to cultural products and services. In this context, on 20 August 2024, the Ministry of Culture conducted an informational and training session, attended by 66 representatives of the non-commercial organizations whose projects were selected for funding.

Among the projects funded by the Ministry of Culture was the *Youth Orchestra Concerts, 2024 Edition – “You Are Europe, Europe Is You”*, implemented by the NGO Musical-Choral Association. One of its key objectives was the organization of the “Ukrainian Music Evening” concert, featuring the participation of 50 Ukrainian refugee artists. Additionally, the cultural project *IA MANIA Festival*, organized by the NGO *Ca Lumea* with the support of the Ministry of Culture, brought together artists, craftsmen and artisans from various ethnic groups in the Republic of Moldova (Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Gagauzians and representatives from the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova). The festival included performances by the Rodoliubie ensemble from Taraclia, the Kadinja ensemble and the artist Sted from the ATU Gagauzia, among others.

The project *“Ethno Fest Taraclia – The Treasure of Cultural Heritage”*, implemented by the NGO Bulgarian Community of Taraclia District, aimed to promote cultural heritage and strengthen intercultural dialogue. This initiative sought both to expand its audience and raise awareness of cultural values, as well as to actively engage various ethnic groups in celebrating cultural traditions. Furthermore, the project provided an opportunity for participation and the presentation of cultural heritage, facilitating exchange and interaction among communities.

¹⁴ Approved by Order of the Minister of Culture No 13/2024

Within the cultural project “*Inauguration of the Tourist Route ‘The Holocaust Museum Complex in Mărculești Town’*”, implemented by the NGO Public Association of Parents Supporting Education, the initiative aimed to establish a tourist route encompassing the Institutional Museum, Jewish Cemetery, former concentration camp, Holocaust Memorial and historic Jewish buildings.

The project's key objectives included:

- Development of the website “*The Holocaust Complex in Mărculești Town’*”, providing information on historical sites, announcements, photographs, archival documents, maps and grave mapping within the cemetery;
- Restoration of the Jewish cemetery, including the rehabilitation of access paths to burial vaults with Jewish symbolism, featuring the first intact crypt dating back to 1839;
- Compilation of the tourist guide “*The Holocaust Complex in Mărculești Town’*” and installation of 20 informational-memorial plaques at historical sites and buildings throughout the city.

Furthermore, among other cultural projects funded by the Ministry of Culture targeting ethnic minorities are:

- “*Cultural Dialogue: Jewish Moldova’*”, implemented by the private institution *Jewish Cultural Center “KEDEM”*;
- “*Enhancing the International Visibility of the Republic of Moldova by Promoting the Country’s Initiative for the Certification of the European Cultural Route of the Council of Europe ‘The European Route of Ukrainian Heritage’*”, implemented by the NGO *National Association of Business and Industrial Tourism “Pro Tourism Moldova”*.

In line with the Law No. 160/2017 on libraries and in accordance with Parliamentary Decision No. 433/1999 concerning commemorative days, public holidays and rest days in the Republic of Moldova, *the National Program “Open Book”* was implemented in the context of celebrating the National Reading Day. This program aims to promote quality reading, establish a network of Reading Clubs and increase interest in national literature. Furthermore, *the National Campaign “Let’s Read Together!”* organized by public institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Culture, actively contributes to promoting reading among children and adolescents, including belonging to national minorities. The campaign's activities include book launches, meetings with authors and educational workshops, which have a significant impact on the intellectual development of the younger generation.

The National “Central Reading” Program was established to promote reading engagement among citizens of all age groups and to support public libraries in hosting literary events. The program’s framework includes organizing public reading sessions, conducting creative writing workshops and implementing comprehensive reading promotion campaigns through both traditional media channels and digital platforms.

Ethno-cultural NGOs accredited under the Agency for Interethnic Relations continue to benefit from organizational and financial support for initiatives that strengthen interethnic relations. This support framework encompasses financial support for ethno-cultural associations and access to event facilities at the House of Nationalities, which serves as a cultural and documentation hub for NGOs operating under the Agency's framework. These measures significantly enhance the statutory activities of such organizations. Financial allocations for this purpose have seen a substantial increase from 500.0 thousand lei in 2023 to 2 500.0 thousand lei in 2024. Throughout 2024, the House of Nationalities hosted approximately 105 cultural events, including exhibitions, book launches, festivals, traditional custom promotions, conferences, roundtable discussions, seminars, concerts, performances, competitions and national holiday celebrations. Organized in partnership between ethno-cultural associations and the Agency for Interethnic Relations, these events attracted an estimated 3000 participants.

Efforts in preparation for ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

In line with the provisions of the Strategy for Strengthening Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2027, approved by Government Decision No. 1464 of 30.10.2016, the national authorities have undertaken a number of actions for creating the prerequisites for this commitment. However, the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, the unprecedented refugee crisis and its consequences for the Republic of Moldova, the migration flows and new challenges of both external and internal influence have led to the need for reassessing the preparedness for ratification of the Charter. In this context, the authorities consider necessary to conduct a study to assess the institutional capacities and mechanisms for implementing the provisions of the Charter both at the central and local levels, as well as the costs related to these actions.

Article 6

Promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual respect

The ongoing development of inclusive community spaces and the increased organization of educational, social and cultural activities have significantly advanced intercultural dialogue across Moldova. These initiatives actively promote the country's rich cultural and linguistic diversity while fostering social cohesion among all citizens, regardless of ethnic background.

Throughout the reporting period, the Agency for Interethnic Relations sustained its efforts to enhance intercultural understanding and strengthen community ties through a diverse range of ethno-cultural events. These activities were specifically designed to:

- Facilitate meaningful cultural exchange between different ethnic communities;
- Create platforms for constructive dialogue and mutual understanding;

- Celebrate and preserve Moldova's multicultural heritage.

By implementing these measures, the Agency for Interethnic Relations has played a pivotal role in building an inclusive society where diversity is valued as a national asset. The Agency's programming continues to bridge cultural divides while promoting shared values and common identity among Moldova's diverse population.

In July 2024, the National Program "Strengthening Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova in the Context of the European Integration – CRIn" was launched. It was implemented by the Agency for Interethnic Relations in collaboration with ethno-cultural organizations, central and local public authorities and with the support of the Government of the Republic of Moldova.

The program focused on organizing awareness-raising and cultural-artistic events aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue under the official motto of the European Union – "Unity in Diversity", as well as fostering social cohesion among citizens of the Republic of Moldova, regardless of ethnicity, while supporting and advancing the country's EU accession process.

During its six-month implementation period (July – December 2024), the "CRIn" Program achieved substantial progress in strengthening interethnic relations across Moldova. The initiative successfully organized 31 local events spanning diverse regions of the country, including urban centers like Comrat municipality and Chişinău, as well as numerous villages such as Mihăileani in Rîşcani district, Horeşti in Ialoveni district, Gaidar in Ceadâr-Lunga district and several communities in Taraclia district including Corten and Cairaclia. These events brought together active participation from representatives of various ethnic groups.

The program made strides in promoting the Romanian language acquisition among ethnic communities, with focused efforts in ATU Gagauzia. This included staging Romanian-language theatrical performances for children in Congaz, Chirsova and Comrat, complemented by meetings with writers organized in schools throughout the Gagauz autonomy. These cultural-educational activities contributed to measurable improvements in interethnic communication nationwide.

At the institutional level, the program facilitated the signing of collaboration agreements with over ten mayoralities across different regions. It also established groundbreaking partnerships between localities with significant ethnic minority populations and communities with a Moldovan-majority population, most notably between Edineţ municipality and Ceadâr-Lunga and between Comrat and Ungheni.

The program's achievements were celebrated during the *Ethnic Communities Gala*, which honored 33 distinguished personalities and ethno-cultural organizations for their exceptional contributions to developing and strengthening interethnic relations

in Moldova. Cumulatively, the program's various initiatives reached and benefited approximately 73000 citizens throughout the implementation period.

Furthermore, the Agency for Interethnic Relations has implemented other impactful initiatives aimed at promoting intercultural exchange while preserving Moldova's rich linguistic and cultural diversity, including traditional celebrations of International Mother Language Day, International Roma Day and Slavic Writing and Culture Days in Moldova, along with cultural events showcasing the heritage of national minority communities such as Ukrainian, Russian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, Polish, Armenian and Azerbaijani groups.

Each year, the Republic of Moldova commemorates International Holocaust Remembrance Day with a series of events organized during the Holocaust Memorial Week. This solemn program brings together communities across the country through various commemorative and educational activities.

The observances include wreath-laying ceremonies at Holocaust memorials located in towns and villages throughout Moldova, accompanied by academic conferences and roundtable discussions that examine this historical tragedy. Cultural institutions host documentary film screenings, theatrical performances and photo-documentary exhibitions that preserve the memory of Holocaust victims. Educational institutions participate through specialized lessons, student competitions and youth forums, while virtual and guided tours of Holocaust sites make this history accessible to wider audiences. These coordinated activities serve multiple purposes: honoring the victims, educating current generations about the Holocaust, combating anti-Semitism and preserving the historical record of these events in Moldovan territory. By engaging government representatives, civil society organizations, educators, students and the general public, the commemorations foster collective remembrance and promote the values of tolerance and human dignity.

During Holocaust Victims' Commemoration Week 2024, a series of awareness-raising events were organized to highlight the importance of promoting interethnic tolerance, intercultural dialogue and combating racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance.

The program featured, inter alia, a public lecture followed by the screening of *Gruber's Journey* film, directed by Radu Gabrea. This event was organized by the Orthodox Jewish Religious Community "Agudath Israel Moldova" in partnership with the Agency for Interethnic Relations, the Italian Embassy in Moldova, the Romanian Cultural Institute "Mihai Eminescu" in Chişinău and the Chişinău Municipal Administration.

Additional commemorative activities included:

- A memorial rally honoring Holocaust victims;
- Two exhibitions: one displaying books and documents from institutional archives and another titled *Art During the Holocaust*, organized by the

Museum of Jewish History in the Republic of Moldova;

- The #WeRemember *Learn from the Past* campaign, conducted by the Jewish Community of Moldova;
- Educational events held in schools, research institutions, public libraries, museums and youth centers across the country.

Alongside the International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2024 observances, the Agency for Interethnic Relations implemented a special youth awareness program focused on combating discrimination, stereotypes and prejudices against the Roma population. This “Holocaust Memory and Interethnic Tolerance” Museum Center, specifically designed to engage young people including Roma students and scholarship recipients. The program incorporates several key educational components: thematic presentations on Roma history, culture, language and traditions, along with awareness-building sessions about the horrors of the Roma genocide during World War II. To ensure academic rigor, the Agency has accredited subject matter experts who deliver research-based lectures accompanied by documentary video materials. The program saw successful implementations in both January and April 2024. These carefully designed events serve multiple important purposes: they educate young Moldovans about historical atrocities, work to eliminate contemporary prejudices and actively promote values of interethnic understanding. By combining historical remembrance with present-day tolerance education, Agency’s initiative creates meaningful opportunities for dialogue while honoring the memory of Roma victims. The project represents a significant commitment to fostering social cohesion through targeted educational interventions that address both past injustices and current challenges.

For more than 15 years, the Agency for Interethnic Relations has organized the annual celebration of International Roma Day with the active participation of Roma public organizations, local public administrations and international organizations.

Roma Culture Week 2024 was held from 5 to 13 April organized by the Agency in cooperation with the Roma Task Force - a coordination mechanism comprising national and international institutions supporting Roma communities. The program featured diverse activities implemented both in Chişinău municipality and areas with concentrated Roma populations, including cultural exhibitions, academic conferences, roundtable discussions, children's cultural events, puppet theater performances, classroom educational sessions and thematic displays showcasing Roma traditions and heritage.

On 3 December 2024, the Palace of the Republic hosted the inaugural *Ethnic Communities Gala*, the first such initiative organized by the Agency for Interethnic Relations to recognize outstanding contributions to promoting diversity and social cohesion in alignment with Moldova’s European aspirations. During this prestigious event, 33 distinguished personalities and organizations received trophies and merit diplomas across twelve categories of achievement, including the protection of human rights, promotion of cultural diversity, enhancement of social cohesion and

interethnic tolerance, participation in public life and lifetime accomplishment. The gala brought together approximately 600 participants representing ethnic communities, central and local government authorities and international organizations. This gathering served as both a celebration of Moldova's multicultural society and a reaffirmation of the nation's commitment to European values of unity in diversity.

