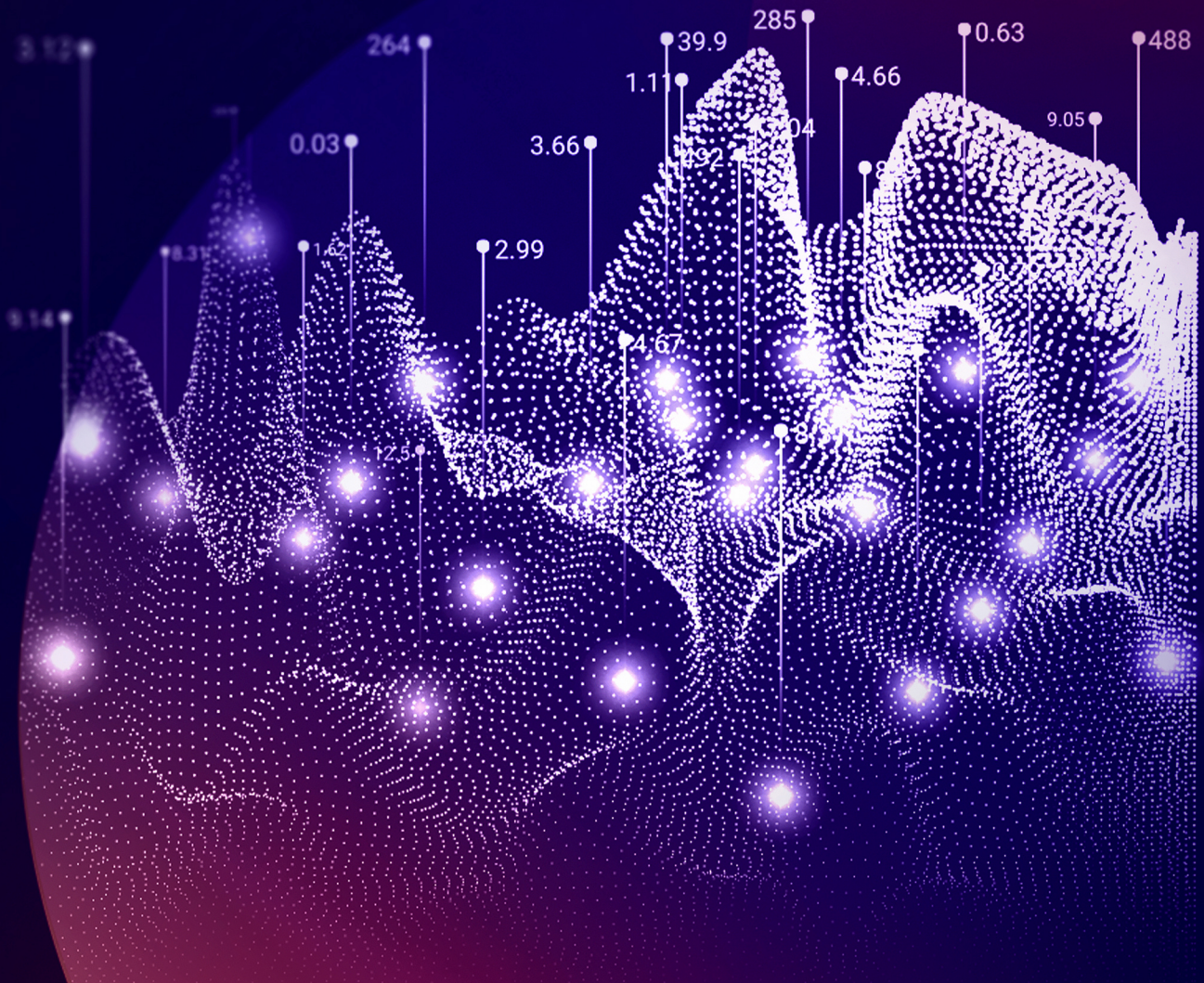


ELENA MÂRZAC, RODICA PANȚA, SANDA SANDU



MAPPING INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN THE SECURITY AND DEFENCE SECTOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

STUDY

Chișinău, 2024



Elena Marzac, Rodica Panta, Sanda Sandu

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The views expressed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of DCAF, EU and NATO.

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Foreword

In a world marked by rapidly changing geopolitical dynamics and security challenges, understanding the intricate web of international assistance and its impact on a nation's security sector is no small feat. I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the authors for the initiative to venture into this research, on a territory marked by complexity, rapid evolution, sometimes opacity, and definitely demanding rigorous inquiry.

Mapping International Assistance to Security and Defence Sector in the Republic of Moldova sheds light into the role played by international community in shaping Moldova's security governance and consolidating its resilience. The study is published at a time when such insights are needed most. The war in Ukraine and the subsequent crises it generated in Moldova, have exposed systemic vulnerabilities that have long delayed and burdened the country's democratic consolidation. Decades of underfunding and underestimation of security risks have crippled national defence capacities, leaving the security sector in dire need for reform, modernization, and allies.

Since February 2022, a newly found sense of urgency has intensified the local demands for a comprehensive reform of the security sector. The European community has marshalled unprecedented levels of attention, support, and funding for Moldova. Numerous initiatives, projects and pledges of support have rapidly emerged, providing resources, expertise, and diplomatic backing to the pro-European reforms undertaken by the Moldovan government.

The study provides the large public with a coherent and well-structured review of the security assistance received by the country and allows interested experts to deepen their understanding of the multifaceted interaction between Moldova's security sector and the international community. The study brings three main contributions to our collective understanding of Moldova's security dynamics.

First, it provides a sea of information about ongoing projects and activities aimed at enhancing Moldova's security capacity. The authors provide more than a collection of project data and statistics, as they define *dimensions* of security that help map and classify the information collected. From *defence capacities* to *democratic governance*, from *human rights* to *digitalization* these *dimensions* of security illustrate the interdisciplinary complexity of security sector and invite a reflection on how different security and defence initiatives interconnect and blend with other areas of governance, impacting the overall well-being of a society. The large number of projects and activities documented here demonstrate that international assistance is not symbolic, and is not solely defense related, but a tangible force for positive change, promoting the adoption of international norms and values related to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

Secondly, the study analyses the mechanisms set up at different levels to coordinate international assistance. Moldova currently benefits from a wide spectrum of active donors, but the landscape of support initiatives is fragmented and lacks a comprehensive integration of efforts and evaluation of impact. The authors point to the fact that the big challenge now lies in ensuring local ownership over the prioritization of projects and an effective donor

coordination, both on the Moldovan side and within the international community. The authors unravel the often-convoluted pathways through which assistance flows into the security sector and explore existing modalities of communication, cooperation and partnership between Moldovan authorities and foreign partners.

Thirdly, the study highlights the paramount role of international assistance in shaping the destiny of the country. The authors explain how supporting national capacity to provide security governance is instrumental for keeping Moldova on its current pro-EU track and for mitigating fragility risks generated by the war in Ukraine. With this, the Mapping study places international assistance for security sector into a broader narrative— one of hope, partnership, and progress. It tells the story of a nation's journey towards greater security, prosperity, and stability, and the unwavering support of its international partners in that endeavour.

With these contributions and valuable insights, the mapping study cater to a diverse audience within both the local and international community. I am convinced that the information presented here will enrich scholarly discourse but also provide a robust foundation for informed decision-making and policy formulation. And, as a meaningful exercise of openness and transparency, it will contribute to the reinforcement of public trust in the government and its development partners. Learning about the West's commitment to Moldova's democratic resilience can reinforce citizens' belief that the West is a steadfast ally, committed to shared values of democracy, peace, and prosperity.

DCAF has supported this research study in the context of its larger partnership with the Platform for Initiatives in Security and Defence (PISA), within the implementation of the programme Supporting Security Sector Governance in Moldova, which is kindly funded by Sweden. The programme helps civil society organisations and independent experts to contribute to a more informed public debate on security issues and promote the values and the principles of good governance in security sector.

Phd. Teodora Fuior

Principal programme manager and senior SSR advisor, DCAF

Executive Summary

In 2022, the Republic of Moldova went through the biggest challenges to national security, determined by the destabilization of the regional and global security system. With the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, hybrid threats intensified, which fueled a series of social, humanitarian, economic, energy and security crises and had a negative impact on citizens.

To face these challenges and to ensure its stability and security, the Republic of Moldova sought external support and partnerships. The need and importance of external assistance and partnerships in the management of the security and defense sector in the Republic of Moldova cannot be underestimated, as they play a crucial role in developing and strengthening its security and defense capabilities and in promoting democratic values. External assistance is paramount for government institutions, resulting from the insufficiency of resources allocated from the state budget for improving and strengthening capacities, endowment and improvement of infrastructure.

The security of the Republic of Moldova is a major concern, given the delicate geopolitical context in which it is located. Therefore, cooperation with international partners, including the EU, NATO, OSCE and bilateral actors such as the US, Romania, UK is vital to strengthen security and effectively respond to current challenges. This cooperation involves a series of mechanisms and tools, from political dialogue and practical cooperation to the implementation of concrete projects and the exchange of expertise. It is important that Moldova continues to work closely with its international partners to strengthen its capacity to manage security challenges and contribute to regional and global stability.

Also, partnerships with international organizations, such as NATO and the EU, bring significant advantages for the Republic of Moldova. These organizations provide support in developing security and promoting security and defense sector reforms. Joining partnership programs, such as NATO's Partnership for Peace, has contributed to improving the interoperability of the Moldovan armed forces and strengthening international standards in the security and defense sector.

Another crucial aspect of foreign assistance and partnerships is the promotion of democratic values and good governance in the security and defense sector. In a democracy, civilian control over the armed forces and law enforcement agencies is essential to maintain balance and avoid abuses of power. Assistance and consultation from international partners in promoting transparency, accountability and respect for human rights in the security and defense sector is of crucial importance for the Republic of Moldova.

Coordination between internal and external actors is the key to success in managing external assistance. The Republic of Moldova has established mechanisms that include representatives from various ministries and international organizations. These mechanisms aim to facilitate communication, information exchange and project coordination. Institutional strategic plans and policy documents are also being developed to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of external assistance. Within the Ministries, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Health and others, Directorates have been created that

are responsible for coordinating external assistance, they have the role of attracting and negotiating external assistance projects and correlating institutional needs with national strategic priorities and international.

In the Republic of Moldova, the Ministry of Finance is responsible for the coordination and management mechanism of external assistance and fulfills the role of single point of contact/control in the relationship with external development partners and public authorities regarding proposals for external assistance projects/programs. Through the Platform for the Management of External Assistance, the operational exchange of information regarding the implemented assistance projects takes place.

External assistance is offered to beneficiaries from the Republic of Moldova on the following dimensions: the development of defense capabilities and capabilities, the transformation and modernization of the defense sector, including the development of security and defense policies, security education; democratic governance, institution development, anti-corruption and integrity; human security, dialogue and conflict management, internal affairs, border security, safety and crisis management, emergency management; migration and the refugee problem; cyber security; environmental security; nuclear security.

The security crisis faced by the international community offers opportunities to the Republic of Moldova for the transformation process of the National Army not only through the programs of NATO, but also of the European Union, also through bilateral cooperation (with Romania, USA, France, Germany, etc.), as the availability of partners to provide assistance has increased significantly.

The Republic of Moldova experienced a major change in the dynamics of its cooperation with international organizations after February 2022. This materialized in an intensification of projects and programs, an increased focus on security, refugees, border management and increased cooperation with external partners. The tense regional context highlighted the importance of strengthening external relations and continuous adaptation to changes in the security sphere.

Moldova has developed significant mechanisms for attracting, managing and coordinating external assistance in the security sector. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms must be constantly assessed and improved to ensure efficient use of resources and to achieve the country's security and defense objectives. It is crucial to maintain transparency and accountability in this process and to continue working closely with international partners to ensure security and stability in the region. We recommend implementing the following policies:

- Adaptation of external assistance to the specifics and real needs of the Republic of Moldova, avoiding the application of standard solutions or the copying of models that do not fit the local context.

- Emphasis should be placed on building a robust internal capacity by providing training and education to the staff of security institutions so that they can effectively manage the resources and skills they have accumulated.
- Improving the coordination mechanism of external assistance, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and that there is synergy between different programs and initiatives.
- Ensuring a higher level of transparency on how external funds are spent and measuring their impact. This would increase public confidence and ensure better accountability for results.
- Engaging civil society and encouraging closer collaboration with civil society organisations, which can provide valuable feedback, monitor the implementation of reforms and identify areas for improvement.
- Carrying out periodic evaluations of the impact and efficiency of external assistance, with the aim of adjusting and recalibrating the actions according to the changes in the security environment and the emerging needs of the Republic of Moldova.

Foreign assistance and international partnerships are vital for strengthening the national security of the Republic of Moldova. They support the country's reintegration efforts, improve external cooperation, strengthen border security and strengthen intelligence capacity. In this sense, it is imperative that the Republic of Moldova continues to develop and strengthen relations with international partners and receive the necessary assistance to face the security challenges it faces.

Instead of introduction

In an increasingly interconnected and complex global context, good governance of the security sector has become fundamental in maintaining a nation's stability and development. In particular, the Republic of Moldova faces unique challenges that require increased attention in the security sector. This study aims to present a mapping of Foreign Assistance to the security and defence sector in the Republic of Moldova, providing a comprehensive overview of the need for foreign assistance in the current security environment, the main partners involved, and the support platforms created for this purpose.

The confluence of factors such as Russia's brutal war against Ukraine, frozen conflict, European aspirations, and external pressures make effective governance of the security sector a pressing necessity. The war in Ukraine represents a significant shift in the regional security balance, amplifying the need for external assistance and multilateral cooperation.

In recent years, foreign assistance has become an essential component of efforts to strengthen the country's national security and European integration. However, coordinating, implementing, and monitoring this assistance remains a challenge, given the plurality of actors involved and the specificities of each recipient institution. *The aim of this study is to*

provide an overview of the mechanisms and benefits of this assistance, while identifying challenges and prospects for improvement.

This study explores external assistance in the security and defence sector in the Republic of Moldova provided by bilateral and multilateral levels. The study focuses on key components and areas such as: 1. military and defence, 2. conflict management, 3. home affairs modernisation and 4. Human security, 5. Environmental and cyber security, These areas are supported through various international assistance mechanisms, which manifest themselves in a comprehensive and multidimensional manner.

Foreign assistance in security and defence is examined not only as a component of donor aid programming, but also as a foreign policy instrument with long-term implications for Moldova's stability and security. This study aims to provide an analytical framework for understanding the complexities of mapping foreign assistance to security sector governance. Through a multidisciplinary approach, the study aims to facilitate a constructive dialogue between donors, recipients, and other stakeholders, and contribute to efforts to strengthen security and stability in the region.

In addition, the study provides several recommendations for more effective implementation of security and defence assistance. These suggestions include improving the alignment and coordination of international assistance, and adopting a holistic and comprehensive approach to reform that respects the principle of local sovereignty and ownership in the process of change.

Methodology

This study is based on a rigorous methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to examine the complexities involved in the foreign assistance in security and defence sector of the Republic of Moldova. The research tools used include comprehensive analysis of external assistance datasets, documentary analysis, legislative review, field research, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires. Documents analysed include various reports and studies from government institutions, international organisations, foundations, think-tanks and academic institutions.

In total, 15 interviews were conducted with experts from civil society, officials from state institutions, representatives of embassies, and representatives of international organizations active in the Republic of Moldova. These interviews, conducted in Romanian and English, focused on conceptual questions related to objectives and activities in the security and defence sector, as well as more specific questions about the shape of the donor agenda, project and programme dynamics, aid coordination and local involvement. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing both for answers to specific questions and for open discussion on relevant topics.

The aim of these interviews was to identify the existing mechanisms for communication and coordination between donors and beneficiaries, and to get a better understanding of how

security and defence assistance can be optimised in the specific context of Moldova, addressing local and international challenges and opportunities.

Questionnaires were also used to collect information from civil society, state institutions, embassies, and international organizations active in the Republic of Moldova. The questionnaire was composed of questions on implemented foreign assistance projects, dynamics of assistance, delivery mechanisms, and challenges in the field.

We have collected and analysed quantitative data on the external assistance received by the Republic of Moldova for security and defence for the period 2022-2023 and those in progress. This included, but was not limited to, allocated budgets, funding sources, partners, specific projects, purpose, and objectives. The information was collected from the Platform for the Management of External Assistance, a database that tracks donor agency support to the security and defence sector¹. The Platform for the Management of External Assistance does not include all programmes and projects implemented with the support of external donors, because some of these projects are sensitive and confidential in nature.

Validation sessions of the study results were organised with donors and beneficiary and implementing institutions of assistance projects.

The information reflected in this study comes from public sources— no confidential or secret data have been included. This study presents a list of the main projects implemented since 2022, as well as those planned to be implemented in the near future, collected from sources available in the public space and from the questionnaires/interviews organized during the elaboration of the study.

The study seeks to provide a holistic picture of the context, challenges, and opportunities related to international security and defence assistance in the Republic of Moldova, and to formulate informed and relevant recommendations for all stakeholders.

The categories were developed following the analysis of the areas included in the first edition of the study on mapping foreign assistance in security sector governance in the Republic of Moldova.²The areas were expanded following the assessment of areas that have become urgent and of major importance for Moldova following Russia's war against Ukraine.

The study captures the intersection between a variety of projects in the security and defence sector. Many of the projects are cross-cutting and could be included in more than one category; they have been mentioned in the category that appeared to be most relevant, given the description of their objectives and purpose. Projects strengthening the democratic oversight framework, transparency and accountability, and governance framework are

¹ <https://amp.gov.md/>

² Elena Mârzac, Viorel Cibotaru, Sanda Sandu, Rosian Vasiloï. External assistance in security sector reform in the Republic of Moldova. Chisinau: 2018

included where relevant. Projects funded include examples, but are not limited to, support for democratic institutions, anti-corruption initiatives, conflict management, and peace building.

Part II of the study presents the list of main projects (implemented in the period 2022 – November 2023) in progress, as well as those planned to be implemented in the near future, available from public sources.

Research limitations

There are many constraints and limitations worth mentioning in order to understand the data collection and analysis processes. The main limitation during the data collection stage, was the potential overlapping of information on projects and programmes, due to the use of multiple open data sources. Some of these sources may refer to the same projects or programmes, but with different names. We tried to minimize this risk by triangulating data from different sources to get a more comprehensive understanding.

Another major constraint in the data collection phase was the limited time and difficulties associated with accessing detailed information about various programme activities. It is a challenge to validate details presented in open sources, such as duration and allocated budgets.

For confidentiality concerns, some of the information collected on various programmes has not been integrated into the final report. Although we attempted to document most of the programmes and projects active in Moldova, some entities and donors contacted chose not to participate in the mapping process. It is essential to emphasise that this report is based solely on the information made available to the research team. The report is not exhaustive and does not represent all projects and programmes assisting the defence and security sector in Moldova.

CHAPTER 1. THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE TO THE SECURITY AND DEFENCE SECTOR

1.1. The need for external assistance to develop the sector

Russia's military invasion of Ukraine has had significant implications on the nature and focus of the foreign assistance received by Moldova. There has been a recognition of Moldova's vulnerability to potential external threats, given the geographical proximity of the war and the geopolitical interests of international actors in the region. Therefore, the need to ensure Moldova's stability, security, and sovereignty in the face of threats and hybrid warfare has become a priority in international assistance. This has been reflected in the increase and diversification of assistance for defence and security capacity building, law enforcement training, and strengthening of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border control. The Republic of Moldova has received and continues to receive assistance from several international actors, including the European Union, the United States, NATO, specialised United Nations agencies, governmental and non-governmental organisations. Each of these partners comes with its own set of priorities and methods, making coordination a key element in maximising the effectiveness of assistance.

The Republic of Moldova is already tackling many aspects of national security and defence preparedness. Moldova is diversifying its energy sources, increasing defence investment, strengthening relations with partners, and improving strategic communication to expose Russia's vulnerabilities and propaganda. But perhaps most important is the effort to improve national resilience. This is a very important issue, which takes time and effort, but will certainly make Moldova less vulnerable to Russian influence.

Institutional needs that require international support

The data provided in this chapter included information gathered from interviews and questionnaires with stakeholders. Ministry of Defence promotes collaboration between international partners and national institutions, being the key interlocutor on all national defence issues. International cooperation on this dimension is important for enhancing the defence capacity of the state, not only because of the modest defence budget, but also in view of the participation of the National Army in international peacekeeping missions and operations. The support of partners is also fundamental for the implementation of institutional reforms, with a focus on improving management, reducing corruption, and strengthening transparency.

The Office for Reintegration Policies stresses the importance of external assistance and international partnerships in managing the country's reintegration processes. This includes negotiations for the peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict and projects implemented on both sides of the Dniester River with the financial support of international entities and partner states. External assistance is essential for strengthening the links between the two sides, thus reinforcing single national spaces throughout the country.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) plays a crucial role in facilitating cooperation between external partners and national institutions, particularly in foreign assistance and partnerships. Recently a new office of foreign affairs and European integration in the state chancellery has been opened. Will begin operations in 2024 under the auspices of the Minister of FAEI.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI) stresses the need for external assistance due to the insufficient resources allocated from the state budget for equipping and improving the infrastructure of MAI and its subordinate subdivisions. Technical assistance, expertise, training, and studies financed from external sources are vital for the institutional development of the MIA.

The Border Police stresses the need to strengthen the national security system, particularly border security. Given the austerity of the national budget, external assistance is imperative to improve and strengthen the Border Police's capabilities.

The Intelligence and Security Service (SIS) recognises the importance of cooperation in intelligence work, especially in an era of interdependence, globalisation, digitalisation, and increasingly complex security challenges. Cooperation, joint operations, exchanging information, lessons learned and best practices with external partners are essential to prevent and counter security risks and threats.

1.2. Specificities of external assistance to the security and defence sector

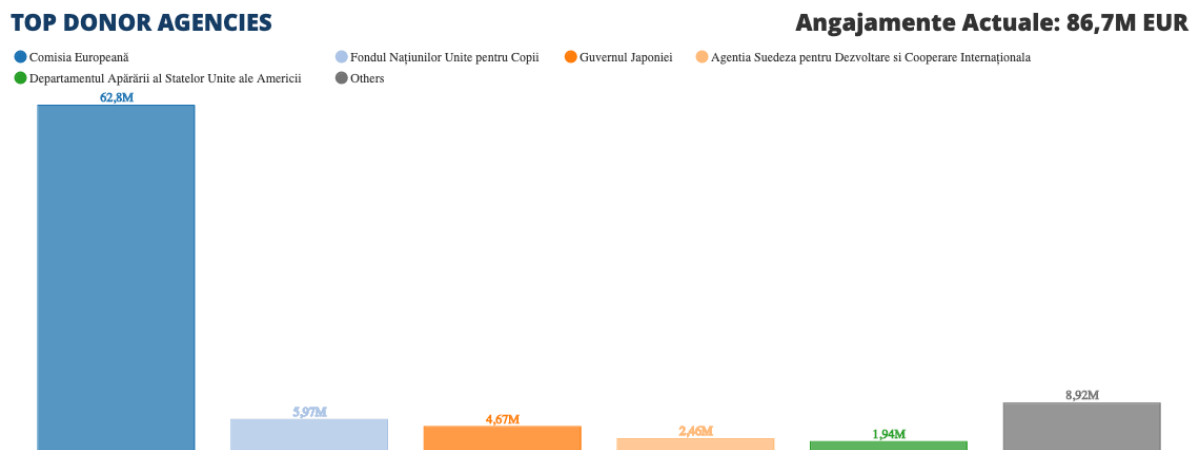
According to the Rules of the Institutional Framework and Mechanism for Coordination and Management of External Assistance,³ external assistance includes both financial and technical assistance provided to the Republic of Moldova, the Government and/or other public authorities by the creditor/donor community;

- **Financial assistance (cooperation)** - financial support in the form of loans, grants, including supplies of goods and/or works for the implementation of projects/programmes;
- **Technical assistance (cooperation)** - support in the form of knowledge transfer, including technologies, methodologies, and techniques in projects/programmes through training, human resource development, research— the costs of which are covered by donors. This includes various social projects designed to strengthen the capacities of central and local authorities and civil society or to support the preparation and implementation of investment projects. There is also external assistance received in the form of donations, humanitarian aid, philanthropic means and sponsorships. Both private sector and non-governmental organizations registered in the Republic of Moldova benefit from external assistance.

