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**CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

Support to local networks in protecting vulnerable groups against stigmatization, discrimination and bias motivated offences **in Moldova**

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| **Project** | ’’Promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova’’ |
| **Awarding entity** | **Council of Europe** |
| Office in Chisinau |
| **Funding** | Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024 |
| **Duration** | Projects shall be implemented by **25 October 2024**.  Reporting requirements shall be completed by **20 November 2024**. |
| **Estimated starting date** | **23 July 2024** |
| **Issuance date** | **21 June 2024** |
| **Deadline for applications** | **9 July 2024** |

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Appendices:

* Appendix I - Application Form
* Appendix II - Provisional budget (Template)
* Appendix III - Template Grant Agreement (for information only)

**How to apply?**

* Complete and sign the **Application Form** (See **Appendix I**)
* Attach a provisional budget (using the template reproduced in **Appendix II**)
* Attach the other supporting documents: work plan, organigram of the unit implementing the proposed project and the CV of project manager(s).
* Send these documents in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address:

[antidiscrimination.moldova@coe.int](mailto:antidiscrimination.moldova@coe.int)

* E-mails should contain the following reference in subject:

APPLICATION - GRANT REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

* Applications must be received **before 9 July 2024 (at 23:59 CET)**.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This call for proposals is launched within the framework of the Council of Europe project “Promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova” and is implemented under the [Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024](https://rm.coe.int/prems-043221-eng-1501-action-plan-moldova-couv-texte-a4-bat-web/1680a22649) in which the Council of Europe and the Moldovan authorities have agreed to carry forward jointly, through co-operation projects, reforms in a number of areas, including anti-discrimination and equality.

This call of proposals aims to fund specific measures to favour inclusion and combat negative stereotyping and stigmatization of vulnerable groups, and/or raise awareness against hate speech targeting these groups in line with European standards.

There is the urgency of reinforcing preventive and inclusion measures for these groups, especially those outside the formal social security schemes provided by the authorities.

Project proposals shall aim to produce an added value to the Council of Europe’s work in combating discrimination and hate speech, raise awareness of project beneficiaries of applicable European standards in the field of equality, and favouring inclusions in the present circumstances.

Initiatives shall be complementary with the activities and expected results of the projects “Promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova” and “Enhancing diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova”.

1. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT**

The Council of Europe project “Promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova” runs in close synergy and is complementary to the Council of Europe project [“Enhancing diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova](https://www.coe.int/en/web/chisinau/enhancing-diversity-and-equality)”.

The project's overall objective is to develop a system of support among local public authorities and civil society actors to protect the rights of vulnerable groups (LGBTI persons, women, ethnic and religious minorities, persons with physical and mental disabilities, amongst others) against discrimination, hatred and bias-motivated violence.

The project “Promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova” supports the country’s European perspective and reforms required within the EU accession process. Specifically, it supports in implementing the [National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) 2024-2027 for the Republic of Moldova](https://particip.gov.md/ro/download_attachment/21974) (General Objectives No 3, 5 and 8) in relation to anti-discrimination and the rights of national and ethnic minorities. It also supports the implementation of the latest [recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) for Republic of Moldova, published in 2021](https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d9c), on increasing knowledge of law enforcement personnel in combating effectively hate crime and hate speech incidents at the national level.

Hate speech, discrimination and hate crimes create a hostile atmosphere in society towards already marginalised groups. To address this issue, **four support networks have been established in the Soroca, Calarasi, Dubasari and Cimislia districts. These networks aim to protect vulnerable groups from hatred, discrimination, and bias-motivated offenses.**

In particular, the project aims:

1. In cooperation with national authorities, to enhance the capacity of local authorities’ relevant services in protecting vulnerable groups from hatred and hate-motivated violence, with a focus on the rayons of Soroca, Calarasi, Dubasari and Cimislia;
2. To enhance the capacity of the Police to address discrimination, hate speech and hate crime in line with European standards and become a community actor that enhances community cohesion, diversity and tolerance. This includes establishing a pool of trainers and implementing confidence-building measures with civil society organisations;
3. To enhance the understanding of NGOs representing vulnerable groups regarding their rights and relevant European standards and tools, thus empowering them to take action against discrimination, hatred and bias motivated violence, while also raising public awareness.

