

Stocktaking of the Republic of Moldova's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (14 November 2025 – 15 May 2026)

Introduction

On 14 November 2025, the Republic of Moldova assumed for the second time the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, in the year marking 30 years of our membership.

At a time of unprecedented challenges to the rules-based international order and repositioning of geopolitical configurations, the role of the Council of Europe in safeguarding and defending democracy, human rights and the rule of law – has never been more crucial.

In exercising its mandate, as Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, the Republic of Moldova endeavoured – under the motto ***For a Europe of Peace and Resilience*** – to facilitate the convergence of the Council of Europe activities towards reaching its objectives and enhancing its capacities and acquiring new tools to better adapt to shifting realities – while preserving the key importance of its essential values.

The new realities in which we are operating make our Organisation even more significant, highlight the need for renewed responsibility and commitment to its core values, and call for resolute actions to strengthen our collective response to the challenges to its fundamental principles.

The Presidency was guided by three major axes: *support for Ukraine and the accountability for the crime of aggression committed by the Russian Federation; support for the work on the New Democratic Pact for Europe; and strengthening our response to disinformation.*

Its thematic priorities have been promoted throughout the Presidency's tenure by organising 43 events including high-level meetings, regional conferences, meetings of the Council of Europe intergovernmental committees, expert level conferences and debates. In promoting its key priorities and thus contributing to the external action of the Organisation the Presidency organised/co-organised side events in Geneva and in New York dedicated to the accountability for Ukraine, to the promotion of the fight against domestic violence and to the consolidation of social rights protection. The priorities of the Presidency were presented by Minister Popșoi in his capacity of President of the Committee of Ministers to the OSCE Permanent Council and a 2+2 Meeting was organised on the margins of the Ministerial Session in Chișinău.

Maia Sandu, President of the Republic of Moldova, participated at the winter Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), during which she addressed the Assembly in the overarching topics of the Presidency and reaffirmed the commitment to preserve and promote the core values of the Organisation. Mihai Popșoi, in his capacity as President of the Committee of Ministers, addressed the PACE with communications on the activity of the Committee of Ministers in January and April 2026.

Meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), attended by about 60 parliamentarians from the 46 member States of the Council of Europe, were held in Chişinău on 20-21 November 2025. The Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was opened by PACE President Theodoros Rousopoulos, followed by a welcome address by the President of the Moldovan Parliament Igor Grosu, the parliamentarians then held an exchange of views with the Republic of Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, Mihai Popşoi, in the framework of the Moldovan Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The event also featured a dedicated side-event on combating violence against women, highlighting the crucial role of parliamentarians in advancing the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, strengthening legislative frameworks, and promoting co-ordinated action to prevent and address gender-based violence.

This document presents an overview of the principal initiatives and achievements of the Moldovan Presidency, structured by its key and thematic priorities.

Accountability, justice, and lasting peace were at the core of our support for Ukraine, which continues to face a brutal war of aggression by the Russian Federation.

A new milestone regarding accountability has been accomplished. Thirty-five countries, including the Republic of Moldova and the European Union, signed a new convention establishing the International Claims Commission for Ukraine at a diplomatic conference co-hosted by the Council of Europe and the Netherlands on 16 December 2025. It was a moment in which we took a decisive step towards ensuring justice. Not a symbolic justice, but real, efficient accountability for the immense suffering caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Throughout its mandate, the Presidency streamlined and facilitated the work at the level of the Committee of Ministers on advancing towards the establishment of the Special Tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. Thus, based on the agreement reached on the modalities for the adoption at the Ministerial Session in Chişinău 36 States and the European Union adopted the Resolution establishing the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Management Committee of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine. This represents a crucial step toward an operational Special Tribunal.

The annual exchange of views between the Council of Europe and the United Nations that took place on 5 February 2026, focused this year – at the initiative of the Presidency – on human rights and the situation of Ukrainian children, particularly those deported to Russia. Participants emphasised the importance of international co-operation in the context of the war in Ukraine, Russia's responsibility, and the need to make full use of existing mechanisms, such as the Register of Damage, ECtHR judgments, and the Special Tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. It was also highlighted that, despite ongoing challenges and limited resources, the international human rights system must be strengthened to remain effective and credible.

Geopolitical shifts, rising trends of authoritarianism, the corrosion of democratic norms, and hybrid disruption threaten the progress, peace, and stability that the Council of Europe has been defending for 75 years. **The New Democratic Pact for Europe** aims to strengthen the foundations of democracy, amplify its benefits, and innovate its forms to make it tangible and meaningful for all. Choosing to support the New Democratic Pact for Europe was a most natural decision for the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova for which there is a clear need for a strengthened collective response to the attempts to undermine democracy by means of ensuring and promoting democratic stability, democratic resilience and democratic security. Moldova's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers contributed, throughout the implementation of the Presidency priorities, to our Organisation's response to the need to make our democracy more resilient and adapted to emerging realities and threats to its existence. Most of the events organised under the aegis of the Presidency had at their core strengthening democratic resilience.