³ Decision No 377 of 25-04-2018 on regulating the institutional framework and mechanism for coordination and management of external assistance, https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=117564&lang=ro

International actors involved in security sector development contribute a wide range of mandates and expertise, through various forms of technical and financial assistance, addressing issues such as justice, anti-corruption, policing, defence, human rights, and good governance.

Externally supported programmes develop the state's capacity to create and use policy tools to mitigate vulnerabilities, and more effectively prevent and address threats to national security.

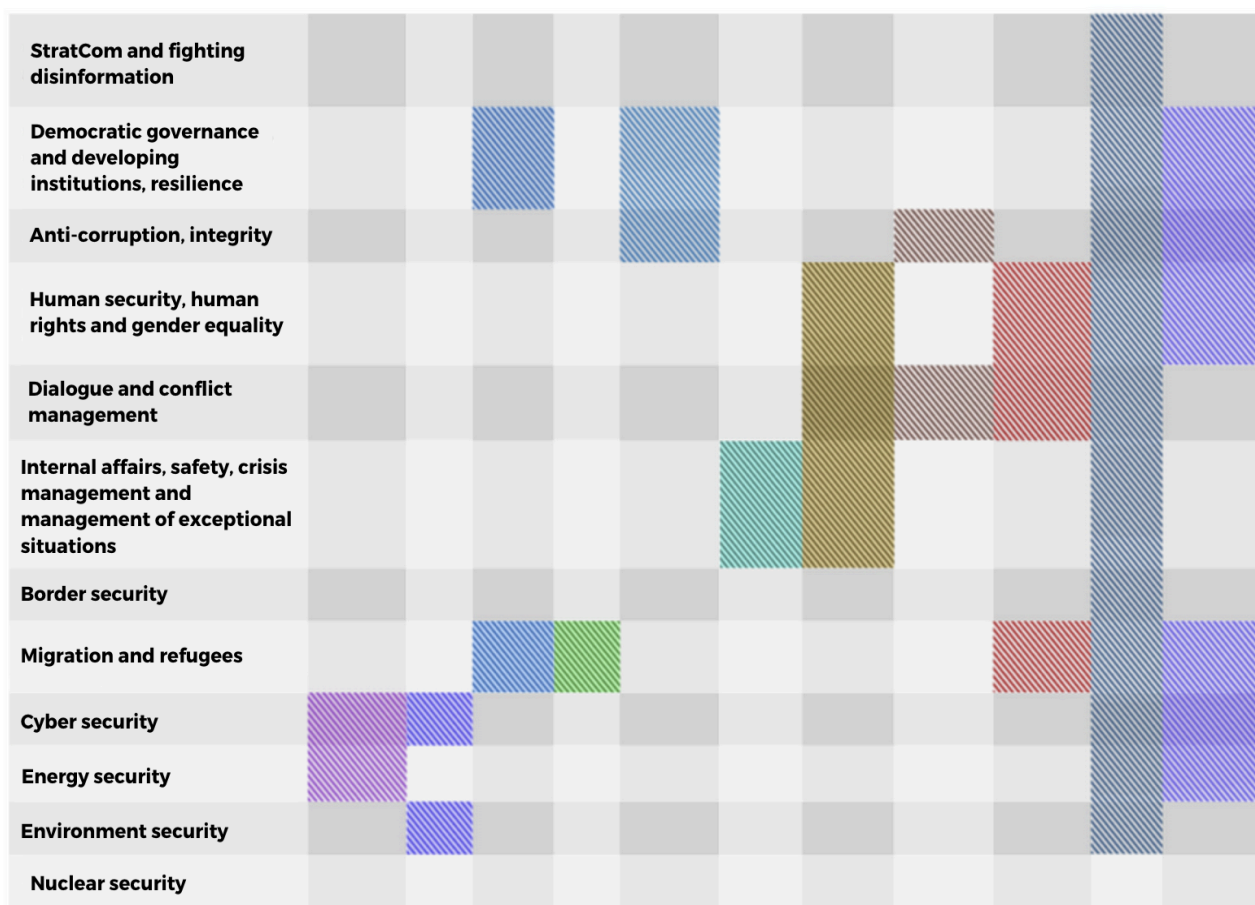


Source: Platform for the Management of External Assistance, Information on donor agency support to the security and defence sector, <https://amp.gov.md>

Recently, the tense geopolitical context, significantly marked by the war in Ukraine, has generated a notable change in the dynamics of foreign assistance delivery in the security and defence sector in the Republic of Moldova. This has led to the emergence of new international donors, such as Japan and Denmark, determined to contribute to strengthening national capacity to respond to challenges. In this respect, the need for humanitarian and other forms of assistance has become imperative, with the main objective of effectively managing the multiple crises facing the country.

Table: The areas and organizations that provide external assistance to the Republic of Moldova in the field of security and defense

Areas	Organisations										
	BERD	BM	CE	FFP	NATO	OMV	ONU	OSCE	PNUD	UE	USAID
Developing defence capabilities and capacities, transforming defence modernisation											
Security and defence policy development, security education											



Source: Elaborated by the authors

Table: The domains and states that provide external assistance to the Republic of Moldova in the field of security and defence

Areas	Austria	Czech Republic	Switzerland..	Estonia	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Japan	Latvia	Lithuania	Norway	Netherlands	Great Britain	Poland	Romania	Slovakia	USA	Sweden	Turkey	Ukraine
Developing defence capabilities and capacities, transforming defence modernisation	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Security and defence policy development, security education	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Strategic communication and countering misinformation	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No

- **Diplomacy and mediation:** the Republic of Moldova has also received support for initiatives aimed at ensuring regional stability and security of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. This has included efforts to advance the resolution of the frozen conflict in Transnistria.
- **Humanitarian support:** In the context of massive population and refugee movements from Ukraine following the war, there has also been increased support to help Moldova manage refugee flows and ensure that they are properly integrated into society and that their rights are respected.
- **Developing defence capabilities:** The security crisis faced by the international community provides opportunities for the Republic of Moldova to transform the National Army through NATO, European Union programmes, and also through bilateral cooperation countries such as (with Austria, Japan, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United States of America, etc.), as the willingness of partners to provide assistance has increased significantly. The partners demonstrated their commitment to strengthening the capabilities of the Moldovan Armed Forces to enhance national security, stability, and resilience in the defence sector. Thus, based on advancing the process of reforming and modernising the national security and defence sector in line with new developments and requirements of the security environment. The aims are based on developing the defence and security capabilities of Moldova, strengthening the resilience of democratic institutions and increasing the level of military interoperability.

Table: Modalities and areas of support of partners providing external assistance to the Republic of Moldova

	Support modalities	Areas
Donors (bilateral and multilateral assistance)	Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conflict management -Arms control -Human rights and democratisation -Combating human trafficking and violence Gender equality and anti-discrimination
	Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prison reform -Justice reform -Police reform -Anti-corruption and integrity

Donors (bilateral and multilateral assistance)	Institutional support	-Human rights and democratisation, -Combating human trafficking and violence,
	Legislative support	-Gender equality and anti- discrimination.

Source: Elaborated by the authors

- **The beneficiaries of projects in the field of security and defence** are governmental institutions (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Border Police, Customs Service, Intelligence and Security Service, Office for Reintegration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration), non-governmental organisations working in the field (Promolex, IPRE, PISA, Institutum Virtutes Civillis, etc.), universities in the country and the private sector.

In this context, foreign assistance and international partnerships have become essential to strengthen and consolidate Moldova's national security. Governance of the security sector is a complex and multidimensional process that requires a coherent and integrated approach. It is imperative that the Republic of Moldova develops effective mechanisms for planning, implementing, monitoring, and absorbing external assistance in this context.

CHAPTER 2. ANALYSIS OF MECHANISMS FOR ATTRACTING AND COORDINATING EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

In this chapter, we present an overview of the main donors involved in the security and defence sector. Secondly, we will deepen the discussion on the coordination of international assistance, identifying challenges and points of convergence or divergence between donors and recipients. Finally, we present an assessment of the impact of international assistance on SSM in the Republic of Moldova. As well in this chapter will be analysed the specifics of foreign assistance in the security and defence sector of the Republic of Moldova, exemplifying the complex practices of relevant institutions such as the Ministry of Defence, the Reintegration Policy Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI), the Ministry of Interior (MAI), the Border Police, and the Intelligence and Security Service (SIS).

In a globalised world, no state can ensure its security in isolation. External assistance, be it financial, technical, or operational, is often indispensable to strengthen security. Such external assistance not only enhances individual capabilities but also streamlines integration into collective security systems.

In an increasingly interconnected global environment, collaboration and partnerships become vital to the success of any institution. External assistance and strategic partnerships are not only beneficial, but often essential to respond to the complex and multifaceted challenges of the modern world.

The current situation, marked by rapid changes in technology, geopolitics, and the social climate, brings with it a number of new needs and requirements. In this context, external assistance becomes crucial to provide technical expertise, funding, and resources that might otherwise be inaccessible. Partnerships, whether with other public institutions, the private sector, or non-governmental organisations, can provide access to networks, know-how and opportunities for innovation.

In terms of current needs, these can range from strengthening the technological infrastructure to developing training programmes for staff, or addressing complex social issues that require a multidisciplinary approach. External assistance and partnerships also allow for an exchange of best practice and faster adaptation to international norms and standards.

External assistance and partnerships are therefore not only a way to improve institutional efficiency and effectiveness, but also a means to respond proactively to emerging opportunities and challenges, thereby enriching institutional capacity to serve the interests and needs of the public.

One of the main findings of our research is that the new geopolitical context Moldova finds itself has dramatically increased the attention the country receives in the international community and it has boosted the external assistance received.

Russia's military invasion of Ukraine has had significant implications for the nature and direction of foreign assistance to Moldova. The need to ensure Moldova's stability, security, and sovereignty in the face of threats and hybrid warfare has increased. This has translated into diversified assistance adapted to the new realities of the region. An example of this is the case of the Office for Reintegration which considers external assistance and international partnerships vital due to the Transnistrian conflict and the geopolitical transformations triggered by the war in Ukraine, . It is largely thanks to the involvement of international actors in the negotiations for the peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, through organisations such as the OSCE and the EU, as well as major donors such as the USA, that they have helped to put the Transnistrian issue on the agenda of the international community and to strengthen ties between the two sides of the Dniester. In this context, major donors such as the EU, the US, the OSCE, the United Nations and its specialised agencies, consider the regional security context and environment when providing coordinated external assistance. ⁴

Institutional mechanisms for the coordination of external assistance

Within the Reintegration Office civil servants are actively involved in the review and coordination process of projects implemented through international programmes such as the EU-UNDP Programme "Confidence Building Measures" or "Export Capacity Building on the Dniester banks" (*AdTrade*). Thus, officials participate in *Steering Committee* discussions, in the selection process of eligible projects and in the evaluation of their results. Project information is updated and accessible on the websites of international partners.

The Ministry of Interior has a Directorate for Coordination of External Assistance and Project Management, which is responsible for attracting and negotiating external assistance projects and linking institutional needs with national and international strategic priorities. There are also formal working mechanisms, cooperation agreements and action plans, and coordination and information sharing done through the "Together 4 Home Affairs" platform.⁵ A Sectorial Council was set up as a consultative structure that contributes to the good management of external assistance under the platform. Twice a year, the Council brings together representatives from the MFA subdivisions and partners to review the implementation of external assistance projects and programmes and to summarise progress.⁶ The Council will identify and strengthen new cooperation partnerships with the donor community, in view of the MI's major objective of strengthening the field of home affairs in the process of accession and alignment with EU legislation. In addition, this platform is intended to inform the public and the donor community about the progress made in the implementation of assistance projects and programmes and to strengthen strategic partnership dialogue.

⁴ For additional details please see Part II of the study which contains information on projects and programmes on conflict management and negotiation, p. 54

⁵ Strategic Council on Policy Dialogue - Together4home Affairs.

<https://www.mai.gov.md/ro/consiliul-strategic-privind-dialogul-de-politici-together4home>,

<https://www.mai.gov.md/sites/default/files/transparenta/TOG/eBook.pdf>,

https://www.mai.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/matricea_dezvoltare.pdf

⁶<https://maisigurinue.md/together-4home-affairs/>

An important tool in the management of external assistance is the "Development Matrix of the Home Affairs sector for the years 2023-2025,"⁷⁻² which includes all actions that require external assistance for implementation and provides the needs and priority actions for capacity building of the MFA system. All the actions in the strategic document are taken from the six sectoral programmes of the Strategy for Development of the Internal Affairs Sector (SDDAI) for the years 2022 -2030. It includes 138 actions in six policy areas, with an external assistance requirement of over 345 million euros. The implementation of the Development Matrix is regularly monitored, and so far, 33% of the programmed activities have been implemented, compared to the expected 15%.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) plays an important role in facilitating cooperation between external partners and national institutions, including in the processes of identifying needs for external assistance and developing and delivering projects and programmes.

The Ministry of Defence receives external support from international organisations and foreign governments, covering a wide range of activities and areas. The defence institution has subdivisions and mechanisms that ensure and facilitate bilateral and multilateral cooperation with development partners. The International Cooperation Directorate is responsible for promoting, ensuring, and managing the Ministry of Defence's cooperation with the defence institutions of other states and international organisations, while the Foreign Assistance Transformation and Coordination Directorate is responsible for developing, promoting, and refining policy on attracting, implementing, and coordinating foreign assistance in the form of programmes, projects or donations. Most assistance projects are implemented through certain bilateral or multilateral platforms and programmes such as PfP, IPAP, DCBI, PARP, IMET, GPOI and others.

The Border Police is also actively involved in the external assistance process, participating in the formulation of projects and project ideas, identification of needs, formulation of objectives, implementation of projects, and impact assessment. There are formal mechanisms in place within the working process, cooperation and implementation agreements, Steering Committee and evaluation interviews during project implementation and/or after completion.

The Intelligence and Security Service (SIS) has a special role in external cooperation and assistance given its nature as a special service. Cooperation with counterpart institutions at bilateral or multilateral level is essential to detect and prevent potential risks and threats to national or regional security. 'External assistance' to the SIS takes the form of exchanging data and expertise, conducting joint operations, and other intelligence-specific activities.

⁷ Together 4 Home Affairs Sector Council in the field of external assistance: Adoption of the Development Matrix for the years 2023-2025. <https://www.mai.gov.md/ro/node/7492>

The benefits of security and defence cooperation

Cooperation with international partners to develop and strengthen the security sector is essential given the multiple threats and challenges that Moldova currently faces. . With the help of various initiatives and assistance from external partners, Moldova has managed to improve its security capabilities and competences.

The benefits of cooperation with international partners are manifold. In the case of the Reintegration Office, we see increased visibility and expanded capacity to serve citizens on both sides of the Dniester. The collaboration has not only brought in valuable resources but also introduced innovative practices and methodologies, crucial for effective reintegration efforts. With the backing of international partners, the Reintegration Office has been able to extend its outreach, offering more comprehensive services and support mechanisms to the people in the region. This includes improved access to social, economic, and legal services, contributing significantly to the betterment of lives and fostering a sense of unity and cooperation across the Dniester. This is not only an immediate benefit in terms of security, but also a means of improving relations and creating long-term trust and stability in the region. Also, the accumulation of expertise in working with international organisations is a knowledge asset that will benefit Moldova in the long term.

External assistance has contributed to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of government institutions in the sector. Reducing response time in managing a crisis or security situation is vital and highlights how beneficial this cooperation can be in terms of responsiveness and resilience. This ensures greater visibility on the international stage, and an improvement in all three dimensions of security: politico-military, environmental and economic, and human.

The assistance received by the defence sector translated into equipment, technical means and training that helped strengthen resilience to new security challenges at the Moldovan border. In addition, this external support has helped to optimise processes and increase capacity to combat cross-border crime.

The benefits are wide-ranging, from preventing and countering security risks to improving the exchange of intelligence and expertise with other intelligence agencies internationally. It helps create a more robust security environment, both nationally and regionally.

Cooperation with external partners in the security sector has brought the Republic of Moldova concrete benefits, from improving the capabilities and efficiency of national institutions to developing expertise and know-how that will have positive long-term impacts. These partnerships are valuable tools for any state wishing not only to maintain its security but also to strengthen its status and influence on the international scene. In Moldova's case, they serve a dual purpose: strengthening national security and advancing the process of European integration and representation on the world stage.

2.1. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation - a tool for attracting external assistance



At present, the assistance provided by Moldova's development partners acts as a catalyst in the areas of security, home affairs, justice, and human rights. It is also a crucial source for the implementation of key infrastructure projects, for political support in the process of alignment with the EU acquis, and for strengthening the institutional capacities of public authorities.

Cooperation with international partners, including the EU, NATO, OSCE, has been vital in strengthening security and responding effectively to the current challenges. This cooperation involves a range of mechanisms and tools, from political dialogue and practical cooperation to the implementation of concrete projects and the exchange of expertise. It is important that Moldova continues to work closely with its international partners to strengthen its capacity to manage security challenges and contribute to regional and global stability. In the Republic of Moldova, this cooperation takes place at several levels and involves a range of actors, both national and international.

The Republic of Moldova has shown a sustained interest in strengthening national security through involvement in various international and regional partnerships.

Coordination between internal and external actors is the key to success in managing external assistance. The Republic of Moldova has established mechanisms, comprised of representatives from various ministries and international organisations, which facilitate communication, information exchange, and project coordination. In this context, we present the coordination mechanisms:

2.2. International mechanisms and platforms for coordination of external assistance

Aid coordination involves establishing concrete mechanisms and arrangements, agreed among the donor community, to enhance development effectiveness at country or sector level. This can be achieved by proactively engaging multiple stakeholders and establishing financial forecasting systems that facilitate sustainable aid management. Beneficiaries of external assistance address a wide diversity, including government institutions, civil society organisations, the media and, ultimately, citizens who benefit directly or indirectly from international support.

To achieve significant results, it is essential that the national government integrates donor efforts into national governance and development plans and structures. In this regard, the

objective of coordination will be to ensure "aid effectiveness" and "development and security effectiveness."⁸ These issues are particularly relevant for the Republic of Moldova, especially in terms of aid coordination.

The Republic of Moldova is committed to international agreements such as the Paris Declaration (2005), the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), the Busan Commitments (2011) and the Mexico Communiqué (2014). These commitments underline the need for improved dialogue between donors and recipients to make assistance more effective and aligned with national development priorities.

According to the provisions of Government Decision No 377 of 25 April 2018 "On the regulation of the institutional framework and mechanism for the coordination and management of external assistance," the Ministry of Finance has been designated as the national coordinating authority for external assistance.

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the coordination and management mechanism of external assistance and acts as a single point of contact/control in relation to external development partners and public authorities on proposals for external assistance projects/programmes.

The coordination of external assistance has been largely focused on ensuring permanent and intensive dialogue between the Government, the Ministry of Finance, and external development partners. Thus in 2022-2023, in the context of the felt impact of Russia's war in Ukraine on the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, the Moldova Support Platform was created by an initiative of Romania, Germany and France, aiming to generate immediate political, financial and material assistance. The following major events took place:

- The disbursement of the second tranche of the ongoing Direct Budget Support Programme "State and Resilience Building Contract for the Republic of Moldova" (grant assistance) in the total amount of EUR 75 million from the European Commission was secured;
- Negotiation and signature of the Grant Agreement on Sector Budget Support to Promote Energy Security for Vulnerable Groups signed between the German Development Bank KfW and the Republic of Moldova, represented by the Ministry of Finance, ensuring the disbursement of the fixed tranche of budget support (grant assistance) in the amount of EUR 40 million on 28 November 2022 from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany;
- Coordination of the priorities/projects forming the EU Annual Action Plan 2022 (AAP 2022) for Moldova in the amount of EUR 40 million (grant assistance in the form of grants, Twinning, etc.), consisting of one programme: the "EU Programme for Resilience and Governance" and adopted by the European Commission Decision on

⁸ Annual Report on External Assistance to the Republic of Moldova in 2016.
https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/oda_raport_2016.pdf

the financing of the Annual Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova for the year 2022 (C(2022)9686 final of 16.12.2022);

- In view of the need to manage the refugee crisis, development partners have mobilised to contribute financial resources (by way of donation) to the Government of the Republic of Moldova's Intervention Fund in the special account opened for the support of Ukrainian refugees (e.g.: contribution of the Government of the Swiss Confederation - in the amount of about 3.2 million USD, disbursed on 3 May 2022 (1st tranche) and 30 June 2022 (2nd tranche), contribution of the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden - in the amount of about 3.7 million EUR, disbursed on 13 October 2022.⁹

In the process of analysing the mechanisms for providing foreign assistance, it is necessary to provide an overview of the role of negotiators in the process of receiving foreign assistance in the security and defence sector, which has a direct impact on how international resources and support are channelled and used in the Republic of Moldova. Negotiators representing the interests of the state are responsible for setting the terms and conditions under which assistance is received, ensuring that it is consistent with national security and defence objectives. They play a key role in identifying funding opportunities, establishing strategic partnerships, and facilitating the exchange of expertise and knowledge. It is therefore imperative that these negotiators are well trained and have the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of international relations and assistance agreements.

Therefore, negotiations cannot and should not begin without a prior assessment and knowledge base of donor concerns. Gathering information on their agenda, objectives, modalities, and perspectives is a crucial first step to be considered by any government or actor in an attempt not only to balance the existing asymmetry in information, but more specifically to build national capacity for communicating with donors.¹⁰

In order to strengthen the negotiating capacity of state representatives and to promote national interests effectively, a continuous process of training and professional development is necessary. This involves not only improving technical skills and domain-specific knowledge, but also developing communication and coordination skills.¹¹ Good internal coordination and communication is essential to ensure that external assistance is aligned with national priorities and that resources are allocated in a way that maximises the benefits for the security and defence of the country. Thus, capacity building of negotiators becomes a key component in the process of optimising the flow of external assistance in the security and defence sector in the Republic of Moldova.

⁹ Report on the work of the Government 2022-2023.

https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/raport_gov_2022-2023_0.pdf

¹⁰ UNESCO IIEP, Contributions No.19 Negotiation with aid agencies: a dwarf against a giant, Hallak, Jacques, Document presented during the Specialized Course on Macro Educational Planning for Malaysian Ministry of Education Officials, IIEP/S.149, Paris, 1995, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000101042>

¹¹ OECD, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series Harmonising Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery Good Practice Papers, A DAC Reference Document, <https://www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/20896122.pdf>

In an attempt to address the multi-faceted challenges, various platforms and mechanisms have been developed to coordinate assistance. These range from bilateral agreements to multilateral initiatives and multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms such as:

- **Support Platform for Moldova**

The Support Platform for Moldova, established in April 2022, was created in the context of the war in Ukraine at the initiative of Romania, Germany, France with the participation of the USA. It is a response mechanism to the consequences and crises generated by the war on the Republic of Moldova.

The aim of the Platform is to mobilise, focus and coordinate political, technical, and financial support from developed countries to the Republic of Moldova. In particular, it aims to generate immediate assistance as well as in-depth expertise for the democratic reform process from the institutions and member states of the European Union, G7 countries, international financial institutions and international organisations, and other development partners.

In preparation for the Platform Conferences, meetings of the 6 pillar thematic working groups are held:

- humanitarian effort - managing the flow of refugees and their resettlement in European countries.
- energy - supporting Moldova's energy security;
- fighting corruption.
- supporting the government in implementing the ambitious reform agenda, including in the areas of justice, fighting corruption, and promoting economic development; - border management
- internal affairs and effective border management.
- financial assistance - increasing socio-economic resilience; - administrative reform and public finance management.¹²

The first edition of the Ministerial Conference of the Support Platform for the Republic of Moldova took place in Berlin, Germany, on 5 April 2022. The second edition took place in Bucharest, Romania, on 15 July 2022. The third edition took place in Paris, France on 21 November 2022. The fourth edition was hosted in Chişinău on 17 October 2023.¹³

1.4 billion has been pledged through the Moldova Support Platform, bringing together EU Member States, G7 countries, international partners, and like-minded countries to mobilise immediate and concrete international support for Moldova in the face of the current situation. By September 2022, Moldova had received €420 million.¹⁴

¹² Support platform for the Republic of Moldova ro/eng.<https://www.mai.gov.md/ro/node/7639>

¹³Support Platform for the Republic of Moldova ro/eng, Government of the Republic of Moldova <https://gov.md/ro/platforma-de-sprijin-pentru-republica-moldova>

¹⁴The European Union and Moldova Factsheet, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/Factsheet_EU_Solidarity_with_Moldova_May%202023.pdf

During the 3rd edition of the Platform, it was announced that the Republic of Moldova will receive €148.7 million in financial support, including €38.7 million in grants and €110 million in soft loans for the development of strategic sectors. The support for infrastructure, energy and climate change adaptation comes in the context of the signature of six financing agreements under the Support Platform for the Republic of Moldova.¹⁵

State institutions collaborate with international organisations, bilateral/multilateral partners and national and international NGOs. Cooperation with international organisations is based on Cooperation Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding and Partnership Agreements concluded with international organisations. Cooperation with bilateral/multilateral partners is also based on cooperation plans concluded with counterpart institutions in other countries and cooperation agreements/memoranda with partner country agencies.

