

Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024



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WHAT IS THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ACTION PLAN FOR THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA?

The Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021–2024 was approved by the Committee of Ministers on 25 November 2020. The Action Plan is based on the recent recommendations, resolutions and findings of the Council of Europe’s monitoring and expert advisory bodies. It also represents a continuation of the results achieved with the Action Plan for 2017–2020. The current Action Plan reflects the priorities of the reforms in the Republic of Moldova, as defined by the authorities. Through the Action Plan, the Council of Europe assists the country in legislative and institutional reforms in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL OF EUROPE ACTION PLAN?

Human Rights

- ▶ **Re-accreditation of the Ombudsman's Office** with "A" status with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.
- ▶ The **complaints are processed faster and more efficiently** by the Ombudsperson's Office as a result of changes in internal rules.
- ▶ Overall compatibility of the application of **pre-trial detention** with the right to liberty and security in Moldova and compliance of **criminal sentencing** with international standards assessed.
- ▶ The Equality Council became member of **EQUINET** (European Network for Equality Bodies) and was equipped with a **Communication Strategy and an Ethics Code**.
- ▶ Improvements and harmonization of **data collection on discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes, national responses mapped**.
- ▶ **Systemic issues affecting the child protection system's** response to child sexual exploitation and abuse **mapped**.

Rule of Law

- ▶ Continued support to the **justice sector reform** through a dedicated high-level Working Group and **Venice Commission's opinions** on constitutional matters.
- ▶ The **analysis of the judicial performance** was improved due to the statistical reporting module and European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)-recommended key performance indicators included in the **Integrated Case Management System**.
- ▶ Enhanced quality of healthcare in prisons through procurement of **medical equipment** (including to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic) and training of staff.
- ▶ **Better re-socialization and dynamic security** in 3 pilot prisons achieved.
- ▶ Enhanced capacities of **probation officers** in using various intervention techniques.
- ▶ Adoption of Council of Europe-supported first ever **Media Development Strategy** and the new Audiovisual Code.

- ▶ **Prison management policies** more focused on rehabilitation of offenders and closer to the European standards.
- ▶ **Hardware modernization** resulted into doubled number of monitored TV stations by the regulator.
- ▶ Setting up the Training Centre of Teleradio-Moldova and the Documentary Films Department of TRM (**Telefilm-Chisinau**).
- ▶ Adoption of the **Development Strategy 2019–2023** by the regional broadcaster Teleradio-Gagauzia.
- ▶ Approved Anti-corruption sectorial action plan in the field of health and social protection (2018–2020) and Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism Strategy (2020–2025).
- ▶ **Improved hardware and software infrastructure** for investigative units to fight corruption and money laundering
- ▶ Operationalization of the **national asset recovery framework** through capacity building activities and facilitation of the connection to EUROPOL's SIENA.

Democracy

- ▶ Central Election Commission, Training Centre and Central Election Commission in Gagauzia equipped with **results-oriented Strategies for 2020–2023**.
- ▶ The 40% gender quota introduced on electoral lists as a result of adoption of an **amendment Electoral Code**.
- ▶ **E-Learning Platform** of the Training Centre **re-engineered** and register of trained/certified persons developed.
- ▶ Reconceptualization and adoption of **the civic education curriculum** for grades V to XII in line with to the Council of Europe's Framework of Competences for a Democratic Culture.
- ▶ **Policy framework** aligned and **guidelines** implemented on civic education in line with the Education for Democratic Citizenship/Human Rights Education principles.
- ▶ Strengthened **teachers' capacities** on the new curriculum throughout the country.

The Action Plan 2017–2020 received a total of €14M by the end of 2020 from 16 donors. For example, the European Union provided €5.5M, Norway €4.5M, Switzerland €1M and Sweden €800.000.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE ACTION PLAN FOR THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA 2021–2024 MAIN PRIORITIES

The Action Plan 2021–2024 supports the Republic of Moldova in fulfilling its obligations as a Council of Europe member state and will contribute to addressing fundamental issues of human rights, rule of law and democracy. Beneficiaries of the co-operation programmes will be state institutions, civil society and the public at large. The methodology followed by the Council of Europe aims to reinforce ownership by national stakeholders and to ensure sustainability of outcomes through a “multi-institutional approach”. This allows different Council of Europe bodies to target governmental stakeholders, independent governance institutions, local and regional authorities, and civil society, in order to create a unique leverage for comprehensive, inclusive, successful and sustainable reforms.