Project partners include the General Police Inspectorate, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Agency for Interethnic Relations, the Equality Council, the National Institute of Justice, civil society organisations such as PromoLex, Coalition for Inclusion and Non-discrimination, and also local authorities from Soroca, Calarasi, Dubasari and Cimislia districts.

1. **BUDGET AVAILABLE**

The indicative available budget for this call for proposals is 30,000 EUR (thirty thousand Euros). The Council of Europe intends to award one grant with a maximum amount of 30,000 EUR (thirty thousand Euros).

Subject to availability of funds and extension of the Project’s initial duration, the Council of Europe reserves the right not to award all available funds, and/or to redistribute the available funds differently based on the project proposals received and on the outcome of the call for proposals.

1. **REQUIREMENTS**
2. **General objective**

The grants will fund activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of four districts to provide specialised support and assistance to the victims of discrimination or of bias motivated offences in line with the standards of the Council of Europe. It should feed into results already accomplished with various Council of Europe activities in this field and create synergies with ongoing projects in the field of enhancing diversity and equality, implemented by the Council of Europe.

It will support inclusion and combat negative stereotyping and stigmatization of vulnerable groups, and/or raise awareness against hate speech targeting these groups.

Projects designed could address the following issues:

* Promotion and protection of the rights of vulnerable persons in four districts (Soroca, Calarasi, Dubasari, Cimislia) including issues related to impaired access to health, legal assistance and protection, psychological assistance, adequate access to accommodation, facilities and social services;
* Combating discrimination, hate speech and bias-motivated violence, notably the stigmatization of vulnerable groups and their increased exposure to violence.

1. **Means of action**

Projects proposals will include tailored activities aiming at supporting the implementation and/or follow-up at local level (in Soroca, Calarasi, Dubasari and Cimislia districts) of the recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) applicable to the Republic of Moldova, notably the findings and recommendations of the [Fifth Report on the Republic of Moldova](https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-the-republic-of-moldova/16808de7d7) (2018), [ECRI’s Conclusions](https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d9c) on the implementation of recommendations (2021) and supporting the [National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) 2024-2027 for the Republic of Moldova](https://particip.gov.md/ro/download_attachment/21974) (General Objectives No 3, 5, 8).

Activities should reflect the applicant’s understanding of its role in combating discrimination and the additional challenges to social inclusion, based on European standards and values promoted by the Council of Europe. Communication and visibility guidelines of the Council of Europe should be followed, and all materials produced through the activities will be subject of discussion with the Council of Europe team responsible for monitoring the implementation of the grant.

1. **Implementation period**

The implementation period of the projects should commence on **23 July 2024** (as indicated in the timetable under section VIII below) and must not exceed **25 October 2024**.

Reporting requirements must be fulfilled by **20 November at the latest**.

Projects completed prior to the date of submission of the applications will be automatically excluded. Regarding projects initiated before the date of application submission, or before the date of grant agreement signature, only costs incurred after the date of grant application submission may be eligible (provided that the agreement specifies accordingly).

1. **Target stakeholders**

Projects should target in particular the following key stakeholders:

* Local self-governments;
* Civil society organisations;
* Youth;
* General population;
* Vulnerable groups such as Roma, people with disabilities, LGBTI people, people of different ethnic/religions backgrounds, etc.

The above list is not exhaustive, and projects may propose to target other relevant stakeholders, while keeping in mind the general objective of the Project.

1. **Budgetary requirements**

Project proposals shall be accompanied by a draft budget (See **Template Budget, in Appendix II**) amounting to a maximum of 30,000 EUR (thirty thousand Euros). The estimated budget must be consistent, accurate, clear, complete and cost-effective, in the light of the proposed activities.

The Grantee shall also be required to contribute to the project either through its own resources or contributions from third parties. Co-financing may take the form of financial or human resources, in-kind contributions, or income generated by the action or project. In any of these cases, **co-financing must be measurable and reflected in the project budget**.

1. **Further to the general objective, the following would be assets:**

Projects/actions that involve the **local support networks** created with the support of the Council of Europe at the district level in Dubasari, Cimislia, Soroca and Calarasi will be considered to be assets. These networks should further engage and expand partnerships with/among NGOs from these districts.

The **support networks** were formed under the Council of Europe project “[Enhancing diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova”](https://www.coe.int/en/web/chisinau/enhancing-diversity-and-equality), aiming to safeguard vulnerable groups (LGBTI, women, ethnic and religious minorities, people with physical and mental disabilities, amongst the others) from discrimination, hatred and bias motivated offences. The members of the four district networks are representatives of local public authorities (Directorate of Education, Directorate of Social Assistance and Family Protection), social workers, police officers, NGOs, Roma community mediators and civic activists.