● **Cooperation mechanisms with the European Union (EU)**

Since 2014, bilateral relations have been based on the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, including a deep and comprehensive free trade area, which provides the basis for a stronger political association and economic integration between the EU and Moldova. EU-Moldova relations have entered a new strategic phase since the European Council recognised Moldova's European perspective and granted it EU candidate country status on 23 June 2022. EU assistance and support for democratic reforms has brought tangible benefits to Moldovan citizens over the years, such as increasing trade and visa-free travel to the Schengen area since 2014.

The EU is one of Moldova's main partners in strengthening its security. Through the High Level Political and Security Dialogue, the EU guides its actions to strengthen security in Moldova. This involves expanding cooperation through the newly launched EU-Moldova Partnership Mission, the Internal Security and Border Management Support Hub, the EU Border Assistance Mission, as well as working with European agencies such as Frontex, Europol, Eurojust and CEPOL. In addition, internal security and border management are strengthened through targeted investment and provision of equipment. Furthermore, Moldova's defence sector is strengthened through the European Peace Facility.¹⁶ The European Peace Facility was established in March 2021 to finance all Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) actions, with the aim of preventing conflict, maintaining peace, and strengthening international security and stability. In particular, the EPF allows the EU to finance actions aimed at strengthening the capabilities of non-EU countries and regional and international organisations in military and defence matters.

Over the last few years, the EU has provided Moldova with substantial support using a variety of different instruments, such as macro-financial assistance, humanitarian aid,

¹⁵ Government of Moldova, Six Financing Agreements signed under the Support Platform for the Republic of Moldova. <https://gov.md/ro/content/sase-acorduri-de-finantare-semnate-cadrul-platformei-de-sprijin-pentru-republica-moldova>

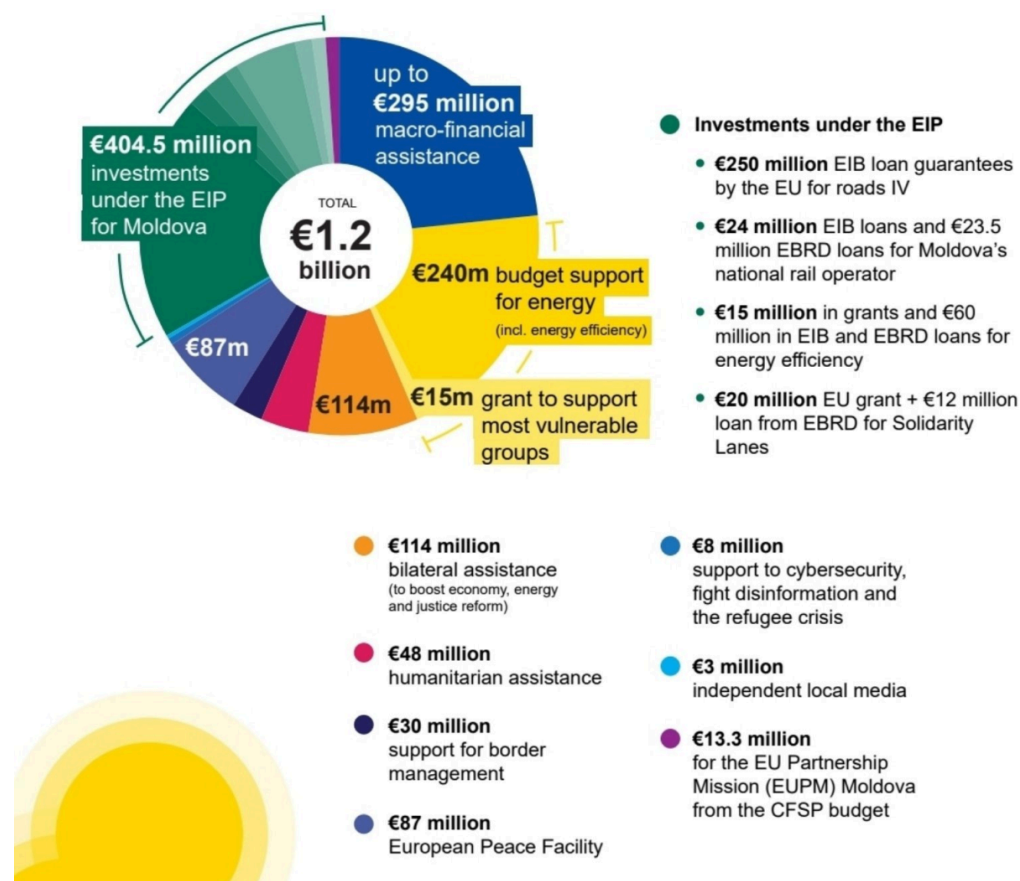
¹⁶ European Instrument for Peace. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/policies/european-peace-facility/>

development assistance, support provided by EU Member States under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism civilian aid programme, and programme support implemented in several government institutions (through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe). As of October 2021, the EU has provided over €1.09 billion in support, including grants and loans. As of 2021, Moldova has received €87m under the EPF, €30m for border management, €8m for cyber security, FIMI and the refugee crisis, €3m for independent local media and €13.3m is allocated for the EUPM mandate.

Thanks to the EPF, the EU supported the Ukrainian armed forces through seven successive support packages, as well as many other countries, including Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.¹⁷

EU'S OVERALL SUPPORT TO MOLDOVA SINCE 2021

Since October 2021, **€1.2 billion** has been made available for Moldova by the EU, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.



Source: Factsheet EU Solidarity with the Republic of Moldova https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ro/fs_22_1667

The European Commission's Foreign Policy Instruments Service (FPI) also supports the analytical capabilities of the Ministry of the Interior by training and promoting analytical

¹⁷European Peace Facility: EU Council increases financial ceiling to almost €7.98 billion by 2027. <https://euneighbourseast.eu/ro/news/latest-news/facilitatea-europeana-pentru-pace-consiliul-ue-majoreaza-plafonul-financiar-la-aproape-798-miliarde-de-euro-pana-in-2027/>

culture in public order and security services. With this upcoming project, 20 trainers will be trained and two OSINT tools will be purchased to develop analytical products. In the area of disinformation and FIMI, the FPI has funded the Estonian expert network project PractNET (already supporting similar efforts in Ukraine) to provide support on StratCom issues. With the launch of EUPM, PractNET and the Mission's Hybrid Threat Team joined forces, demonstrating a strong example of an integrated EU approach, well appreciated by partners of the Republic of Moldova.

The EU has also funded humanitarian assistance projects managed by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) that provide services to vulnerable refugees and host families in Moldova since the beginning of the war. Since Russia's aggression against Ukraine began in 2022, €48 million in humanitarian aid has been allocated to Moldova in various humanitarian coordination and humanitarian coordination clusters (Food Security and Livelihoods, Protection, Disaster Risk Reduction, WASH, Health and Shelter).

Security cooperation is carried out on several platforms:

European Union Partnership Mission in the Republic of Moldova (EUPM Moldova)

EUPM Moldova is a non-executive, non-armed civilian mission under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), established on 24 April 2023 by the Council of the European Union. The objective of this civilian mission is to enhance the resilience of the country's security sector in crisis management and countering hybrid threats, including cyber security and countering foreign intelligence manipulation and interference. The mission provides strategic advice to the Moldovan authorities in these areas and identifies the needs to strengthen capabilities for early warning, detection, identification, attribution, and response to hybrid threats¹⁸. EUPM Moldova also includes a project cell, which funds projects to complement the advice provided to Moldovan authorities.

To avoid duplication and in the spirit of an integrated approach, the EUPM coordinates its activities with the EU Delegation and other like-minded donors.

As the Ministry of Interior Affairs is a key beneficiary of EUPM activities, EUPM has undertaken assessments of crisis management structures and capacities at both sectoral and national level. In addition, EUPM has been involved in the establishment of the new Centre for Strategic Communication and Countering Misinformation, providing best practice advice, and ensuring a European perspective. Another vital component of EUPM's activities are the trainings offered to staff of governmental institutions in the Republic of Moldova.

European Union Security HUB

Understanding the internal security burden, but also the increasing dangers to its own internal security environment, the EU launched the EU Support HUB for Internal Security and Border

¹⁸ European Union Partnership Mission to Moldova (EUPM)
https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/moldova/misiunea-de-parteneriat-uniunii-europene-%C3%AEn-moldova-m. pue_ro?s=223.

Management in the Republic of Moldova, thus making Moldova part of the European security space.¹⁹ The Support Hub operates under six core priorities, namely: trafficking in arms and ammunition, smuggling of migrants, trafficking of human beings, terrorism and violent extremism, cybercrime, and drug trafficking.²⁰

The importance of the HUB lies in its level of operation, as it is a regional operational mechanism through which joint intelligence expertise is conducted to ensure the security infrastructure of European countries. By hosting this EU Security HUB, the Republic of Moldova succeeds in asserting itself as a security provider, thus contributing to the strengthening of Europe's security belt. To improve the collaboration strategy, as well as the quality and quantity of information exchange on the platform in Chisinau, two working groups have been set up: the first is tasked with monitoring and countering hybrid warfare, and the second with systemic approaches to large seizures of goods taken out of civilian use, including arms, drugs and others. Among the main results listed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, which denote a deepening of interoperability between the security structures of the Republic of Moldova and the European/international ones, can be mentioned: 1. Design and implementation of the system for identifying criminal trends for the European area, based on information indicators quantified on the territory of the Republic of Moldova; 2. 106 operational actions in which the Republic of Moldova participates during 2023 on the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT); . 1. Elaboration of the first Moldovan OpenSource Intelligence (OSINT) analysis and submission to the European Europol Police Office (Europol EPO) as national contribution to the design of European analytical products; 2. 14 joint investigations with Europol support regarding emerging trends in transnational crime.

EU High Level Advisory Mission to Moldova (EUHLAM) (2023-2025)

The project is funded by the European Union with an implementation period of two years, from January 2023 to January 2025. Its main objective is to support the Moldovan authorities in implementing the reform agenda and in developing the capacities needed for the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA), including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), as well as assistance for the EU accession negotiation process. In particular, the project aims at strengthening the policy-making process at a sectoral level, including the strategic planning/policy development and policy management capacities of line ministries and agencies operating in the sectors selected for assistance; strengthening the knowledge and awareness of stakeholders on EU policies, legislation and regulations; strengthening the capacities of central level public institutions in the Republic of Moldova; providing advice to ensure the political, institutional and financial sustainability of planned reforms in these sectors for their effective implementation.

¹⁹ EU Security HUB for internal security and border management of the Republic of Moldova (Infograms).
<https://www.mai.gov.md/ro/node/7598>

²⁰ Factsheet: EU support package for Moldova.
<https://euneighbourseast.eu/ro/news/publications/fisa-informativa-pachetul-de-sprijin-al-ue-pentru-republica-moldova/>

The project provides support for the engagement and work of EU High Advisers appointed by the EU Delegation to Moldova. At present, the EU Senior Advisers Mission is composed of 10 advisers in the following sectors: anti-corruption; diplomatic and European affairs; education; energy; environment and green transition; internal security affairs; local public administration reform, including decentralisation and voluntary merger; customs and tax policy; strategic coordination and European affairs; coordination of reforms.²¹

European Union Border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) - deployed over the period 2005-2023

The mission promotes border control, customs/fiscal rules and practices that meet EU standards and meet the needs of both partner countries. The main areas of assistance are: promoting EU border management standards and procedures for faster crossing by persons and goods; enhancing the professional capacities of Moldovan and Ukrainian customs and border authorities; supporting Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities in combating cross-border crime more effectively; acting as a catalyst to bring together key stakeholders to strengthen cross-border cooperation between border authorities and law enforcement agencies; contributing to the peaceful resolution of the Transnistrian conflict. The project is funded by the European Commission with € 5 000 000²².

European Endowment for Democracy (EED)

The EED is an independent and complementary mechanism, established in 2013 by the European Union (EU) and EU Member States, which provides rapid and flexible technical and financial support to promote democracy in the European neighbourhood (Eastern Partnership - EaP - and Middle East and North Africa - MENA), the Western Balkans, Turkey and beyond. The EED supports civil society organisations, pro-democracy movements, civic and political activists, as well as independent media and independent journalists working for a pluralistic, democratic society and pluralistic and democratic political system. In Moldova, the EED has been active in supporting small independent media or initiatives, including in Transnistria (e.g. People and Kilometres).²³

The European Security and Defence College (ESDC)

The ESDC organised courses on cyber defence policy at a national and international level. The courses cover strategic aspects of cyber security and defence of EU Member States, relevant EU institutions and agencies, as well as agencies in partner countries (priority for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia).

The European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)

The EUISS is the Union's agency for the analysis of foreign, security and defence policy

²¹ Project description. <https://www.eu-advisers.md/ro/projectdescription/>

²² European Union Border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine/ EUBAM Phase 13-Border Resilience
<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2128~language=en>

²³ No public information on projects is available.

studies. The Institute held consultations on cyber issues with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine during 2022. In addition, EU ISS facilitated consultations on Moldova's National Security Strategy in Brussels in June 2023, attended by EEAS, Commission, EUPM and others.

EU Law Enforcement Training Agency (EU CEPOL)

In partnership with Europol, EU CEPOL implemented the Operational and Training Partnership against Organised Crime (TOPCOP), which ran from 2020 to 2024, and was funded by DG NEAR. The partnership aimed to improve law enforcement cooperation in the Eastern Partnership in the fight against organised crime. The cyber security capacity building activities cover the following: web seminars on cyber investigations and the dark web, study visits on the latest cyber threats, trends and strategies to fight cyber-crime, regional course on cryptocurrencies, online payment fraud and malware. In addition, CEPOL aims to provide specific capacity-building support to the AU and MD in cyber criminal investigations, war crimes and criminal analysis.

Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)

In September 2023, the EU and the Republic of Moldova signed the Agreement for Moldova to become a Participating State in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Full entry into force is foreseen for 1 January 2024. Prior to this, in February 2022, Moldova activated the UCPM requesting assistance in managing migration flows, with several EU Member States and Norway providing emergency assistance. A rapid response measure with a budget of €8 million has been announced under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation programme. Neighbourhood and Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe" (referred to as "NDICI- Global Europe") will strengthen Moldova's resilience to the crisis situation by supporting national efforts to enhance the country's cyber security and the resilience of its cyberspace, while also providing inclusive assistance to the government and the population in managing the refugee influx resulting from the war in Ukraine.

The Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) regional cooperation group

Foreign ministers from the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) regional cooperation group (which includes Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden) have jointly expressed their support for Moldova amid Russia's hybrid threats.

European Centre of Excellence for Hybrid Threat Countermeasures (Hybrid CoE)

Hybrid CoE is an international, autonomous, network-based organisation open to all EU and NATO countries, promoting a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to countering hybrid threats. The main task of the Centre is to strengthen the capabilities of its participating states to prevent and counter hybrid threats. This is done by sharing best practices, providing recommendations, and testing new ideas and approaches. The Centre also strengthens the operational capabilities of participating States by training practitioners and organising practical exercises. A Hybrid CoE working paper explores key tools that Russia can use to achieve its policy objectives in Moldova. In October 2022, the Hybrid CoE facilitated a scenario-based discussion on hybrid threats from Russia and China and possible EU and NATO responses. The Hybrid CoE also hosted the pilot course on "The Contribution of Cyber in Hybrid Conflicts", organised by the European Institute of the European Defence

Agency (EDA) with the support and participation of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence.

The European Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management (CoE)

This Berlin-based association was established in February 2020 following an invitation to all European Union (EU) Member States members of the EU by the German Federal Foreign Office. It works with a focus on improving capabilities to strengthen civilian crisis management in the framework of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Together with the Swedish Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA).

Additional measures of exceptional assistance to the Republic of Moldova from the EU are also currently under consideration, in particular an 18-month aid programme aimed at strengthening public service delivery in a hybrid threat environment (up to a maximum of €12 million) through the provision of equipment and capacity building programme. This exceptional programme will also contribute to ensuring a secure and independent environment for the smooth conduct of future elections.

- **Cooperation mechanisms with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**

One of the most constructive partnerships of the Republic of Moldova on the modernisation of the national defence system is the collaboration with the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance. In this regard, the cooperation of the Republic of Moldova within the framework of the Partnership for Peace Programme has been exploited through the instruments and initiatives offered by NATO: the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), the Strengthening Integrity Programme (BII), the Partnership Planning and Review Process (PARP), and the Defence Capabilities Building Initiative (DCBI)-. These mechanisms have played an undeniable role in the modernisation process of the National Army. Although Moldova promotes the principle of neutrality, it is deepening its political dialogue and practical cooperation with NATO through the Moldova-NATO IPAP for 2022-2023. This plan, approved by Government Decision, outlines the objectives and areas of dialogue and practical cooperation with the Alliance, including the modernisation of the national security and defence system, the development of capabilities to combat new threats, the management of exceptional situations, the implementation of NATO-supported projects and the promotion of strategic communication and public diplomacy.

NATO and individual Allies have extensive experience of defence and security sector reform. Following the request of the Moldovan government (the principle of cooperation is based on the principle of request), NATO supports defence reform efforts through several initiatives. NATO-Moldova bilateral projects are developed in a complementary manner, meaning that projects are interlinked and sometimes interdependent. The main objective of NATO cooperation with Moldova is to support the country's efforts to reform and modernise defence and security structures and institutions.

The assistance projects focus in particular on the reform of the security and defence structure in accordance with international and democratic standards, the training of the National Army personnel in the relevant institutions in allied and partner countries, as well as the implementation with the support of the Alliance of several humanitarian, social and academic projects, the public diplomacy segments, the development of long-term capabilities (2020-2030), the participation of the Moldovan military in international peacekeeping missions, as well as the European integration process of our country.

NATO Centre of Excellence for Strategic Communications in Latvia (StratCom CoE) Cooperation of NATO and EU staff with the NATO Strategic Communications Centre Strategic Communications Excellence in Latvia (StratCom CoE). In the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023, both Lead States facilitated the involvement of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in the Countering Disinformation War Game organized by Hybrid CoE and StratCom CoE, which aimed to support partner countries' strategic communications capabilities.

Centre of Excellence for Crisis Management and Disaster Response (CMDR COE): The CMDR COE is a NATO accredited and certified entity in Sofia, Bulgaria, which provides recognised expertise and experience to benefit NATO, particularly in support of transformation. Its area of expertise is crisis management, disaster response capabilities and improving alliance interoperability. The CMDR COE organises courses, seminars and conferences, exercises and training, workshops, meetings, and requests for papers on crisis management and disaster response. These include Climate Change Concept and Development Support and Courses on Climate Change and Security.

- **Cooperation mechanisms with the Council of Europe**

The Council of Europe's Action Plan for Moldova 2021-2024 is a vital strategic programming tool, which aims to continue the process of aligning Moldovan legislation, institutions, and practices with European standards. It covers key areas such as human rights, rule of law, and democracy, with the main objective of supporting Moldova's efforts to fulfil its obligations as a Council of Europe member state. The Action Plan is proving to be a crucial tool in facilitating transition and ensuring compliance with European norms and values.

The priorities set out in the Action Plan are the result of a thorough analysis of the decisions, resolutions, recommendations, and opinions issued by the various bodies of the Council of Europe, such as the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, and the European Commission for Democracy through Law. They also reflect Moldova's national commitments as defined in the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030", the Strategy for Ensuring the Independence and Integrity of the Justice Sector (2021-2024), and the National Human Rights Action Plan.

In the context of this Action Plan, the Council of Europe and the Moldovan authorities reaffirmed their commitment to work together to continue and strengthen the reforms initiated in the past. This includes implementation of the European Convention on Human

Rights, combating discrimination, strengthening child protection, improving electoral legislation, and reforming the penitentiary system. It is also planned to step up efforts in areas such as data protection, the fight against corruption and strengthening the capacity of law enforcement institutions.

The budget of the Action Plan is estimated at EUR 13.7 million. While funding of EUR 2.6 million has been secured, additional funding is essential to fully implement the priority actions identified for 2021-2024.²⁴

- **Cooperation mechanisms with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**

The OSCE plays an important role in strengthening cyber/ICT (information and communications) cooperation, by reducing the risks of conflict between states arising from the use of ICTs. A key element of concern in this respect is the operationalisation of the relevant UN guidelines through government expert groups at regional level. The Transnational Threats Department of the OSCE Secretariat organised a workshop in September 2023 on Coordinated Vulnerability Disclosure (CVD) - a process for managing vulnerabilities in information and communications technology that reduces their harmfulness. Participants were from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South Caucasus and Mongolia.

- **Cooperation mechanisms with International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**

The ITU is working with Moldova to strengthen national and regional capacities. At the national and regional level, to deploy capacity and assist in the establishment and strengthening of National Computer Incident Response Teams (CIRTs). ITU is working with UNDP on this project as part of a global programme (Digital Transformation Strategy 2023-2030).

- **Cooperation mechanisms with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**

The EBRD's three strategic priorities for Moldova over the period 2023-2028 will be to strengthen energy resilience and security and promote a greener environment and greener economy; support a competitive and inclusive private sector; develop a more resilient financial infrastructure and improve governance.

The EBRD is working with Ukraine-founded global cyber security service provider ISSP to increase the digital and cyber resilience of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Republic of Moldova

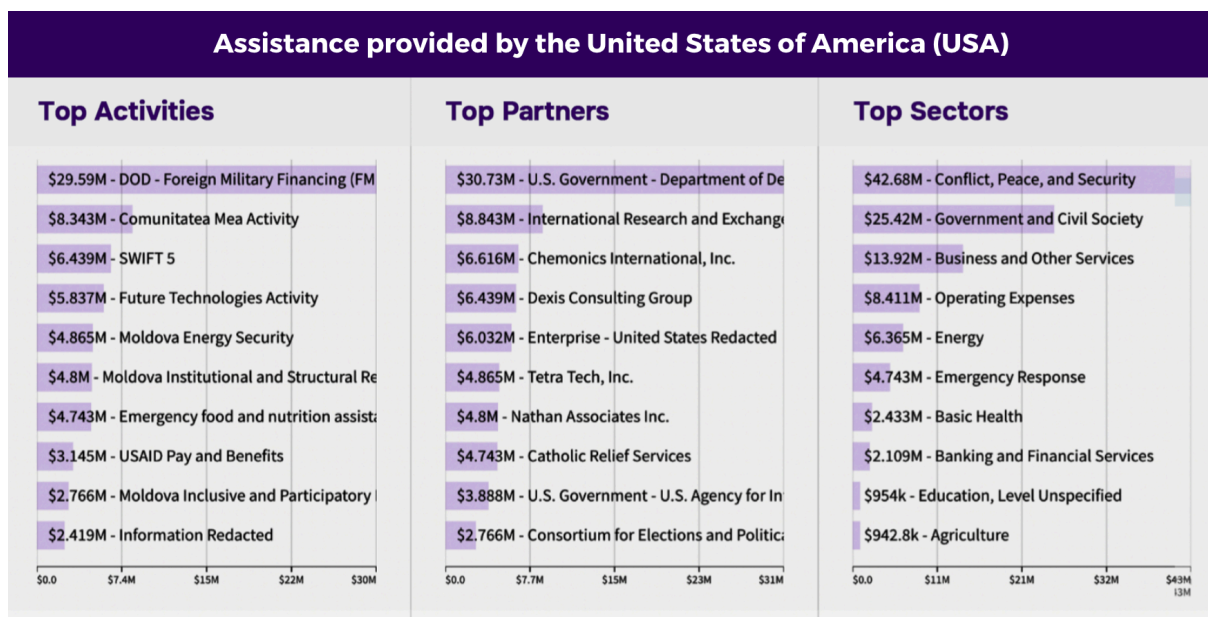
Finally, some additional partnership initiatives currently underway or planned could be listed. However, at this stage and at the time of writing, these have not yet materialised into actual support for concrete activities and therefore could not be included as such in the donor list.