Protecting Human Rights: The Council of Europe will concentrate on achieving an effective and timely execution of European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgments, including through the protection of persons deprived of liberty from torture and ill-treatment. This component will work with relevant stakeholders to improve pre-trial detention and reshape the criminal sentencing framework.

Promoting Human Rights and Dignity: The Council of Europe will continue promoting the ratification of the Istanbul Convention to secure national commitment, supporting the fight against all forms of discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech through necessary legislative changes, capacity building and a more prominent role of equality bodies, legal and justice professionals as well as law enforcement. Support to the authorities to consolidate capacities of professionals working with and for children will be ensured, couple with awareness raising on child sexual exploitation and abuse (off and online).

Ensuring Social Rights: based on recommendations from previous assessments, the Council of Europe will improve the capacities of the authorities to prepare high-quality national reports on the implementation of the European Social Charter and of the civil society organisations to submit alternative reports. The Council of Europe will also increase awareness on the European Social Charter and better understanding of its case law and practical application.

Ensuring Justice: judicial reforms aiming to increase public trust in the institutions will be supported, together with strengthened co-operation between justice and legal stakeholders and the capacities of prosecutors, judges and judicial staff. The Council of Europe will also work with the National Institute of Justice to include tailor-made curricula and boost distance learning. Work with penitentiary institutions and the police will continue focusing on prevention and investigation of ill-treatment, while probation services will be assisted in reforming resocialization policies. As a novelty, the Council of Europe will work with the Ministry of Health,

Labor and Social Protection in promoting psycho-social rehabilitation programmes and safeguards for patients in psychiatric institutions, including forensic patients.

Strengthening the Rule of Law: The Council of Europe will support the establishment of a monitoring system of the Audiovisual Media Services Code and the overall capacities of the Audiovisual Council. Cooperation activities will increase the capacities of journalists to perform investigations and produce documentaries. A variety of actors will be involved in devising effective systems for Internet governance. Data protection will be targeted with a special emphasis on the health sector and to improve the control methodology to counter digital risks.

Counteracting Threats to the Rule of Law: The Council of Europe will focus on increasing judges' and prosecutors' capacities to implement anti-corruption standards and on more effective integrity controls of public officials by the National Integrity Authority. Similarly, the Council of Europe will foster the capacities of anti-money laundering supervisory entities to put in place effective controls and increase the capacities of law enforcement and judiciary to recover illegal assets. Work to fight cybercrime and bring legislative and policy frameworks more in line with the Budapest Convention will continue.

Strengthening Democratic Governance and Fostering Innovation: The Council of Europe will facilitate dialogue between state representatives, and county/raion and local authorities. It will also assist them in introducing modern and gender responsive human resource management. Work will continue with the Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova to strengthen its dialogue with central level. Concerning elections, relevant authorities will enhance their capacities to revise electoral legislation and to operate in a more professional, transparent and inclusive manner. Work will continue to further promote dialogue and human rights between the two banks of the Nistru river.

Promoting Participation and Diversity: The Council of Europe aims to support the national authorities in enhancing the regulatory framework for civil participation and in establishing effective practices for civil society engagement in the decision-making process. Work in the field of education for democracy will continue with the support to the application of the policy framework and methodological guidelines on civic education and digital citizenship as well as through the introduction of the principles of the democratic governance of schools.

BUDGET

The 4-year Action Plan budget is estimated at €13.7 million.

ADDED VALUE OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Council of Europe cooperation programmes complete the unique strategic triangle of standard-setting – monitoring – co-operation. Commitment to legally binding standards is linked with their monitoring by independent mechanisms. Where appropriate, technical co-operation is extended in order to support member states to implement the necessary reforms and build capacity. This at the same time enhances compliance with their incumbent obligations as member states of the Council of Europe.

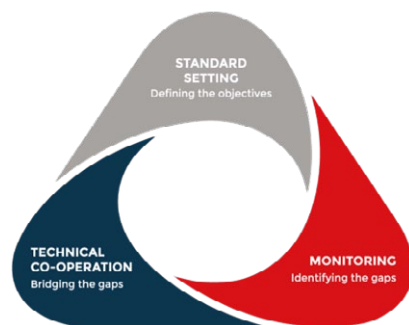


Figure 1. Council of Europe Strategic Triangle



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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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