Targeting acts of **foreign manipulation and interference** by identifying and operationalising clear and comprehensive tools, including of a legal nature to efficiently counteract them was a priority action for the Presidency. Information manipulation and interference is a primary threat to our civic space and what threatens our civic space undermines our democracy and its resilience. When our citizens' minds are more effectively protected against co-ordinated information manipulation campaigns – their free choice is protected, deliberative democracy is protected, human rights' defenders, civil society and journalists are better protected, and our democratic societies are defended. The topic of counteracting FIMI as a transversal overarching priority of the Presidency featured in a series of events organised as part of its Programme. In the same vein, an Informal Meeting of the Ministers' Deputies on "Crypto-assets: regulations, compliance and measures for digital assets – combating crime and foreign interference" was organised at the initiative of the Presidency on 23 February 2026.

To respond to this emerging threat, the Committee of Ministers set up a Committee of Experts on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (PC-FIMI), tasked with preparing a feasibility study on the possible elaboration of a Council of Europe legal instrument on foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI). The study made clear that, first, FIMI and related hybrid threats constitute a real and evolving threat to democratic and national security, human rights, and the rule of law; second, that no single response suffices, and that a co-ordinated, whole-of-society approach is necessary; and, finally, that there is added value in member States adopting a co-ordinated approach to countering FIMI, which reflects the diversity of national experiences and exposure levels to FIMI-related phenomena. Based on the results of the feasibility study, the member States adopted at the Ministerial Session in Chişinău the decision to continue building on the findings of the feasibility study and consequently instructed the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to submit to its Deputies proposals relating to the negotiation of an appropriate legal instrument, including a possible framework convention addressing FIMI, based on the standards and expertise of the Council of Europe.

In line with these overarching priorities, a particular emphasis was put on the following thematic priorities.

I. Rule of Law

Implementation of the Convention system

The credibility of the Convention system stems from the implementation of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. It is therefore imperative that all member States, without exception, abide by their obligations and execute the Court's judgments.

Under the Moldovan Presidency, on 12 December 2025, in Chişinău, the *International Conference on the European convention system and execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights* was organised. The purpose of the Conference was to identify the specific challenges faced by domestic authorities and justice system actors in the execution of the Court's judgments, and to contribute to the development of a more effective and equitable approach to their implementation at the national level.

The event also tackled possible avenues under international law aimed at securing the payment by Russia of just satisfaction awarded by the Court in these cases, including in conflict-related cases and interstate cases. A number of possible mechanisms were discussed, in order to promote broader co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union, while ensuring that victims are compensated and the authority of the European Court is upheld.

The second edition of the Council of Europe High-level Conference with Ombudsperson Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), named "*Council of Europe ON Forum*" was held on 12-13 March 2026, in Strasbourg, France, under the auspices of the Moldovan Presidency of the Committee of Ministers and co-organised by the European Court of Human Rights. It focused on the vital role of Ombudspersons institutions and NHRIs in protecting democracy, exploring, *inter alia*, their role in addressing actions that undermine democratic processes such as foreign interference and erosion of checks and balances. The event gathered representatives of the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, national human rights institutions, ombudsman mechanisms, international experts and youth participants. It was structured around thematic sessions addressing external interference in democratic processes, checks and balances, youth participation and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. The Forum contributed to reinforcing dialogue among human rights protection institutions and to promoting co-ordinated responses to contemporary democratic challenges, including safeguarding freedom of expression, strengthening institutional independence and improving the implementation of the Court's case-law across member States.

The international conference "*The Future of the 'Marketplace of Ideas' amid the Rise of the Internet, Fake News and Artificial Intelligence: Challenges for Constitutional Courts*" was organised on 24 April 2026, in Chişinău, at the initiative of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova and with the support of the Council of Europe. The speakers, including Mr Timothy Otty, Vice-President of the Venice Commission and Mrs Ivana Jelić, Vice-President of the European Court of Human Rights, underscored the need for strengthened European co-operation in addressing the challenges generated by the digital environment and the need for thorough examination of the legal challenges posed by artificial intelligence from the perspective of the Court's case-law.

In line with the mandate set out at the Reykjavík Summit, and building on the decisions of the Ministerial Session in Luxembourg, it is important to highlight the opening for signature on 3 December 2025, under the Moldovan Presidency, of the **Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law**, which represented another landmark contribution by the Council of Europe to the global environmental protection. The Convention provides the foundation for a coherent criminal justice response by States to environmental crime, including across borders. ~~The Convention was signed by 2 countries and the EU and the number of ratifications reached during the Moldovan Presidency was 10 Ratifications, including 8 member States.~~ **The European Union, Portugal, and the Republic of Moldova were the first to sign the Convention. During the Moldovan Presidency, Latvia signed it on 10 December 2025, Luxembourg on 14 January 2026, and Sweden on 15 May 2026. The Convention will enter into force once it has been ratified by 10 States, including at least eight Council of Europe member States.**

On 28 January 2026, in Chişinău, for **Celebration of the Data Protection Day**, was held the *National Conference "Implementation of the legal framework on data protection: challenges, benefits, resilience"*. The National Conference provided a platform for dialogue on the implementation of modern data protection standards in line with European requirements. The event reflected Moldova's commitments under the ratification process of the modernised Council of Europe Convention 108+ and focused on the legal, technical and institutional measures necessary to ensure the effective protection of personal data in the context of accelerated digital transformation.