²⁴ Council of Europe, Action Plan for Moldova 2021-2024, <https://rm.coe.int/action-plan-2021-2024-romanian/1680a3ff23>

Bilateral Cooperation Mechanisms

Bilaterally, countries such as Austria, Japan, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States of America provide assistance in the following areas: training/courses in the fields of military logistics, military surveying, military medicine, general inspection, military observers, military refresher courses, military graduate studies, assistance in the field of cyber security, etc.

Considering that the areas of cooperation are diverse, cooperation takes place at different levels and degrees of involvement.



Source: <https://www.foreignassistance.gov/cd/moldova/2022/obligations/0>

The U.S. government assistance aims to help Moldova strengthen democratic institutions, increase prosperity, secure its international borders, and integrate into Europe and the Euro-Atlantic community. USAID is currently the largest U.S. development partner in the Republic of Moldova.²⁵ USAID's goal is to help build a competitive and democratic European Republic of Moldova that resists malign influences-. In support of promoting Moldova's participatory democracy, USAID focuses on direct assistance to public institutions to catalyze citizen engagement in their communities and to stimulate demand for accountable governance and stronger democratic institutions.²⁶ USAID is providing \$63 million in support to the Republic of Moldova on its European journey and in response to the multiple crises facing the Republic of Moldova. The majority of the funds, \$46.3 million, are earmarked for Moldova's sustainable economic growth and will help make the Moldovan economy more resilient. At the same time, \$16.7 million will go to programmes aimed at strengthening

²⁵ United States of America, <https://mfa.gov.md/ro/content/statele-unite-ale-americii-0>

²⁶ Country Overview.

<https://www.usaid.gov/moldova#:~:text=USAID%27s%20goal%20is%20to%20help,partnerships%20with%20the%20private%20sector>

participatory democracy and governance, and enhancing ongoing reforms in the justice system. Priorities include programmes that support independent media institutions and create a media sector more resilient to political and financial pressures, and misinformation. The programme supports the immediate needs of local governments facing refugee flows, including in rural areas, to be more efficient, transparent and accountable, including community development, infrastructure projects and business support.²⁷

The United States also supports International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), the State-to-State Partnership Program (SPP), the Military-to-Military (M2M) Joint Contact Team Program, Humanitarian Main Action (HMA) assistance, and tactical-level military exercises.

In the field of education, *France* hosts an exchange of cadets between the military academies of the Republic of Moldova and the French Republic, language training (French language) of the soldiers of the National Army at the French Alliance in Chisinau and offers studies at military educational institutions in the French Republic. *Austria, Switzerland, Slovakia* also provide training assistance (courses, seminars, workshops) and *the Czech Republic* offers training and courses in the fields of medicine, logistics and standardisation. *Estonia* offers courses in Higher Military Studies at the Baltic Defence College in Estonia. *Turkey* offers military refresher courses and higher military studies at Bachelor level. *Ukraine* assists in the conduct of the EOD Training Centre (Engineer Battalion) course on identification and destruction of single explosive objects on site for the Ukrainian contingent.

Germany provides training/courses in the fields of military logistics, military topography, military medicine, general inspection, military observers, etc. It ensures the care of German war graves in the Republic of Moldova. It also contributes to the training of the National Army contingent planned for deployment to KFOR/Kosovo in Exercise KFOR MRE (Hohenfels) and contributes financially to the implementation of the project Strengthening the Armed Forces for the safe transport, maintenance and storage of ammunition and dangerous goods.

Greece offers undergraduate studies at the *Greek Military Academies*, while *Italy* offers training courses and supports Moldova's participation in KFOR and UNFIL peacekeeping theatres.

Latvia and Lithuania contribute financially to the training of National Army soldiers at the Higher Military Studies Courses at the Baltic Defence College in Estonia, as well as assistance in the development of the sergeant corps.

Japan is an important partner in the field of humanitarian security, provided through

²⁷ The Republic of Moldova will benefit from additional funding of \$63 million from USAID. <https://mf.gov.md/ro/content/republica-moldova-va-beneficia-de-finan%C8%9Bare-suplimentar%C4%83-de-63-milioane-de-dolari-din-partea>

"Kusanone" grants with priority areas: primary health care, education system, protection of vulnerable sections of society, environmental and natural resources system, etc.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands provides assistance in the field of cyber security, including secondment of experts, and training courses in medicine, international cooperation and courses for military observers.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland provides language training for personnel deployed to KFOR, BMATT courses (for junior officers), studies at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, visits and exercises organised by the British Training and Advisory Team.

Romania offers exchange of expertise and cooperation in the field of military medicine, surveying, procurement, military transformation, air situation, etc., military training of all levels. Bilateral exercises are organized (Fire Shield, Regional Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET), Peace Shield, Junction Strike, Fortress, etc.). To facilitate the partnership with Romania, the Moldovan-Romanian Joint Defence Commission was created.

The bilateral partnership with *Sweden* is focused on the defence sector reform, the transformation process of the National Army, in the context of the Defence Capabilities Building Initiative (DCBI), the implementation of the Professional Development Plan, as well as the support to the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in the National Army. Thanks to Swedish partners, through the Swedish Armed Forces International Centre (SWEDINT) and the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM), National Army soldiers have participated in various forms of gender training.

2.3 Dynamics of Cooperation Projects and Programmes with International Organizations in the Field of Security Sector Reform in the Republic of Moldova after 24 February 2022

In the tense context of the geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe, the Republic of Moldova has experienced profound changes and reconfigurations of cooperation with international organizations, especially in the field of security.

The Ministry of Defence receives external support in the context of institutional reform processes, such as the transformation and modernisation of defence capabilities. The aim of this support is to develop and improve national security, international security, crisis management, and institutional strengthening. External support focuses on various professional areas, such as military education and training. Support is also given in the form of equipment and technology, providing the military with modern equipment to carry out its activities more effectively. Overall, the EU provided €7 million worth of equipment in 2021, primarily for military medicine and the development of de-mining capacity. In comparison, in 2022 the EU gave €40 million in equipment and broadened to areas such as Communications, Logistics, Cyber, etc. Experience shows that military equipment received as donations from

International Organisations does not include lethal equipment. External assistance activities also include the provision of advisory support for institutional reforms, with a focus on improving management, reducing corruption, and strengthening transparency.

Reintegration Policy Office: Although the Reintegration Office did not have a direct link with the defence and security sector, it supports reform indirectly through its close cooperation with national authorities. In the current context, the situation in the Transnistrian region has been closely monitored in view of the additional regional security risks. Moreover, the Office has identified the need to respond adequately and promptly to the information censorship implemented in the region, with particular attention to the protection of citizens.

Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI): The transformations related to the dynamics of the projects were evident. Compared to 2020 and 2021, when the MAI managed 83 and 76 projects respectively, in 2022 the number increased significantly to 155 projects. External assistance has increased, with more than €34 million support provided by partners.

Border Police: This reflected a continued increase in cooperation projects and programmes, demonstrating a rapid adaptation to the changed security context. Bilateral and international cooperation was intensified, with close collaboration with Ukraine and Romania, but also with relevant international organisations. External support reached MDL 200 million in 2022, representing about 30% of the annual institutional budget.

Intelligence and Security Service: Following the aggression in Ukraine, there has been a noticeable increase in the attention paid by foreign institutions to the Moldovan Service, contributing to strengthening cooperation and exchange of best practices. There have been essential exchanges of information with key European states in the process of institutional reform and legislative development.

In conclusion, the Republic of Moldova has experienced a major change in the dynamics of its cooperation with international organisations since February 2022. This has materialised in an intensification of projects and programmes, an increased focus on security and increased cooperation with external partners. The tense regional context has highlighted the importance of strengthening external relations and continuously adapting to changes in the security sphere.

2.4 Challenges and impediments in the implementation of external assistance projects. Prospects for improvement

The Republic of Moldova faces many challenges in terms of security and institutional development. The geopolitical situation, including the Transnistrian issue, governance complications and budgetary constraints create a fertile ground for involving external partners in improving the security system. However, cooperation with external partners is not without its complexities and challenges. In this context, external security assistance and projects can play a significant role in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions involved.

Ministry of Defence: The challenges that arise in the process of identifying and implementing programmes relate to the lack of budgets, the lengthy collection of funds needed to start projects, and the long time needed to achieve a change in reform both within the institution and at government level. The field of "National Defence" is a complex one in terms of organisational, procedural, and technical standards that require a long time and considerable financial resources to achieve the objectives. In this respect, the defence sector needs mechanisms to reduce the time needed to collect the funds required to start projects and to use external assistance.

Reintegration Policy Office: The office is not a direct beneficiary of external assistance but receives expertise and advice. As such, the Office stresses the importance of transparent and permanent coordination with all constitutional authorities. The sensitivity of cooperation with Tiraspol is also noted, indicating an acute need for specific assistance mechanisms for the Transnistrian region.

Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI): MAI highlights the shortage of qualified human resources as a major limiting factor. This, combined with the need to adjust the regulatory framework, poses serious problems in project implementation. The institution proposes the creation of an effective coordination mechanism and the separation of the project budget from the national budget.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MAEIE): MFAEI, although not a direct beneficiary, facilitates coordination between donors and national authorities. The institution emphasises the effectiveness of this mechanism, stressing its important role in the preparatory and initial phase of projects.

Border Police: The Border Police mentions several levels of coordination, from strategic to local. Here, the lack of financial and human resources is also prominent. The institution also highlights bureaucracy and regulations as factors that can affect project implementation.

Intelligence and Security Service (SIS): SIS does not apply directly to external funding projects, but is part of working groups, suggestive of an advisory or monitoring role.

There is a general consensus in the Republic of Moldova that a coordinated approach to foreign assistance for security and defence must respect local context and ownership/involvement, which is crucial for effective and holistic implementation. However, the reality on the ground suggests that isolated initiatives have often led to coordination failures and sustainability problems. The complexity of external assistance calls for an "integrated governance approach," involving a clear division of responsibilities and priorities between donors, while ensuring effective coordination.

There are a number of weaknesses in the coordination of assistance at country level, including limitations in the predictability and complementarity of assistance and the risk of duplication of donor efforts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

External assistance is essential for the development of any state, including the Republic of Moldova. It includes financial, material, technical and other resources provided by international organisations, partner countries to support the economic and social development of the recipient country. This type of assistance is particularly important for developing countries as they often face insufficient resources to finance their own development and transformation programmes. External assistance can also be essential in emergency situations, such as natural disasters or political crises, when a country's domestic resources may be insufficient to meet immediate needs and threats to national security.

Internal difficulties, especially the lack of resources and limited institutional capacity, create an increased dependence on external assistance to improve security sector governance. Thus, external assistance becomes not only desirable, but essential for maintaining and strengthening national security. Moldova is currently facing a number of major challenges, including the regional security crisis, the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict and the strengthening of national security. This context makes external assistance and international partnerships vital for the success of reintegration and security efforts.

External assistance for security and defence in Moldova has played a significant role in the development and modernisation of security structures, enhancing the responsiveness and professionalism of relevant institutions, improving the infrastructure and operational capabilities of the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, the Border Police and the Intelligence and Security Service. This involves not only funding, but also expertise, training, and technical support. However, there have been challenges in adapting rapidly to geopolitical changes and new security threats, indicating a need for increased flexibility and effectiveness of external assistance. There is a growing trend to engage more local stakeholders, including civil society organisations, in security reform and implementation processes, underlining the need for closer collaboration and better coordination.

Considering the complex security environment, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has mobilized all available resources for the management of multiple crises, to provide them with the necessary assistance and to reduce the pressure on the socio-economic system of the Republic of Moldova. But multiple and multi-faceted crisis management would not have been possible without external assistance. In the process of developing an active response to crises, as well as sustainable and consistent approaches to solving problems in this area, the need for external assistance and use of accumulated international experience, implementation of advanced practices, policies and programmes is becoming increasingly evident.

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the coordination and management mechanism of external assistance and acts as a single point of contact/control in relation to external development partners and public authorities on proposals for external assistance projects/programmes.

There are a number of complex challenges for security institutions in the Republic of Moldova such as shortcomings in the process of identifying and implementing programmes, lack of budgets, lack of human resources, long collection of necessary funds, lack of transparent coordination, bureaucracy in project implementation. A common solution is the need to identify more efficient mechanisms for managing external assistance, and a well-developed strategy is needed to maximise the benefits of cooperation with external security partners.

Foreign assistance and international partnerships are vital for strengthening Moldova's national security. Through NATO, EU programmes, and also bilateral cooperation, support is given to the country's reintegration efforts, the improvement of external cooperation, the strengthening of border security and the reinforcement of intelligence capacity. In this regard, it is imperative that the Republic of Moldova continues to develop and strengthen relations with international partners and receives the necessary assistance to address the security challenges it faces.

In conclusion, external assistance and inter-institutional partnerships are key to achieving strategic objectives, addressing capacity and resource gaps. External cooperation is not only a facilitator but an efficiency multiplier, enabling the achievement of complex objectives in a dynamic and interconnected environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Adapt external assistance to the specificities and real needs of the Republic of Moldova, avoiding the application of standard solutions or copying models that do not fit the local context.
2. The focus should be on building robust internal capacity, providing training and education for security institutions' staff so that they can effectively manage the resources and skills they have accumulated.
3. Review and improve the coordination mechanism for external assistance within the government, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently on the basis of need and that there is synergy between different programmes and initiatives.
4. Ensure a higher level of transparency on how external funds are spent and measure their impact. This would increase public confidence and ensure better accountability for results.

a) Inclusion of additional project information on the Ministry of Finance website www.amp.gov.md. This portal should contain detailed information on each grant or external funding, including amount, beneficiary, objectives, progress reports and results achieved. At the moment, not all projects in the security and defence sector are included and this causes impediments to data collection.

b) Preparation and publication of regular reports. Publication of quarterly or annual reports detailing progress, problems encountered and results achieved from external funds.

c) Organisation of public events. Seminars , conferences or workshops where stakeholders can discuss, debate and provide feedback on the use of funds.

5. Involve civil society and encourage closer collaboration with civil society organisations, which can provide valuable feedback, monitor the implementation of reforms and identify areas for improvement.

a) Creating a framework for collaboration. Organise regular roundtables between government, civil society and external donors to discuss progress, obstacles and opportunities.

b) Soliciting feedback by implementing feedback mechanisms, such as online surveys or public consultation sessions, where civil society can provide opinions.

c) Funding for monitoring by allocating a share of funds to non-governmental organisations that have the capacity and expertise to monitor the implementation of security and defence reforms.

d) Training and education are essential. Provide resources and training for civil society organisations so that they better understand the security and defence field and can contribute effectively.

In many countries, there are "budget coalitions" or networks that bring together NGOs and experts to monitor and analyse government spending, including foreign funds. These coalitions provide feedback, suggestions and recommendations based on their analyses.

6. Conduct regular evaluations of the impact and effectiveness of external assistance in order to adjust and recalibrate actions according to changes in the security environment and the emerging needs of the Republic of Moldova.
7. Develop and strengthen the capacities of the negotiators representing the country in this process. This can be achieved through consistent investment in training and specific skills development, as well as ensuring access to relevant resources and information in the field. It is also crucial to create a strong support and mentoring network, through which experienced negotiators can share their knowledge and expertise with less experienced colleagues. In addition, participation in mock negotiations, workshops and international conferences can provide valuable learning opportunities and can develop essential negotiation skills. By strengthening the capacities of negotiators, the Republic of Moldova will significantly improve its potential to achieve favourable conditions and maximise the positive impact of external assistance on national security.

8. Develop regional partnerships and strengthen links with neighbouring countries and other countries that have undergone similar reforms in the security sector to exchange experience and best practices.
9. Establish specialised implementation units for the management of external assistance at the level of each institution.
10. Improve administrative capacity by investing in skilled human resources.
11. Simplify bureaucratic procedures to facilitate project implementation.
12. Extremely important is consistency of action, strategic communication at all levels, coordination of implemented initiatives, as well as solidarity and sharing of responsibilities.
13. Develop sectoral studies analysing the situation of external assistance not only in security and defence but also in other crucial sectors. This will provide a comprehensive overview of how external assistance is delivered and implemented, highlighting areas where improvements are needed and identifying opportunities for optimising resources. By looking specifically at different areas, such as education, health, infrastructure and social development, Moldova can identify patterns of success, areas of weakness and areas that need further attention. The development of these sector studies should involve close collaboration between government, research institutions, the private sector and development partners.
14. In the process of identifying, developing, implementing and evaluating projects we present the following recommendations:
 - a) **Project Identification and Development Mechanisms.** To maximise the effectiveness of external assistance and partnerships, it is essential that institutions are actively involved in all stages of projects, from needs identification to impact assessment.
 - b) **Participation in Project Formulation.** Institutions should be consulted and actively participate in the formulation of project ideas and needs. This may include requesting assistance or consultation in the formulation of projects and project ideas that have not yet been started.
 - c) **Identifying Needs and Formulating Objectives.** Consultation with the institutions is essential to correctly identify current needs and to formulate project objectives in a way that reflects these needs.
 - d) **Importance of prioritising needs at institutional and national level.**
 - e) **Project Implementation.** The active participation of institutions in project implementation is crucial to ensure that projects are carried out effectively and that objectives are achieved.
 - f) **Impact Assessment.** Institutions should be involved in assessing the impact of projects, both during implementation and after completion. This may include participation in evaluation interviews or Steering Committees.

Part II

PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA WITH THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

This chapter will present a list of the main projects (implemented in the period 2022 – November 2023), as well as those planned to be implemented in the short term, collected from publicly available sources (open sources) or from questionnaires/interviews conducted during the preparation of the study.

Projects aimed at strengthening our country's resilience to hybrid threats, security and defence sector development relate to the following dimensions of security: capacity building, defence capabilities, transformation, defence sector modernisation, including security and defence policy development, security education; democratic governance, institution building, anti-corruption and integrity; human security, dialogue and conflict management, internal affairs, border security, security and crisis management, exceptional situation management; migration and refugee issues; cyber security; environmental security; nuclear security.

Developing capabilities, defence capabilities and transforming defence modernisation

The projects reflected in this chapter relate to the area of capacity building and capability development of the security and defence sector; actions to transform the national army and support to the reform of the sector in general.

Developing capabilities and interoperability

NATO has expanded its support for capacity building in the wider security sector and works with both civilian and military personnel at various levels in the defence and security sector, including the Ministry of Interior, the Security and Intelligence Service, the State Chancellery and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. NATO supports the government-led reform process, based on a three-pronged approach through: 1. Mentoring, assistance and advisory activities; 2. Military education and a range of training activities; 3. Procurement projects: IT and military non-lethal equipment.

At the 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid, the Allies agreed on a package of tailored support measures to help Moldova strengthen its national resilience and civilian preparedness. As part

of these agreed measures, in February 2023, at the Ministerial meeting in Brussels, Allied Defence Ministers endorsed a Defence Capability Enhancement Package (Enhanced DCBI Package). It will support Moldova in implementing its own plans to develop and modernise its long-term military capabilities in the field of security and defence. In this context, NATO will continue to support Moldova in strengthening its overall resilience and better respond to hybrid pressures and foreign interference. The enhanced DCB package addresses additional requirements identified by Moldova, adding new areas of work as part of a whole-of-government approach.

This new package responds to the deteriorating regional security environment in light of Russia's large-scale, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. NATO will support Moldova in a number of areas, including strategic planning; human resources management; civilian professional development; non-commissioned officer corps development; standardisation of training and logistics; defence resource management; physical security of stockpiles and ammunition management; civil emergency planning and preparedness; defence against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats; countering improvised explosive devices; cyber security; strategic communication; and development of the Carabinieri institution.

DCBI Projects

1. NATO DCBI project on strategic planning which aims to develop and review policy and planning documents (National Defence Strategy, Military Strategy and Long and Medium Term Plans).
2. NATO DCBI Project on Developing Military Medical Capabilities
3. NATO DCBI Human Resources Management Project for the development of the Human Resources Management System.
4. NATO DCBI Project on Defence Professional Development of Civilian Personnel (PDP)
5. NATO DCBI project on standardisation of logistics for all allied or partner countries.
6. NATO DCBI project for the development of the sergeant corps, transition to Western standards. Transformation of the NCO Corps leadership system.
7. NATO DCBI project on defence resource management for the development of the national resource management system. We are currently in the process of promoting an initiative for the development of an electronic national resource register.
8. NATO DCBI Project on Force Development for Special Operations
9. NATO DCBI project on the development of cyber defence capabilities - the project only concerns non-lethal equipment, medical training, communications
10. NATO DCBI Integrity Building Programme in the Defence and Security Sector.

Interoperability

Increasing the interoperability of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova with the forces of NATO allies and other partners is also a priority. The Operational Capability Concept (OCC), through a rigorous assessment and *feedback* programme, is an essential tool in supporting those Moldovan operational military structures, designated to meet and comply with NATO standards, to achieve a level of interoperability with similar structures in allied and partner states, so that they can be made available for peacekeeping or crisis management operations.

NATO provides the Republic of Moldova with numerous programmes aimed at developing interoperability with NATO allies' forces and strengthening capabilities to participate in NATO-led peacekeeping operations. Learning to use a common language and developing interoperability in terms of standard procedures are essential elements. Multinational exercises, visits by teams of experts and refresher courses are available to help develop the capability of its forces to work with NATO forces. Through participation in multinational exercises, the Republic of Moldova is developing the ability of its peacekeeping forces to work with forces of other countries, particularly in crisis management and peacekeeping operations.

More than 40 Moldovan military personnel, including an infantry manoeuvre platoon and an explosive ordnance disposal team, have been deployed on rotation in support of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) since 2007. NATO is assisting the Republic of Moldova by providing support for the training of public intelligence specialists within the country's armed forces. NATO is also assisting the Republic of Moldova in updating and maintaining its Current Notified Force Structure (NCFS) for both the Vienna Document and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). This information is maintained in the VERITY system, which centralises the exchange of data on the Treaty and Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs), making it easily accessible to Moldova and NATO allies.

Assistance under the European Instrument for Peace (EIP) for the benefit of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova, amounting to EUR 40 million, is aimed at strengthening the capabilities of the Armed Forces of Moldova, enhancing national security, stability and resilience in the defence sector. The money will be allocated to strengthen the logistics, mobility, command and control, cyber defence, unmanned aerial reconnaissance and tactical communications units of the Armed Forces of Moldova through the provision of non-lethal equipment, supplies and relevant services, including equipment-related training. This assistance measure will finance the provision of medical equipment and explosive ordnance disposal equipment for the Engineering Battalion¹.

¹ European Instrument for Peace: The Council adopts a measure to assist the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova.

https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/moldova/instrumentul-european-pentru-pace-consiliul-adopt%C4%83-o-m%C4%83sur%C4%83-de-asisten%C8%9B%C4%83-%C3%AE_n_ro?s=223

Through the **EU EPF 2022 Project on Enhancement of Logistics, Mobility and Transport, Command and Control, Communications, Cyber, and Air Research Capabilities**, it is planned to fortify the logistics, mobility, command and control, cyber defence, unmanned aerial reconnaissance and tactical communications units of the Armed Forces of Moldova through the provision of non-lethal equipment, supplies and relevant services, including equipment-related training. This assistance measure will complement the EUR 7 million assistance measure adopted in December 2021, which strengthens the capabilities of the Military Medical Service and the Armed Forces Engineering Battalion, and finances the provision of medical equipment and explosive ordnance disposal equipment for the Engineering Battalion².

The EU EPF 2021 project on enhancing medical-military and engineering capabilities concerns the financing of the provision of medical equipment for the Medical-Military Directorate and explosive ordnance disposal equipment for the Engineer Battalion.

On 14 April 2023, the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova and the Estonian Centre for Defence Investment (ECDI) signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate mutual cooperation in the implementation of an EU assistance measure under the European Peace Facility** adopted in June 2022, under which ECDI will procure non-lethal equipment for the Armed Forces of Moldova. The projects are part of a modernisation process that will strengthen the capabilities of the Moldovan Armed Forces to enhance operational efficiency, accelerate compliance with EU standards and interoperability and thereby better protect civilians in crises and emergencies. It will also strengthen Moldova's capabilities in terms of its participation in EU CSDP military missions and operations³.