In 2024, the Ministry of Culture implemented several initiatives to support Moldova's common civic identity while promoting ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. These efforts included a series of educational and commemorative events focused on preserving historical memory and raising public awareness and namely:

- At the National Library, the Ministry organized events to educate visitors about the Holocaust, preserving the memory of its victims through historical documentation and public sensitization to humanitarian tragedies. A notable initiative was the inauguration of the exhibition "*Art During the Holocaust: Four Different Destinies*", which presented a unique perspective on Holocaust experiences through artworks, with each panel illustrating the story of four distinct victims of Nazi persecution.
- Another significant exhibition featured approximately 100 carefully selected historical and educational documents, highlighting the Holocaust phenomenon and the fate of Jews in Romanian territories and worldwide. This thematic display aimed to promote scholarly understanding while educating the broader public about this historical tragedy's profound impact.
- The program also included the screening of the documentary "*The Holocaust - A Tragedy of Humanity*", attended by 280 participants. The film served to deepen public understanding of Holocaust atrocities, emphasizing both the victims' suffering and the crucial lessons humanity must learn from this global catastrophe.

Additionally, English language learning activities, individual and group psychological counseling sessions and guided excursions for diverse ethnic groups were organized.

At the "Ion Creangă" National Children's Library, a series of intercultural education activities and projects were implemented:

- The project "*Multicultural Visual Journey Ukraine-Moldova*", the conference "*Mărțișor: Traditions, Customs and Legends*"; "*The Ukrainian Wreath: Beauty and Braiding Traditions*";
- Book exhibition dedicated to International Roma Day, celebrating and promoting Roma culture and traditions while educating the public about this community;
- Meeting with Ukrainian writer Galina Malik;

- Meeting between refugee children from Ukraine and writer Claudia Partole, organized on World Refugee Day, providing refugee children with a space for creative learning and expression;
- The cross-border Ukraine-Moldova project: *A Multisectoral Approach for Children and Adolescents Affected by War*, supported by WeWorld Moldova, including digital education workshops under the “*Biblio CodeLab*”, “*TIC-Lab*”, “*Quiz Club*” programs and Romanian language courses for refugee children and local communities;
- *Stories and Traditions*: book exhibition for International Roma Day;
- World Day for Cultural Diversity - Reading and creative workshops aimed at raising public awareness about global cultural diversity and its importance for developing an inclusive society.

Article 6

Protection of persons belonging to national minorities against racism, hate crimes and hate speech, including in the media and law enforcement bodies and respect for equality and human rights

The national authorities continue efforts to combat hate crimes through improved data collection and institutional accountability, while harmonizing with international best practices in criminal justice monitoring.

To align crime reporting methods with European standards and incorporate bias-motivated offense data, Joint Order No. 6/15-0/4/9 was signed and entered into force on 16.01.2023. This order amended Annex 2 (Registered Crime Form - Form 1) and Annex 3 (Criminal Prosecution Tracking Form - Form 1.1) of the *Unified Crime Reporting Instructions covering offenses, criminal cases and offenders*¹⁵.

The revisions implemented two specialized data fields to enable systematic tracking of hate crimes:

1. a binary indicator identifying whether an offense was prejudice-motivated (yes/no);
2. a field specifying the particular prejudice criterion involved.

These modifications facilitate disaggregated data collection on hate-related incidents.

Furthermore, the updated Form 2.1 requires detailed offender information, including mandatory disclosure of nationality at point 15. Complementing these administrative changes, prosecutors are now obligated to document perpetrators’ nationality and ethnicity in all formal indictments and criminal charges, ensuring this data is preserved throughout judicial proceedings.

¹⁵ Instructions were originally established by Joint Order No. 121/254/286-O/95 on 18 July 2008, which had been approved by the General Prosecutor, Minister of Internal Affairs, Director of the Customs Service and Director of the Anti-Corruption Center.

Statistical data stored in the Registry of criminalistics and criminological information of the Republic of Moldova reflects the following situation for 2024.

A total of 56 cases have been initiated, concerning crimes that have been committed with traits of hatred and/or prejudice among them:

- 6 crimes were committed due to national origin;
- 1 crime was committed due to prejudice based on language;
- 6 crimes were committed due to prejudice based on ethnic origin;
- 1 crime was committed due to prejudice based on race;

In 2024, 37 criminal cases were sent to courts of justice, while 7 criminal cases were dismissed/closed.

Activities in the field of combating discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech

Throughout 2024, the General Police Inspectorate carried out a number of activities focused on combating hate speech, discrimination and bias-motivated offences. These activities contributed to strengthening the legal and institutional framework to combat hate speech and bias-motivated offences. By working with international partners, such as the Council of Europe and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and involving civil society organizations, the Republic of Moldova is improving its data collection, investigation and law enforcement capacities in this field, promoting a more equitable and inclusive society.

Main events and initiatives included:

- 13 February 2024: Guidance for police officers and investigating officers has been presented to facilitate the application of the provisions of the Contravention Code on hate speech and incitement to discrimination. The guidance includes clear explanations and conceptual delineations to hate speech and/or incitement to discrimination, as well as an analysis of the conceptual delineations to other types of contraventions and offences.
- 10 April 2024: A meeting was held in Chisinau with state authorities and civil society organizations dedicated to the collection of disaggregated data on hate crimes. The event was organized in the framework of the regional project "Combating discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes"¹⁶.
- 29-31 May 2024: Three employees of the General Police Inspectorate participated in a workshop organized by the OHCHR and the General Prosecutor's Office, dedicated to conceptualization of the Guidelines for the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of hate crimes and hate speech. This event was an important step in strengthening national and international efforts to combat hate crimes and hate speech online,

¹⁶ This initiative is being implemented as part of Phase III of the joint European Union and Council of Europe program "Partnership for Good Governance."

contributing to the development of effective investigation and prosecution practices.

- 6 September 2024: The Council of Europe has issued recommendations to modify the forms for recording bias-motivated offences in order to streamline the collection of disaggregated data on bias-motivated offences in the Republic of Moldova and online workshops are to be organized to implement the necessary actions.
- 29 October 2024: An online working meeting was held with the subdivisions involved in the process of disaggregation of contraventions data, where they discussed the need to amend Law 185/2020 on the automated information system for recording the contraventions, contravention cases and of the persons who committed contraventions.
- 2 December 2024: A request has been sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the inclusion of a new provision in Law no.185/2020.

Combating hate speech in the media

Audiovisual Media Services Code No. 174/2018 (hereinafter referred to as the “AMSC”), the implementation of which falls under the responsibility of the Audiovisual Council, entered into force on 1 January 2019. It transposes Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation, or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive).¹⁷

Thus, the AMSC incorporates gender-related provisions under Article 18 – Gender Equality and establishes regulatory measures in Article 11(2)(a) – Respect for Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, which prohibits audiovisual programs “likely to propagate, incite, promote, or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, antisemitism, or other forms of hatred based on intolerance or discrimination on grounds of sex, race, nationality, religion, disability, or sexual orientation”.

The Audiovisual Council, with the support of development partners, has approved internal working instruments - the *Methodology for Monitoring Hate Speech in Audiovisual Media Content*¹⁸ and the *Guide for identifying and monitoring sexist discourse and behavior in traditional and online media in the Republic of Moldova, particularly during electoral periods*, to protect human rights, focusing on aspects related to the right to freedom of expression and its limitations, such as the prohibition of discrimination, sexism, racial hatred and other similar forms.

On 1 March 2024, the Audiovisual Council adopted new Regulations on Audiovisual Content (Decision No. 61), which similarly contain provisions in line with Article 11 of the AMSC - Respect for Fundamental Rights and Freedoms,

¹⁷ Published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 95 of 15 April 2010

¹⁸ Decision No. 160 of 26 May 2023

particularly paragraph (2): “Audiovisual programs are prohibited if they: a) are likely to propagate, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, antisemitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance or discrimination on grounds of sex, race, nationality, religion, disability or sexual orientation”.

In 2024, the Audiovisual Council sanctioned two audiovisual media service providers for undermining gender equality in audiovisual programs.¹⁹

At the same time, during the electoral campaign for the Moldovan presidential election and the constitutional republican referendum of 20 October 2024, the Audiovisual Council examined three complaints regarding potential cases of hate speech and/or incitement to discrimination in audiovisual media services, two of which were rejected and one partially upheld.²⁰

The situation of non-citizens and progress achieved in 2024 in the implementation of the Programme on Management of the Migration Flow, Asylum and Integration of Foreigners for 2022-2025

As of 31 December 2024, a total of 20700 foreigners were documented with valid identity papers in the Republic of Moldova. Of these, 4734 individuals held permanent residence permits, while 15966 had temporary residence permits.

In 2024, a total of 8153 asylum applications were filed in the Republic of Moldova. The recognition rate of international protection, relative to the number of applications submitted during the year, stood at 1.4%, granting 116 individuals international protection (refugee status or humanitarian protection) in the country.

On 18 January 2023, the Government approved the mechanism for implementing temporary protection for forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine by transposing Article 4(1), Article 6, Article 8(1), Articles 9, 10, 12, 13 and Article 14(1) of Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001, on minimum standards for granting temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons, as well as

¹⁹ Thus, through Decision No. 153 of 30 May 2024, the Audiovisual Council examined the petition filed by the "Women for Women" Public Association. The monitoring results confirmed that during the "Popcorn Show" audiovisual program broadcast on 30 April 2024, the hosts made gender-based discriminatory remarks targeting women and children while using language containing sexist elements. Consequently, the CA issued a public warning to the media service provider - the "Health Promotion and Health Education Center 'Health'" Public Association, founder of the "Jurnal FM" audio broadcasting service - for violating Article 13(6)(b) of the AMSC.

Through Decision No. 290 of 18 November 2024, the Audiovisual Council examined the petition submitted by Ms. Angela Frolov. The investigation established that during the "Обсуждаем вместе" (Discussing Together) program aired on 19 June 2024, the "TV-Găgăuzia" audiovisual media service broadcast content constituting discrimination based on sexual orientation. The CA consequently issued a public warning to "TV-Găgăuzia" for breaching Article 13(6)(b) of the AMSC. Additionally, "TV-Găgăuzia" was fined 15,000 lei for repeated violations of Article 13(1)(b) of the AMSC: "By virtue of the fundamental right to information, media service providers must comply with the following requirements: b) to report on facts or events accurately, with information being verified and presented impartially and in good faith."

²⁰ Decision No. 243 of 02.10.2024 (petitioner: "PCRM" - AMS: "Moldova 1"); Decision No. 244 of 02.10.2024 (petitioner: R. Usafii - AMS: "Moldova 1" and "Radio Moldova"); Decision No. 266 of 23.10.2024 (petitioner: Natalia Morari - AMS: "PRO TV Chişinău") - link: Decisions - Audiovisual Council) - link: [Decisions - Audiovisual Council](#).

Council Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022, recognizing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine under Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC and introducing temporary protection.

By the Government Decision No. 21/2023 were established the conditions for granting temporary protection to displaced persons from Ukraine, along with the necessary measures to safeguard their rights and ensure their protection.

As a result, between 1 March 2023 and 31 December 2024, a total of 66,457 individuals were granted temporary protection. Of these, 75% (49,708) were adults, while 25% (16,749) were minors. The gender distribution shows that women accounted for 51.2%, compared to 48.8% men.

Regarding progress in implementing the *Programme on Management of the Migration Flow, Asylum and Integration of Foreigners for 2022-2025 (hereinafter - PMMFAIF)*²¹, the following key developments took place in 2024:

1. Amendments and new legal provisions were introduced concerning the public custody procedure for foreigners under Law No. 287/2024, published on 31 December 2024 in the Official Gazette No. 564-568.
2. Law No. 223/2024 (Art. III, Art. 62) introduced modifications to Administrative Code No. 116/2018.

The normative framework in the areas covered by the Programme continued to be harmonized throughout the year.