On 28 April 2026, the *Regional Conference to encourage States from the region to accede to the MEDICRIME Convention* took place in Chişinău. As this treaty remains the only binding international criminal law instrument designed to combat the falsification of medical products and related crimes, the experts during the Conference discussed the promotion of accession by encouraging States in the region to sign, ratify and effectively implement the MEDICRIME Convention, analysed emerging threats through the presentation of the latest findings from law-enforcement operations, focusing on the trafficking of lifestyle medical products, peptides and the misuse of digital platforms, fostered dialogue between all actors (health authorities, customs, police and legal actors) to build the multidisciplinary approach required by the Convention, and facilitated operational contacts between States Parties and international stakeholders focused on falsified medical products and related crimes.

On 28-29 April 2026, the *11th plenary meeting of the Medicrime Committee* took place in Chişinău. The event brought together representatives of States Parties, international experts and international organisations, providing an important platform for strengthening co-operation in the fight against pharmaceutical crime and the implementation of the MEDICRIME Convention. Discussions focused on enhancing national co-ordination mechanisms, progress achieved through monitoring exercises, and improving interinstitutional co-operation at both national and international levels. Particular attention was given to emerging challenges related to falsified medical products, including the misuse of online platforms, social media and digital channels for the distribution of illicit products. The event also facilitated the exchange of good practices, rapid information-sharing mechanisms and discussions on the impact of new technologies on pharmaceutical crime and public health protection.

Cybercrime

The regional exercise "Regional Cybercrime Co-operation Exercise", held in Chişinău on 7-9 April 2026 under the joint EU–Council of Europe CyberEast+ project, brought together representatives from more than 20 countries to strengthen international co-operation in combating cybercrime and handling electronic evidence. Through practical simulations based on real-life scenarios, the exercise enhanced the operational capacities of participating institutions in preventing, investigating and responding to cyber threats, while promoting closer interinstitutional and cross-border co-operation. The event also reaffirmed the importance of continued alignment with international standards, including the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, and highlighted the need for sustained investment in national and regional cyber resilience.

On 15 May 2026, the Ministerial Session in Chişinău adopted the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism, addressing evolving challenges in organised crime, money laundering, and terrorism financing

II. Democracy

Local Democracy – Democratic resilience leads to a cohesive society, which relies on strong local communities and sound local democracy. Respect for the Charter of Local Self-Government is essential for ensuring the resilience and sustainability of local democracy. The Moldovan Presidency therefore decided to highlight the importance of local democracy as one of its main priorities.

On 16 February 2026, the roundtable *“Local Voices, Shared Goals: Advancing Local Democracy”* took place in Sireți, Republic of Moldova. The event brought together representatives of local, regional and central authorities from the Republic of Moldova and Council of Europe member States, including members of the Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The roundtable promoted local democracy and participatory governance, highlighting best practices related to citizens' engagement in decision-making, transparency in public administration and local initiatives in the field of human rights.

On 17 February 2026, the meeting of the *Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities* of the Council of Europe was held in Chișinău, with the participation of Bureau members, Moldovan officials and representatives of local and central public authorities. The meeting contributed to strengthening dialogue on the Congress priorities, including support for Ukraine, the promotion of local democracy and good governance, as well as enhanced co-operation among member States. Discussions focused on the administrative-territorial reform of the Republic of Moldova, the strengthening of local democracy, and the role of local public authorities in the context of electoral processes and the country's European integration agenda. Particular attention was given to the voluntary amalgamation process, institutional capacity-building, financial decentralisation and enhancing resilience against disinformation. The events also facilitated high-level bilateral exchanges between Moldovan authorities and representatives of the Congress, reaffirming the importance of inclusive dialogue, European standards and international co-operation in advancing sustainable and effective local governance reforms.

From 31 March to 2 April 2026, Strasbourg hosted the *50th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe*, during which the priorities of the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova of the Committee of Ministers were presented. On this occasion, the Secretary General of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, Alexei Buzu, addressed participants on behalf of the Moldovan Presidency, underlining the importance of local democracy, good governance and international co-operation in strengthening democratic resilience. He highlighted the key role of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, Moldova's commitment to local public administration reform, and continued support for Ukraine.

On 29 April 2026, in the Republic of Moldova, the *Third Conference on Multilevel Governance* was held as a continuation of the Reykjavík process (following Vilnius 2024 and Valletta 2025). This international conference focused on consultation, participation and effective co-operation between different levels of governance, civil society and citizens, with a view to ensuring efficient multilevel governance.

Media – Disinformation undermines public trust, distorts democratic debate, polarises societies, and threatens the integrity of democratic institutions. The ability to think critically, coupled with a consolidated civic awareness and media literacy can be vital for building democratic resilience and thus help young people to recognise manipulative narratives and resist their influence.

