

Management Response and Action Plan

Name of Evaluation Report:	Final evaluation of the Council of Europe Project “Enhancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova”		
Date of Evaluation Report:	November 2025	Date of Action Plan:	February 2026

Overall management response to the evaluation:

The management acknowledges with interest the final evaluation of the Council of Europe project “Enhancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova” and appreciates its valuable observations and recommendations. The management agrees with the conclusion that the project has made substantial and transformative contributions to social and labour rights, particularly through expanding the European Social Charter commitments, strengthening labour inspection, and establishing the Network for the integration of youth that are not in employment, education and training (NEET) into the labour market. These achievements have paved the way for systemic changes and are widely recognised, despite some remaining structural challenges.

The management is pleased to outline below its ongoing and planned actions to address the recommendations and will provide updates on their implementation in due course.

[FOR DECENTRALISED EVALUATIONS] Dissemination plan for the evaluation: please briefly explain how the report will be shared (internally, other CoE entities, donors, beneficiaries etc.), methods (email, events, website etc.), resources, timeframe and person responsible.

The evaluation report will be shared with the primary users, including the Department of Social Rights of the Council of Europe, the Directorate of Programme Co-ordination of the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Office in Chisinau, and the Austrian Development Agency. The secondary users will include national partner institutions, project beneficiaries, and other relevant stakeholders involved in or benefiting from project activities. The evaluation report will be shared via email and published on the web page of the Department of Social Rights and Council of Europe Office in Chisinau in February 2026. The person responsible is Ms Nelea Bugaevski, Project Co-ordinator, Department of Social Rights, Council of Europe.

Management Decision ¹	Entity in Charge	Planned Actions ² (determined by Entity)	Justification ³ for Non-Acceptance	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
Recommendation 1: Strategic ➤ Pursue a phased, multi-cycle approach to reform. <i>Given the systemic nature of legislative and institutional reforms, the Council of Europe should adopt a sequenced strategy focusing first on institutionalisation and data system development, and then on scaling implementation and monitoring.</i>					
☒ Accepted ☐ Partially accepted ☐ Rejected	Department of Social Rights	The project “Enhancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova” was the first fully fledged project in the field of social labour rights in the Republic of Moldova. It supported the Republic of Moldova in aligning its social and employment rights framework with European standards, guided by the European Social Charter and the country's EU accession commitments. It demonstrated that achieving sustainable change in complex systems requires a step-by-step approach. The initial phase addressed national priorities by strengthening legal and policy frameworks, building institutional capacities, and promoting evidence-based decision-making, while promoting inclusive vocational education and training (VET) and facilitating labour market integration for people from vulnerable groups, including NEET youth.		February 2026 – December 2028	Margarita Galstyan, Head of the Co-operation Unit, Department of Social Rights

¹ The management decision is in relation to the Recommendation (Accepted, Partially accepted, Rejected).

² For implementing accepted recommendations.

³ For recommendations that are partially accepted or rejected.

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		In January 2026 a new Council of Europe project “Advancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova” was launched for a period of three years (2026-2028). The new project will consolidate and scale-up the actions initiated under the previous project.			
Recommendation 2: Programmatic ➤ Strengthen data systems for monitoring inclusion and employment outcomes. <i>The absence of disaggregated data on vulnerable groups and employment outcomes remains a systemic barrier. Future interventions should prioritise the development of a national graduate-tracking system</i>					
☒ Accepted ☐ Partially accepted ☐ Rejected	Department of Social Rights	The new Council of Europe project “Advancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova” will continue to assist national authorities in the development and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation tool to track the professional path of VET graduates. This will help assess their employment outcomes and contribute to evidence-based policy-making. The business requirements document for the development of the software to track the professional path of VET graduates has been already prepared and approved by the Ministry of Education and Research under the project “Enhancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova”. The development of the		February 2026 – July 2027	Margarita Galstyan, Head of the Co-operation Unit, Department of Social Rights

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		software will be done under the new project.			
Recommendation 3: Programmatic ➤ Strengthen gender equality and inclusion mainstreaming. <i>Gender-responsive approaches should remain integral to future programming. This includes updating gender analysis, supporting enforcement of anti-discrimination provisions introduced through the project, and promoting women's participation in VET programmes.</i>					
☒ Accepted ☐ Partially accepted ☐ Rejected	Department of Social Rights	Gender mainstreaming is a core element of the new Council of Europe project "Advancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova." It integrates a gender perspective into all activities, including policy analysis, capacity building, monitoring, and awareness-raising. The new project will contribute to addressing systemic challenges faced by both women and men, thereby ensuring that labour reforms benefit all workers equitably. It will also continue to promote the integration of NEET women and men into the VET institutions.		February 2026 – December 2028	Margarita Galstyan, Head of the Co-operation Unit, Department of Social Rights
Recommendation 4: Programmatic ➤ Enhance cooperation with employers and the private sector. <i>Building on the employer database and NEA collaboration, deepen engagement with private sector associations to promote inclusive employment. The Council of Europe could facilitate public-private dialogue platforms and design recognition schemes for inclusive employers, linking rights-based standards with business incentives.</i>					
☒ Accepted ☐ Partially accepted ☐ Rejected		The new Council of Europe project "Advancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova" will further facilitate dialogue and collaboration between different target groups,		February 2026 – December 2028	Margarita Galstyan, Head of the Co-operation Unit, Department of Social Rights