Strengthening the Armed Forces for the Safe Transport, Maintenance and Storage of Ammunition and Dangerous Goods, funded by Germany started in 2018 and is currently ongoing. Under this project, donations of military equipment and techniques, training and expertise in the field have been provided to the value of approximately €2.8 million⁴.

Project 67676 of the HMA (Humanitarian Demining Action) Program of the US Armed Forces Command Europe to develop infrastructure and increase the level of safety and security at Department of Defense compounds.

The project with a budget of EUR 654 938,76, provided by the US Department of Defense, was implemented from 05/12/2022 to 31/07/2023. The project involves infrastructure

² European Union experts at the Ministry of Defence.

<https://www.army.md/?lng=2&action=show&cat=122&obj=7329>

³ Memorandum of Understanding, in the context of the implementation of European Union projects on the European Peace Facility (EPF) platform.

https://www.army.md/index.php/duhovniceti/inf/nota_inf_1452.doc?lng=2&action=show&cat=122&obj=8178

⁴ German experts in the field of transporting dangerous goods visited the ammunition depots of the National Army. <https://www.army.md/?lng=3&action=show&cat=122&obj=8366>

development works in support of the US Department of Defense's Humanitarian Demining Action Program and the US Forces Europe Command as technical assistance, with the sole purpose of being provided to the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Moldova for free under the US Government's Humanitarian Demining Action Program. The project contributed to the development of infrastructure and increased safety, security, and security at the Ministry of Defense military, arms, and ammunition storage complexes in Floresti and Cahul, Republic of Moldova; providing safer living conditions for the civilian population of the cities of Floresti and Cahul, living in the vicinity of the Ministry of Defense military, arms, and ammunition storage complexes in Floresti and Cahul, Republic of Moldova; to avoid the risk of uncontrolled/unplanned/unintended detonations (explosions) at the Ministry of Defence military, arms and ammunition storage complexes in Floresti and Cahul, Republic of Moldova; avoidance of material damage, loss of life and humanitarian catastrophes that could result from uncontrolled/unplanned/unintended explosions at the Ministry of Defence Military Holdings, Armaments and Ammunition Storage Complexes in Floresti and Cahul, Republic of Moldova⁵.

DOD - Foreign Military Financing (FMF) Program funded by the Department of State in the amount of \$29,585,000 and implemented by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense. The purpose of the project is to provide assistance in the procurement of defense-related items and services for design and construction services⁶.

The Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) of Small Arms, Light Weapons (SALW) and Conventional Ammunition (ca) in the National Army Programme, implemented with OSCE support. The objective of the programme is to ensure security and safety of the civilian population deployed around military objectives by improving the conditions of storage, transportation, safety and integrity of weapons, ammunition and military assets. The programme includes the following actions: construction of a warehouse at the Bulboaca training centre in accordance with international standards for the storage and preservation of the ammunition of the National Army; repair of the National Army warehouses with the installation of security systems; destruction of 68 aviation bombs with fragmentation; destruction of 19 R-60 type missiles belonging to the Republic of Moldova but currently in Georgia; etc.⁷

Security education

The European Union - Area of justice, security and freedom project is funded by the European Commission to the tune of €50,000 and runs until 2023. The overall aim of the project is to deepen the teaching, research and reflection of EU disciplines for the Europeanisation of university curricula in line with new labour market requirements. It also

⁵ Project 69487 US Forces Command Europe's Humanitarian Demining Action (HMA) Program to develop infrastructure and increase safety and security at Department of Defense heritage preservation complexes. <https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=1791~language=en>

⁶ U.S. Foreign Assistance By Country. Moldova. <https://www.foreignassistance.gov/cd/moldova/2022/obligations/0>

⁷ The comprehensive programme on small arms and light weapons (salw) and conventional ammunition in the Republic of Moldova. <https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=308~language=en>

aims to promote the European dimension and values in higher education in the Republic of Moldova, to communicate, share and increase the visibility of the results of the action to the general public in encouraging dialogue between academia, professional groups and members of civil society⁸.

Through the **Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP)**, NATO is advising on how to build, develop and reform educational institutions to help Moldova build a professional military education system, with university degrees and specialised courses offered by the Military Academy of Moldova, its Continuing Education Centre and the NCO School⁹. Overall, the availability of external partners in the areas of assistance focuses on professional development (training, workshops, etc.), such as: NATO-Moldova Professional Development Programme (PDP) training; Partner Cooperation Menu (PCM) training; NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme (SPS) training; counter-terrorism course; specialised training on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and small arms; advanced English language courses.

The Professional Development Programme aims to strengthen the skills of civil servants in the field of defence and security. Since June this year, 3 different training courses have been organised on strategic communication, cyber hygiene and national security (about 60 people attended these trainings)¹⁰.

DOD - International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program, is a program that aims to train foreign military students both overseas and in the United States, which also covers the cost of training aids and materials associated with such training. The implementing partner for this program is the U.S. Government - Department of Defense, Department of State, the managing agency being the Department of State. The amount offered to the Republic of Moldova in 2022 under this program is \$1,145,572¹¹.

Developing security and defence policies

In this chapter we will reflect on major projects and programmes that relate to assistance in the area of security and defence strategy, policy and legislation development.

⁸European Union - the area of justice, security and freedom.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=1576~language=en>

⁹Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) with Moldova.

https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_06/20150629_150629-DEEP-Moldova-Background.pdf

¹⁰A Professional Development Programme will be implemented in the Republic of Moldova with the support of NATO and the UK.

<https://cancelaria.gov.md/ro/content/un-program-de-dezvoltare-profesionala-va-fi-implementat-republica-moldova-cu-suportul-nato>

¹¹Foreign Assistance.gov.

https://www.foreignassistance.gov/data?country=Moldova&fiscal_year=2022&transaction_type_name=obligations#tab-query

NATO assistance in policy development

The Republic of Moldova is involved in several initiatives and programmes¹² launched by NATO for the purpose of assisting Partners to assess participation in the Partnership for Peace Programme (PfP). In addition to these, in 2015 the Republic of Moldova joined the NATO Defence Capability Building Initiative (DCBI). This initiative aims to strengthen defence capabilities as part of the Alliance's efforts to project security and stability on an international scale and prevent conflict. In line with the roadmap agreed by both sides the first phase of the roadmap focused on reviewing and amending the legislative and regulatory framework at the strategic level in the field of defence and developing strategic documents such as the National Defence Strategy, the Military Strategy and the Long Term National Army Development Plan. Thus, with the support of NATO experts, the Republic of Moldova approves in 2018, for a four-year period, both policy documents and implements them through its action plans. Currently, the DCBI Assistance Package for the Republic of Moldova includes a project called Strategic Planning, which involves support in the form of expertise and consultancy provided by Allied experts for the improvement, revision and elaboration of these policy documents.

Project Providing the necessary assistance to the national authorities of the Republic of Moldova in the process of developing a national security strategy, with a budget of 20000 Euro provided by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation and implemented by the Platform for Security and Defence Initiatives in 2023. The aim of the project is to provide the necessary assistance and expertise to national authorities to fulfil the task of developing and promoting the National Security Strategy (NSS) by providing assistance in the development of NSS components and the necessary tools to strengthen expertise and coordination of experts in working groups.

Similarly, training in security and defence was organised by the **George C. Marshall** European Centre for Security Studies, where about 280 military, police and civil servants from Moldova studied . The institution, founded in 1993 in Germany, aims to create a stable security environment, promote democratic mechanisms and sustainable partnerships in several countries, including our country¹³ .

EU TAIEX project "Implementation of the Regulation implementing the New Customs Code" - included a study visit in the context of the elaboration of the "Regulation implementing the New Customs Code of the Republic of Moldova", familiarization with the procedures of application of the EU Regulation, acquisition of new skills and knowledge, taking over the best practices of the European Union in the field of customs valuation of

¹² Examples of these initiatives include the Operational Capabilities Initiative (OCC), the Partnership Planning and Analysis Process (PARP); the Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP), the Military Training and Exercise Programme (MTEP).

¹³ Representatives and graduates of the George C. Marshall Centre met in Chisinau.
<https://www.army.md/?lng=2&action=show&cat=122&obj=7207>

goods, harmonization of national legislation with EU legislation and subsequent application in practice¹⁴.

Security Sector Reform (SSR) project, funded by UNDP, with a budget of USD 3,283,724. Project objectives: to contribute to the effective implementation of security and defence sector reforms as a means of ensuring the security of men and women in the Republic of Moldova, which includes overall public administration and sector reforms, to enhance institutional integrity and transparency through the mobilisation of ICT and innovation, training and digitisation of business processes, and to provide innovative tools for the collection and processing of disaggregated data that will facilitate policy making. Ensuring a representative composition in institutions in terms of gender, ethnicity and other factors; institutions are trained and equipped to match the strategic environment (which may include contributing to regional security and peacekeeping organisations); supporting military institutions in ensuring compliance with international law, thus contributing to national and international peace and security objectives. Thanks to this project the Central Military Clinical Hospital and the Centre for Preventive Medicine has been equipped with modern equipment and developed infrastructure, using the best value for money approach; Increasing individual and institutional human capacities of the Ministry of Defence on gender mainstreaming in policies, practices and daily work by piloting the Gender Equality Distinction methodology in public institutions. In 2023 the Ministry of Defence received 424,802 USD¹⁵ under this project.

Strategic communication and combating disinformation

In this chapter we reflect on major projects and programmes aimed at countering disinformation and strengthening strategic communication

The EU Delegation in Chisinau manages six strategic communication and media literacy project programmes funded by the FPI, under the Supporting Independent Media and Information Resilience (SIMIR) in Moldova programme implemented by Internews Moldova (most of them are due to end in November). These are: Internetu Graieste - online broadcast, disinformation debunking/regional approach, Community Plus (Zdarova Natasha) - online broadcast, disinformation debunking, ADEPT - awareness raising/studies in Gagauzia, SuperLike - media literacy/tabletop game, Youth Media Centre - video/demonstration of conspiracy theories, Watchdog.md - 4 surveys on perception of disinformation and main narratives. Through the same project, the Audiovisual Council received support to improve its monitoring capacities and 17 independent media institutions received grants. A proposal

¹⁴ External assistance projects of the Customs Service.

https://customs.gov.md/ro/articles/proiecte-de-asistenta-externa-ale-serviciului-vamal-1612-ro?fbclid=IwAR1xs szwya44eEZaRPveQ27ujfAjmv_f_Q0jTCLIFig6oeLQ3OZYeVRImHs

¹⁵ Support for security sector reform in Moldova.

<https://www.undp.org/ro/moldova/projects/suport-pentru-reforma-sectorului-de-securitate-republica-moldova>

has been launched to implement a second phase of the project, which will involve support for the Centre for Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation.

The EU Delegation also supports the Government's strategic communication by paying a communication fee for the expert working in the Government Spokesperson's Office. "Civil society resilience and media response to the war in Ukraine" is a regional project implemented by People in Need (PIN) through the regional project "OWIS". The regional project is carried out in partnership with the Centre for Civil Society in Prague and the Netherlands and Helsinki Committee, with the aim of strengthening civil society resilience and media response to the war in Ukraine. The project is implemented by: AO "Aripile Dumbrava", Association of Librarians of the Republic of Moldova, Regional Centre for Community Development and National Network of Local Youth Councils of Moldova.

EU Regional Communication Programme for the Eastern Neighbourhood (EUNEIGHBOURS east),¹⁶ implemented from 08.12.2020 - 07.12.2024 in the PaE countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. The EU contribution is € 10 659 000. Implementing organisations: B&S Europe-led Consortium, Consortium led by B&S Europe. The aim of the programme is to strengthen strategic communication actions, improve public understanding of the EU and its policies and strengthen societal resilience to misinformation in the EU and its Eastern neighbourhood. The programme will complement and build partnerships/synergy with a wide range of communication activities implemented at national level by EU Delegations, including thematic communication campaigns, public diplomacy and outreach actions in partnership with youth activists, media partners, national authorities, civil society organisations, academia and various networks of professionals and associations¹⁷.

Strategic Communication and Media Support in the Republic of Moldova¹⁸, implemented in the period 01.01.2019 - 31.08.2023 in Moldova, the contribution of the European Union is 5 443 230 EUR. The implementing organisation is - COMMWITHUS¹⁹. The project has three key components: strategic EU communication and EU support; management of the EU Centre in Chisinau and the network of EU Information Centres and Euro Clubs in the territory; media support and media education. The overall objective of the project is to support the successful implementation of democratic reforms in the Republic of Moldova through increased visibility of the EU and EU assistance to the Republic of Moldova, thus ensuring a stable, prosperous and democratic future for all its citizens.

VIGILANT - Vital Intelligence for Investigating Illegal Disinformation, funded by the European Commission with €3 725 130 and running from November 2022 to October 2025. The project aims to: adapt state-of-the-art research tools and technologies to analyse and detect criminal disinformation, exploit social science-based tools to enable law enforcement authorities to investigate disinformation campaigns and their actors, develop a comprehensive data model and protocol for data collection, storage and transmission, integrate tools into an

¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/euneighbourseast/>

¹⁷ EUNEIGHBOURSEAST. www.euneighbourseast.eu

¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/StratComMoldova>

¹⁹ Strategic Communication and Support to mass-media in the Republic of Moldova. <https://euneighbourseast.eu/ro/projects/eu-project-page/?id=476>

interactive and user-friendly VIGILANT platform, ensure successful adoption of the VIGILANT platform by law enforcement authorities²⁰.

Covid-19: resilience and sustainability of civil society, funded by the European Commission with €4 224 220 is a regional action taking place in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The project aims to support the resilience and sustainability of civil society and independent media in the Eastern Partnership countries through grants for: essential support; psychosocial support; technical support; capacity building; media campaigns and activities to combat misinformation with the aim of mitigating the immediate and long-term impact of COVID-19. Additional grants are offered in Ukraine for CSO cooperation, public authority monitoring, analysis and policy development²¹.

Supporting Independent Media and Information Resilience (SIMIR) in Moldova, funded by the European Commission with EUR 1 300 000 and running from 24/05/2022 to 23/11/2023. The SIMIR project in Moldova will address the urgent needs of information and media actors in Moldova to address the lack of resources by providing financial and technical support. To improve the public's ability to recognise misinformation, Internews will support activities at local level that will combat misinformation and provide monitoring software to the Moldovan Broadcasting Council to enhance its technical capacity to contribute to EU efforts to combat misinformation²².

EU support for local media institutions in the Republic of Moldova, funded by the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation, Slovak Republic, AO "Media Project - With Meaning", Solidarity Fund PL, European Commission Implementing Organisation Delegation of the European Union to Moldova. Project budget - 998 284,32 EUR, for the period 01/03/2022- 29/02/2024. The main goal of the project is to develop a more enabling environment for local independent media institutions to strengthen their capacities, independence, sustainability and professionalism in order to produce high quality, fact-based, balanced and reliable local journalistic content²³.

MEDIA-M: Media Enabling Democracy, Inclusion and Accountability in Moldova / MEDIA-M: Media Enabling Democracy, Inclusion and Accountability in Moldova funded by USAID with a budget of \$14.3 million, implemented by Internews from April 2017 to September 2026. MEDIA-M aims to promote the development of independent, professional media institutions that provide citizens with access to a variety of perspectives and create a media sector that is more resilient in the face of political and financial pressures²⁴.

On Door-to-Door Disinformation, funded by International Media Support, running from 1 July 2022 to 30 May 2023 and implemented by the Independent Press Association. The aim of

²⁰ VIGILANT-Vital intelligence for investigating illegal disinformation.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2442~language=en>

²¹ COVID-19: Resilience and Sustainability of Civil Society.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=948~language=en>

²² Newsletter of the Delegation of the European Union to Moldova.

https://issuu.com/asistentauemoldova/docs/newsletter_04-05_2023_ro_

²³ EU support for local media institutions in

Moldova <https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2597~language=en>

²⁴ Supporting fair and democratic governance

<https://www.usaid.gov/ro/moldova/governing-justly-and-democratically>

the project is to develop critical thinking and promote media literacy in Moldovan society, especially in rural areas²⁵.

Support to SIS Strategic Communication, stage II Chisinau, countrywide, funded by Sweden. The project aims to support SIS in building up its StratCom capacities to respond to hybrid assaults, communicate positively with the public and to position its successes more focused to pro-Russian population parts. Moreover, expert support to identify gaps, tools, better workflows will be provided. Following a baseline assessment, the project will procure needs-based OSINT tools.

Democratic governance, institution building and resilience

In this chapter we reflect on major projects and programmes that address capacity development of governmental and non-governmental institutions, principles of good governance and building state resilience.

Council of Europe Action Plan for Moldova 2021-2024. The total budget of the new Plan has been estimated at EUR 13.7 million²⁶. The project is a continuation of the efforts to bring Moldovan legislation, institutions and practice in line with European standards on human rights, rule of law and democracy and is a strategic instrument of the Council of Europe for the Republic of Moldova. The main objective being to support democratic reforms in the Republic of Moldova and focuses on: combating corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing, as well as promoting the independence, transparency and efficiency of the justice system, and combating discrimination and strengthening equality, assistance in areas of reform covered by the AA, including in areas such as the judiciary and specialised anti-corruption institutions, gender equality and media freedom and pluralism.

A Compass for an Enabling Environment and CSO Empowerment, implemented from 01.01.2021 - 31.12.2023²⁷ in the Eastern Partnership Countries (EaP): Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova EU contribution is EUR 799 999 Implementing organisations: European Center for Not-for-Profit Law Stichting (Netherlands), Transparency International Anti Corruption Center (Armenia), MG Consulting LLC²⁸. The project monitors and advocates for the improvement of the working environment for civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Eastern Partnership countries; it assesses the legislative framework and practical work in key areas affecting civil society, from freedom of association and assembly to participation to access to finance and the right to privacy.

Building capacities

Improvement of spatial data services in the Republic of Moldova according to EU standards, implemented in the period 01.09.2020 - 31.10.2023 in Moldova. The EU

²⁵ Disinformation from door to door. <https://www.api.md/despre-dezinformare-de-la-usa-la-usa>

²⁶ Council of Europe Action Plan for Moldova 2021-2024. <https://rm.coe.int/coe-action-plan-leaflet-ro-final-web-2/1680a22a24>

²⁷ <https://twitter.com/enablingNGOlaw>

²⁸ CSO METER. Assessing the civil society environment in the Eastern Partnership countries. <https://esometer.info>

contribution is: € 1 800 000. Implementing organisations: Croatian State Geodetic Administration, Dutch Enterprise Agency, Polish Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography, Central Finance and Contracting Agency. The project aims at the continuous development of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (INDS) in the Republic of Moldova, based on the EU INSPIRE Directive. The final goal of the project is that the National Spatial Data Infrastructure will become a functional tool for citizens, public institutions and economic agents, used to verify relevant information about real estate, infrastructure and environmental issues in any area of the country²⁹.

Ensuring the integrity, efficiency and independence of the justice system in Moldova, implemented between 01.03.2023 - 28.02.2026 PaE countries, EU contribution: € 445 000. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to increasing the role of civil society and the media in strengthening the independence, integrity, efficiency and accountability of the justice system in the Republic of Moldova.³⁰

Goog governance

Governance Progress Board for the Eastern Partnership implemented in the period 01.04.2023 - 31.07.2024 in the PaE Countries: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. EU contribution: € 1 000 000 Total budget: € 1 631 776. Implementing organisations: GIZ as part of the project "Eastern Partnership Regional Fund for Public Administration Reform". The project aims to contribute to strengthening good governance and the rule of law in the Eastern Neighbourhood. The project will improve evidence-based policy making and track progress on key reforms through reliable data analysis and stakeholder engagement skills among policy makers and civil society in the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine)³¹.

The Partnership for Good Governance (PGG) (2023-2027) is a regional programme, which aims to support the alignment of national legislation and practices with European standards, according to the individual needs of the EaP countries. EU contribution: € 15 000 000, The total budget of the project is € 19 300 000. PGG III builds on the implementation of two previous phases of the programme in the area of justice reform, fight against corruption, fight against discrimination and violence against women. All actions draw on the distinct expertise of the Council of Europe to enable stakeholders to achieve the organisation's standards in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The planning of the PGG III also took into account the objectives of Ukraine, Republic of Moldova and Georgia related to their EU candidate status (for Ukraine and Republic of Moldova) and European perspective (for Georgia)³².

The project **Support for structured political dialogue, coordination of the implementation of the Association Agreement and improvement of the process of legal approximation**, carried out in the period 2020 - 2025 with a budget of EUR 5 million

²⁹ Eventful autumn in the framework of the EU Twinning project "Improving spatial data services in the Republic of Moldova according to EU standards". <https://eu4moldova.eu/ro/strong-toamna-bogata-in-evenimente-in-cadrul-proiectului-ue-twinning-im-bunatatirea-serviciilor-de-date-spatiale-in-republica-moldova-conform-standardelor-ue-strong/>

³⁰ Ensuring the integrity, efficiency and independence of Moldova's justice system - #Justice4Moldova. <https://ipre.md/2023/05/05/asigurarea-integritatii-eficientei-si-independentei-sistemului-de-justitie-din-moldova-justice4moldova/>

³¹ Governance Progress Board for the Eastern Partnership Countries. <https://euneighbourseast.eu/ro/projects/eu-project-page/?id=1935>

³² <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pgg2>

granted by the Delegation of the European Union to Moldova. This project directly aims at strengthening the capacities of the Government and relevant institutions to implement the EU-Moldova Association Agreement (AA). Through this project the EU intends to provide continuous support on priorities, conceptualization, formulation and implementation of policies, strategies and action plans to ensure good governance, as well as effectiveness and efficiency of governmental decision making - especially in focal areas. The main partners of the project are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, the State Chancellery, the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Finance, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and other relevant ministries and agencies³³.

The program Strengthening Security Sector Governance in Moldova (SSGM) runs during the years 2023-2025, being financed by Sweden with the amount of 21,854,790 Swedish Krona and implemented by the Geneva Center for Security Sector Governance (DCAF). The program aims to enhance the good governance of the security sector and consolidate the resilience of the Moldovan state and society by supporting a stronger democratic culture rooted in strategic planning, professionalism and performance in the public sector. Among the objectives of the program we mention: increasing the expertise and capacity of the Parliament and the Supreme Security Council to engage in developing a strategic, legislative and institutional framework adapted to European norms and best practices, strengthening strategic and operational management capacities in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the General Inspectorate of Police, increasing citizens' trust in the state through an informed public debate of security sector reforms and an intensified dialogue between state institutions and a competent, vigilant and pro-active civil society³⁴.

The Advanced Technologies for Physical Resilience of Critical Infrastructures (APRIORI) project, started in 2023 and expected to be completed in 2026, funded under the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) programme, aims to improve resilience in critical infrastructures in the Republic of Moldova and the European Union countries. The direct beneficiaries of the project results will be: Military Academy of the Armed Forces "Alexandru cel Bun" of the Republic of Moldova, as well as the companies DanAero/ Saves Grup and Pride System³⁵.

"My Community" is an eight-year program, funded by USAID and implemented by IREX, with the aim of strengthening local governance and providing technical assistance to local public authorities in Moldova to ensure effective, transparent and accountable governance to citizens. As of 2018, the CM Program has provided support to 92 communities and 1.3 million citizens. The total value of USAID's investments in the My Community program over the 8 years of implementation is USD 35.5 million. In 2022, \$6,610,329 has been allocated.³⁶

³³<https://www.dai.com/our-work/projects/moldova-support-for-structured-policy-dialogue-coordination-of-the-implementation-of-the-association-agreement-and-enhancement-of-the-legal-approximation-process>). External Assistance Monitor, no. 3 p.15.

https://www.expert-grup.org/media/k2/attachments/Monitorul_Asistentei_Externe_editia_3.pdf

³⁴ Strengthening Security Sector Governance in Moldova

(SSGM).<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2031~language=ro>

³⁵A new international research project - NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) - is to be implemented at USM. <https://usm.md/?p=21440>.

³⁶My Community Programme extended for another three years. USAID provides another \$15 million for the development of localities in

Moldova.<https://www.calm.md/programul-comunitatea-mea-prelungit-pentru-inca-trei-ani-usaid-ofera-alte-15-mln-dolari-pentru-dezvoltarea-localitatilor-din-r-moldova/>.