3. Amendments were introduced to Law No. 270/2008 on Asylum in the Republic of Moldova, establishing a fast-track procedure for examining asylum applications submitted by individuals subject to extradition proceedings. The revised legislation reduces the timeframe for conducting asylum interviews to no more than 10 days from either the application date or the initiation of fast-track proceedings, down from the previous 21-day period. The law also modified the review deadlines for rejected asylum applications processed under the accelerated procedure. Furthermore, in cases of asylum application rejections, the decision can now be directly challenged through administrative litigation without prior procedures, with appeals required to be filed within 5 working days of notification. Courts are mandated to adjudicate such administrative cases within 30 calendar days and any subsequent appeals against the court's decision to uphold or annul the rejection must be submitted to the Court of Appeal within 5 working days.
4. Law No. 297/2024 amended several normative acts concerning asylum procedures by transposing provisions from three key European Parliament and Council directives regulating asylum and international protection:

²¹ Approved by GOVERNMENT DECISION 808/2022

Directive 2011/95/EU on standards for refugee status and subsidiary protection; Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection; and Directive 2013/33/EU on reception standards for applicants of international protection.²² This legislative update aligns Moldova's asylum framework with EU standards across all critical aspects of international protection.

5. The Government amended Decision No. 21/2023 on granting temporary protection to displaced persons from Ukraine. Based on Article 381(3) of Law No. 270/2008 on asylum in the Republic of Moldova²³ the duration of temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine was extended by one year, until 1 March 2025.
6. To strengthen migration flow monitoring, all 6 foreigner registration offices under the Migration and Asylum Bureau located along the administrative border were renovated and equipped during the reporting period. Additionally, to improve accessibility, a new entry route through the Transnistrian segment was established, along with the creation of a new Foreigners Registration Office to streamline procedures.
7. In 2024, the Integration Centers of the Migration and Asylum Bureau actively promoted cultural diversity, integration processes, mutual benefits, prevention of intolerance and xenophobia, while ensuring public order and national security. Throughout the year, the centers provided approximately 14000 consultations to migrants regarding participation in integration programs and activities in the Republic of Moldova. The Migration and Asylum Bureau organized and conducted 112 educational and awareness sessions for both foreign nationals and local populations. These included 17 informational sessions in schools reaching 1171 children (including 455 foreign children), 8 sessions in higher education and technical vocational institutions with about 403 participating students and 51 informational sessions as part of the “Choose for Yourself!” campaign that engaged approximately 1800 high school students. Additionally, the centers held 7 socio-cultural adaptation sessions for about 90 foreign nationals with children and 29 informational sessions for refugees that reached around 1000 people. To foster inclusion at national and regional levels, the Migration and Asylum Bureau supported 32

²² The transposed provisions included:

- Article 20(3)-(4) of Directive 2011/95/EU (December 13, 2011) on standards for third-country nationals/stateless persons qualifying for international protection, uniform refugee/subsidiary protection status, and the content of granted protection (OJEU L 337/9, 20.12.2011, CELEX: 32011L0095);
- Article 2(d), Article 4(1), Articles 6, 18, 23(3), 24(1)-(3), 26, 31(8), 32(1), 36, 37(2)-(3), 38(1)-(2), 39(2)-(4), and Annex I of Directive 2013/32/EU (June 26, 2013) on common procedures for granting/withdrawing international protection (OJEU L 180/60, 29.06.2013, CELEX: 32013L0032);
- Article 2(g)(k), 6(2), 8, 9(1)-(3), 10(4), 13, 17(1)(3)(5), 19, 20(1)(6), 21, 22(1)-(3), and 25 of Directive 2013/33/EU (June 26, 2013) on reception standards for asylum seekers (OJEU L 180/96, 29.06.2013, CELEX: 32013L0033).

²³ (Official Gazette of the Republic of Moldova, 2009, No. 53-54, Art. 145)

cultural events. Among the most significant were Europe Day, Ukrainian Vyshyvanka Day, Diaspora Festival, Solidarity Picnic with Refugees, World Refugee Day, Gusto-Hora festival, Casa Mare - A Day in the Park event, International Migrants Day and the “Every Step Counts” Marathon.

In 2024, integration specialists conducted comprehensive assessments for 123 foreign nationals, identifying their specific integration needs. Among these individuals, 13 were stateless persons. Of the total assessed, 108 foreigners requested integration support services, while 13 were successfully enrolled in structured integration programs.

8. Special emphasis was placed on the specific objective of “*Strengthening the capacities of national authorities involved in migration crisis management through training and situational simulations*”. In this regard, the Migration and Asylum Bureau, in collaboration with the General Inspectorate of Border Police, organized and conducted the "AFLUX-2024" simulation exercise in the Vulcănești district. This exercise aimed to test and enhance the capabilities of Ministry of Internal Affairs staff in managing mass migration flows and asylum seekers at the state border. A total of 52 employees participated in the exercise, including 16 female staff members who provided essential psychological and medical services to the foreign nationals involved in the simulation.
9. In 2024, the Migration and Asylum Bureau received 20 VisionBox workstations with support from the International Organization for Migration Mission in Moldova. Through development partners’ support, the infrastructure of the Temporary Placement Center for Foreigners was improved under a project implemented based on the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Migration and Asylum Bureau and the “EzzyLink” Public Association. Additionally, three medical kits were acquired to provide medical services for accommodated foreigners taken into public custody in accordance with the European Union standards. The medical point within the Temporary Placement Center for Foreigners was renovated and equipped with medical equipment.
10. To support Ukrainian refugees in education, the Ministry of Education and Research, in collaboration with UNICEF and UNHCR, established the Inter-Agency Working Group on Refugee Education in 2022. This working group holds monthly meetings at the end of each month, inviting relevant stakeholders to report and discuss challenges identified in the educational process of refugee children. During these meetings, the current situation is analyzed and concrete solutions are developed to address cases and difficulties faced by refugee children in accessing education. On 18 April 2024, the Ministry of Education and Research signed a Cooperation Memorandum with the international organization “People in Need”, which provides support for the educational inclusion of Ukrainian refugees.

11. Furthermore, in 2024 two collaboration agreements were signed to enhance cooperation for facilitating the integration of foreigners into local communities while promoting diversity and social cohesion:
 - An inter-institutional cooperation agreement between the Southern Regional Directorate of the Migration and Asylum Bureau and BoGovernment Decisionan Petriceicu Hasdeu State University in Cahul;
 - A partnership agreement between the History and Ethnography Museum in Bălți and the Northern Regional Directorate of the Migration and Asylum Bureau.
12. Regarding the achievement of the specific objective concerning access to healthcare, education and labor market integration for displaced persons from Ukraine under the PMMFAIF, this will be accomplished through the implementation of the National Program on Phased Integration, developed in 2024, which is expected to be approved by Government Decision in the first quarter of 2025. In 2024, according to data from the Ministry of Education and Research, 3153 refugee children from Ukraine attended educational institutions in the Republic of Moldova. Of these, 2390 were enrolled in schools and 753 in kindergartens.
13. Furthermore, regarding this objective, on 8 August 2024, the Ministry of Education and Research issued Order No. 1126, introducing several amendments and clarifications to the Instruction on the Integration of Refugee Children from Ukraine and Other War-Affected Countries into the education system. The updated Instruction was distributed to all local specialized education authorities. The amendments specify that: Schools are required to accept Ukrainian children's enrollment using scanned documents without notarization; when dealing with illiterate parents (particularly within the Ukrainian Roma community), schools must assign an assistant to complete registration paperwork; and Regional Education Directorates must collaborate with local governments, Social Assistance Agencies and Public Health Centers to implement regular monitoring systems tracking out-of-school children, with collected data submitted to the Ministry of Education and Research.

The Ministry of Education and Research has paid special attention to higher and vocational-technical education. Ukrainian refugee students seeking admission to higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova have received particular support. In this regard, the Ministry issued Order No. 1043 on July 18, 2024, regarding the admission of foreign students, which establishes the following provisions:

- Priority for Ukrainian citizens in accessing state-funded places at higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova;
- Tuition fees and study contracts equivalent to those for Moldovan citizens for Ukrainian students enrolling in universities on a fee-paying basis.

The latter provision also applied to admissions to vocational schools, enabling Ukrainian citizens to benefit from the same favorable financial conditions.

Article 9

Broadcasting and print media in languages

In the Republic of Moldova, within regions where ethnic minorities constitute the majority of the population, there operate 11 audiovisual media service providers (7 radio stations, 4 TV channels) broadcasting television and radio programs in national minority languages (in accordance with Article 4(7) of the Audiovisual Media Services Code No. 174/2018). These include:

- 2 Bulgarian-language media services (1 TV channel: “NTS”; 1 radio station: “Albena”);
- 7 Gagauz-language media services (2 TV channels: “TV-Găgăuzia” and “ATV”; 5 radio stations: “GRT FM”, “Bugeac FM”, “Bizim Dalgamiz FM”, “PRO 100 Radio” and “Radio Jean”);
- 2 Romani-language media services (1 TV channel: “NOAH TV”²⁴; 1 radio station: “Romano Patrîn FM”).

All these audiovisual media services have been undertaken, in the editorial drafts submitted to the Audiovisual Council, to produce programmes in the languages of the majority ethnic groups in the region.

The Audiovisual Council carried out 4 checks on compliance with the provisions of Art. 4 paras. (3), (4), (7) and (9) of the Audiovisual Media Services Code of the Republic of Moldova No 174/2018: “TV-Gagauzia” - 2 checks and “ATV” and “NTS” - 1 check each.

The monitoring results confirmed that these television media services complied with the required quota of original programming in their respective minority languages. This compliance was formally documented in Decision No. 12 (26 January 2024) and Decision No. 129 (16 May 2024), available on the Audiovisual Council’s Decisions page.

The Public Company Teleradio-Moldova and particularly TV Moldova-1, recognizes its essential role in building a cohesive, tolerant and inclusive society. By reflecting ethnic and cultural diversity, it not only promotes intercultural dialogue and integration but also fosters greater understanding of democratic values and respect for human rights.

In accordance with these objectives, TV Moldova-1 broadcast a total of 460 hours and 38 minutes (5.25% of total airtime) in national minority languages during 2024, alongside 8299 hours and 22 minutes (94.75%) in Romanian. These totals do not

²⁴ This audiovisual media service holds a broadcasting license issued by the Audiovisual Council since 21.08.2020. During 2024, this television media service did not notify the Council about the start of broadcasting of the television audiovisual media service.

include acquired programming such as foreign series, films or cartoons that were translated, dubbed or subtitled into Romanian.

BROADCASTS IN NATIONAL MINORITY LANGUAGES

Nr/ o	Program Name	Language	Duration	Frequency	Annual Volume (First Broadcast)	Annual Volume (Reruns)	Total Annual Volume
1.	“Știri”	Russian	30 min	Monday - Friday	102 h 05 min	-	102 h 05 min
2.	“Scanner”	Russian	45 min	weekly	13 hours 30 min	13 hours 30 min	27 hours
3.	“Știri externe”	Russian	26 min	Monday - Saturday	95 hours 25 min	-	95 hours 25 min
4.	”Zapovednic”	Russian	15 min	weekly	12 hours 45 min	12 hours 45 min	25 hours 30 min
5.	“ЩоТыжневик”	Ukrainian	30 min	weekly	20 hours	28 hours	48 hours
6.	“Unda Bugeacului”	Bulgarian	30 min	bi-weekly	10 hours	26 hours 30	36 hours 30 min
7.	“Наш Общй Дом / The Common House”	Russian	30 min	bi-weekly	10 hours	20 hours	30 hours
8.	“Всегда на высоте”	Russian	30 min	bi-weekly	8 hours	41 hours 30 min	49 hours 30 min
9.	“Gagauz meydanı”	Gagauz	30 min	bi-weekly	10 hours 38 min	36 hours 38 min	46 hours 38 min
	Total:				241 hours 45 min	178 hours 53 min	460 hours 38 min

The Socio-Economic Programs Department of TV Moldova-1 produced four minority-focused TV projects in 2024, totaling 112 programs (49 hours 38 minutes cumulative runtime). Broadcast in Ukrainian, Russian, Bulgarian and Gagauz, these

programs aim to preserve linguistic/cultural traditions while fostering interethnic understanding. Romanian subtitles ensured inclusive access for all viewers.

