

CONCEPT NOTE

2026 MEDICRIME CONFERENCE

Republic of Moldova's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of
the Council of Europe



Committee of the Parties to the
MEDICRIME Convention



*Medicines and
Medical Devices Agency*



PRESIDENCY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
COUNCIL OF EUROPE
NOVEMBER 2025 - MAY 2026
PRÉSIDENCE DE LA
RÉPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE
NOVEMBRE 2025 - MAI 2026

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

GENERAL INFORMATION

- ▶ **Dates:** 28 April 2026
- ▶ **Venue:** Chişinău, (Republic of Moldova)
- ▶ **Organisers:** Council of Europe in partnership with the Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices of Moldova under the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova

BACKGROUND

The falsification of medical products and related crimes constitutes a growing and global threat to public health and patient safety, and the rule of law. This criminal activity has evolved into a sophisticated technology-driven global industry. Understanding these current trends is a fundamental step for designing effective policy responses. At least 10% medicines in low and middle-income countries are substandard or falsified¹. There is also evidence suggesting a shift among organised crime groups in some regions from smuggling narcotics and weapons to also involving counterfeiting medicines, possibly even with terrorist organizations².

The [**MEDICRIME Convention**](#)³ remains the only binding international criminal-law instrument designed to combat this threat by requiring States Parties to criminalise these acts.

The convenience of online sales provides an opportunity for exploitation of e-commerce sites, social media platforms and encrypted apps to reach consumers with falsified and other illicit medical products⁴, posing serious health risks to consumers, whether unsuspecting or not.

The growing infiltration of falsified medical products into sport directly threatens anti-doping integrity. Criminal networks exploit the demand for performance enhancers, flooding the market with falsified hormones, peptides and banned stimulants, often sold online or through unregulated gym networks and sports clubs. This convergence of pharmaceutical crime and sport erodes public trust in clean competition and forces anti-doping bodies to operate in an increasingly blurred landscape between therapy, enhancement and criminal falsification. It is a threat to the health of youth and adults engaged in sport, whether at professional or amateur level.

The skyrocketing global demand for diabetes, weight-loss medicines (GLP-1) as well as peptide supplements has created a lucrative opportunity for criminal networks. These groups exploit supply shortages to flood markets with dangerous falsified versions; which now a threat that now extend over five continents. The emergence of new oral formulations presents an additional challenge, as pills are easier to falsify and distribute in mass than injectables.

An emerging concern is the falsification of veterinary medical products. Criminal networks increasingly target the animal health sector, producing and distributing falsified veterinary vaccines,

¹ WHO, Substandard and falsified medical products, 3 December 2024.

² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Transnational trafficking and the rule of law in west Africa: a Threat Assessment*, July 2009, p.35.

³ Council of Europe, *Council of Europe Convention on the counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health* (CETS No. 211), Moscow, 28 October 2011.

⁴ INTERPOL, "USD 11 million in illicit medicines seized in global INTERPOL operation", 20 July 2022.

antibiotics and parasiticides. These products endanger animal welfare and can enter the food chain, posing serious public health risks, including antimicrobial resistance and drug residues in food.

Criminal networks are now using AI to create convincing fake endorsements and testimonials. Furthermore, even standard security features like QR codes are regularly copied, rendering simple serialisation insufficient as a safeguard, particularly when supplied online and not through any regulated outlet where they may be checked by authentication software. Misinformation, misleading online promotions and non-legitimate distribution channels are creating a real patient risk. Transnational criminal organizations no longer confine themselves to just street-level distributors; they are systematically infiltrating the online pharmaceutical ecosystem

Driven by significant financial gain and enabled by technological advances, the falsification of medical products presents an ever-increasing challenge, as it is becoming progressively more difficult for authorities and consumers to detect.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

Building on Moldova's commitment to public health and the rule of law, this conference aims to:

- ▶ **Promote accession:** Encourage States in the region to sign, ratify and effectively implement the [MEDICRIME Convention](#).
- ▶ **Analyse emerging threats:** Present the latest findings from law-enforcement operations, focusing on the trafficking of lifestyle medical products, peptides and the misuse of digital platforms.
- ▶ **Enhance multi-agency co-operation:** Foster dialogue between all actors (health authorities, customs, police and legal actors) to build the multidisciplinary approach required by the Convention.
- ▶ **Strengthen cross-border Networks:** Facilitate operational contacts between States Parties and international stakeholders focused on falsified medical products and related crimes.

ORGANISATION

Venue		Radisson Blu Leograd Hotel Chişinău, Republic of Moldova
Hours		9:00a.m.–5:00 pm. Eastern European Summer Time (EEST)
Coffee break		10:40 a.m. and 15:00 p.m.
Lunch		12:30 a.m.
Interpretation		Simultaneous interpretation for all sessions (English, French and Romanian)
Group photo		09:30 a.m.
Social event		05:00 p.m.

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 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.