Resilient CSOs + responsible budgeting = implementation, implemented between 01.01.2023 - 30.06.2025 in Moldova. EU contribution: € 979 000. The aim of the project is to contribute to increasing the capacity of CSOs to support the implementation of the conditionalities related to Moldova's EU candidate status and the Association Agenda, at national and local level. Project objectives: improved capacity, stronger resilience and increased participation of CSOs in the implementation of budget monitoring and advocacy at central and local level, increased capacity and involvement of EPCSF NPM, EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform and DAG on TSD to provide cohesive support for the implementation of the AA with the EU and the conditions related to the EU candidate status of the Republic of Moldova³⁷.

Strengthened participatory democracy

Inclusive and Participatory Political Processes in Moldova / Moldova Inclusive and Participatory Political Processes (MIPPP), funded by USAID with a budget of \$22.6 million and implemented by the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS)/IRI and NDI, running from August 2016 to July 2026³⁸. MIPPP works with political parties, national party leaders, emerging political actors, local government officials, civil society organizations and activists to ensure a fairer and more transparent political competition in Moldova that is more representative and accountable to citizens. And it aims to strengthen democratic political processes to better meet the needs of voting citizens; strengthen democratic norms governing the political process; and strengthen civic education and engagement of youth, women and underrepresented populations.

Democratic Transparency and Accountability Program (DTAP), funded by USAID with a budget of \$9.05 million, implemented by Promo-LEX Association from July 2016 to March 2025. The program aims to enhance the credibility of electoral processes by monitoring elections and promoting a conducive environment for political competition. It also strengthens mechanisms for electoral transparency and accountability; engages actors such as civil society, community groups, grassroots party members and activists to pressure decision-makers to be more responsive to citizens and engage in fairer and more representative elections and political competition; to promote civic activism and human rights education; and to combat hate speech and discrimination³⁹.

Civil Society Resilience Activity (CSRA) project with a budget of \$1.49 million funded by USAID and implemented by the CONTACT Center from May 2023 to May 2028. CSRA aims to strengthen Moldova's civil society resilience by enhancing the ability of civil society organizations (CSOs) to cooperate with citizens and diversify their resource base. The project will work with local CSOs to enhance their ability to mobilise national resources in response to community needs and citizens' priorities. The project will also aim to strengthen the capacities of CSOs to cooperate with Moldovan citizens and relevant groups.⁴⁰

³⁷Resilient CSOs + Responsible Budgeting = Accelerated implementation of the Association Agreement. <https://expert-grup.org/en/activitate/proiecte/item/2473-osc-rezistente-%20-bugetare-responsabil%C4%83---implementarea-accelerat%C4%83-a-acordului-de-asociere/2473-osc-rezistente-%20-bugetare-responsabil%C4%83---implementarea-accelerat%C4%83-a-acordului-de-asociere>

³⁸U.S. Foreign Assistance By Country. <https://www.foreignassistance.gov/cd/moldova/2022/obligations/0>

³⁹Supporting fair and democratic governance.

<https://www.usaid.gov/ro/moldova/governing-justly-and-democratically>

⁴⁰Support fair and democratic governance.

<https://www.usaid.gov/ro/moldova/governing-justly-and-democratically>

Strengthening Social Cohesion

Moldova Resilience Initiative / Moldova Resilience Initiative, funded by USAID with a budget of \$20 million, implemented by Management Systems International (MSI) from March 2022 to May 2026. It was launched by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) in March 2022, extended by OTI through early 2026 to provide additional support in building popular support for a democratic and European Moldova. The objectives of the project are to strengthen support for European integration and democratic reform processes, unify Moldovans around a common European identity, and provide support to strengthen the Government of Moldova's strategic communication capacities⁴¹.

Promoting Democracy and Stability in Moldova/Advance democracy and stability in Moldova, funded by USAID with \$3,000,000, in 2023. The project will establish and manage a flexible, rapid-response mechanism to support activities that will promote democracy and stability in Moldova. The activity will work with a coalition of civic, media and government stakeholders in support of the program's objectives⁴².

Civic education, citizen participation and public accountability, funded by USAID with \$273,000, aims to support activities that promote citizen engagement to hold governments accountable and to actively participate in economic, political, governance and other critical processes aimed at creating more peaceful, democratic and pluralistic societies. Promote citizens' involvement in local decision-making processes, such as through participatory budgeting processes and public-private dialogue on economic development priorities⁴³.

Improving access to justice for a dignified life, running from 2023-2024 and funded by the Federal Republic of Germany with an amount of EUR 1 502 150.12. The overall objective of the project is to increase the resilience of the rule of law in the Republic of Moldova and strengthen its capacity to provide effective solutions for ensuring access to public services. Under this project UNDP will provide rule of law institutions and other relevant actors (such as CSOs) with the tools and knowledge to work cross-sectorally addressing the link between humanitarian aid, development and peace to improve access of refugees, displaced persons and host communities to inclusive justice services, safety and security and protection systems⁴⁴.

Anticorruption and integrity

This chapter will mention the main projects that relate to strengthening the rule of law, anti-corruption mechanisms, strengthening integrity in the security and defence sector

Strengthening the rule of law and anti-corruption mechanisms in the Republic of Moldova, running from 2020-2024. Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for

⁴¹ Strengthening Social Cohesion. <https://www.usaid.gov/ro/moldova/building-social-cohesion>

⁴² Foreign Assistance.gov.

https://www.foreignassistance.gov/data?country=Moldova&fiscal_year=2022&transaction_type_name=obligations#tab-query

⁴³ Inclusive Civic Education Program. [Inclusive_Civic_Education.pdf \(usaid.gov\)](#)

⁴⁴ Improving access to justice to live in dignity.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2339~language=en>

Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-funded by the European Union (EU), the project aims to make civil society and state measures to fight and prevent corruption in the Republic of Moldova more effective by focusing on three key measures: raising public and civil society awareness of the consequences of corruption and the fight against this scourge; promoting mechanisms designed to fight corruption by strengthening the competence, accountability and transparency of anti-corruption institutions; improving cooperation between institutions; and facilitating closer dialogue with civil society. The project also provides support to the Government of the Republic of Moldova in the implementation of the National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy in at least three areas where the risk of corruption is high⁴⁵.

EU for Integrity - Open Government Partnership (OGP) for the Eastern Partnership implemented from 01.05.2020 - 30.08.2024 in the EaP countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. The EU contribution is € 2 500 000. Implementing organisation: Open Government Partnership⁴⁶. The project aims to support partner countries in the East to implement evidence-based anti-corruption policies, using the Open Government Partnership (OGP) platform to design and implement reforms that enable open, inclusive and responsive governments and citizen-centred service delivery by strengthening civic engagement and participation of civil society organisations (CSOs).

EU for Integrity - The OECD Anti-Corruption Network, implemented from 02.01.2020 - 30.12.2023 in PaE countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. The EU contribution is € 4 500 000. Implementing organisations: OECD Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe. The action aimed to support the Eastern partner countries in implementing evidence-based anti-corruption policies, strengthening the enforcement of anti-corruption legislation in line with international standards and best practices⁴⁷.

US Department of State (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau - INL) **"Action against Corruption in the Republic of Moldova (AIC)" Phase 2 project**, implemented by the Council of Europe (Economic Crime and Cooperation Section, Action against Crime Department, Directorate General for Human Rights and the Rule of Law), running from September 2022 to August 2024. The aim of the project is to support national authorities in effectively tackling corruption and enforcing integrity checks⁴⁸.

Strengthening the anti-money laundering and asset recovery regime in the Republic of Moldova, implemented over the period 2023-2026 and funded by the European Commission with €510,000. The project aims to support the Republic of Moldova in increasing the effectiveness of measures against money laundering and terrorist financing, to strengthen the capacities of dedicated structures in the field of asset recovery and parallel financial investigations. The current action will allow a necessary follow-up to the recommendations

⁴⁵Combating and preventing corruption in the Republic of Moldova
<https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/109028.html>

⁴⁶ EU for Integrity Programme for the Eastern Partnership.
<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/eu-for-integrity-programme/>

⁴⁷ EU for Integrity Programme for the Eastern Partnership
<https://www.oecd.org/corruption/eu-for-integrity-programme-for-the-eastern-partnership.htm>

⁴⁸External assistance projects of the Customs Service
<https://customs.gov.md/ro/articles/proiecte-de-asistenta-externa-ale-serviciului-vamal-1612-ro>

provided by previous interventions to strengthen the anti-money laundering and terrorist financing measures and asset recovery regime in Moldova⁴⁹ .

Action Against Corruption in the Republic of Moldova - Phase 2, funded by the US Department of State's International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Bureau, 2022-2024. Project objectives: Enhance independence through strengthened structural safeguards for judges and prosecutors; increase the effectiveness of the National Integrity Authority in conducting integrity checks of persons of public dignity; strengthen and enforce corruption prevention measures by persons of public dignity and law enforcement authorities; providing advice to the Ministry of Justice on legislative and institutional reforms related to anti-corruption and integrity; strengthening the capacities of the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) and the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP), the Police and the Customs Service, strengthening the capacities and raising the awareness of the General Inspectorate of Police (IGP) and the Border Police, the Ministry Justice⁵⁰ .

The INL Assistance Programme in the areas of justice and law enforcement, implemented between 01/07/2020 and 30/06/2023 and funded by the US Department of State in the amount of EUR 5 548 646.32. This programme aims to support the capacity of the Government of Moldova to achieve European and international standards in the areas of law enforcement and justice. To achieve this objective, the U.S. Government and the Government of Moldova will, on an annual basis, carry out activities and allocate resources as authorized by legislative processes. This program consists of the following projects: Law Enforcement Capacity Building Project, Justice Sector Reform and Anti-Corruption Support Project, Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Project, Prisons Project, Cybercrime Project⁵¹ .

The Building Integrity Initiative, NATO provides strategic-level advice on strengthening good governance and reducing the risk of corruption in its defence and security sector. The aim of the programme is to enhance the effectiveness of security and defence sector institutions and to provide assistance in improving the management of financial and human resources, strengthening integrity, transparency and reducing the risk of corruption in the sector. For the Republic of Moldova and directly for institutions in the sector concerned, the interest in joining this initiative derives from the financial pressure on defence and national security budgets. Moldova benefits from a tailor-made package of BI capacity building and training and education activities for civilian and military personnel, including in the context of pre-deployment preparation for Moldova's participation in the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU) and NATO-led⁵² .

The Justice and Anti-Corruption Reform Activity (JARA) **project**, funded by USAID with a budget of \$6 million implemented by Dexis Consulting Group (Dexis) from March 2023 to March 2026. The objective of the project is to support the Government of Moldova's efforts to implement justice reform and promote its anti-corruption commitments. The support will contribute to the creation and functioning of a mini-secretariat that will monitor the

⁴⁹ Improving the anti-money laundering and asset recovery regime in the Republic of Moldova.

<https://www.coe.int/ro-RO/web/chisinau/enhancing-aml-and-asset-recovery-regimes>

⁵⁰ Action against Corruption in the Republic of Moldova - Phase 2

<https://www.coe.int/ro/web/chisinau/action-against-corruption-in-the-republic-of-moldova-phase-2#:~:text=Project%20%E2%80%9EAc%C8%9Biune%20%C3%AE%20against%20corruption%C8%9Biei%20%C3%AE,implementation%20of%20international%C8%9Biune%20%C3%AE%20against%20corruption%C8%9Biei>

⁵¹ INL assistance programme in the fields of justice and law enforcement.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=1106~language=en>

⁵² Relations with the Republic of Moldova. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49727.htm

implementation of the 2022 Justice Development Strategy-and the corresponding Plan; track the implementation of specific actions in the Justice Strategy and Plan, including targeted assistance for the extraordinary evaluation of judges and prosecutors; and advance anti-corruption reform through the implementation of specific commitments⁵³ .

Support to the Pre-Vetting Secretariat (SSPV) / Support to the Pre-Vetting Secretariat (SPVS) funded by USAID with a budget of 2.3 million , implemented by Dexis Consulting Group (Dexis) from February 2022 to September 2023.The project aims to create and equip an operational Secretariat to assist the Evaluation Commission in charge of examining the integrity of candidates to the administrative bodies of judges and prosecutors of the Republic of Moldova, the Superior Council of Magistracy (CSM) and the Superior Council of Prosecutors (CSP). The current project is an accelerated support package, provided in direct response to a request from the Ministry of Justice, and will allow the implementation of the first phase of the Government of the Republic of Moldova's reform plan to verify the integrity and professionalism of all actors in the justice system⁵⁴ .

The Justice and Anti-Corruption Reform Activity (JARA) project, with a budget of \$6 million and implemented by Dexis Consulting Group (Dexis) from March 2023 to March 2026.The objective of the project is to support the Government of Moldova's efforts to implement justice reform and promote its anti-corruption commitments. The support will contribute to the creation and functioning of a mini-secretariat that will monitor the implementation of the Justice Development Strategy for 2022-2025 and the corresponding Plan; follow up on the implementation of specific actions in the Justice Strategy and Plan, including targeted assistance for the extraordinary evaluation of judges and prosecutors; and advance anti-corruption reform through the implementation of specific commitments⁵⁵ .

Justice and anti-corruption reform activity (JARA), funded by USAID with \$3,000,000 supports the Government of Moldova's efforts to implement justice reform and promote its anti-corruption commitments⁵⁶ .

Improving youth crime and drug prevention through legality education and awareness campaigns that address the threats of organised crime and corruption. Enhancing youth crime and drug use prevention through education on legality and awareness campaigns addressing threats of organized crime and corruption (project targeting a number of states in the OSCE area - South Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South Caucasus). The objective of the project is to enhance the capacity of educators to teach young people about the dangers of corruption, organised crime and drug use, building on existing UNODC materials. Provide national strategic needs assessment workshops. The project is Intermediated by MFAEI 1.04.2021 - 31.03.2024 and implemented by the OSCE Secretariat, donor: Germany, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Italy, Andorra The total budget of the project is 3,614,987.00 EUR⁵⁷ .

⁵³Support fair and democratic governance.

<https://www.usaid.gov/ro/moldova/governing-justly-and-democratically>

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

⁵⁷ OSCE holds multi-stakeholder event in Moldova on youth crime prevention
<https://www.osce.org/oceea/544501>; <https://www.osce.org/node/518334>

Human security: respect for human rights, gender equality

In this chapter we will reflect on major projects and programmes that relate to human security, respect for human rights on both sides of the Dniester, respect and promotion of gender equality both in society and at the legislative level.

The Democracy, Transparency and Accountability Programme, funded by the European Union with EUR 8 657 801.59, runs from 2016-2025. The programme is a combination of monitoring, public awareness and advocacy activities on issues related to governance and political processes, will promote active political citizenship and contribute to increasing political accountability of government and political actors. The project has three core components: *electoral transparency and accountability*, fair and representative electoral and political competition, human rights education and advocacy. In the long term, the project is expected to contribute to ensuring free and fair elections in Moldova. In addition, the project will enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections and ensure respect for electoral rights.⁵⁸

The Resilient Civil Society and Media respond to the Ukraine War project is a project for the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine), implemented by the European Union with a financial contribution of € 9 600 000. Implementing organisations: Člověk v tísni o.p.s., People in Need, Netherlands Helsinki Committee, Prague Civil Society Centre. The programme aims to build the resilience of civil society and independent media in the Eastern Partnership region (EaP+) with the skills and financial resources to effectively respond to the needs of the conflict-affected population. In the context of the war in Ukraine, in order to provide adequate support, empower domestic resources, address the needs of the affected population and build resilience, the project provides third party financial support (FSTP) to a wide range of formal and informal civil societies⁵⁹.

EU4 Gender Equality: implementation period: 04.01.2021 - 04.01.2024 Countries PaE: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. EU contribution: € 2 245 500. The programme will provide gender analysis and expert advice on gender equality in a wide range of areas such as labour market policies, economic development, public administration, justice reforms, health care and social services, and education and family policies. The aim of the programme is to increase gender equality through the use of gender analysis in decision-making, reforms, policies and programmes. The helpdesk is mainly addressed to national governments and public administrations, EU delegations in the region and the general interested public⁶⁰.

EU4Dialogue: Support for Conflict Transformation in the South Caucasus and the Republic of Moldova, implemented from 03.12.2020 - 02.12.2024 in the Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. EU contribution: € 9 000 000. Implementing organisation: UNDP The programme supports initiatives that foster an

⁵⁸ Democracy, transparency and accountability programme.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=277~language=en>

⁵⁹ Resilient Civil Society and Media respond to the Ukraine War.

<https://eu4moldova.eu/ro/projects/eu-project-page/?id=1805>

⁶⁰ EU4GenderEquality: Reform Support Service. <https://eu4moldova.eu/ro/projects/eu-project-page/?id=1480>

environment of dialogue and people-to-people contacts between the divided parties in the South Caucasus and the Republic of Moldova. The programme is committed to reaching out to conflict-affected populations by improving the quality of daily life of local people, with special attention to the most vulnerable groups, including displaced persons. The project aims to build a sustainable foundation for conflict transformation by improving socio-economic conditions and human security among conflict-affected communities⁶¹.

PGG III: Women's Access to Justice: implementing Council of Europe's gender equality and violence against women standards. Implemented between 01.03.2023 - 28.02.2026 in the Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. The European Union contribution is 800 000, other donors cover 200 000. It is implemented by the Council of Europe. The project will contribute to the removal and elimination of systemic barriers that women face when accessing justice, both legal and institutional challenges and socio-cultural barriers that materialize as gender bias in the justice systems of the Eastern Partnership countries⁶².

Partnerships for women's leadership and good governance, funded by the European Union and implemented from 01.04.2021 to 31.03.2024 with a total budget of € 1 055 901 by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Moldova and Institutum Virtutes Civilis. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of civil society actors in the Republic of Moldova, to increase their involvement in governance processes and change for the better the communities they belong to⁶³.

EU Health Security Initiative, implemented between 01.01.2020 - 31.12.2024 in the Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. The European Union contribution is € 6 000 000. The initiative aims to create a competent regional workforce for the prevention and control of communicable disease challenges and to enhance regional cooperation to combat cross-border threats to health security⁶⁴.

USAID's Economic Development, Governance and Enterprise Growth (EDGE) Project - implemented by International Development Group LLC (IDG) aims to provide support for inclusive, sustainable economic growth and support for intra-regional and Euro-Atlantic integration⁶⁵.

Strengthening Social Cohesion through Inclusive Participation, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation with an amount of 1 409 414,69 EUR and running from 2023-2026, whose beneficiary is the Diaspora Relations Office. The strategic goal of the proposed project is to improve the living standards of the people of Moldova through a more inclusive, accountable, responsive and evidence-based governance model and an

⁶¹ EU4Dialogue: Support for conflict transformation in the South Caucasus and the Republic of Moldova
<https://eu4moldova.eu/ro/projects/eu-project-page/?id=1576>

⁶² Women's Access to Justice: implementing Council of Europe's gender equality and violence against women standards
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/women-s-access-to-justice-implementing-council-of-europe-s-gender-equality-and-violence-against-women-standards>

⁶³ Partnerships for women's leadership and good governance
<https://eu4moldova.eu/ro/projects/eu-project-page/?id=1592>

⁶⁴ EU Health Security Initiative
<https://eu4moldova.eu/ro/projects/eu-project-page/?id=1426>

⁶⁵ External assistance projects of the Customs Service.
https://customs.gov.md/ro/articles/proiecte-de-asistenta-externa-ale-serviciului-vamal-1612-ro?fbclid=IwAR1xszwya44eZaRPveQ27ujfAjmv_f_Q0jTCLIFig6oeLQ3OZYeVRImHs

increased level of participation of migrants/diaspora in the sustainable development of Moldova⁶⁶ .

Strengthening humanitarian support to vulnerable and conflict-affected communities and local authorities in the Republic of Moldova, funded by the Government of Japan with EUR 504 331.42, implemented over the period 2023-2024 and benefiting the General Police Inspectorate. The project aims to contribute to addressing urgent humanitarian needs and increasing the resilience of communities in Moldova by providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities in Moldova through support to local authorities⁶⁷ .

Journalists in the Guard of Democracy - carried out in the period 2022-2025, with a budget of

654 506,3 EUR and funded by the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour and whose beneficiary is the AO "Association of Investigative Reporters and Editorial Security of Moldova (RISE Moldova)". The aim of the project is to increase transparency and accountability of justice sector reform in Moldova through quality investigative journalism at national and regional level⁶⁸ .

UN Women, with financial support from Sweden, has supported the Government in the development of the second National Programme for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security for the period 2023-2027 and is supporting the Ministry of Interior in coordinating its implementation, having previously in the period 2018-2021 contributed to the implementation of the first National Programme for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security and the related Action Plan, as well as to the assessment of its implementation. In this way, UN Women has supported the creation of women's associations in the defence and security sector, including their capacity building and advocacy efforts to advance gender equality in these sectors. To enhance women's meaningful participation in conflict resolution, UN Women has created and supports the functioning of an informal Women's Peacebuilding Advisory Council, composed of 14 equally represented women civil society leaders from both sides of the Dniester River, whose role is to provide recommendations on the inclusion of a gender perspective in sustainable and inclusive peacebuilding and peacebuilding processes. UN Women has also facilitated consultations with local organisations and gender equality activists on both banks of the Dniester and has established three women's discussion platforms on the left bank of the Dniester, which include elements of confidence building and social cohesion and which it continues to support with the financial support of Switzerland under the project "Women Supporting Women: Enhancing Leadership and Resilience of Women Affected by Crisis through Community Initiatives".

Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges, 2023-2024, funded by Japan in the amount of €6,359,980.39 and implemented by UNDP. The overall aim of the project is to protect human security and enhance resilience of the Republic of Moldova to address the multidimensional and interlinked challenges of current socio-economic, food

⁶⁶ Strengthening social cohesion through inclusive participation.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2744~language=en>

⁶⁷ Strengthening humanitarian support to vulnerable and conflict-affected communities and local authorities in the Republic of Moldova

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2131~language=en>

⁶⁸ Journalists guarding democracy.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=1694~language=en>

and energy shocks. The three specific objectives are: to improve the energy security of the population through access to affordable energy that supports livelihoods and efficient energy production; to improve food security by supporting the government in the implementation of the Food Security Strategy, thereby strengthening the capacities of agricultural producers affected by multidimensional crises; to improve community security by strengthening the capacities of the police service and community actors to respect the principles of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence⁶⁹.

Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Republic of Moldova, implemented between 2016-2023, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and implemented by UN Women. With a total budget of 8 711 642, 34 EUR. The expected results of the project is to increase the number of women participating and leading fully in gender-sensitive governance processes and institutions, including in the security sector; address and implement by Parliament and government legislation, policies and services that address domestic and unpaid care work, and increase income security and decent work opportunities for women laws, policies and strategies to prevent violence against women and girls and provide essential quality services⁷⁰.

Dialogue and conflict management

This chapter will list the most important projects aimed at building sustainable peace, strengthening trust and social cohesion, strengthening export capacities, respecting human rights on both sides of the Dniester.

EU Programme Confidence Building Measures (V) - Confidence Building Measures along the Dniester River, Component IV Modernisation of the health sector, implemented in 2019-2022. Funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Federal Republic of Germany in the amount of €1 155 000. The objective of the project is cooperation on confidence building in the health sector with the Transnistrian side. The objectives of the project are to strengthen cooperation in the health and social sectors, which would ensure a process of change in the portfolio of medical and social services for disabled and bedridden people, especially in the Transnistrian region.⁷¹

The Building Sustainable and Inclusive Peace, Confidence Building and Social Cohesion on Both Banks of the Dniester River project, funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund and implemented by OHCHR, UN Women and UNDP over the period 2022-2024, aims to facilitate an enabling environment for improved networking between communities and CSOs on both banks of the Dniester River, social cohesion, reduction of social tensions and improved integration of human rights and gender issues in the Transnistrian conflict resolution process.⁷²

⁶⁹ Multidimensional response to emerging human security challenges.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2223~language=en>

⁷⁰ Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the Republic of Moldova.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2109~language=en>

⁷¹ Programme supporting confidence-building measures (v)

<https://www.undp.org/ro/moldova/projects/programul-sustinerea-masurilor-de-promovare-increderii-v>

⁷² Building sustainable and inclusive peace, confidence building and social cohesion in Moldova

The EU-UNDP **Confidence Building Measures Programme"/Social and Economic Development of both banks of the Dniester River**, aims to improve living conditions on both banks of the Dniester River by increasing economic opportunities and creating jobs; developing communities by enhancing the capacities of NGOs and LPAs; development of the thematic platforms created in the previous phase of the programme for cooperation of NGOs on both banks in order to eliminate disparities; support to culture as a pilot sector for development and confidence building; improvement of capacities of media institutions on both banks to jointly produce attractive, qualitative and professional content for social and economic development of both banks⁷³ .