Programs Produced by the Socio-Economic Programs Department and Detailed Results

<i>No</i>	Programme name	Overview/Results
1	<i>ShchoTyzhnevik (Weekly, Ukrainian)</i>	<p>Duration: 46 episodes, 1196 minutes (19 hours 56 minutes)</p> <p>Purpose: Launched in 2022 in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, focusing on the adaptation of Ukrainian refugees (approximately 100,000 people in Moldova) and promoting Moldovan-Ukrainian cooperation across various fields.</p> <p>Average viewership: 9105 per episode</p> <p>Topics covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural life of Ukrainians in Moldova • Legal and social support for refugees • Personal stories of refugees • European integration of Moldova and Ukraine <p>Featured events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemoration of Holodomor victims • Second anniversary of the war • Romanian language studies by refugees • Establishment of the Ukrainian Ethnic Mayors Association

2.	<p><i>Наш Общій Дом / The Common House (bi-weekly, in Russian)</i></p>	<p>Duration: 21 episodes, 546 minutes (9 hours 06 minutes)</p> <p>Purpose: Highlighting the lives of smaller ethnic groups (Poles, Jews, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Georgians etc.) and promoting cultural diversity. Average viewership: 5,528 per episode</p> <p>Topics covered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ethnic personality profiles (artisans, artists, writers, community leaders) 2. Specific traditions like “Navruz” (Azerbaijanis), Mother's Day (Armenians), Christmas and New Year (other ethnicities) 3. Activities of ethnic organizations 4. Creation of a new tourist route reflecting Moldovan-Ukrainian cultural connections 5. Holocaust: atrocities and victim commemorations 6. Ethnic Gala - a first for the Republic of Moldova <p>Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program served as a platform for strengthening cultural identities and facilitating intercultural dialogue <p>Featured diaspora representatives and community leaders, enhancing the public presence of these ethnic groups</p>
3.	<p><i>Bugevac Wave (bi-weekly, in Bulgarian language)</i></p>	<p>Duration: 23 episodes, 598 minutes (9 hours 58 minutes)</p> <p>Purpose: Promotion of Bulgarian language and culture, facilitating the integration of the Bulgarian community into Moldovan society.</p> <p>Average viewership: 6101 per episode</p> <p>Topics covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural and social activities including the Tvardița forest planting, educational projects (museum corners, solar panel installations in schools) and publication of the "Bessarabian Necklace" collection • Revival of traditions such as “Todorovden” and wool carpet weaving, promotion of traditional Bulgarian games • Important anniversaries: 30 years since the founding of the Bulgarian Community, 20 years of Taraclia State University • Activities of Bulgarian ethnic NGOs and joint

		projects implemented by non-governmental organizations from Bulgaria with local authorities and specialized NGOs in Taraclia and other predominantly Bulgarian communities
4.	<i>Gagauz Meydanı</i> (<i>bi-weekly in Gagauz</i>)	<p>Duration: 22 episodes, 638 minutes (10 hours 38 minutes)</p> <p>Purpose: To showcase Gagauz life and culture while promoting the Gagauz language and ethnic identity within the context of Gagauz autonomy.</p> <p>Average viewership: 12,083 per episode</p> <p>Key topics covered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Historical foundations of Gagauz settlements, linguistic identity challenges and regional-central dialogue issues (particularly regarding Comrat) 2. 30th anniversary of the legal establishment of Gagauz autonomy (“Gagauz Yeri”) and future development prospects 3. Notable Gagauz figures including poets, artists and educators 4. Development projects implemented by Gagauz NGOs with EU and other international support <p>Impact: The programming provided comprehensive documentation and analysis of three decades of Gagauz autonomy, offering audiences balanced perspective on both achievements and ongoing challenges.</p>

Objectives Achieved:

1. **Preservation of ethnic identity:** The four TV programs successfully supported the maintenance of minority languages and cultures, serving as a valuable resource for national minority communities.
2. **Cultural diplomacy:** The projects strengthened relations between the Republic of Moldova and the historical homelands of its minority groups, promoting collaboration, diversity and international engagement.
3. **International recognition:** The presentation of these programs at international events and summits highlighted their significance in a global context.
4. **Local impact:** The coverage of collaborative initiatives between NGOs and local authorities helped promote the non-governmental sector and civic engagement in community development.

5. **Ensuring information access for all communities:** Through its programming, TV Moldova-1 guaranteed information access for all citizens, including ethnic minorities, enabling full social integration and informed decision-making.
6. **Combating discrimination and promoting equality:** By presenting positive and inclusive portrayals of cultural diversity, public media:
 - Contributed to reducing ethnic discrimination;
 - Provided balanced coverage of both challenges and successes of minority groups;
 - Helped dismantle prejudices;
 - Fostered a more equitable social environment.
7. TV Moldova-1 has contributed to building an inclusive national identity that values Moldova's ethnic and cultural diversity. By integrating minority stories, values and traditions into public discourse, it has strengthened the sense of belonging to one national community.

In 2024, TV Moldova-1's attempts to relaunch programming in the Romani language were unsuccessful. Despite Teleradio-Moldova repeatedly publishing job announcements for journalists/editors for projects in Romani and Gagauz languages (the "Gagauz Meydani" project was ultimately produced as a co-production), no applications were submitted for these positions. However, issues affecting the Roma community were occasionally covered in various TV Moldova-1 programs, including news broadcasts, morning shows like "Bună dimineața", and the Ukrainian-language program "ShchoTyzhnevik".

In response to the Advisory Committee's recommendation regarding the recruitment of persons belonging to national minorities within the Audiovisual Council, the institution clarifies that it organizes competitions for vacant public positions in accordance with the Regulation on Filling Public Offices through Competition, approved by *Government Decision no. 201 of 11.03.2009 on the implementation of the provisions of Law no. 158 of 4 July 2008 on the public office and status of the civil servant*. When conducting competitions, the Audiovisual Council adheres to fundamental principles including transparency and objectivity, open competition, professional competence and merit and equal access to public office.

The requirements for entering public service are identical and mandatory for all competition candidates, who must meet a series of general conditions established by national legislation, as well as specific conditions outlined in the vacancy notice for each public position. The selection process is rigorous, with written tests being coded to ensure that when awarding scores, competition committee members cannot show preferential treatment toward any candidate. Proficiency in the Romanian language is essential for working at the Audiovisual Council. All employees receive training according to their specialization and qualification level. A specific requirement for holding public office and selecting the most suitable candidate from among

competitors is knowledge of audiovisual legislation, particularly the framework law - the Audiovisual Media Services Code No. 174/2018. Accordingly, when recruiting qualified personnel for the public authority, there can be no lower expectations regarding knowledge of the Audiovisual Media Services Code or the audiovisual field for representatives of national minorities.

In 2024, the Audiovisual Council announced 27 competitions for 11 vacant public positions, 5 staff units were filled. The job advertisements were published both on the official website of the authority: consiliuaudiovizual.md and on the government portal: careers.gov.md. For the 11 vacant positions, an application was submitted by a representative of national minorities, which was accepted and subsequently hired.

Article 10 Use of minority languages in public life at central and local level and in the courts

The Central Electoral Commission is responsible for ensuring the printing of ballots and other relevant information in Romanian as well as in the languages spoken by national minorities, particularly those with co-official status in administrative-territorial units.

According to Article 73(7) of the Electoral Code 325/2022: "Ballots shall be printed in Romanian. To facilitate the participation of ethnic minorities in elections, ballots shall also be printed in another language upon request by electoral authorities in the respective constituency."

Thus, for the local general elections held on 5 November 2023, the Commission adapted its electronic system to generate ballots in five ethnic minority languages: Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian and Romani. However, the ballots were ultimately printed in Romanian and in Russian for certain localities, as requested by the polling station electoral offices.

For the first time during the 2023 local general elections, the Commission printed informational materials in all five ethnic minority languages. These included informational leaflets and the "Voter's Guide for the 5 November 2023 Local General Elections", which were distributed nationwide through mobile teams and district electoral councils.

Similarly, the Commission ensured the printing of two informational posters in all five aforementioned languages for every polling station nationwide: 1 poster explaining voting procedures and 1 poster listing prohibited actions in polling stations. All materials remain available on the Commission's official website: <https://cec.md>.

For the 2024 local elections (May 19, November 17 and the repeated vote on December 15), the Commission printed ballots in Romanian and Russian, as formally requested by electoral authorities in the respective constituencies.

For the constitutional republican referendum and presidential elections on October 20, 2024, the Commission printed ballots in five ethnic minority languages: Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Gagauz and Romani.

For the first round of presidential elections and constitutional referendum, the Commission printed a total of 3,674,005 ballots, distributed as follows:

- 2,914,800 in Romanian
- 753,329 in Russian
- 3,900 in Gagauz (for ATU Gagauzia and Istanbul, Turkey)
- 991 in Bulgarian (Taraclia district)
- 870 in Romani (Drochia, Ocnița and Soroca districts)
- 115 in Ukrainian (Căușeni district).

For the second round of presidential elections, the Commission increased the number of ballots in Romanian and Russian, following a request from the Electoral Council of Municipal District No. 1 in Chișinău:

- 400 additional ballots in Romanian (2,915,200 total)
- 100 additional ballots in Russian (753,429 total)

For both rounds of voting, the Commission also printed informational materials in all five minority languages, including:

- Voter's Guide pamphlets
- Three types of posters distributed to all polling stations nationwide:
 1. Campaign awareness poster (featuring the informational slogan)
 2. Voting procedure poster
 3. Sample referendum ballot poster

All materials remain available on the Commission's official website: <https://cec.md>.

With reference to the Equality Council's decisions concerning linguistic accessibility within the judicial system, the Ministry of Justice provides the following communications:

The jurisprudence of both Moldova's Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights establishes that the right to access justice is not absolute, but may be subject to reasonable and proportionate procedural limitations. Consequently, the requirement to submit legal pleadings exclusively in Romanian - without provision for filings in other languages (specifically Russian, as identified by the Equality Council) - does not constitute discriminatory practice. It should be noted that litigants retain the right to interpreter assistance during court proceedings, ensuring this linguistic requirement does not substantively impair access to justice.

Of particular significance is Constitutional Court Decision No. 4 of January 21, 2021, which struck down Law No. 234 of 16 December 2020 on functioning of languages on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. The Court ruled that elevating the Russian language to a status comparable with the official Romanian language would undermine the integrative function of the state language as enshrined in

Article 13 of the Constitution. Such preferential treatment of Russian over other minority languages was found to violate constitutional principles, particularly Article 10(2) concerning the rights of other linguistic minorities.

This position finds support in European human rights jurisprudence. The ECtHR's decision in *Ivanova v. Finland* explicitly recognizes that language requirements for legal submissions serve the legitimate aims of ensuring proper judicial administration and maintaining legal certainty. More recently, the Court's November 16, 2023 rulings in *Džibuti and Others/Valiullina and Others v. Latvia* reaffirmed these principles in similar contexts.

Article 11 Personal names in identity and administrative documents

In accordance with the provisions of Law No. 100/2001 on civil status documents, the “patronymic” field is absent from the content of civil status records and certificates, given that it does not constitute an element of a person's name under the national onomastic formula of the Republic of Moldova, which follows the Romance model of given name and surname.

While the Republic of Moldova officially recognizes Ukrainians, Gagauz, Russians, Bulgarians, Roma, Jews, Belarusians, Poles and Germans as its principal minority groups, civil registration extends beyond these communities to encompass all ethnic residents within the country, including those holding foreign citizenship (such as British or Serbian nationals). The declared ethnic identity of an individual is not subject to formal verification, constituting instead a self-reported designation without evidentiary support from official documents. This designation remains subject to modification in accordance with the declarant's evolving personal identity. Civil registry data reflect exceptional cases wherein parents declare ethnic affiliation during birth registration procedures, as well as instances where individuals exercise their right to declare their ethnic identity upon attaining the age of legal capacity (16 years).