The *High-Level Conference on Media Literacy and Information Integrity: Building Resilience to Disinformation in Europe*, which was hosted in Chișinău on 20 March 2026, explored key challenges and opportunities in strengthening democratic resilience through MIL and enhanced information integrity. It provided a platform for dialogue, the exchange of good practices, and the development of co-ordinated, cross-sector approaches to ensure a healthy and trustworthy information ecosystem, as well as highlighting recent initiatives from the Republic of Moldova and other member States, showcasing effective models for strengthening MIL, combating information manipulation, and fostering societal resilience across Europe. A key feature of the event was the launch of the new Council of Europe documents prepared by the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) *Guidelines for the development of national-level media and information literacy strategies*. These instruments were designed to support member States in developing comprehensive national MIL strategies and implementing practical measures to counter disinformation and uphold information integrity. These phenomena are increasingly eroding public trust and undermining the integrity of democratic processes. Malicious actors exploit online platforms to rapidly

spread misleading content, influence public opinion, and distort public discourse, ultimately threatening the very foundations of democracy. In these challenging times, a collective response is needed.

To raise the topic of FIMI, as the biggest challenge for democracy in the Council of Europe member States and beyond, the Republic of Moldova organised under its Presidency an *Informal Exchange of the Committee of Ministers “Freedom of Expression and Democratic Resilience”* (9 April 2026). The event brought together policymakers, journalists and experts to discuss current and emerging challenges affecting freedom of expression and media freedom in Europe. During the meeting key developments shaping today’s information environment were addressed, including increasing pressure on journalists and media, the growing role of foreign information manipulation and interference in undermining public debate, and the rapid technological transformation of the information ecosystem, including the emergence of generative artificial intelligence. The discussion drew on member States’ experience in addressing information integrity challenges while safeguarding media pluralism and freedom of expression.

Violence and threats against journalists remain a serious concern, undermining their democratic role. The Council of Europe’s “Journalists Matter” campaign promotes their safety and freedom. On 22 April 2026, the Moldovan Presidency hosted the 4th meeting of the *Journalists Matter* Campaign Focal Points in Chişinău. The meeting provided a streamlined platform for member States to exchange on progress, challenges, and priorities in strengthening the safety of journalists, with a particular focus on preventive approaches in line with Council of Europe standards. This offered the Focal Points an opportunity to present recent national developments, including new preventive measures, co-ordination mechanisms, and reforms undertaken in line with Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4, as well as examples of effective co-operation between authorities, media organisations, and civil society. The meeting also introduced the new youth component of the *Journalists Matter* Campaign, outlining how young people can contribute to awareness-raising, prevention efforts, and the broader defence of media freedom.

On 23 April 2026, in Chişinău, the Moldovan Presidency of the Committee of Ministers hosted a high-level Conference: *“Defending Truth: Comprehensive Approaches to Journalistic Safety and Quality Journalism”*, organised in the framework of the Council of Europe’s *Journalists Matter* Campaign. The event promoted a holistic and preventive approach to protecting journalists, strengthening the quality and integrity of journalism, and reinforcing democratic resilience across Europe. A key moment of the conference was the presentation of the Mid-Term Report of the *Journalists Matter* Campaign (2023–2025). This assessment provided an overview of progress achieved across member States, highlighted persistent challenges, and identified trends in attacks on journalists and gaps in prevention measures. Its presentation offered an opportunity for participants to reflect collectively on the impact of the Campaign to date and to consider priorities, strategic adjustments, and strengthened co-operation for the next phase of work, ensuring that upcoming actions are informed by evidence, experience, and lessons learned.

In conjunction with the Conference within the *Journalists Matter* Campaign (23 April 2026), and from a youth perspective, the *Youth event: “Youth Voices against Discrimination”* took place from 21 to 22 April 2026. The event gathered non-governmental and governmental youth stakeholders to address a growing threat of disinformation to democratic institutions in Moldova and beyond. It explored young people’s role in combating fake news and propaganda, while also acknowledging their vulnerability to false narratives. Through knowledge and experience sharing, the participants discussed innovative approaches for youth to actively counter misinformation and build resilience against propaganda.

During Moldova’s Presidency, the Committee of Ministers adopted key documents in this area: the Recommendation to member States on online safety and empowerment of users and content creators and its Explanatory Memorandum; the Guidance Note on the implications of Generative AI for Freedom of Expression; the Policy document “Resisting Disinformation: 10 Building Blocks to Strengthen Information Integrity”; the Policy document “National Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Strategies – Practical Steps and Indicators” and Feasibility Study on Benefits and Challenges to Freedom of Expression in Immersive Realities.

Youth – The Republic of Moldova's Presidency placed youth as a priority in its agenda. Thus, the *Youth Forum: Unleashing human rights: A forum to further universal human rights education for, with and by young people*, which was held at the European Youth Centre Budapest, Hungary (9-12 December 2025) provided an opportunity for the community of human rights educators to share, to reflect and to nurture human rights education practice for the upcoming years, underlining co-operative dialogue between international, national and local partners, whether professionals or volunteers from the formal or non-formal education sectors, whether governmental institutions or non-governmental organisations.