Development of export capacities on the banks of the Dniester River" (AdTrade), with a budget - 3,420,979 USD and implemented in the period 2019 - 2023. The project facilitates trans-River cooperation and expands access of Transnistrian enterprises to export promotion mechanisms available on the right bank. The project fostered development knowledge of Transnistrian companies and business associations and about the opportunities offered by DCFTA and the UK-Moldova Strategic Partnership, Trade and Cooperation Agreement, consultancy/certification support from business development service institutions/networks on the right bank of the Dniester to promote their exports, improve competitiveness due to the equipment provided; and other activities contributing to resilience and trade competitiveness.⁷⁴

Strengthening human rights on both banks of the Dniester River, implemented between 2022-2025, with a budget of USD 2,500,000 provided by the European Union and UNDP. The programme focused on promoting commitments to comprehensive, human rights-oriented reforms in the areas of disability, youth and children's rights, Roma, rights of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, rights of prisoners, vulnerable women and drug users, facilitating the basis for multidimensional cooperation and knowledge sharing between the banks of the Dniester and development based on existing best practices on both sides. The programme aims to contribute to reducing inequalities for women and men, youth and children in the Transnistrian region by empowering vulnerable rights holders to exercise their rights⁷⁵ .

PGG III: Promoting equality and non-discrimination: towards more resilient and inclusive societies, implemented between January 2023 and February 2026 in the Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. With a total budget of € 500 000, the EU contribution is € 388 600. The project aims to strengthen the partnership established with institutions in the field of equality and non-discrimination and to monitor ongoing processes and harmonise legislative and institutional frameworks with European standards. This project is implemented under the third phase of the joint EU-Council of Europe programme "Partnership for Good Governance". It builds on the results of the

<https://www.undp.org/ro/moldova/projects/construirea-pacii-durabile-si-incluzive-consolidarea-increderii-si-coeziunii-sociale-moldova>

⁷³ European Union Programme "Confidence Building Measures" announces new grants of up to €40,000 each for business support organisations

<https://www.undp.org/ro/moldova/press-releases/programul-uniunii-europene-%E2%80%9Em%C4%83suri-de-promovare-%C3%AEncrederii%E2%80%9D-anun%C8%9B%C4%83-noi-granturi-de-p%C3%A2n%C4%83-la-40000-euro-fiecare-pentru>

⁷⁴ Developing export capacities on the banks of the Dniester

<https://www.undp.org/ro/moldova/projects/dezvoltarea-capacitatilor-de-export-pe-malurile-nistrului>

⁷⁵ UN Joint Programme to Strengthen Human Rights on Both Banks of the Dniester River (Phase IV).<https://www.undp.org/ro/moldova/projects/programul-comun-al-onu-de-consolidare-drepturilor-omului-pe-ambele-maluri-ale-nistrului-etapa-patra>

previous phases of the Partnership for Good Governance in the field of equality and non-discrimination (Phase I 2015-2018 and Phase II 2019-2023)⁷⁶ .

Home affairs and security, crisis management and exceptional situations

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and World Customs Organization (WCO) supported United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) **Container Control Programme**. Timeframe: 2014 - timeframe for completion is not regulated by partner. The aim of the programme is to support the detection of high-risk containers⁷⁷ .

EU Training and Operational Partnership against Organised Crime Project (TOPCOP) - implemented from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2024 by the EU Law Enforcement Training Agency (CEPOL) with the support of the EU Law Enforcement Cooperation Agency (EUROPOL), with the participation of DG NEAR of the European Commission and EEAS. The aim of the project is to strengthen the operational capacities of law enforcement authorities in the Eastern Partnership countries in the fight against transnational organised crime⁷⁸ .

The EU project "COARM V implemented from 2021 onwards and is being implemented by the Federal Office of Economics and Export Control (BAFA) in Germany. The aim of the project is to provide mutual administrative assistance and cooperation assistance with non-EU states in support of transparent and responsible arms transfers⁷⁹ .

Project **Operational Assistance Initiative in Moldova**, funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, implemented by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), from 01.10.2022 to 31.07.2023. The project provides operational support to national law enforcement agencies in preventing and combating trafficking in arms and ammunition, illegal migration, trafficking in human beings, terrorism and other related illegal activities⁸⁰ .

INTERPOL-Moldova Operational Assistance Initiative, running from 2022-2023 and funded by the Federal Republic of Germany with EUR 1 150 942, aims to support law enforcement agencies in tackling organised crime and emerging threats. The project will provide operational assistance and strengthen national efforts to combat transnational organised crime, with a particular focus on migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, terrorism and trafficking in firearms; strengthen national and cross-border cooperation between law enforcement agencies, international organisations and the aid

⁷⁶ PGG III: Promoting equality and non-discrimination: towards more resilient and inclusive societies
<https://eu4moldova.eu/ro/projects/eu-project-page/?id=1975>

⁷⁷ External assistance projects of the Customs Service.

https://customs.gov.md/ro/articles/proiecte-de-asistenta-externa-ale-serviciului-vamal-1612-ro?fbclid=IwAR1xszwya44eEZaRPveQ27ujfAjmv_f_Q0jTCLIFig6oeLQ3OZYeVRImHs

⁷⁸ *Ibid*

⁷⁹ *Ibid*

⁸⁰ External assistance projects of the Customs Service.

https://customs.gov.md/ro/articles/proiecte-de-asistenta-externa-ale-serviciului-vamal-1612-ro?fbclid=IwAR1xszwya44eEZaRPveQ27ujfAjmv_f_Q0jTCLIFig6oeLQ3OZYeVRImHs

sector/non-governmental organisations; improve international police cooperation and ensure effective exchange of information in the region⁸¹.

Shaping and mitigating social disasters caused by disasters and terrorism", NATO

Civil preparedness is an important area of NATO-Republic of Moldova cooperation because it prepares authorities to cope with natural or man-made disasters and benefits the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. With Allied support, the Republic of Moldova has been working to strengthen the legal framework for dealing with such emergencies and to establish a civil crisis information system by coordinating activities in cases of emergency. The aim of the project is to create complex methodologies and tools tailored for the detection, monitoring, modelling and mitigation of social disasters, provided by the situational analysis centre created within the project. This will enhance the country's security, in terms of social aspects, including possible social disasters caused by terrorism.

Reducing Explosive Hazards at Small Arms and Light Weapons (ALW) and Conventional Ammunition (CA) Stockpiles in the Republic of Moldova, funded by Norway, Germany, USA, Austria, Switzerland and implemented from 2018-2022. The objective of the project is to improve the overall safety of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova by increasing the capacity of relevant stakeholders to address SALW and CA and minimise the risks derived from weapons and explosive materials at ammunition storage sites⁸².

Firearms and Ammunition in South East Europe, funded by the European Commission with EUR 50 061 and starting in 2023, ongoing. The main objective of the project is to detect and combat trafficking in firearms, to strengthen the capacities of Moldova and the EU to counter any threats to internal security, to combat threats related to cross-border crime in the region and to improve the situation of illegal arms trafficking⁸³.

TENSOR Trusted biometric technologies to assist law enforcement authorities in the fight against terrorism and organised crime funded by the European Commission with EUR 4 562 975 and running from 01/02/2023- 26/01/2026. TENSOR will empower law enforcement practitioners with new tools that will assist law enforcement authorities in identification, identity verification, intelligence and investigation processes and can be used to unlock criminals' mobile devices, share biometric data through secure, automated and scalable exchange of biometric information and forensic evidence between law enforcement authorities in a cross-border manner, enhancing interoperability between legacy systems owned by security practitioners and forensic institutes⁸⁴.

Response to natural and man-made disasters in Eastern Partnership countries - phase 3 (PPRD East 3), implemented from 01.10.2020 - 30.09.2024 in the EaP countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. The EU contribution is € 5 999 971. Implementing

⁸¹ INTERPOL-Moldova Operational Assistance Initiative.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2476~language=en>

⁸² Explosive Risk Mitigation at Small Arms Light Weapons (SALW) and Conventional Ammunition (CA) Depots in the Republic of Moldova

<https://salw.osce.org/Projects/ViewPage/3100306-explosive-risk-mitigation-at-small-arms-light-weapons-salw-and-conventional-ammunition-ca-depots-in-the-republic-of-moldova>

⁸³ Firearms and ammunition in South-East Europe.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2445~language=en>

⁸⁴ TENSOR Trusted biometric technologies to help law enforcement authorities fight terrorism and organised crime. <https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=1657~language=en>

organisations: Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), Emergency Services Academy Finland, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic - Section of Crisis Management, Centro. The PPRD East Programme, initiated in 2010, aims to strengthen disaster risk reduction and crisis management in the Eastern Partnership countries and to promote regional cooperation with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The third phase of the programme is ongoing and is being implemented in the years 2020-2024. The programme ensures that cross-cutting issues of gender, environment and human rights are mainstreamed in the implementation of the programme to enhance its impact, sustainability and relevance⁸⁵.

Increasing the protection of the population in emergency situations caused by natural disasters in the cross-border area, carried out in the period 2020-2022 and funded by the European Commission with €200 000. Project objectives: modernization and equipping of the "natural disasters" module within the Republican Training Centre in order to ensure an efficient cross-border response in case of disasters; increasing the intervention capacity of the Galati Emergency Situations Inspectorate in case of natural disasters in the eligible area, as well as joint actions. The project addresses the main challenges caused by natural and man-made disasters in the Republic of Moldova and Romania. The project will contribute to a strategic objective in the cross-border cooperation programme for disaster prevention and mitigation.⁸⁶

Improving emergency response times in the cross-border area by renovating the infrastructure for training the population, funded by the European Commission with 225,000 in the period 2020-2022. The project aimed to establish a common educational framework for crisis prevention in case of natural and man-made disasters, which will be implemented through a comprehensive programme of actions. Project objectives: improving skills and knowledge through first aid training and simulation of response in exceptional situations for 1360 people from 10 localities in Romania and the Republic of Moldova; increasing operational capacity by renovating and equipping with first aid equipment a training room of the Republican Training Centre in the Republic of Moldova; increasing the involvement and active participation of the population in emergency prevention measures.⁸⁷

Romania-Moldova cross-border cooperation area a safer area by improving the operating infrastructure of the mobile emergency, resuscitation and rescue service (SMURD), increasing the level of training and maintaining the capacity of staff, started in 2019 and expected to be completed in September 2023, the project budget is EUR 3 214 000. Project objective - increasing the safety and protection of the population by improving training and maintaining the intervention capacity of professional emergency services (including SMURD) in the border area. According to the programme rules, the beneficiaries together with the partners are to contribute 35.72% of the project value and 64.28% is the

⁸⁵ Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-Made Disasters in Eastern Partnership Countries - Phase 3 (PPRD East 3)

<https://eu4moldova.eu/ro/projects/eu-project-page/?id=1535>

⁸⁶ Closing conference of the project "Increasing the protection of the population in emergency situations caused by natural disasters in the cross-border area".

<https://dse.md/ro/communicate/conferin%C8%9Ba-de-%C3%AEncheiere-proiectului-%E2%80%9Ecre%C8%99terea-prot%C8%9Biei-popula%C8%9Biei-%C3%AEn-situa%C8%9Bii-de>

⁸⁷ Improving emergency response times in the cross-border area by renovating the infrastructure for training the population",

https://primajutorro-md.ro/?fbclid=IwAR1uHzCE1SRDFrwuDXJYAhN_M9IMDCzK2GD5oeUvfFkKphCKkCb335rzicI

European Union grant⁸⁸. The project leader is the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations of the Romanian Ministry of Interior and the partners: General Inspectorate of Aviation of MAI, Romania; Ministry of Health of Romania; General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations of MAI, Republic of Moldova; Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova; Inspectorate for Emergency Situations "Mihail Grigore Sturza" of Iasi County, Romania; Institute of Emergency Medicine of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova⁸⁹.

The Disaster Readiness Project, funded by USAID in the amount of \$700,000, running through 2022 aims to Provide effective protection, assistance and durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other victims of conflict and disaster⁹⁰.

Strengthening crisis response capabilities, , founded by Sweden, TETRA portable radios donation countrywide (4 stations) - Equip 1000 first responders (operational law enforcement officers and crisis response personnel) with modern TETRA handheld radios allowing for secure information transmission during crisis situations and complementing the existing encrypted system for voice-data information transmission of operational communications.

Strengthening crisis response of the MoI by equipping with Mobile Crisis Center vehicles Countrywide, founded by Sweden. Support the Police Operational Intervention Subdivision with the purchase of four Mobile Operations Cars (4x4 long-wheelbase vehicle with technical equipment) enabling commanders from different police services to deal with crisis on the spot (secure communications and mobile decision/order).

Border security

Export Control and Border Security Programme (EXBS) - implemented with the support of the US Department of State started in 2011 and is ongoing. The aim of the programme is to support the prevention of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), destabilizing accumulations, irresponsible transfers of conventional arms by assisting in the establishment of effective national strategic trade control systems in countries possessing, producing, delivering strategic goods, as well as countries through whose territory these goods may transit⁹¹.

⁸⁸ Romania-Moldova cross-border cooperation area a safer area by improving the infrastructure for operating the mobile emergency, resuscitation and rescue service (SMURD), increasing the level of training and maintaining staff capacity.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewactivitypreview.do~public=true~pageid=2~activityid=1928~language=en>

⁸⁹ Ministry of Interior's Action Plan for 2020

<https://www.mai.gov.md/sites/default/files/Activitatea/Planuri%20de%20activitate/Anexa%20la%20Ord.20%20din%2017.01.2020%20pentru%20publicarea%20pe%20site.docx>

⁹⁰ Foreign Assistance.gov.

https://www.foreignassistance.gov/data?country=Moldova&fiscal_year=2022&transaction_type_name=obligations#tab-query

⁹¹ External assistance projects of the Customs Service.

https://customs.gov.md/ro/articles/proiecte-de-asistenta-externa-of-service-vamal-1612-en?fbclid=IwAR1xsszwya44eEZaRpveQ27ujfAjmv_f_Q0jTCLIFig6oeLQ3OZYeVRImHs

Alignment with European border security standards

EU Border Security Project, funded by the European Commission - EUR 3,552,000 and co-financed by Moldova: EUR 216,131.69. It is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Moldova and co-implemented by IOM Ukraine during 2020-2022, extended until 31 December 2023, with co-financing from Moldova and Ukraine. The project includes 2 components: Implementation of the video control system (VICOS (VIdeoCOntrolSystem) component for the customs authorities of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, with data access for the General Inspectorate of the Border Police of the Republic of Moldova and the State Border Service of Ukraine) and improvement of mobility and accessibility in difficult areas and along the border with Ukraine in adverse weather conditions, with the aim of strengthening the capacities of the General Inspectorate of the Border Police and the State Border Service of Ukraine (equipment for border surveillance)⁹².

Improving the institutional capacities of the General Inspectorate of Border Police and the operational capacities of customs workers

Improve the institutional capacities of the IGPF by strengthening the security of identity and travel documents to prevent and combat illegal migration and trafficking in human beings. It is funded by the European Union, 392.927,63 Euro. The project aims to improve the capacities of border authorities to prevent and counter cross-border crimes related to the fraudulent use of travel documents through well-trained and highly qualified staff able to identify and report forgeries thanks to advanced technologies in the field.⁹³

There are several **EU TAIEX** projects, running from March to May 2023, whose beneficiary is the Customs Service. Project activities included study visits to familiarise with the procedures for submitting applications and authorisation for various customs procedures, EU states' procedures on mutual assistance in customs matters, best practices on information exchange in the field of cross-border crime law enforcement, best practices on coordinated border management, avoiding duplication of controls by different agencies present at border crossing points, simplification and optimisation of border procedures, implementation of intelligent digital border systems such as "Digital Border" as well as familiarisation with the Community common transit procedure and successful implementation of the NCTS information system in the Republic of Moldova⁹⁴.

EU project Support for the Modernisation and Evaluation of Integrated Border Management in the Republic of Moldova, funded by the EU through the MIEUX (Migration EU expertise) initiative and implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The aim of the project is to ensure quality management in the application of Integrated Border Management (IBM) principles by: establishing viable mechanisms for the evaluation and control of the quality and conformity of processes, procedures, legislation and other components carried out at national level with those carried out and implemented at EU level in the field of integrated border management; creating and implementing the relevant regulatory and institutional framework related to the

⁹² *Ibid*

⁹³ External assistance projects of the Customs Service.

https://customs.gov.md/ro/articles/proiecte-de-asistenta-externa-of-service-vamal-1612-en?fbclid=IwAR1xsszwya44eEZaRPveQ27ujfAjmv_f_Q0jTCLIFig6oeLQ3OZYeVRImHs

Ibid

⁹⁴ *Ibid*

field of integrated border management according to EU regulations adapted to the situation in the Republic of Moldova⁹⁵.

Project Supporting Protection, Transit, Voluntary and Informed Return and Reintegration of Eastern Partnership Citizens and Third Country Liabilities Affected by the Conflict in Ukraine - implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Moldova from 24 February 2022 to 23 February 2025. The project provides support in strengthening institutional capacities and purchasing equipment⁹⁶.

iMARS - image Manipulation Attack Resolving Solutions", funded under the EU Horizon Programme for Research and Innovation (2014 - 2020). The project aims to improve the operational capabilities of border guards by providing solutions that ensure reliable passport verification procedures and analysis solutions that can detect manipulated and morphed passport images and document fraud. The project is expected to be completed in 2024⁹⁷.

The development of a joint police patrol concept for roads in the Moldova-Romania border area, funded by the European Commission, was completed on 1 November. The aim of the project - to improve the professional knowledge and skills of 100 employees of the Patrol Police, working in the border area between the Republic of Moldova and Romania, within 18 months, in the field of prevention of offences, including those related to road traffic safety. This project contributes directly to the Objectives of the Operational Programme Romania - Moldova 2014-2020⁹⁸.

The DoE's pilot NSDD Green Border Security Initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DoE), runs from 2019 through today. The NSDD/SLD team supports the cooperation efforts between IGPF RM and SGSU in the field of joint patrolling and joint control of the central (Transnistrian) segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. The following actions were carried out within the project: conducting the workshop entitled: "Joint patrolling at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border" and Equipping the IGPF with 8 vehicles, technical.⁹⁹

Airspace surveillance

The establishment of the aerial monitoring unit within the Border Police of the Republic of Moldova with a budget of EUR 1 061 000 aims to improve aerial surveillance of the border Moldova to prevent illegal migration and terrorist threats. It is funded by the GS Foundation - Foundation for Global Security Sector Reform. The activity is a support to strengthen institutional capacities to emerging security threats, based on the Home Affairs Development Strategy 2022 -2030. The parties will support citizens' security, public order

⁹⁵ External assistance projects of the Customs Service.

<https://border.gov.md/files/2022-02/Proiecte%20de%20asistent%20extern%202020-2021%28p-u%20site%29%20%284%29%20%E2%80%94%20%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf>

⁹⁶ *Ibid*

⁹⁷ *Ibid*

⁹⁸ The Republic of Moldova will cooperate with Romania to develop a joint border patrol concept in a project. <http://curentul.md/stiri/republica-moldova-va-coopera-cu-romania-pentru-a-dezvolta-un-concept-de-patrolare-cu-muna-la-frontiera-in-cadrul-unui-proiect.html>

⁹⁹ LIST of donors and grant programs for the period 2020 - 2021, from which the General Inspectorate of Border Police of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Moldova has benefited/benefited. <https://border.gov.md/files/2022-02/Proiecte%20de%20asistent%20extern%202020-2021%28p-u%20site%29%20%284%29%20%E2%80%94%20%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf>

and border management by increasing knowledge, expertise and awareness within PF subdivisions¹⁰⁰.

BorderUAS project - Technologies to enhance border and external security, funded by European Union and co-funded by IGPF: 127 500 Euro. The project aims to develop the next generation of unmanned aerial vehicles equipped with new types of sensors capable of detecting, locating and identifying people and vehicles crossing the border in wooded areas¹⁰¹.

Innovative concept of relocatable aerial surveillance for border security, running from 2021-2022, with a total budget of 847.526,25 Euro funded by the European Union and co-financed from the IGPF budget (600.000 Euro). The project aims to take the experience of Lithuania and Estonia on specific aerial border surveillance systems and provide FP support to establish and implement a pilot solution for a relocatable mobile aerial surveillance system for border security¹⁰².

Migration and refugee problem

This chapter highlights issues related to strengthening the resilience of refugees, persons affected by conflict, legal assistance for refugees, strengthening the migration management system in the Republic of Moldova.

UNDP-funded project **Strengthening the resilience of Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Moldova, host communities and local and national authorities in Moldova is ongoing**. Through this project, rapid intervention was taken to support local and national authorities in responding to the new context and emerging needs of refugees. The project also recognised the importance of the process in providing refugees with the opportunity to become self-reliant and resilient by promoting their integration into Moldovan society and economy, while contributing to reducing pressure on host households and communities, which were at the same time facing a complex energy, food and high price crisis, and strengthening social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between refugees and members of host communities¹⁰³.

Strengthening Access to Justice through Legal Aid for Refugees in the Republic of Moldova, implemented by UNDP aims to support national and local governments to address the impact of the crisis on development and to contribute to bringing a resilience approach to the humanitarian response to refugees, thereby helping to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus and adding a longer-term perspective to the national discourse on the duration and scale of the current refugee crisis. It is essential to continue to ensure the protection of refugees and to empower national and local actors to prepare for,

¹⁰⁰ LIST of donors and grant programs for the period 2020 - 2021, from which the General Inspectorate of Border Police of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Moldova has benefited/benefited. <https://border.gov.md/files/2022-02/Proiecte%20de%20asistent%20extern%202020-2021%28p-u%20site%29%20%284%29%20%E2%80%94%20%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf>

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*

¹⁰² *Ibid*

¹⁰³ Strengthening the resilience of Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Moldova, host communities and local and national authorities in Moldova. Building the resilience of Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Moldova, host communities and local and national authorities in Moldova | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)

respond to and implement durable solutions to forced displacement, while respecting protection, humanitarian and sustainable development principles. With a budget of € 244 570,53¹⁰⁴.

The Protection and Livelihoods for Ukrainian Refugee Seekers (PLUS) project, amounting to EUR 1,051,304, is funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and aims to alleviate the immediate emergency needs of displaced girls, boys and women from Ukraine in the Republic of Moldova and Romania¹⁰⁵ whose beneficiaries were refugees from Ukraine in transit on the territory of the Republic of Moldova as well as those who intended to stay.

Strengthening the response to persons affected by the Ukrainian crisis in the Republic of Moldova, whose beneficiaries are the General Inspectorate of Border Police, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Customs Service has the overall objective to improve the response to those crossing the borders of the Republic of Moldova as a result of the crisis in Ukraine. Funded by the Council of Europe Development Bank with an amount of EUR 500,000 the project aims to complement the current efforts of the Moldovan authorities to respond to humanitarian needs by: collecting, analysing and providing critical information to authorities and donors for a better targeted response, procuring essential non-food items for those most in need and strengthening the operational capacity of local border authorities to ensure the swift and dignified processing of conflict-affected persons arriving from Ukraine¹⁰⁶.

Emergency relief and protection of internally displaced persons affected by the conflict in Ukraine as well as Ukrainian refugees in Moldova, funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) with an amount of EUR 900,000, aims to contribute to the humanitarian relief and resilience of internally displaced persons in Western AU as well as Ukrainian refugees in Moldova through an immediate humanitarian response¹⁰⁷.

Food Assistance for Conflict Displaced Populations Project. Provided by USAID for the Republic of Moldova in the amount of \$4,742,617¹⁰⁸.