The full denomination format, incorporating the patronymic, may be deemed appropriate for individuals of Russian ethnicity while simultaneously proving unsuitable for persons belonging to other national minorities. Consequently, the selective registration of the patronymic for certain individuals of the same ethnic group, as opposed to others, cannot be considered equitable. An examination of practices in other states reveals that identity documents do not selectively indicate the patronymic solely for persons of a particular ethnicity. It is therefore concluded that the absence of this component in identity documents does not constitute an infringement upon the rights of national minorities. In instances where the “patronymic” field has already been recorded in civil status documents held within archival records - given that the contents of such documents have undergone certain modifications over time - the relevant information is entered in the "observations" section of the civil status extract. However, under no circumstances is it appended to the document holder's name.

The Agency of Public Services reiterates its previously stated position and deems it unreasonable to revert to the practice of recording personal data with the inclusion of the individual's patronymic in identity documents issued to citizens of the Republic of Moldova.

At the same time, the Agency of Public Services has recently drafted a legislative proposal to amend certain normative acts pertaining to the issuance of identity cards to citizens of the Republic of Moldova. This draft provides for the revised wording of Article 16 of Law No. 382/2001 on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and the legal status of their organizations. The revision of Article 16 in the aforementioned law stems from the need to align its provisions with Article 3(5), (9) and (10) of Law No. 273/1994 on identity documents within the national passport system, as amended by Law No. 68/2024.

Article 7(3) of Law No. 100/2017 on normative acts provides that in case of a conflict between provisions of two normative acts with equal legal force, the provisions of the most recently adopted, approved, or issued normative act shall prevail, except for the situations stipulated in Article 5(3) and (4). Consequently, the amendment of Article 16 was necessary to resolve the normative conflict arising from the nationwide introduction of the new internal-use ID card model (ID-I format) on 7 March 2013. Under the revised wording of Article 16, persons belonging to national minorities retain the right to use their names in the accepted form of their native language. The procedure for recording names of national minorities in official documents is governed by special normative acts. The definition of a “natural person’s name: and its components is established in Article 36 of the Civil Code (Law No. 1107/2002).

De jure and de facto, to align identity documents with international standards for machine-readable formats, both the patronymic and father’s surname were removed from card-type identity documents effective as of 7 March 2013, when the new Moldovan ID card (ID-I format) was introduced. This change was legally grounded in Article 3 of Law No. 273/1994 on identity documents, as amended by Law No. 187/2012, which entered into force on the same date. Government Decision No. 125 of 18 February 2013, which approved the Regulation on identity documents and resident registration, stipulates in Section 12 that personal data in Moldovan IDs must match civil status records or, per Section 30, reflect updates in the State Population Register following the automation of civil records. Article 1 of Law No. 100/2001 on Civil Status Records confirms that all civil status documents derive from these records. The legal provisions governing the content of all types of civil status records and certificates (including birth, marriage, divorce and name change documents) under the aforementioned law do not require the inclusion of the “patronymic” component. Consequently, this component is also absent from the State Population Register.

It should be noted that most public authorities, institutions and private legal entities that process personal data as part of their official functions obtain this information from the State Population Register through the MConnect interoperability platform, in compliance with data exchange regulations. Consequently, the official documents they issue for individuals likewise contain no reference to patronymics.

According to the official position of academic institutions in the Republic of Moldova, the national onomastic formula follows the Romance model: given name + family name (e.g., Dorin Marcu). Within the Romance linguistic tradition, the term “patronymic” refers specifically to a hereditary surname derived from paternal lineage (examples including Niculescu, Țurcanu, Vișan, Stere). Etymologically, the term “patronym” literally means “father’s family name”. The academic clarification further notes that in certain other cultural traditions, the concept of patronymics differs significantly - referring to names formed directly from a father’s given name through specific suffixes (as in Petrovici, Alexandrovici, Nicolaevici). This distinction highlights the fundamental difference between the Romance surname system and patronymic naming conventions found in Slavic and other cultural contexts.

Considering the ethnic diversity of the Republic of Moldova (the State Population Register records over 150 ethnic groups) and the fact that not all ethnicities use patronymics in their onomastic systems— and even when they do, patronymics carry different meanings—the inclusion of patronymics in official documents has been discontinued. This measure ensures consistency and prevents erroneous or confusing entries in civil status records, identity documents and other official papers.

Moreover, in order to align the Republic of Moldova with the European Union acquis, the revision of the normative framework regarding the provision of new-type identity documents to residents of the Republic of Moldova was carried out based on the requirements established by the European framework and international standards, namely:

- a) Regulation (EC) No 1030/2002 establishing a uniform format for residence permits for third-country nationals;
- b) Regulation (EU) 2019/1157 on strengthening the security of identity cards of Union citizens and of residence documents issued to Union citizens and their family members exercising their right of free movement;
- c) ICAO (OACI) Regulation - Document 9303 on machine-readable travel documents.

According to the aforementioned normative acts, the visual inspection zone of machine-readable card-type identity documents, ID-I format, includes both mandatory and optional informational fields, depending on the requirements of states and issuing authorities.

The requirements for recording the document holder’s personal data, as stipulated in ICAO (OACI) Regulation - Document 9303 on machine-readable travel documents, provide that the state or issuing authority determines which element of this data may

constitute the primary identifier. This may be the (family) surname, one of the given names, or in some cases the complete first and last name.

Thus, according to the sequential order of the constituent elements of the holder's identifying data placed on the recto side of the ID-I card, the surname constitutes the primary identifier, while the given name serves as the secondary identifier, followed by gender, citizenship and date of birth - with other optional personal data elements included at the discretion of the issuing state.

Consequently, in accordance with Article 3(5) of Law No. 273/1994, as amended by Law No. 68/2014, all types of identity cards issued to citizens of the Republic of Moldova must include the following mandatory personal data: the holder's surname and given name in Romanian, gender, citizenship and date of birth.

According to paragraph (9) of Article 3 in its revised wording, if the applicant's native language for the identity card or provisional identity card uses a non-Latin script, the Romanian rendering of the surname and given name shall follow the grammatical norms for transliterating foreign names into Romanian. For identity documents issued to individuals who are citizens of other states, born on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and who regain Moldovan citizenship or are recognized as citizens of the Republic of Moldova under the Law on Citizenship No. 1024/2000, their surname and given name shall be recorded in identity documents according to their national birth certificate registered by the Moldovan civil status authority. When rendering the names of foreign nationals in residence cards, these names shall neither be translated nor transliterated but shall be transcribed according to their original Latin-script spelling as appearing in their national passport or travel document issued by the competent foreign authorities.

In this context, the proposed amendments to Law No. 382/2001 and their correlation with other normative acts in the field do not in any way infringe upon the right of national minorities to their identity. Rather, they ensure equal rights for all citizens of the Republic of Moldova, as stipulated in Article 16(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, adopted on 29 July 1994: *(2) All citizens of the Republic of Moldova are equal before the law and public authorities, without discrimination based on race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, political affiliation, wealth, or social status.*

Article 12

Educational materials, teacher training and intercultural education

In 2024, multiple activities and projects were implemented in the field of national minority education, with a focus on publishing teaching materials, teacher training and intercultural education.

Teaching materials

School textbooks for various subjects and grades have been published, including:

- Bulgarian Language and Literature for Grade VIII (800 copies) and Grade IX (600 copies).
- Gagauz Language and Literature for Grade V, VI, VII, VIII (1,900 copies each) and Grade IX (1,800 copies).
- Russian Language and Literature (language of instruction) for Grade IV (8,400 copies), Grade V and Grade XI (5,700 copies each).
- Ukrainian Language and Literature for Grade IV, VI, VII (700 copies each), Grade VIII (600 copies) and Grade IX (550 copies).

Teacher training

Various republican and regional seminars were conducted for teacher professional development:

1. The regional seminar “*Interactive Methods in Teaching Bulgarian Language and Literature*” (22 March 2024, Taraclia Gymnasium), attended by 30 teachers.
2. The zonal seminar on Ukrainian Language and Literature (November 21, 2024, “Tețcani” Theoretical High School), themed “*Designing a Modern and Effective Lesson*”, with 45 participating teachers.
3. The regional methodological seminar “*Monitoring and Evaluating Multilingual Education Programs*” (12 March 2024, “F. Angheli” Gymnasium in Gaidar), with over 50 participants.

Intercultural education:

The optional course “Culture of Good Neighborliness” is being implemented in 48 schools, with 2256 students enrolled. Additionally, the optional subject “Intercultural Education” is taught in Grades I-IX.

On 29 August 2024 the Ministry of Education and Research approved a pilot curriculum for the course “History, Traditions and Culture of the People” (Bulgarian, Gagauz, Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish and Roma) for Grades V-IX. This curriculum allows for one additional weekly hour dedicated to studying the history and culture of Bulgarian, Gagauz, Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish and Roma communities in their native languages.

In 2023, the Ministry of Education and Research approved a new *Regulation on the Selection and Procurement of School Textbooks*²⁵. This normative act revised the evaluation criteria for textbook proposals.

Criterion II. Non-Discriminatory Nature establishes the following key requirements:

- Compliance with principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination, irrespective of: race, color, nationality, ethnic or social origin, language, religion, beliefs, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, health status, HIV status, political opinions, or any other characteristics;

²⁵ Approved by Order No 300/2022

- Prohibition of content that undermines national identity and values, including racist, xenophobic, or national-extremist ideologies;
- Ensuring that informational content, learning activities and tasks foster critical thinking, promote human rights and strengthen universal human values;
- Guaranteeing gender balance across all textbook components (text, images, maps, graphs, tables, diagrams, symbols).

Furthermore, under the new regulation, the National Textbook Approval Council must now mandatorily include a non-discrimination specialist. Since 2022, the council's composition has also incorporated a representative from the Equality Council.

Thus, during the 2023–2024, 95 textbook projects were evaluated and improved to ensure compliance with human rights standards, non-discrimination and equality principles. The key enhancements focused on:

- Increasing visibility and representation of ethnic minorities;
- Incorporating culturally specific elements (e.g., traditions, customs, traditional cuisine);
- Optimizing textual content, images, exercises and the presentation of representative personalities.

Article 14

Equal access to education for Roma

While access to education in the Republic of Moldova is guaranteed for all citizens regardless of ethnicity, official statistics do not systematically disaggregate enrollment and dropout data by ethnic groups.

According to data provided by the Ministry of Education and Research, for the 2024-2025 academic year, Roma children were enrolled across various educational levels as follows:

- Pre-school (kindergarten): 233 Roma children
- Primary and lower secondary (gymnasium) education: 1,645 children (832 boys and 813 girls)
- Upper secondary (lyceum) education: 42 Roma children
- Vocational-technical institutions: 33 students (20 boys and 13 girls)
- Higher education: 20 Roma students (13 male and 7 female).

Key activities implemented by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2024 under the Programme to support the Roma population in the Republic of Moldova for the 2022-2025 included:

1. Awareness Campaigns for Parents

The Ministry organized three informational sessions in Buda (Călărași district), Vulcănești (Nisporeni district) and Soroca to encourage preschool, primary and lower secondary enrollment. These sessions engaged 95 parents and 68 Roma children, ensuring better school integration.

2. District Council Meetings on Educational Inclusion

On 10 September 2024 the Ministry held a meeting with local education authorities to discuss measures for improving Roma children's access to schooling. Key topics included nutrition support for socially vulnerable children and supplementary educational services. Representatives from UNICEF Moldova and UNHCR Moldova participated, alongside school principals who shared best practices.

3. Implementation of the “History and Culture of Roma in the Republic of Moldova” Curriculum

A new curriculum, "History and Culture of Roma in the Republic of Moldova", was approved for Grades V-IX, marking a significant step toward cultural diversity in education. Currently, 77 Roma children study this subject at “Mihai Eminescu” Lyceum in Otaci (Edineț district). In classes with 2–5 Roma students, teachers expand the "History, Traditions and Culture of the Russian People" curriculum to include Roma heritage. Where 60–65% of pupils are Roma, teachers may form subgroups dedicated to Roma history and culture.

4. Teacher Training on Intercultural Tolerance and Roma Heritage

The Ministry conducted three training sessions for 79 teachers in: “Vasile Lupu” Lyceum (Chișinău), Popeasca Gymnasium (Ștefan Vodă district), “Lev Tolstoi” Lyceum (Glodeni). Partners included UNHCR Moldova, UNICEF Moldova and the Roma Youth Union “Tarna Rom”.