On 17 and 18 February 2026, in Chişinău, more than 40 young people participated in the educational workshop, *"Memory, responsibility and solidarity: young people facing the lessons of the Holocaust"*. During the two-day workshop, the participants were introduced to educational policies in the Republic of Moldova, as well as European and local perspectives on Holocaust remembrance. This also included the Committee of Ministers' recommendations on incorporating the history of Roma and/or Travellers into school curricula and teaching materials, as well as on passing on the remembrance of the Holocaust and preventing crimes against humanity. The event reflected the Presidency's emphasis on democratic resilience, youth participation, and education grounded in European standards and values.

From 11 to 13 March 2026, an *international youth research conference* and a *public roundtable "Youth Perspectives in Action: A new chapter for youth research in Europe"* took place at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, in order to respond to the need to open a new chapter for youth research in Europe and explore the issues related to "Youth Social Rights – Challenges for youth research in an age of disinformation". Both events launched and developed a youth research agenda for the coming years around the theme of young people's access to rights, aimed at harnessing academic and institutional research on this topic to support effective policy development and youth work practice.

On 27 March 2026, an event celebrating the Republic of Moldova's ethnocultural diversity brought together representatives of ethnic communities, diplomats, international organisations, and civil society to celebrate the country's cultural diversity through exhibitions, artistic performances, and intercultural dialogue. Organised in co-operation with the Agency for Interethnic Relations, the initiative's impact lied in promoting social cohesion, strengthening intercultural understanding, and reaffirming Moldova's commitment to European values, inclusion, and the protection of cultural diversity as an essential part of democratic society.

Marking the International Roma Day on 8 April, the international conference "Promoting the implementation of Council of Europe standards on Roma integration" was organised in the Republic of Moldova by ARI, in partnership with the "Voice of Roma" coalition and the Council of Europe, and within the framework of Moldova's Presidency. The conference aimed at facilitating a practical exchange of views between authorities, civil society representatives and the Roma community on the implementation of national policies aimed at the integration of Roma, both at central and local levels.

Building on and reflecting on the implications of Human Rights Education Forum from Budapest in December 2025, the *Regional Compass Training course on Human Rights Education with young people* was organised in Chişinău from 4 to 9 May 2026. The training aimed at engaging in human rights education practitioners and advocates from Moldova and neighboring countries, based on the Romanian version of the Compass manual, to support the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE and foster co-operation between the youth and education sectors.

On 15-17 April 2026, an event for partners and stakeholders in the Republic of Moldova – *Regional Workshop for stakeholders from member States – Cultural Routes Onsite* was organised in Chişinău. The seminar enhanced the visibility and engagement of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in the Republic of Moldova, by providing information and an overview of the main characteristics of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe to various stakeholders concerned with cultural heritage in the Republic of Moldova; it strengthened participants' capacity to establish and maintain collaborative relationships with national and international partners to support transnational cultural routes; it helped to link Moldovan cultural and heritage initiatives with the priorities of the Moldovan Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

III. Human rights

Social rights – Social rights protection featured highly on the Moldova's Presidency agenda, culminating in the ***High-Level Conference on Social Rights and the European Social Charter*** (18-19 March 2026) organised in Chişinău, which concluded with the adoption of a forward-looking political declaration, setting priorities for future action and reinforcing Europe's shared dedication to promoting social rights for all citizens. The Chişinău Declaration on Social Rights and the European Social Charter adopted by the Conference reaffirmed and took forward the collective commitment to social rights and to the Charter.

Marking the 30th anniversary of the Revised European Social Charter, a Treaty Event was organised in the framework of the Conference and several States made new treaty commitments, one of which extended the territorial scope of the Revised Charter to overseas territories; certain States accepted additional provisions of the Revised Charter; a few States handed over letters of intent regarding further acceptance. Eleven side-events, addressing a variety of social rights topics such as: multilevel governance for the implementation of social rights, health literacy, building social justice in Europe, Roma inclusion and the future of work in social rights, digitalisation of social protection systems in Europe, social rights and resilience for Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, etc, were organised in Chişinău. Some of these events had high-level participation, including the Moldovan President, several ministers and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

On 16-18 March 2026, the plenary *meeting of the ECSR* and the *meeting of the Governmental Committee* on the Social Charter took place in Chişinău.

On 24 February 2026, the Republic of Moldova co-organised the Side Event at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) Session – a high-level conversation *From Doha 2025 to Chişinău 2026: Advancing Social Rights and Democratic Stability*, which aimed to build a bridge from the outcomes of the Second World Summit for Social Development (Doha, 2025) to the forthcoming High-Level conference on social rights (HLC) (Chişinău, March 2026). This initiative offered a unique opportunity to translate renewed global ambition on social development into concrete, rights-based commitments as enshrined in the European Social Charter which reinforce social justice, democratic resilience, and stability. It highlighted the importance of social rights as the catalyst for multilateral co-operation, using their benefits as a common language across all the regions and their role as a bridge builder in efforts aimed at achieving greater stability in societies and to translate the Doha global commitments into European social rights systems-anchored actions that advance social justice, democratic resilience, and stability across Council of Europe member States, paving the way toward the HLC in Chişinău 2026.