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		including the VET institutions, the National Employment Agency, CSOs, public and private companies, social partners on the access of people from vulnerable groups to the labour market. It will organise capacity-building and awareness-raising activities to promote respect for social and employment rights, highlight the advantages of inclusive employment, and encourage the creation of inclusive workplaces.			
Recommendation 5: Operational ➤ Simplify administrative and budgetary procedures to improve efficiency. The long delays caused by internal approval and budget revision processes significantly constrained implementation. The Council of Europe and the donor (ADA) should review and streamline contractual and financial workflows, particularly for budget modifications, to prevent similar disruptions. Consider establishing fast-track mechanisms for low-value adjustments or pre-approved flexibility clauses. Contingency funding should be also considered in future projects to absorb unforeseen costs, such as salary adjustments.					
☐ Accepted ☒ Partially accepted ☐ Rejected		The new Council of Europe project “Advancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova” will conduct tenders for securing all types of relevant services (consultancy, transportation, printing, etc) for the whole duration of the project 2026-2028. Additionally, the project will use the framework contracts and agreements concluded by the Department of Social Rights and Council of Europe Office in Chisinau for such types of services as the international consultancy services, event management		February 2026 – December 2028	Margarita Galstyan, Head of the Co-operation Unit, Department of Social Rights

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		services, interpretation services. This will allow to reduce the delays in the conduct of procurement procedures and ensure the timely implementation of project activities. The project team will closely follow the project budget absorption based on the quarterly financial reports prepared by the Financial Officer and timely inform the management on the need to conduct budget revisions. It is important to note that the project does not have the mandate to revise or change the Council of Europe financial workflows, which are inherently time-demanding. Additionally, the project cannot influence the workflows of ADA. Contingency funding is not included in Council of Europe project budgets, and this aspect is determined by the Department for Programme Coordination and donor relationship, remaining outside the project's scope of influence.			
Recommendation 6: Operational ➤ Ensure adequate human resources and M&E capacity. <i>Given the project's complexity, staffing levels should be aligned with its thematic and operational demands. The next phase should include dedicated positions for Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication/Visibility to strengthen evidence generation, reporting, and dissemination of results. Additional administrative support would improve workload balance and ensure timely delivery.</i>					
☐ Accepted ☒ Partially accepted ☐ Rejected		The new Council of Europe project, "Advancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova," was launched in		February 2026 – December 2028	Margarita Galstyan, Head of the Co-operation Unit, Department of Social Rights

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		January 2026. The project is implemented by a dedicated team consisting of a Senior Project Officer, Project Officer, and Project Assistant, under the oversight of a Project Co-ordinator based at Headquarters to ensure alignment with Council of Europe standards. Each team member has clear, assigned responsibilities, enabling systematic progress tracking, results-oriented implementation, and timely reporting. In accordance with the Council of Europe's established practice, positions such as Communication Officer and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer are not included within the scope of the project. The project team works in close collaboration with the Communication Officer from the Department of Social Rights and the Communication Officer from the Council of Europe Office in Chisinau to ensure consistent, accurate messaging and to enhance the project's visibility at both national and international levels. The project team benefits from the guidance and expertise of the Monitoring and Evaluation Regional Adviser from the Department for Programme Coordination. Monitoring and evaluation are integrated throughout all activities via			

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		PMM tool, with regular internal reviews to ensure objectives are met and lessons learned are incorporated. The project will also implement a robust communication and visibility plan, using various platforms and partnerships to enhance stakeholder engagement and promote public awareness.			
Recommendation 7: Operational ➤ Institutionalise adaptive management and learning. <i>The project's flexibility was a major success factor; however, learning was often ad hoc. The next phase should formalise learning processes (through regular reflection workshops, mid-term reviews, and after-action analyses) to capture insights and inform adaptive planning. The Steering Committee could incorporate a "learning and innovation" agenda item in each meeting. Workplans should not also be excessively rigid for being able to adjust to external factors, such as administrative delays or seasonal breaks in the academic calendar.</i>					
☒ Accepted ☐ Partially accepted ☐ Rejected	Department of Social Rights	The new Council of Europe project "Advancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova" has carefully considered the findings from the evaluation and will incorporate lessons learned to promote continuous improvement and adaptability to unforeseen circumstances. A mid-term evaluation is planned to assess project progress and inform future actions. The project will introduce a dedicated learning and innovation component focused on encouraging behavioural change, with outcomes regularly shared during Steering Committee meetings. Additionally, project workplans will be		February 2026 – December 2028	Margarita Galstyan, Head of the Co-operation Unit, Department of Social Rights

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		designed to remain flexible, enabling adjustments in response to external factors such as administrative delays or ad hoc requests from project partners. This approach will enhance the project's ability to achieve its objectives efficiently and effectively.			
Recommendation 8: Operational ➤ Strengthen communication, visibility, and advocacy. <i>Visibility proved transformative in shaping public perception of vocational education. Future initiatives should continue to invest in communication as a strategic tool for behavioural change, using multimedia storytelling, youth ambassadors, and employer success stories to amplify results. Communication plans should be aligned with the Council of Europe's and donor's overall visibility guidelines and co-branded with national institutions to reinforce ownership.</i>					
☒ Accepted ☐ Partially accepted ☐ Rejected	Department of Social Rights	The new Council of Europe project "Advancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova" will further strengthen the visibility and communication efforts of the Ministry of Education and Research and partner VET institutions. Guidance will be provided, and informational materials, multimedia stories, and success narratives will be developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research and partner VET institutions to promote the VET system. All materials and visuals will be disseminated via the Council of Europe's relevant web pages and social media channels, the Facebook page of the Network for the Integration of NEET Youth into the VET system, as well as the		February 2026 – December 2028	Margarita Galstyan, Head of the Co-operation Unit, Department of Social Rights

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		web and social media platforms of the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova and partner VET institutions. The project's communication plan is aligned with the Council of Europe visibility guidelines.			