5. Promotion of Dual Education

In 2024, one informational session on dual vocational education was held, reaching 20 Roma participants, with 5 enrolling in vocational programs.

In order to combat school dropout rates and to support access to quality education for young Roma people, the Agency for Interethnic Relations together with the Ministry of Education and Research is implementing the *Merit scholarship programme for Roma secondary school pupils and university students*²⁶. Through this initiative, the authorities are helping to raise the educational attainment of young Roma and develop their academic and professional opportunities.

To ensure the effective implementation of the programme, the following actions were undertaken:

- Development of an action plan for executing the programme;

²⁶ Approved by Government Decision No 818/2023

- Creation of methodology for applying the Regulations on awarding merit-based scholarships;
- Establishment of operational procedures for the Public Competition Commission for scholarship selection, officially instituted by administrative order;
- Preparation and distribution of application forms for candidates.

As of January 2024, a total of 94 Roma pupils and students are receiving merit-based scholarships valued at 1,200 MDL monthly. The scholarships were distributed as follows:

- Secondary education: 42 scholarships;
- Secondary technical education: 8 scholarships;
- Post-secondary technical education: 24 scholarships;
- Higher education: 20 scholarships.

To encourage civic engagement and promote education, 35 scholarship recipients participated in an official visit to the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on 11 April 2024, during the Roma Culture Week. The youth had the opportunity to engage in discussions with parliamentarians about the role of education in Roma community development.

To ensure equitable access for Roma youth to vocational, technical and higher education, the Republic of Moldova has maintained its policy of reserving 15% of state-funded university placements for this community. For instance, the 2024 admissions cycle included two Roma students (including one female student) secured state-funded positions at the Faculty of Musical Arts.

From 8 to 12 April 2024, the Ministry of Education and Research marked a significant milestone in promoting inclusion by organizing the first nationwide Roma Week in all educational institutions. This pioneering initiative engaged students from 350 schools and 4 universities in activities celebrating Roma cultural heritage. The Ministry partnered with Roma civil society organizations, community mediators and prominent figures to facilitate interactive dialogues about Roma traditions, creating meaningful exchanges between students and the Roma community.

Article 14

Teaching in and of minority languages

According to data provided by the Ministry of Education and Research, in the 2024-2025 school year, the number of children studying national minority languages is as follows:

- Bulgarian: 4,950 pupils (classes I-IV - 1,922, classes V-IX - 2,419, classes X-XII - 600) in 24 schools.
- Gagauz language: 12,269 pupils (grades I-IV - 4,864, grades V-IX - 6,230, grades X-XII - 1,098) in 41 institutions.

- Ukrainian language: 2,938 pupils (grades I-IV - 1,220, grades V-IX - 1,462, grades X-XII - 221) in 30 institutions.

These data emphasize the significant involvement of pupils in the study of national minority languages, reflecting the cultural and linguistic diversity in the education system.

Pre-school education

The pilot bilingual education program continues to be implemented during 2023-2025 in 54 kindergartens within the ATU Gagauzia. Under this program, educational activities alternate daily between the native Gagauz language and Romanian.

General education

The Ministry of Education annually publishes textbooks for ethnic minorities, ensuring students' access to quality educational materials in their native languages. These textbooks play a crucial role in preserving and promoting the linguistic and cultural identity of national minorities while facilitating their integration into Moldova's educational system.

The publishing program specifically includes textbooks for subjects taught in minority languages, designed to support the teaching-learning process. In 2024, the government allocated 8882008 MDL from the state budget for this purpose, demonstrating a significant investment in minority education.

On 29 August 2024 the pilot curriculum for the subject "Gagauz language and literature" for grades I-IV was approved. It is implemented in grades I, totaling 1351 pupils.

The approval of the Multilingual Education Concept by the Ministry of Education and Research in May 2024 marks a significant advancement in Moldova's educational policy. This framework notably includes provisions to strengthen minority languages (Gagauz, Bulgarian and Ukrainian) through the gradual transition of certain non-linguistic subjects to instruction in both native languages and Romanian. Currently, in collaboration with OSCE and the CMI - Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation, development is underway on a Multilingual Education Plan scheduled for implementation beginning September 2025.

In accordance with Article 10(2) of the Education Code No. 152/2014, the state ensures, within the capabilities of the educational system, that persons belonging to national minorities benefit from appropriate conditions to study their minority language or receive education in this language at the compulsory education level. Consequently, when estimating the volume of special-purpose transfers for funding the study of national minority languages, the Ministry of Finance takes into account data provided by the Ministry of Education and Research regarding the planned number of classes for teaching minority languages, as well as the study of history, culture and traditions of the respective communities.

As a result, for the years 2023-2024, in line with the specific requirements outlined in the curricula for national minority language studies, financial resources were allocated in amounts of 40.6 million MDL and 43.3 million MDL respectively.

Article 14

Learning the state language

Measures to enhance accessibility and quality of Romanian language teaching and learning in public education, from preschool to higher education.

Pre-school education:

In 2024, 1400 textbooks and 2800 workbooks in the Romanian language were distributed to 56 kindergartens in the ATU Gagauzia. These educational materials were developed with support from the OSCE Moldova and the Ministry of Education and Research, as part of the Bilingual Program for Romanian and Gagauz Language Studies, which has been implemented in the region since 2015.

The Ministry of Education and Research approved Order No. 122 of 27 January 2025, establishing staffing norms for early childhood education institutions, preschools and general education schools offering programs at various levels or integrated curricula. A key provision of this order introduces the Romanian language teacher position in Russian-language kindergartens across Moldova. This measure ensures preschool children can begin learning Romanian from their earliest educational years.

General education:

Between June and August 2024, the Ministry of Education and Research, in partnership with Romania's Ministry of Education and the Romanian Embassy in Moldova, implemented an extensive project aimed at enhancing the linguistic competencies of 107 Romanian language teachers. These educators serve in three key regions with significant national minority populations: the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Găgăuzia, Taraclia district and Bălți municipality.

This project enabled teachers to participate in intensive Romanian language courses in Romania, organized at several higher education institutions (Ștefan cel Mare University in Suceava, West University of Timișoara, Transilvania University in Brașov and Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Iași). The training programs included daily grammar, text analysis and conversation classes, Romanian language tutorials and lectures delivered by renowned academics. These activities aimed to support teachers in delivering Romanian language instruction in a multiethnic context, thereby contributing to the linguistic and cultural integration of students in these regions.

Additionally, Autumn Romanian Language Courses were organized in Chișinău, combining language instruction with a cultural immersion program. Beyond

traditional Romanian language lessons, participants engaged in museum visits, theater performances and film screenings.

In October 2024, the Ministry of Education and Research, in partnership with Romania's Dunărea de Jos University of Galați, launched the "Integrated Romanian Language Teaching through Specialized Subjects" program. The initiative, introduced in Comrat (ATU Gagauzia) and Taraclia, will train 30 non-language subject teachers, including instructors of Personal Development, History, Mathematics and Computer Science to deliver their subjects in Romanian.

In December 2024, the Ministry of Education launched the Romanian Model Classroom Project, an initiative aimed at equipping Romanian language and literature classrooms in schools with national minority students with modern furniture and comprehensive learning resources. The project provides specialized book sets to support minority students in acquiring and mastering Romanian, including A1-B2 level textbooks, synonym/antonym dictionaries, grammatical reference charts, educational games, encyclopedias, portraits of Romanian writers and poets and literary works by renowned authors. With a total budget of 306 000 lei allocated for educational materials and classroom furnishings, this initiative significantly enhances Romanian language instruction in schools serving national minority communities, facilitating their integration into the national education system.

The model classrooms were established in two Taraclia district schools serving ethnic Bulgarian students: Tvardița Theoretical Lyceum in Tvardița town and Hristo Botev Theoretical Lyceum in Valea Perjei village. In a parallel development during the 2024-2025 academic year, Mihail Ciachir Theoretical Lyceum in Ceadâr-Lunga (ATU Gagauzia) inaugurated its first middle school class conducted entirely in Romanian for fifth-grade students.

Higher education:

In February 2025, Comrat State University reopened the Romanian Language Lectureship, a project supported by multiple institutions: the Department for Relations with the Republic of Moldova (the Government of Romania), Romania's Ministry of Education, the Romanian Language Institute, the Romanian Embassy in Chișinău and Comrat State University. This initiative aims to strengthen the linguistic competencies of students and residents in the ATU Găgăuzia. A professor from the Romanian Language Institute in Bucharest will provide Romanian language instruction for the ethnic Gagauz population in Comrat. The relaunch of the lectureship seeks to promote and reinforce the Romanian language in the region, contributing to the educational and intercultural development of the local community.

Implementation of the National Programme of the Romanian language learning by national minorities, including the adult population, for 2023-2025²⁷

In 2023, a total of 6557 adults benefited from free Romanian language courses under the National Program of the Romanian language learning by national minorities. The program was allocated a budget of 30 million MDL to support its implementation. Additionally, the initiative included the organization of summer camps, providing 1000 enrolled students with comprehensive Romanian language programs and cultural immersion experiences.

In 2024, 12,700 individuals enrolled in the Program. Of the total applicants, 9000 requested beginner (A1) or elementary (A2) level studies. The majority of participants work in key professional sectors: education (3284 people), economics (2244 people), healthcare (867 people), central and local public administration (759 people), arts (682 people) and justice (446 people), among others. This distribution highlights the Programme's broad reach across essential fields, reinforcing its role in linguistic integration and professional development for national minorities.

In 2024, approximately 5300 adults completed free Romanian language courses at A1, A2 and B1 proficiency levels. Furthermore, between September and December 2024, an additional 7400 adults participated in these courses.

Other initiatives promoting the study of the Romanian language among ethnic groups in the Republic of Moldova include:

To celebrate the Romanian language and promote its correct usage among the population, the Ministry of Education and Research organized the second edition of the "Great National Dictation" on 31 August 2024. Approximately 1500 participants took part in the event, testing their language skills through a competitive dictation exercise. The top performers were awarded prizes during a public award ceremony.

In September 2024, with support from ARI, the Young Talents Theater "Oratorul" performed Romanian-language dramatic plays in two Gagauzian communities—Congaz and Chirsova—reaching approximately 1000 children. The project was highly praised by local residents, who emphasized its significance in promoting Romanian language learning among the ethnic Gagauz population. These theatrical performances served as both cultural enrichment and an innovative language-learning tool, helping young audiences engage with Romanian in an accessible, entertaining format.

The Public Institution "Teleradio-Moldova" also contributes to promoting Romanian language proficiency among national minorities. Several times a year, the Ukrainian-language project team "Svitohlyad" produces reportages highlighting opportunities to study Romanian, targeting both refugees and Moldovan citizens

²⁷ Adopted by Government Decision 115/2023

belonging to national minorities. These reportages provide practical information, including website links and registration contacts for language courses. Additionally, studio interviews with government officials and language experts have emphasized the importance of learning Romanian, discussing its role in social integration, professional development and civic participation.

Article 15

Consultation and participation in decision-making processes and representation in elected bodies and public administration

Within the Agency's for Interethnic Relations framework, the Coordinating Council of Ethno-cultural Organizations operates as a consultative body, currently comprising 83 member organizations. In 2024 the institution accredited 10 additional ethno-cultural associations, marking a notable expansion of its network. This growth included, for the first time, the accreditation of Hindi and Nigerian community organizations. The Council serves as a vital platform for intercultural dialogue, facilitating meaningful exchanges between Moldova's diverse ethnic communities. Through its consultative role, it functions as an essential mechanism for minority representation in policy development, ensuring that the voices and needs of national minorities are incorporated into legislative and governmental decision-making processes.

Throughout the year, the Coordinating Council held three plenary sessions and four meetings of its Executive Committee. These meetings focused on monitoring the implementation of public policies in interethnic relations. During the sessions, participants evaluated progress on existing initiatives, addressed challenges in policy implementation, coordinated activities between ethnic communities and government institutions and planned future actions to enhance intercultural dialogue. The regular convening of these meetings demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to overseeing interethnic relations policies and ensuring their effective execution. Through these structured discussions, the Council maintains its role in facilitating communication between diverse communities and state authorities while working to preserve cultural identities within Moldova's multicultural society.