Under the auspices of the Republic of Moldova's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, on 27 to 28 November 2025, the *19th Ministerial Conference of the Council of Europe International Co-operation Group on Drugs and Addictions (Pompidou Group)* was organised in Strasbourg. The event provided an opportunity for Pompidou Group member States, and other participants to exchange views on the latest political developments and challenges in the field of drugs and addictions.

From 28 to 30 April 2026, the ***Evaluation session and awareness-raising event: European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)*** was organised in Chişinău. The event focused on promoting the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR) as an important tool for facilitating the integration of refugees into higher education systems and labour markets. The discussions highlighted the importance of fair and transparent recognition of qualifications in line with European standards, particularly in situations where official documentation is incomplete or unavailable. Participants examined challenges and practical solutions related to the recognition of qualifications for displaced persons, exchanged relevant European experiences, and explored opportunities for further implementation of the EQPR mechanism at national level. The event also included a dedicated session on the EQPR methodology, aimed at strengthening understanding of qualification assessment procedures and supporting inclusive access to education and employment opportunities for refugees.

Implementation of the Istanbul Convention – the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova placed a particular emphasis on the protection of women and on strengthening efforts to combat violence against women and girls, recognised as one of the most widespread human rights violations. In this context, the *“16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence”* campaign was organised from 25 November to 10 December 2025, in Strasbourg and in Chişinău, with the active participation of member States' delegations and Council of Europe representatives.

On 21 November 2025, a *parliamentary round table* was co-organised with the *Women@PACE* group, on “*Violence against women and the role of parliaments and parliamentarians in implementing the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention*”. Taking place on the margins of the PACE Standing Committee meeting just ahead of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November 2025), the event was opened by the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Grosu, and PACE President, Theodoros Rousopoulos.

On 26 November 2025, a roundtable entitled “*A co-ordinated justice system response to recent legislative amendments on violence against women and domestic violence*” was held in Chişinău, organised by the National Agency for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (NAPCV) in partnership with the Council of Europe. The event brought together representatives of justice sector institutions and relevant stakeholders to discuss the implementation of legislative amendments adopted in July 2025, in line with the standards of the Istanbul Convention. Discussions focused on strengthening interinstitutional co-operation, clarifying legal interpretation issues and identifying practical solutions for the effective and consistent application of the legal framework.

On 28 November 2025, the *international conference “The Istanbul Convention in Action: Preventing Femicide, Protecting Victims and Prosecuting Perpetrators”* was held in Chişinău, focusing on strengthening responses to femicide in light of recent legislative changes. The event highlighted the need for effective interinstitutional co-operation and alignment with European standards.

On 4 March 2026, the Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)1 on equality and artificial intelligence, noting that AI systems may amplify existing discrimination and inequalities, particularly affecting women and girls and increasing the risk of gender-based violence, including online. Furthermore, Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2 on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls was adopted, recognising this phenomenon as a serious human rights concern exacerbated by rapid technological developments.

On 9 March 2026, in the framework of the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70), the event “*Policing the Pixel: Gender, Tech, and Justice*” was organised under the auspices of the Council of Europe within the Moldovan Presidency. The event brought together international experts, law enforcement representatives and key stakeholders. Discussions emphasised the need to strengthen institutional responses to technology-facilitated violence, promote a victim-centred approach, enhance co-operation between authorities and technology companies, and develop effective accountability mechanisms in line with international standards.

On 7 April 2026, the *first edition of the International Platform on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* was held in Chişinău, marking the launch of an annual framework for international dialogue. The conference gathered over 150 participants, including public authorities, justice professionals, development partners, civil society and international experts, providing a platform for exchanging best practices, assessing progress and identifying challenges. It contributed to strengthening international co-operation and formulating recommendations aimed at improving institutional and legal responses, while emphasising the importance of consistent implementation of the Istanbul Convention and a co-ordinated, victim-centred approach.

Children's rights – Considering that this year marks 10th anniversary since the annual awareness day on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse was established by the Committee of Ministers, on 18 November 2025, the *Conference on “Strengthening the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse through evidence-based policy making”* was organised in Chişinău, to raise awareness and highlight the importance of preventing this heinous crime, prosecuting the perpetrators and protecting the victims of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

At the same time, back-to-back with the Conference, from 19 to 21 November 2025, the *46th plenary meeting of the Lanzarote Committee* took place, which provided an opportunity for the Lanzarote Committee, alongside Moldovan stakeholders, to explore common challenges identified in the report. The thematic sessions sought to showcase examples of promising practices of the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention and selected Lanzarote Committee recommendations, with the scope of strengthening the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse through evidence-based policy making.