Other elements that will be considered as added value in evaluating the proposals are:

* Combining multiple forms of discrimination and/or group of persons targeted by hate speech (e.g. against Roma, LGBTI persons, women, etc.);
* Supporting initiatives and actions that promote and encourage fighting discrimination such as on ground of ethnic or national origin, and enhancing intercultural dialogue, mutual respect, understanding and cooperation among all persons living in a local community;
* Linking with existing local level strategies in the aforementioned areas (anti-discrimination, Roma, LGBTI persons, combating hate speech and hate motivated violence) or supporting the preparation of such strategies;
* Incorporating gender mainstreaming elements and paying particular attention to the interplay between gender-based discrimination and discrimination on other grounds, such as ethnicity, nationality and language. Projects should have a strong link with Council of Europe’s work in the field of inclusion and anti-discrimination.
* Including list of visibility activities to be implemented through the grant, aiming to promote tolerance, among general public. The public should have access to fact-based/well-researched information on anti-discrimination and/or ethnic minorities and/or sexual minorities (and their rights) and/or hate speech. This approach can help create positive connotation with issues linked to the vulnerable groups in society;
* Stimulating media interest and increasing the number of media reports aimed at raising awareness regarding the promotion of tolerance, combating hate speech and discrimination; providing visibility for Council of Europe’s efforts in promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova.
* Project actions should target vulnerable groups with the aim of empowering them to seek support and take action against hatred, discrimination, and bias-motivated offences through available legal means.

1. **The following types of action will not be considered:**

* Projects/actions providing financial support to third parties (re-granting schemes);
* Projects/actions concerning only or individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
* Projects/actions supporting political parties.

1. **Funding conditions:**

The funds for each grant should in principle be distributed as follows:

* 75% will be paid to the Grantee or the Lead Grantee in case of a consortium when the Grant Agreement between the Parties is signed;
* the balance will be paid to the Grantee or the Lead Grantee in case of a consortium based on actual expenditures incurred, and after the presentation and acceptance by the Council of Europe of the final narrative and financial reports for the Grant implementation.

1. **Reporting requirements:**

* **narrative reporting** requires a full narrative report on the use made of the grant, along with a copy of the register containing the names and signatures of participants present during each activity;
* **financial reporting**, in particular, requires a statement in the currency in which the Grant Agreement will be concluded (Euros or local currency), written in English, stating the payments made for implementing the activities, certified by the responsible financial officer of the Grantees, accompanied by “appropriate original supporting documents” (see below). The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask for summary translations of invoices into English. If, for legal reasons, the original documents must be retained by the Grantees, certified copies must be submitted with the financial statement.

The Council of Europe will assist the awarded Grantee with narrative and financial templates to fulfil reporting requirements and provide advice in this respect. The Grantee will commit to follow Council of Europe’s rules and regulations on procurement procedures.

“Appropriate original supporting documents” refers to signed contracts, invoices and acceptances of work (for all transactions), payment authorisation for all transactions should also be provided in case the Grantees use such practice, and reliable evidence of payment (authorised payment order and bank statement).

As regards round tables / conferences, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires providing a programme indicating the title, dates, venue, and agenda of the event; the names of persons facilitating the event; a signed list of participants; contracts with the venue owner (e.g. hotel) for renting premises and providing food and beverages for participants; invoices from the venue owner for the afore mentioned services, and a report on the results of the event (see narrative reporting above).

As regards consultancy services, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires providing evidence of the outputs produced, contracts with experts and consultants containing a specific description of services to be carried out, invoices generated after the completion and delivery of the work (the specialities of the consultants shall correspond to the nature of activities for which they are contracted).

As regards travel fees / lodging of experts and participants, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires providing, where applicable, contracts with a travel agency for travel fees and lodging, invoices of the travel agency indicating destinations, dates, ticket costs, and names of the travelling individuals, as well as a programme of the event indicating the names of the experts and signed lists of participants.

The above description is not exhaustive. Any uncertainty regarding the interpretation of the notion of “appropriate original supporting documents” should lead the Grantee or the Lead Grantee in case of a consortium to consult the Council of Europe.