Moreover, the participation of national minority representatives in decision-making processes is ensured through their inclusion in specialized commissions and working groups within ministries and other central and local public authorities.

This mechanism aims to effectively identify and address issues directly concerning national minorities, such as through:

- The Specialized Commission of the National Human Rights Council monitoring the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;

- The Specialized Commission overseeing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, both coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Throughout 2024, five commission meetings were held with broad participation from national minority representatives to discuss the implementation progress of these international treaties, which govern human rights, including the rights of national minorities.

In parallel, throughout the year, the Ministry of Education and Research organized two working sessions at Taraclia State University and Comrat State University, involving representatives of local NGOs. These meetings focused on Chapter I ("Public Participation") of the 2023-2025 Action Plan for implementing the Strategy for Consolidation of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova (2017-2027).

Article 15

Effective participation in socio-economic life - Roma access to healthcare, employment and social services; housing and infrastructure

Implementation of the Programme to support the Roma population in the Republic of Moldova for 2022-2025²⁸

In the Republic of Moldova continues the implementation of the Programme for the support of the Roma population in the Republic of Moldova for 2022-2025. The program outlines a series of interventions and actions designed to enhance the quality of life and improve the socioeconomic situation of the Roma population. Specifically, it aims to support Roma communities in overcoming key obstacles and barriers they face across multiple sectors: participation in decision-making processes, education, healthcare, employment, social protection, migration and culture.

Ensuring Roma access to employment and social services

To facilitate labor market integration for unemployed people, the National Employment Agency implements employment measures in accordance with Law No. 105/2018 on Employment Promotion and Unemployment Insurance. These efforts align with government-approved policies and the annual action plans of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, tailored to labor market needs and priorities.

Thus, in 2023, the territorial subdivisions for employment of the National Employment Agency registered 1516 Roma individuals as unemployed (5.7% of the total 26 506 registered unemployed persons), including 892 women (58.8% of the total registered Roma individuals). Of the total 1516 registered unemployed Roma individuals, their educational attainment was distributed as follows: primary

²⁸ Approved by Government Decision 576/2022

education - 1335 (88.1%), lower secondary education - 134 (8.8%), upper secondary education - 13 (0.9%), vocational secondary education - 27 (1.8%), college education - 6 (0.4%) and higher education (bachelor's, master's and PhD) - 1 (0.1%). Thus, the absolute majority of unemployed Roma individuals lack professional qualifications. Consequently, this category of persons has limited chances of labor market integration and the high proportion of those with only primary education (often accompanied by insufficient basic literacy skills) creates barriers to their participation in vocational training programs. Given their lack of qualifications, the registered unemployed Roma individuals most frequently requested jobs in the following occupations: auxiliary worker, production and service premises cleaner, maid, unskilled agricultural worker, etc.

In 2023, 87 Roma individuals (5.7% of the total registered unemployed Roma population) received job placement support, including 41 women (47.1% of the total employed Roma individuals).

In 2024, 1198 Roma individuals were registered as unemployed (6.4% of the total 18,831 registered unemployed persons), including 750 women (62.6% of the total registered Roma unemployed). Job placement support was provided to 71 Roma individuals (5.9% of registered Roma unemployed), including 38 women (53.5% of the total employed Roma individuals). Additionally, 2040 Roma citizens received employment mediation services. Unemployment benefits were granted to 14 Roma unemployed persons, of whom 9 were women.

In its activities, the National Employment Agency actively involves community mediators in the process of identifying and working with Roma individuals. Thus, several collaboration agreements were signed with community mediators regarding the dissemination of information to Roma citizens about the employment services and measures offered by the National Employment Agency. Furthermore, under the Roma Youth Guarantee Program, the General Directorate of Labor Employment of Chişinău Municipality signed collaboration agreements on 4 March 2024 with the Mayors' Offices of Chişinău's sectors: Botanica, Buiucani, Centru and Rîşcani. Under these agreements, community mediators committed to providing necessary support to job seekers, as well as informing interested persons about the National Employment Agency's services and measures, with particular focus on integrating Roma NEET youth aged 15-35.

As a result, the following actions were undertaken:

- 13 awareness-raising activities for the integration of Roma NEET youth;
- A total of 147 Roma individuals, including 91 Roma youth, received information about employment services, the rights and obligations of registered unemployed persons and the opportunity to enroll in vocational training courses—including workplace training programs designed to improve their labor market integration prospects. Additionally, they participated in career guidance seminars specifically tailored for Roma youth.

The national regulatory framework governing the provision of social services is fundamentally grounded in the principle of non-discrimination and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms. Accordingly, the delivery of social services operates under the principle of equal opportunity, as stipulated in Law No. 123/2010 on Social Services, which guarantees the right to social services for all disadvantaged individuals and families under conditions of equitable treatment and without discrimination.

Victims of human trafficking, gender-based violence and domestic violence are entitled to assistance measures in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 241/2005 on preventing and combating human trafficking, as well as Law No. 45/2007 on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Assistance and protection for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking are provided through specialized services (funded by the state budget) and by specialists in domestic violence prevention and victim rehabilitation. These professionals operate at the territorial level within local social assistance agencies and their subordinate social assistance structures.

In accordance with Government Decision No. 955/2023, the Agency for the Management of Highly Specialized Social Services oversees the operations of the *Assistance and Protection Center for Victims and Potential Victims of Human Trafficking* in Chişinău, as well as the *Assistance and Protection Service for Male Victims of Human Trafficking* within the Residential Center for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities in Chişinău. The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection serves as the founding authority of these institutions, ensuring their compliance with national policies on victim support and social reintegration. This framework guarantees specialized assistance—including legal, psychological and social aid—to victims and at-risk individuals, in alignment with Moldova’s commitments to combating human trafficking and protecting vulnerable groups.

In 2024, the Assistance and Protection Center for Victims and Potential Victims of Human Trafficking provided specialized services to 20 individuals of Roma ethnicity, including:

- 1 mother-child pair (a mother and her daughter);
- 2 single women—victims of human trafficking (one of whom is a Ukrainian citizen);
- 3 mother-child pairs, comprising 3 women and 10 children (6 girls and 4 boys);
- 1 single woman—a survivor of domestic violence and mother of two Ukrainian children;
- 2 unaccompanied girls—victims of sexual violence.

Since 2008, the Republic of Moldova has been implementing the Social Assistance Program, which aims to provide a guaranteed minimum monthly income for disadvantaged families. This support is allocated based on an assessment of each family's average monthly total income and their specific need for social assistance.

The social assistance is regulated by Law no. 133/2008 regarding social assistance and Government Decision no. 1167/2008 for the approval of the Regulation on the method of establishing and paying social assistance—normative acts that contain the mechanism through which the respective benefit is determined.

The *Social Assistance Program* is designed for disadvantaged families (and not specifically for certain categories of persons/minorities), with the aim of ensuring a minimum guaranteed monthly income to promote self-sufficiency. It includes three sets of criteria that applicants must meet in order to qualify for social benefits.

Ensuring Roma access to healthcare

The package of measures adopted by the Ministry of Health to improve Roma population's access to healthcare services includes:

- granting medical assistance to the Roma community, including fully and partially compensated medications, free preventive check-ups and screening within primary healthcare;
- enhancing medical staff's awareness of ethno-cultural customs and eliminating discrimination during counseling and mediation while providing medical services;
- organizing mobile specialist teams to conduct medical examinations in densely populated Roma communities in accordance with legal provisions.

The entire population of the Republic of Moldova, including the Roma, has equal access to healthcare services at all levels, without discrimination. The population of the country benefits from medical services according to the scope and requirements established by the Methodological Norms for implementing the Unified Mandatory Health Insurance Program, approved by Joint Order of the Ministry of Health and National Health Insurance Company No. 1089/288-A of 23 December 2024, depending on the insured/uninsured status of the individual.

Under the mandatory health insurance system, insured persons benefit from pre-hospital emergency care, primary healthcare (including preventive services), hospital care, specialized outpatient care (including dental services), high-performance medical services, home medical care and palliative care. Uninsured persons benefit from pre-hospital emergency care and primary healthcare within the limits established by regulatory acts, including the prescription of compensated medications, as well as certain specialized outpatient and hospital care services specified in the National Clinical Protocols for socially-conditioned diseases with major public health impact.

Uninsured persons are provided with medications compensated from mandatory health insurance funds for outpatient maintenance treatment, in accordance with the Regulation on the prescription and dispensing of medications and medical devices compensated from mandatory health insurance funds, approved by Government Decision No. 106/2022, as well as with medications procured centrally by the Ministry of Health under National Programs for: tuberculosis, endogenous mental illnesses, diabetes mellitus and diabetes insipidus - all provided free of charge.

In all district centers and municipalities, women, youth, adolescents and any other individuals - including those of Roma ethnicity - can access services at Youth-Friendly Health Centers and Community Mental Health Centers. These facilities operate with teams of specialists (physicians, psychologists, nurses, social workers, etc.), where beneficiaries may receive consultations from obstetrician-gynecologists, dermatologists, psychiatrists, psychologists and other specialists.

At the primary healthcare level, services for early detection of gynecological and breast cancer are organized for all women regardless of their insured/uninsured status, including cervical cancer screening, treatment and post-treatment care when necessary. For the entire population, lung screening through digital radiography and colon cancer screening are organized according to an approved schedule.

According to operational data provided by healthcare providers in 2024, family doctors' records included 18207 individuals of Roma ethnicity, including those with humanitarian protection displaced from Ukraine. Notably, health insurance coverage within the Roma population reached 9463 individuals, representing approximately 52% (primarily pregnant women, children and pensioners covered by state insurance).

Throughout the year, about 12556 Roma individuals received examinations from family doctors. Approximately 4680 people were referred to specialists for consultations, including 123 individuals during rural outreach visits. Concurrently, about 4141 patients with chronic conditions received compensated medications according to National Clinical Protocols. Additionally, 294 women and young people accessed contraceptive medicines.

Family doctors (and specialists when required) provided ongoing monitoring for 4898 children, 8180 women and 740 persons with disabilities. These individuals received primary care consultations and diagnostic services in compliance with National Clinical Protocols and regulatory requirements based on medical indications. Throughout 2024, Roma women and children accessed preventive services, immunization programs, reproductive health and family planning services, including through youth-friendly health centers.

Furthermore, approximately 4412 Roma individuals received inpatient treatment during 2024, including 2399 women, 674 children and 211 persons with disabilities. Of these, about 2,779 were treated in district hospitals (including 1875 women, 449 children and 166 persons with disabilities).

Family physicians, during primary visits, inform the Roma population about the rights of both insured and uninsured individuals to benefit from medical services under the Mandatory Health Insurance Program, the types and scope of medical care available, the prevention of communicable diseases (including through vaccination), the prevention of smoking and alcohol abuse, illicit drug use, as well as the procedures for accessing reproductive health services, youth-friendly community health services and mental health services organized at the primary healthcare level.

According to data provided by primary healthcare institutions, throughout 2024, family physicians working alongside community mediators and local public authorities in 48 localities with significant Roma populations conducted approximately 282 informational sessions. These conversations covered several key topics: the types of medical care and range of services available to individuals covered by the mandatory health insurance system (about 231 sessions); prevention of communicable diseases through immunization (about 231 sessions); prevention of smoking, alcohol abuse and illicit drug use (about 68 sessions); and provision of youth-friendly health services (about 53 sessions).

Furthermore, the managers of primary healthcare service providers regularly remind their institutional staff – particularly in areas with dense or mixed Roma populations – about the importance of non-discrimination during medical counseling and service delivery. This includes raising awareness of ethno-cultural customs respected within traditional Roma communities. The topic is also routinely addressed during professional meetings of family physicians, reinforcing culturally sensitive healthcare practices.

Ensuring access to housing

With the aim of improving and expanding the housing stock for socially vulnerable families in the Republic of Moldova, the *Social Housing Construction Project for Vulnerable Groups II* was implemented during the period 2013-2023, within which 677 social housing units are to be completed.

Furthermore, according to the Feasibility Study conducted by the Social Housing II Project Implementation Unit in 2012, over 28,000 vulnerable and low-income families required social housing and by 2022 this number had increased significantly. In this context, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development launched Phase III of the Social Housing Construction Project, which envisions the construction of 455 social housing units across 12 localities in the Republic of Moldova.