Under the Moldovan Presidency, two new Committee of Ministers' *Recommendations on the protection of the rights and best interests of the child in parental separation proceedings and in care proceedings* were presented on 19 November 2025, at a public launch event in Strasbourg, and online. Speakers highlighted the value of the recommendations which provide guidance for assessing the child's best interests and ensuring respect for the substantial and procedural rights of children affected by such proceedings.

Migration's Challenges

At the Conference on 10 December 2025, ministers from the 46 member States of the Council of Europe called for the preparation of a political declaration on issues related to migration and the European Convention on Human Rights. The political declaration was adopted at the formal Session of the Committee of Ministers in Chişinău on 15 May 2026.

External Action of the Council of Europe

Defending democratic security inside Europe requires a coherent and visible engagement beyond Europe. In the current unstable geopolitical context, the Council of Europe should position itself as a regional actor capable of contributing to the protection and promotion of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law through its external action.

The Ministerial Session in Chişinău adopted the strategy for the Council of Europe's external action, which aims to strengthen the Organisation's role in contributing to democratic security and the rules-based international order, including renewed multilateralism. Increasing outreach regarding its standards, intensifying relations with observer States and third countries, as well as with partner and other international organisations, are all means to enhance the Council of Europe's role as a regional standard-setter and promoter of values which are universal. The Strategy will be operationalised by an Implementation Plan.

Policy Programme

14 November 2025 – 15 May 2026

1. 14 November 2025, Strasbourg – **Handover of the Presidency between Malta and the Republic of Moldova**, followed by the **inauguration of the Presidency Tram and the Flag-raising Ceremony** – start of the Republic of Moldova’s Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.
2. 18 November 2025, Republic of Moldova – Conference on ***“Strengthening the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse through evidence-based policy making”***.
3. 19-21 November 2025, Republic of Moldova – **Meeting of the Committee of the Parties to the Lanzarote Convention**.
4. 20-21 November 2025, Republic of Moldova – Meeting of the **Bureau and Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)**
5. **21 November 2025, Republic of Moldova – Side-event** parliamentary round table, co-organised with the Women@PACE group in the margins of the PACE Standing Committee meeting - ***“Violence against women and the role of parliaments and parliamentarians in implementing the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention”***.
6. 25 November-10 December 2025, Republic of Moldova and Strasbourg – **16 Days of Activism campaign (combating violence against women)**.
7. 26 November 2025, Republic of Moldova – Roundtable entitled ***“A co-ordinated justice system response to recent legislative amendments on violence against women and domestic violence”***.
8. 27-28 November 2025, Strasbourg – **19th Ministerial Conference of the Council of Europe International Co-operation Group on Drugs and Addictions (Pompidou Group)**.
9. 28 November 2025, Republic of Moldova – **International Conference “The Istanbul Convention in action: preventing femicide, protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators”**, organised by the Women’s Law Centre (WLC) in partnership with the Moldova State University, Faculty of Law, Criminal Law Department, with the support of the Council of Europe and Sweden.
10. 3 December 2025, Strasbourg – **Opening for signature of the Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law**
11. 9-11 December 2025, European Youth Center in Budapest – **Youth Forum: Unleashing human rights: A forum to further universal human rights education for, with and by young people**. 12 December 2025, Republic of Moldova – **International Conference on the European Convention on human rights’ system – execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights**.
12. 16 December 2025, Netherlands – **Diplomatic Conference for the adoption of the Council of Europe’s open Convention on the creation of a Claims Commission for Ukraine**.
13. January PACE Session 2026, Strasbourg – **Visit of the President of the Republic of Moldova, Ms Maia Sandu and communication by Mr Mihai Popșoi, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova**, President of the Committee of Ministers – presentation of the priorities of the Moldovan Presidency.
14. 28 January 2026, Republic of Moldova – **Celebration of the Data Protection Day / Conference “Implementation of the legal framework on data protection: challenges, benefits, resilience”**
15. 16 February 2026, Republic of Moldova – Roundtable **“Local Voices, Shared Goals: Advancing Local Democracy”**.