1. **HOW TO APPLY?**
2. **Documents to be submitted:**

Each application shall contain:

* the completed and signed **Application Form** (See **Appendix I**);
* a provisional budget (using the template reproduced in **Appendix II**);
* a work plan for the implementation of the project proposal activities;
* certificate of registration;
* CV of project manager(s).

**Applications that are incomplete will not be considered.**

All documents shall be submitted in English (with exception of organisation’s registration certificate and CV of project manager(s) that can be in Romanian), failure to do so will result in the exclusion of the Grantee.

1. **Inquiries**

The Council of Europe project “Promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova” runs in synergy and supports the Council of Europe project [“Enhancing diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova](https://www.coe.int/en/web/chisinau/enhancing-diversity-and-equality)”.

Any other inquiries regarding this specific call for proposals must be submitted no later than 5 days before the deadline for the submission of proposals, in English and shall be exclusively sent to the following address: [antidiscrimination.moldova@coe.int](mailto:antidiscrimination.moldova@coe.int) with the following reference in subject: QUESTIONS - GRANT REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA.

1. **Deadline for submission**

The application form, **completed and signed by all Applicants**, along with the supporting documents, must be submitted in English language, in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: [antidiscrimination.moldova@coe.int](mailto:antidiscrimination.moldova@coe.int).

Emails should contain the following reference in subject: APPLICATION – GRANT REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Applications must be received **before 9 July 2024 (at 23:59 CET)**. Applications received after the above-mentioned date will not be considered.

1. **Change, alteration and modification of the application file**

Any change in the format, or any alteration or modification of the original application file, will cause the immediate rejection of the application concerned.

1. **EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

The projects submitted will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee composed of three members, including staff members of the Council of Europe.

The procedure shall be based on the underlying principles of grant award procedures, which are transparency, non-retroactivity, non-cumulative awards, not-for-profit, co-financing and non-discrimination, in accordance with [Rule 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=SG/Rule(2015)1374&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=99CCFF&BackColorIntranet=99CCFF&BackColorLogged=99CCCC).

The applicants, and their projects, shall fulfil all of the following criteria:

1. **Exclusion criteria:**

Applicants shall be excluded from the grant award procedure where they or, in the case of legal persons, their owner(s) or executive officer(s):

a. have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;

b. are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;

c. have received a judgement with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes a serious professional misconduct;

d. do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of the country where they are established;

e. are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;

f. have been involved in mismanagement of the Council of Europe funds or public funds.

By signing the Application Form, applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in any of the above-mentioned situations (See **Appendix I, Item 12. Declaration**).

The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask applicants at a later stage to supply the following supporting documents:

* for the items set out in paragraphs a), b), c) and f), an extract from the record of convictions or failing that an equivalent document issued by the competent judicial or administrative authority of the country where the applicant is established, indicating that these requirements are met;
* for the items set out in paragraph d), a certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of establishment.

1. **Eligibility criteria:**

In order to be eligible for a grant, an applicant must:

* be legally constituted as a non-governmental organisation in the Republic of Moldova;
* be entitled to carry out the activities described in its project proposal on the territory of the Republic of Moldova;
* have been active for at least three years in the field of human rights/anti-discrimination;
* have sufficient operational and professional capacity, including staff, to carry out activities described in the project proposal;
* have a bank account.

**Multiple applications are not allowed and shall lead to the exclusion of all applications concerned.**

1. **Award criteria**

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

* the extent to which the actions meet the general objectives of the call **(35%)**;
* the extent to which the actions have added value to the objective of the call **(35%)**;
* the quality, accuracy, clarity, completeness and cost-effectiveness of the application and the estimated budget **(30%)**;

1. **NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION AND SIGNATURE OF GRANT AGREEMENTS**

On completion of the selection process, all applicants will be notified in writing of the final decision concerning their respective applications as well as on the next steps to be undertaken.

The selected Grantees will be invited to sign a Grant Agreement (See Appendix III, for information only), formalising their legal commitments**. Potential applicants are strongly advised to read the draft contract, in particular its requirements in terms of payment and reporting.**

1. **INDICATIVE TIMETABLE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Phases** | **Indicative timing** |
| **Publication of the call** | 21 June 2024 |
| **Deadline for submitting applications** | 9 July 2024 |
| **Information to applicants on the results of the award procedure** | 22 July 2024 |
| **Signature of the grant agreements** | 23 July 2024 |
| **Implementation period** | 23 July 2024 – 25 October 2024 |

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