In this regard, the following actions have been taken:

- The Framework Loan Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the Council of Europe Development Bank for the “*Public Housing III*” project was signed in Chişinău on March 19, 2024 and ratified by Law No. 101/2024;
- The Grant Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the Council of Europe Development Bank for implementing energy efficiency

measures under the “*Public Housing III*” project was signed in Chişinău on March 26, 2024 and ratified by Law No. 102/2024;

- The Regulation on Social Housing Allocation, approved by Order No. 73/2024 of the Minister of Infrastructure and Regional Development, was amended;
- Necessary measures were taken for the implementation of the “*Public Housing III Construction (Elderly Shelters and Student Dormitories)*” project, which is currently underway;
- The Law for ratifying the Grant Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the Council of Europe Development Bank for energy efficiency measures under the “*Public Housing III*” project, with a financial contribution (grant) of €6 million, signed in Chişinău on 1 July 2024, was adopted by Government Decision No. 487/2024

In 2024, the regional development project “New Educational Opportunities for Preschool Children in the Dealul Romilor Neighborhood, Soroca Municipality” was completed, with an investment of 6.4 million lei from the National Fund for Regional and Local Development.

As a result of the project, Early Education Institution No. 7 “Calina” in the revitalization area of Soroca Municipality was rehabilitated and modernized according to European standards. The project included complete renovation of 1,200 square meters of the building, reconstruction of 520 square meters of roofing and installation of an autonomous heating system connected to renewable electric energy. Consequently, 100 children, including preschool-aged Roma children, now have access to modern educational facilities.

Additionally, seven other regional development projects and 185 local development projects were completed across all regions of the country. These initiatives aimed to improve living conditions and access to basic technical, utility and social infrastructure, benefiting all residents of the recipient communities. Data on beneficiaries is not disaggregated by ethnic criteria.

The approval process for regional and local development projects follows public consultation mechanisms. The list of projects is published on participatory platforms (www.particip.gov.md, www.midr.gov.md) and the official websites of subordinate institutions, allowing all interested parties to submit proposals for project improvements.

Furthermore, for local development projects, in accordance with the provisions of Government Decision No. 152/2022 approving the Regulation on the Management of Financial Resources of the National Fund for Regional and Local Development, these projects are submitted for funding only after being consulted with the local community through participatory tools.

Public order:

In implementing the 2022-2025 Roma Support Programme, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has concentrated its efforts on three primary directions of activity aimed at improving Roma inclusion and access to justice.

1. Developing cooperation between community mediators, Roma communities and police representatives. Throughout the implementation period, authorities organized 290 community-police cooperation activities with 13 cases across various domains resolved. Most cases investigated by police inspectors from the General Police Inspectorate focused on recurring issues including Roma children's school attendance, conflicts between Roma and Moldovan youth and domestic violence situations.
2. Monitoring of Abuse Cases against Roma Individuals. In 2024, police inspectors subordinate to the General Police Inspectorate prioritized the monitoring process of three documented cases of abuse against Roma individuals, implementing enhanced oversight measures to ensure thorough investigation and appropriate resolution of these incidents.
3. Organization of information campaigns about admission opportunities for Roma candidates at the Stefan cel Mare Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Following Rector's Order No. 42 of 12 February 2024 regarding the "Choose Safety!" promotion campaign for 2024 Admissions, authorities implemented a series of outreach measures during February-March 2024. These included publishing informational notices on the Academy's official website and social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram) detailing enrollment conditions for all prospective students, with special efforts to reach Roma communities. The Campaign's dual purpose focused on increasing youth interest in law enforcement careers while enhancing the public image of both the Ministry and Academy.

Thus, to achieve the Campaign's objectives, information sessions were conducted for high school graduates regarding the educational offerings of the institution, particularly the admission requirements for the Faculty of Law, Administration, Public Order and Security. Teaching staff and students from the institution, together with representatives from territorial units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, visited 117 secondary/high schools across the country. Through these institutional promotion and awareness activities, approximately 2500 potential beneficiaries were informed.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has implemented targeted measures to combat human trafficking within Roma communities, focusing on both prevention and victim support.

As part of these efforts, authorities conducted 5 awareness campaigns about the risks and consequences of involvement in illegal migration and criminal activities, reaching 4564 Roma individuals with crucial information. For specialized protection, officials organized 485 consultations specifically targeting the prevention of child and women trafficking for sexual exploitation, forced labor,

begging rings and other illicit activities. These sessions informed 1699 Roma women and 2865 children.

In the field of facilitating the work of Roma community mediators

The implementation of the 2022-2025 Roma Support Programme saw intensified efforts by the Agency for Interethnic Relations in 2024, focusing on three key priorities:

- strengthening the legal status and professional standing of community mediators;
- expanding their numbers while enhancing their professional capacities through targeted training programs;
- developing stronger collaboration frameworks with local public authorities regarding the implementation of Local Support Plans for Roma populations.

Thus, in 2025 58 community mediator positions were established across 47 localities nationwide, with 50 mediators currently employed.

It should be noted that for maintaining the community mediator service, local public administration budgets for 2023 received 4.9 million MDL to support 53 mediator units, with 3.7 million MDL (75.5%) actually expended.

For 2024, the state budget earmarked 5.0 million MDL for 55 mediator units, of which 4.3 million MDL (86%) were executed.

In 2025, approved funding increased significantly to 5.8 million MDL for 58 mediator units – approximately 1 million MDL more than the 2023 allocation.

To strengthen the role of community mediators, Law No. 305/2024 amended Law No. 270/2018 on the unified salary system in the public sector. The revisions introduced a four-grade salary increase for the position of “community mediator without higher education” compared to the originally established pay scale. This measure, effective from 1 January 2025, is projected to entail annual costs of 213,900 MDL.

In order to strengthen the capacities of Roma community mediators ARI organized various events, trainings:

- Round table “Promoting gender equality in ethnic groups in the Republic of Moldova” in partnership with the Association against Domestic Violence “Casa Mărioarei” (7 March 2024);
- Round table “Strengthening the network of community mediators - applicable tool with reference to the Roma community” (10 April 2024);
- Training course “From discrimination to equal rights: empowering community mediators to effectively promote Roma rights” with the support of the Council of Europe in Chisinau (25 - 26 June 2024);
- Training seminar “Strengthening the capacity of community mediators to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings and to assist, protect and victims, including in the context of the refugee crisis in Ukraine”, in partnership with the State Chancellery (24 October 2024)

To enhance the professional capacities of community mediators, the Agency for Interethnic Relations organized a comprehensive series of training events and knowledge-sharing platforms throughout 2024. These initiatives were designed to equip mediators with specialized skills and foster best practices in working with Roma communities. Among them:

- The roundtable “*Promoting Gender Equality in Ethnic Groups of the Republic of Moldova*”, held in partnership with the Association Against Family Violence “Casa Mărioarei” (7 March 2024);
- The roundtable “*Strengthening the Community Mediator Network - A Practical Tool for the Roma Community*” (10 April 2024);
- The training course “*From Discrimination to Equal Rights: Empowering Community Mediators to Effectively Promote Roma Rights*”, supported by the Council of Europe in Chişinău (25–26 June 2024);
- The training seminar “*Strengthening the Capacities of Community Mediators for the Prevention and Combating of Human Trafficking and the Assistance and Protection of Victims, including in the Context of the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis*”, organized in partnership with the State Chancellery (24 October 2024).

Roma culture preservation and promotion:

In partnership with Roma non-governmental organizations, with the aim of cultural affirmation and promoting a collective positive attitude towards the Roma community, while combating discrimination, reducing social distance and addressing existing stereotypes and prejudices against the Roma population, the Agency for Interethnic Relations organized the following initiatives:

- *Roma Culture Week “Amare Amala”*, on the occasion of International Roma Day (April 8), featuring exhibitions, public discussions, a children's theater caravan and more (8–13 April 2024);
- A roundtable marking the European Day of Remembrance for the Roma Holocaust during World War II (2 August 2024);
- A commemorative event honoring the victims of the Roma Holocaust during World War II, held at the Visterniceni train station (2 August 2024);
- The conference “*Roma: Yesterday and Today*”, organized in partnership with the Roma Ethnographic Association and the Roma Women’s Platform “Romni”, held at the “Nicolae Bulat” Museum of History and Ethnography in Soroca (5 August 2024);
- The conference “*200 Years Since the Writing of A. Pushkin’s Poem ‘The Gypsies’*”, in collaboration with the Roma Ethnographic Association (25 October 2024 at the House Nationalities) etc.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, several activities were also organized to promote Roma cultural traditions, including:

- The exhibition “*Roma Stories and Traditions*” (8 April 2024) at the National Children’s Library “Ion Creangă”, with 78 participants;

- The reading and creative workshop "*World Day for Cultural Diversity*" (21 May 2024), with 33 participants;
- The choral concert "*When the Hearts of Ethnicities Beat in Unison, We Are One PEOPLE!*" (21 April 2024, Palace of the Republic) – 150 attendees;
- The concert "*Soul of Romance*" (3 December 2024, Soroca Palace of Culture) – 100 attendees.

Additionally, the "Enigma Romilor" Ensemble, active for 18 years, has produced 7 original performances and held over 200 shows, thereby significantly contributing to the promotion of Roma cultural expression. In parallel, the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History organized a training session from 3 to 6 June 2024, focusing on the engagement of local communities in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. This event was conducted under the auspices of UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture, reinforcing institutional efforts to preserve and promote traditional cultural practices.

Furthermore, scientific events were organized, such as the Conference "*Contemporary Research Perspectives in Ethnology*" (23 October 2024), where discussions focused on the cultural heritage of the Roma people. In recognition of Roma history, on 14 September 2024, the State Russian Drama Theatre "A.P. Chekhov" hosted a commemorative event honoring the Roma genocide during World War II, featuring a performance by the Gloria Flamenco ensemble.

The measures implemented in 2024 have contributed to enhancing the social and cultural integration of the Roma population by facilitating access to education, promoting cultural traditions and strengthening the protection of their rights. Through the ongoing implementation of the program, the aim remains to improve the quality of life for the Roma community and reduce existing disparities.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Republic of Moldova has demonstrated continued commitment to the protection and promotion of the rights of national minorities in accordance with its obligations under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The measures undertaken during the reporting period reflect progress in legislative, institutional and policy frameworks, while also highlighting persistent challenges that require further attention.

Moldova has reinforced its anti-discrimination legislation and aligned national policies with international standards, including EU directives. The adoption of the National Human Rights Programme (2024-2027) established a comprehensive policy framework for advancing equality, social inclusion and national minority rights. The Equality Council has been instrumental in addressing discrimination cases, though the full implementation of its recommendations remains work in progress.

The 2024 Population and Housing Census provided significant demographic data, offering insights into ethnic and linguistic composition trends. Special measures to ensure Roma participation in the census, including through trained mediators, represented an important step toward more inclusive data collection practices.

In the sphere of education, Moldova made substantial progress in preserving and promoting minority languages through textbook publications and curriculum development. The introduction of the Multilingual Education Concept marks a significant advancement in linguistic integration. Concurrently, the 2023-2025 National Programme for the Romanian Language Learning has effectively expanded language acquisition opportunities for minority communities, contributing to social cohesion.

Cultural preservation efforts, supported by both the Ministry of Culture and the Agency for Interethnic Relations, have enhanced interethnic dialogue and mutual understanding. Public media institutions, particularly Teleradio-Moldova, have played a constructive role through minority-language programming. The Audiovisual Council has actively monitored mass-media compliance with minority rights protections, ensuring that broadcast content adheres to principles of tolerance and inclusion.

The Programme to Support the Roma Population for 2022-2025 has yielded measurable results in education, healthcare and employment access. However, systemic barriers continue to impede full integration of the Roma population, underscoring the need for strengthened community mediation and local cooperation mechanisms.

Despite the progress achieved, the report identifies persisting challenges, including the need for continued efforts to combat discrimination, improve data collection, strengthen the institutional framework for the protection of national minorities and intensify Roma inclusion efforts across multiple sectors. Addressing these issues will imply sustained political commitment, enhanced public policy implementation and coordinated engagement with all stakeholders, including minority representatives, civil society and international partners.