16. 17 February 2026, Republic of Moldova – **Meeting of the Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.**
17. 17-18 February 2026, Republic of Moldova – Educational workshop **“Memory, responsibility and solidarity: young people facing the lessons of the Holocaust”.**
18. 23 February 2026, Informal meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies on “Crypto-assets: regulations, compliance and measures for digital assets – combating crime and foreign interference”
19. 24 February 2026, UN Office in Geneva – Side Event at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) Session a high-level conversation **From Doha 2025 to Chişinău 2026: Advancing Social Rights and Democratic Stability.**
20. February 2026, Austria – **Presentation of the priorities of the Moldovan Presidency to the OSCE Permanent Council.**
21. 9 March 2026, New York – Side event during the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – **“Policing the Pixel: Gender, Tech, and Justice”.**
22. 11-13 March 2026, European Youth Centre in Strasbourg – International youth research conference and public roundtable “Youth Perspectives in Action: A new chapter for youth research in Europe”.
23. 12-13 March 2026, Strasbourg –**Council of Europe High-level Conference with Ombudsperson Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), named “Council of Europe ON Forum”.**
24. 16-18 March 2026, Republic of Moldova – 354th Session of the **European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR)** and the **Governmental Committee on the Social Charter and the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security (GC)** extraordinary meeting.
25. 18 to 19 March 2026, Republic of Moldova – **High-Level Conference on the Social Rights and the European Social Charter.**
26. 20 March 2026, Republic of Moldova – High-Level **Conference on Media Literacy and Information Integrity: Building Resilience to Disinformation in Europe.**
27. 27 March 2026, Republic of Moldova – Event celebrating the Ethnocultural diversity of the Republic of Moldova
28. 31 March – 2 April 2026, Strasbourg – **50th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. Presentation of the priorities of the Moldovan Presidency.**
29. 7 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – First edition of the **“International Platform on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence: Integrated Policies and Intersectoral Co-operation in the Field of Justice”.**
30. 8 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – International conference **“Promoting the implementation of Council of Europe standards on Roma integration in the Republic of Moldova”**, conference marking International Roma Day.
31. 7-9 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – **Regional Cybercrime Co-operation Exercises.**
32. 15-17 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – Regional Workshop for stakeholders from member States – **“Cultural Routes Onsite”.**
33. **21-22 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – Youth event: "Youth Voices against Discrimination".**

34. 22 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – **4th meeting of the Journalists Matter Campaign Focal Points.**
35. 23 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – Council of Europe Journalists Matter campaign annual **Conference: “Defending Truth: Comprehensive Approaches to Journalistic Safety and Quality Journalism.”**
36. 24 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – **International Conference “The Future of the 'Marketplace of Ideas' amid the Rise of the Internet, Fake News and Artificial Intelligence: Challenges for Constitutional Courts”.**
37. 28 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – **Regional Conference to encourage States from the region to accede to the MEDICRIME Convention.**
38. 28-29 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – **11th plenary meeting of the MEDICRIME Committee.**
39. 28-30 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – Awareness raising event on the topic **“Supporting Refugees’ Participation in Higher Education and Labour Market - European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR) as an international instrument to address national challenges”.**
40. 29 April 2026, Republic of Moldova – **Third Conference on Multi-level Governance following Reykjavík (after Vilnius 2024 & Valletta 2025): International Conference – Multilevel Governance Approaches to Reinforce Democratic Resilience and Build Public Trust.**
41. April 2026 PACE Session, Strasbourg – **Presentation by Mr Mihai Popșoi, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, President of the Committee of Ministers, of the results of the Republic of Moldova Presidency’s Priorities.**
42. 6-9 May 2026, Republic of Moldova – Regional Compass Training course on Human Rights Education with young people.
43. 14-15 May 2026, Republic of Moldova – **135th Session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Handover of the Presidency to Monaco.**

Cultural Programme

1. 20 November 2025, *Eglise Saint Guillaume* – **Jazz musique Concert with TRIGON & Vali Boghean Band.** The artists performed jazz music in a fusion of traditional sounds with modern improvisations of the TRIGON Band, accompanied by the voice of Vali Boghean. The Band was founded in 2009, that blends various genres: pop-rock, Balkan, world music, jazz, and fusion.
2. 17 December 2025, *Eglise Saint Guillaume* – **Folk musique Concert with the Band Wolfs of Calancea & Osoianu Sisters** – an experience of the magic of a winter evening in the spirit of Moldovan traditions, at the sounds of ancestral music, reinterpreted in a modern way by the Wolves of Calancea band and sublimated by the vocal charm of the Osoianu Sisters ensemble.
3. 26-30 January 2026, *Palais de l'Europe* – **Painting exhibition: “February 2022: Echoes”** by painter Valeria Duca.
4. February 2026, *Palais de l'Europe* – **Screening of the Moldovan documentary *Siberia from Bones*** in the CM Screening Hall.
5. 23 February 2026, *National University Library* – **Screening of the documentary *The Liliana’s voice***, a moving documentary that defies the prejudices of a society still marked by a post-Soviet mentality. The film is a part of a project organised by the Council of Europe, in partnership with *Telefilm-Chişinău*.
6. 4 March 2026, *Médiathèque André Malraux* – **Craft Workshop** of making *Mărțișoare* for children, under the guidance of the team from the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History of the Republic of Moldova and screening of the documentary dedicated to the Legend of “Mărțișor” with subtitles in French.

7. 10 March 2026, *Cosmos Cinema* – **Screening of the Moldovan film *Carbon*.**
8. 7 to 25 April 2026, *Médiathèque André Malraux* – **Photo Exhibition “Moldovan Traditional Wear and Clothing”** – the preservation and promotion of these traditional elements contribute to strengthening the cultural identity and cultivating a sense of belonging.
9. 15 April 2026, *Médiathèque André Malraux* – **Literary event** – presentation of the best-selling book *Moldova-people, places, food and wine* by Angela Brașoveanu, which is a visual and narrative journey into the Moldovan soul, discovering kind-hearted people, bucolic landscapes, authentic and multicultural gastronomy and wines with deep roots.