Promoting human security of Ukrainian refugees, third-country nationals and host communities in Moldova through empowerment and socio-economic inclusion with a budget of EUR 1,445,278.46 which started on 01/02/2023 is planned to be completed in January 2024. The donor of the project is the Government of Japan through the United Nations Human Security Fund¹⁰⁹. The main goal of the programme is to improve human security of Ukrainian refugees, citizens of third countries fleeing war in Ukraine and their

¹⁰⁴ Strengthening access to justice by empowering Moldovan refugees with legal knowledge.

<https://www.undp.org/ro/moldova/projects/consolidarea-accesului-la-justitie-prin-abilitarea-refugiatilor-din-moldova-cu-cunostinte-juridice>

¹⁰⁵ Protection and Livelihoods for Ukrainian Refugee Claimants

(PLUS). <https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2544~language=en>

¹⁰⁶ Aid Management Platform - Preview Activity (gov.md)

¹⁰⁷ <https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2541~language=en>

¹⁰⁸ Foreign Assistance.gov.

https://www.foreignassistance.gov/data?country=Moldova&fiscal_year=2022&transaction_type_name=obligations#tab-query

¹⁰⁹ Promoting human security of Ukrainian refugees, third country nationals and host communities in Moldova through empowerment and socio-economic inclusion. <https://www.undp.org/ro/moldova/projects/promovarea-securitatii-umane-refugiatilor-ucraineni-cetatenilor-tarilor-terte-si-comunitatilor-gazda-din-moldova-prin-abilitare-si>

host communities in Moldova. Under this programme, UNDP and IOM will strengthen resilience to the multidimensional crisis facing Moldova, which has been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, ensuring that humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian refugees and host communities contributes to long-term development.

The project **Strengthening the Migration Management System in the Republic of Moldova**, financed by the European Union with the amount of 295,655.75 euros, was implemented during the years 2021-2022, with the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Moldova as beneficiary. The partners of the Project were the Polish Border Guard, the General Inspectorate of Border Police and the General Inspectorate for Migration¹¹⁰. The project aimed to strengthen the efforts of the Republic of Moldova in the process of creating modern border migration services that meet current requirements and to implement migration management solutions used in EU countries.

ILO Call Project - Ukraine and Neighbouring Countries - funded by the UK Department of Foreign Affairs / Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), implemented by IOM Moldova. The aim of the project is to provide technical assistance for the winter period through the provision of equipment¹¹¹.

Project Capacity Building for the Protection of Ukrainian Refugees, Third Country Responsibilities and Host Communities in Moldova - funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic, implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Moldova and implemented in the period 01 July 2022 - 30 June 2024. The aim of the project is to strengthen the professional capacities of officials from the Customs Service and the General Inspectorate of Border Police¹¹².

Peaceful and gender-equal societies through capacity building of local NGOs to prevent conflict and respond to crises and emergencies through support from the Women's Peace Fund, 920,825.07 ongoing, expected to end in September 2023. The main objective of the project is to support a peaceful and gender-equal society by building resilient women's organizations and communities, protecting women's rights, providing specialized services to victims of gender-based violence and sexual violence in armed conflict, enhancing women's participation and leadership in planning and crisis response efforts, and creating an enabling environment for the implementation of women's commitments to peace and security. The project supports local women's organizations responding to the urgent challenges facing women and girls affected by conflict in Ukraine Moldova by enabling them to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to refugee women and IDPs, protect women and girls affected by conflict from gender-based and sexual violence, contribute to increased participation of women in planning and response processes, and strengthen public and private partnerships in response to the refugee crisis¹¹³.

¹¹⁰ Closing conference of the Moldovan-Polish migration project
<https://igm.gov.md/ro/content/conferin%C8%9Ba-de-%C3%AEnchidere-proiectului-moldo-polonez-%C3%AE-n-domeniul-migra%C8%9Biei>

¹¹¹ External assistance projects of the Customs Service.
https://customs.gov.md/ro/articles/proiecte-de-asistenta-externa-ale-serviciului-vamal-1612-ro?fbclid=IwAR1xszwya44eEZaRPveQ27ujfAjmv_f_Q0jTCLIFig6oeLQ3OZYeVRImHs

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ UN Women and the Women's Fund for Peace and Humanitarian Assistance strongly support civil society involved in the response to the humanitarian crisis in the Republic of Moldova.
<https://moldova.unwomen.org/ro/stories/comunicat-de-presa/2022/07/un-women-si-fondul-femeilor-pentru-pace-si-asistenta-umanitara-sustin-ferm-societatea-civila-implicata-in-raspunsul-la-criza-umanitara-in-republica-moldova>

Cyber security and digitisation

This chapter will include various cybersecurity projects implemented in the Republic of Moldova over the last two years. The number of these has increased significantly since 2022. Structurally they can be divided into two broad categories: those aimed at improving the infrastructure and cybersecurity of the Republic of Moldova, and those related to the educational process in this field.

One of the most well known, widely publicised and far-reaching projects is the **Future Technologies** project. It was launched in 2021, to continue the activities implemented since 2007, with the assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in the sector of developing the competitiveness of strategic economic sectors in the Republic of Moldova and as a response to global trends of digitalization. With a total budget of USD 52.82 million, provided by USAID¹¹⁴, Sweden and the United Kingdom, the five-year project is intended to be a catalyst for the modernisation and innovation process in the following sectors: information and communication technology (ICT), engineering, light industry, creative industries and digital media, and is a response to global digitisation and innovation trends. Over time, the project has evolved through the realisation and implementation of large-scale projects such as: TEKWILL Center of Excellence - a hub where people connect to ideas, resources, science, to develop together the ICT sector; Center of Excellence and Acceleration in Design and Technologies of the Republic of Moldova - ZIP house, FabLab Chisinau; CIRCLE, etc¹¹⁵ or partnerships have been concluded with various organizations in the private and financial-banking sector¹¹⁶.

With the support of the "Future Technologies" project in the field of innovation and digitization, funded by USAID - United States Agency for International Development and the Government of Sweden, with the participation of the Electronic Government Agency (hereinafter - AGE) and the Information Technology and Cyber Security Service (STISC), the Academy of Cyber Security was established at the Technical University of Moldova in December 2022. The new entity is to be equipped with technologized spaces, training rooms, server room with scenario modeling in the field of cyber security, thematic rooms, as well as an event hall with a capacity of over 400 people¹¹⁷.

The Cyber Security Academy aims to: further improve Moldova's cyber security capability, support the implementation of the latest cyber security technologies, taking into account the needs and interests of cyber security students and professionals, as well as the cyber security needs of Moldovan industries and the public sector. One of the objectives of this project is the creation of a thematic laboratory (Security Operation Center), equipped with the latest

¹¹⁴ Stimulating economic growth in **Moldova**. <https://www.usaid.gov/ro/moldova/economic-growth>

¹¹⁵ The Academy of Cyber Security will be set up within the TUM, with an investment of tens of millions of lei, <https://diez.md/2022/12/23/in-cadrul-utm-va-fi-infiintata-academia-de-securitate-cibernetica-cu-investitii-de-zeci-milioane-de-lei/>

¹¹⁶ Maib and the Future Technologies Project, funded by USAID, Sweden and the UK have signed a Cooperation Agreement to promote e-commerce and develop innovative financial solutions for SMEs in the Republic of Moldova.

<https://www.orange.md/ro/noutate/orange-si-proiectul-tehnologiile-viitorului-parteneriat-durabil-pentru-moldova-a-26-05-2022>; <https://moldcell.md/rom/news/semnarea-acordului-de-parteneriat>

¹¹⁷ The most modern and efficient national cybersecurity centre will soon open its doors at UTM <https://utm.md/blog/2023/06/29/in-curand-la-utm-isi-va-deschide-usile-cel-mai-performant-si-modern-centru-national-cybersecurity/>

technologies and tools in the field from global manufacturers of cybersecurity solutions, where various case scenarios will be studied, including for the needs of state institutions.

The National Cyber Security Centre has multiple goals, including: creation of a programme of short and long continuous training courses for representatives of various state institutions - local and central public authorities, private companies, universities that have programmes in the IT and Cyber Security fields; training of trainers for pre-university education to raise the level of digital literacy in middle and high schools throughout the republic; promotion of cyber health among employees of local and central public institutions through the organisation of continuous training courses; structured organisation of courses by levels of difficulty etc¹¹⁸.

With a budget of \$1.7 million over 5 years, USAID's **Critical Infrastructure Digitization and Resilience (CIDR) Program** aims to assist the Republic of Moldova in increasing the quality of cybersecurity so that critical infrastructure is resilient and can continue to provide citizens with essential services. Implementation priorities include: supporting and facilitating the continuation of the Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity Working Group; assessing and supporting critical infrastructure operators; conceptualizing and creating a public-private mechanism to facilitate cross-sector cooperation of cybersecurity specialists; supporting the implementation of the new cybersecurity law; increasing the cybersecurity resilience of the Government of the Republic of Moldova by organizing trainings and assessments; and supporting the Cybersecurity Academy¹¹⁹.

European Union-funded **Rapid Assistance Project for Cyber Security for the Republic of Moldova**. The EU contribution is €8 million¹²⁰. The project aimed over eighteen months to increase the cyber resilience of public sector organisations and key critical infrastructure sectors and align their operations with the EU Directive on the security of networks and information systems (NIS). Project activities are carried out by the Electronic Government Academy (eGA) in Estonia¹²¹, from May 2022 to November 2023¹²². Among the most important objectives of the project are: defining the responsibilities of a governance model for cyber security and minimum cyber security baselines; improving the mechanism for cyber incident management and monitoring; supporting the development of the cyber security operations centre and information sharing platform; developing the technical skills of cyber security experts of government agencies and critical service providers; establishing communication channels and cooperation mechanisms between public and private agencies to ensure the operation and recovery of critical services and infrastructures¹²³. Thanks to the "Cyber Security Rapid Assistance Project for the Republic of Moldova" the "Law on Cyber Security of the Republic of Moldova" was adopted and will enter into force on 1 January 2025.

¹¹⁸ Cybersecurity exercise boosts Republic of Moldova's resilience to cyber threats.

<https://eu4moldova.eu/ro/exercitiul-de-securitate-cibernetica-sporeste-rezistenta-republicii-moldova-la-ameninta-rile-cibernetice/>

¹¹⁹ Stimulating economic growth in Moldova. <https://www.usaid.gov/ro/moldova/economic-growth>

¹²⁰ Moldova Cybersecurity Rapid Assistance.

<https://eufordigital.eu/discover-eu/moldova-cybersecurity-rapid-assistance/>

¹²¹ The e-Government Academy is a centre of excellence in Estonia, founded in 2002 to increase society's resilience to digital transformation reforms. Over the past 20 years, it has worked with more than 280 organisations and 141 countries on digital innovations around the world.

¹²² With EU support, Moldova has adopted the Cyber Security Law.

https://www.eas.europa.eu/delegations/moldova/cu-sprijinul-ue-moldova-adoptat-legea-securit%C4%83%C8%9Bii-cibernetice_ro?s=223

¹²³ <https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2594~language=en>

In the area of cyber security, an important project to highlight is **CyberEast - Cybercrime Action for Cyber Resilience in the Eastern Partnership**. This project aims to adopt legislative measures and legislative and policy frameworks in line with the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and related instruments, to strengthen the capacities of law enforcement and judicial authorities and inter-agency cooperation, and to enhance effective international cooperation and trust in criminal justice, cybercrime and electronic evidence matters, including between service providers and law enforcement authorities.

The Estonian e-Government Academy (eGA) is also implementing a project in the Republic of Moldova, the beneficiary of which is the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova. **Assistance to the Armed Forces of Moldova - Cyber Defence Component**, funded by the European Commission through the EPF¹²⁴ whose direct beneficiary is J6 Directorate Communications and Information Systems, of the General Staff of the Army of the Ministry of Defence. The 2-year project (2022-2024) has the overall objective to enhance the overall cyber security resilience of the Republic of Moldova and to strengthen the cyber defence capabilities of the Armed Forces of Moldova, with the specific objective to increase the capacity of the Armed Forces of Moldova to detect intrusions into information systems and to counter cyber attacks. The project covers the following main activities to achieve the objectives: cyber defence training and exercises and the preparation and delivery of cyber security equipment¹²⁵. The assistance provided will enhance the defence establishment's ability to respond to counter cyber-attacks and provides for training, delivery of specialised equipment and the creation of the necessary infrastructure for these purposes in line with EU best practice. The cost of the package is €3 million¹²⁶.

The Estonian e-Government Academy (eGA) is implementing two other projects that are also aimed at other countries, but also at the Republic of Moldova: **EU4Digital: Improving Cyber** which has the main objective of improving cyber resilience in the six countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region in line with EU rules and best practices, with a focus on the NIS Directive¹²⁷ and **Advancing Cybersecurity Capacities for Digital Transformation**. This project has its origins in the findings made during the Covid pandemic and the realisation that the need for sustainable cybersecurity development is more timely than ever to protect countries' cyberspace and further digital transformation. The project continues to develop secure digital societies in developing countries by assessing the cybersecurity situation, defining capability gaps and sharing recommendations.

The project "EU4Digital: Supporting the Digital Economy and Society in the Eastern Partnership" phase II, whose co-beneficiary is the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova, aims to support the extension of the EU Digital Single Market to the Eastern Partnership countries, developing the potential of the digital economy and society to ensure economic growth, generate more jobs, improve people's lives and assist the business

¹²⁴ The European Peace Facility (EPF) was set up to enable capacity building of military actors and to provide training, equipment and infrastructure for security purposes.

¹²⁵ Assistance to the Armed Forces of Moldova - Cyber Defence Component.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=1554~language=en>

¹²⁶ Memorandum of Understanding on cyber security signed at the Ministry of Defence. <https://www.army.md/?lng=2&action=show&cat=122&obj=8127> and Assistance to Moldovan Armed Forces - Cyber Defence Component.

<https://ega.ee/project/assistance-to-moldovan-armed-forces-cyber-defence-component>

¹²⁷ Resilience in the EaP Countries. Armenia | Azerbaijan | Belarus | Georgia | Moldova | Ukraine.

<https://ega.ee/project/eu4digital-improving-cyber-resilience-eap-countries/>

environment. It is in the process of implementation and is expected to be completed in 2025.¹²⁸

EU4digital: Connecting Research and Education Communities (EAPCONNECT2) has the overall objective of bringing together research and education communities in Europe and the EaP region and bridging the digital divide. It was first launched by the European Union (EU) in 2015 (first phase: 2015-2020) to improve intra-regional connectivity of EaP countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Republic of Moldova Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia) and facilitate the participation of local scientists, students and academics in global collaborations, research and education (R&E). The Republic of Moldova is represented in the Project by the RENAM Association which manages the RENAM National Research and Education Network (NREN RENAM). The present EaPConnect2 project aims to increase the network coverage for students, lecturers and researchers from EaP countries by up to 70-80%. This will stimulate information exchange and cooperation between the research and education communities in the EaP region and Europe.¹²⁹

Digitisation of the Customs Service Project - funded by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and implemented by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Implementation period: 2021-2023. The project consists of 5 Phases: support to the Customs Service in facilitating cross-border e-commerce through digitization of pre-arrival processing of postal consignments and express mail - CN22/23 (implemented in 2021-2022), support to the SV in the implementation of Preferential Certificates of Origin in electronic format (in the process of implementation in 2021-2023), digitization of customs decision making and management processes through the implementation of the SVRM Customs Decision Management System (2022-2023). simplifying the business environment and increasing the transparency of customs clearance processes through the implementation of the SV Economic Agent Cabinet (2023), improving overall efficiency and digitising customs operations, enabling a paperless environment (2023)¹³⁰.

Project for the implementation of the SEED+ Electronic Data Exchange System in the Republic of Moldova - funded by the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), with co-funding from the Republic of Moldova. Implementation period: 2021-2024. The aim of the project is to implement the SEED Electronic Data Exchange System which will allow the traceability of goods in their circuit between the CEFTA States Parties for the application of full cumulation of origin and draw-back duties and in which, after upgrading to the SEED+ version, the integration of AEO and risk management modules, as well as all agencies issuing the permit documents in cross-border trade¹³¹.

FLEXICROSS-Flexible and enhanced border crossing experience for passengers and authorities, funded by the European Commission. It will run for 3 years, and is planned for completion in 2025. In the framework of the project, in addition to other activities, it will run the Moldova-RO Border Scenario which involves the creation of a smart, secure and portable

¹²⁸ EU4Digital: supporting digital economy and society in the Eastern Partnership - Phase II. eu project page - EU for Moldova (eu4moldova.eu)

¹²⁹ EU4DIGITAL: connecting research and education communities (EAPCONNECT2).
<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=699~language=en>

¹³⁰ External assistance projects of the Customs Service.
<https://customs.gov.md/ro/articles/proiecte-de-asistenta-externa-ale-serviciului-vamal-1612-ro>

¹³¹ *Ibid*

Border Crossing Passenger Control System to facilitate rail travel. A software platform will be created to enable the relevant authorities to link biometric identification data and travel documents. Border crossing checks will be done seamlessly using lightweight equipment (smartphones with multimodal biometric sensors) and in a unified way, using the cross-border data exchange¹³².

The Government Services Modernization Project was launched in June 2018 and will be implemented by the end of June 2023 with financial support from the Bank Group.

22.4 million¹³³. The overall objective of the project is to improve access, efficiency and quality of public service delivery of the Government of Moldova. The second component of this project aims to support the digitization of selected redesigned administrative services, complete and strengthen a common infrastructure and mechanisms for the rapid implementation of ICT-enabled administrative services, and introduce government-wide IT management and cybersecurity standards and procedures. The third component, supports the alignment of institutional and staff capacities of key government agencies with the new citizen-centric model and digital administrative service delivery arrangements implemented under Components 1 and 2¹³⁴.

Energy security

The projects included relate to the development of the energy system of the Republic of Moldova, increasing the integration of renewable energy and increasing resilience to climate change, to promote energy and resource efficiency and renewable energy.

The Moldova Energy Security project, funded by USAID with \$59.78 million to run from March 2022 -2026. The project has three key objectives: improving the physical and market integration of Moldova's energy system with Europe, increasing the integration of renewable energy, and increasing resilience to climate change. The Republic of Moldova Energy Security Project builds on previous USAID technical assistance to support the Government's efforts to diversify energy supply sources. These previous efforts include the construction of the Ungheni - Chisinau gas pipeline which already provides an alternative to Russian natural gas and connects Moldova's gas transportation system with Romania and Europe¹³⁵.

Strengthen energy security and resilience in Europe and Eurasia E&E region project, part of the **U.S.-Europe energy bridge** project, funded by USAID with \$1,500,000 that aims to improve European energy security by connecting partners in the region to U.S. investors, technology and expertise¹³⁶.

¹³² *Ibid*

¹³³ eGovernment Agency.

<https://www.egov.md/ro/communication/news/misiunea-bancii-mondiale-evaluat-stadiul-de-modernizare-serviciilor>

¹³⁴ External Assistance Monitor, No.2

https://www.ipis.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Monitorul-Asistentei-Externe_editia-2.pdf

¹³⁵ USAID will support the Republic of Moldova in strengthening and diversifying its energy sector.<https://md.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/210/MESA-Press-Release-RO.pdf>

¹³⁶ Foreign Assistance.gov.

https://www.foreignassistance.gov/data?country=Moldova&fiscal_year=2022&transaction_type_name=obligations#tab-query

The Moldova development policy program, co-funded by USAID with \$30,000,000 and implemented by the World Bank Group. This programme aims to help Moldova minimise the economic, energy, security and humanitarian impact of the war against Ukraine¹³⁷.

Emergency Response to People in Moldova Affected by the Crisis in Ukraine Project - funded by the US Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), implemented by IOM Moldova. Completed this year. The aim of the project is to support seamless and efficient border management in the context of the energy crisis¹³⁸.

EU4Energy Phase II, implemented from 01.12.2022 to 30.11.2026, in the Eastern Partnership Countries: Georgia, Ukraine, EU contribution: € 3 912 632. The EU will help partner countries to increase energy security by encouraging energy market integration between partner countries, but also with neighbouring EU Member States, based on sound legislation and regulation. The project will advance further work on transposition/alignment to the EU acquis as foreseen by the Energy Community Treaty as well as bilateral agreements with the EU not yet funded by other EU contributions: assistance in drafting/revision, support in adoption and implementation of laws and secondary legislation related to energy reforms; Assistance to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova in the ENTSO-E post-synchronisation process etc¹³⁹.

EU4Energy: Green Growth Fund (GGF), implemented from 01.01.2009 to 31.12.2030 in the Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. The EU contribution is: € 13 350 000. The Green Growth Fund (GGF) is a specialised fund, supported by the European Union, designed to promote energy and resource efficiency and renewable energy in the neighbourhood countries. It provides refinancing to financial institutions to increase their participation in these sectors and also invests directly in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects¹⁴⁰.

EU4Energy - Promoting the Clean Energy Transition, implemented from 01.07.2021 to 30.06.2025 in the PaE countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. The EU contribution is € 3 700 000. Implementing organisations: Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER), Energy Community, The International Energy Agency (IEA). The project aims to develop collaboration with the governments of the Eastern Partnership countries to support them in their efforts to strengthen energy security, remove investment barriers to clean energy financing and increase the share of renewable energy in the energy mix¹⁴¹.

In the context of the risk related to possible limitations/disruptions in natural gas supply, especially during the cold season, the project provides funding for the acquisition and creation of strategic stocks of natural gas in underground storage facilities in neighbouring

¹³⁷ *Ibid*

¹³⁸ External assistance projects of the Customs Service.

<https://customs.gov.md/ro/articles/proiecte-de-asistenta-externa-ale-serviciului-vamal-1612-ro>

¹³⁹ The EU4Energy Programme. <https://www.energy-community.org/regionalinitiatives/EU4EnergyII.html>

¹⁴⁰ *EU4Energy: Green Growth Fund (GGF)*

https://eu4moldova.eu/?eud_pdf_project=270&country=1&lang=rom; <http://www.ggf.lu/>

¹⁴¹ Promoting a transition to clean energy: The EU launches a new phase of the EU4Energy programme under the EAP.

<https://euneighbourseast.eu/ro/news/latest-news/promovarea-unei-tranzitii-catre-o-energie-curata-ue-lanseaza-o-noua-faza-a-programului-eu4energy-in-cadrul-pae-2/>

countries. At the same time, the implementation of the project will facilitate the diversification of the country's natural gas suppliers and supply sources¹⁴².

Power System Development Project with a budget of EUR 61 million financed by the World Bank. The project was signed in September 2019, with the implementation period until 2024 and provides for the allocation to increase the capacity and improve the reliability of the electricity transmission system in Moldova. More specifically, the project involves the financing of 4 key elements: the construction of the overhead power line on the Vulcanesti - Chisinau direction (approximately 158 km long), the modernization/extension of two electricity substations, the strengthening of the electricity dispatching and recording system, which includes the strengthening of the institutional capacity of Moldelectrica, as well as the construction of a new headquarters for it, technical assistance and project management¹⁴³.

Environmental security

The projects implemented with the help of external partners address important environmental issues facing the Republic of Moldova: ensuring access to water, plastic and radioactive waste management, climate change resilience, management of Prut and Nistru rivers.

The European Union for the Environment is a project funded by the European Union for the period 2019-2024 in the Partnership countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and financed by UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO, OECD, World Bank. The European Union's contribution is: € 19 500 000¹⁴⁴. The project aims to ensure the sustainable use of natural capital, improve the quality of the environment and the well-being of the population and stimulate economic growth in the six Eastern Partnership countries. Also by bringing together economic and environmental actors, EU4Environment helps to bring about policy and legislative change, making planning and investment greener, stimulating the adoption of innovative technologies, the adoption of new business models and the creation of green jobs. It also promotes better environmental governance, improved management of protected areas and forests and sustainable trade¹⁴⁵. Although the EU has the central role in implementing the project, it is also supported by other international organisations: the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO); the OECD and the World Bank. The partner organisations are responsible for implementing the results of the programme¹⁴⁶.

The European Union Climate Project (EU4Climate) in the six Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine focuses on supporting measures to increase resilience to climate change. The aim of the project is to

¹⁴² External Assistance Monitor, no.2, p. 24.

https://www.ipis.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Monitorul-Asistentei-Externe_editia-3.pdf

¹⁴³ Moldova Power System Development Project.

<https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P160829>

¹⁴⁴ EU4 Environment. <https://www.eu4environment.org>

¹⁴⁵ External Assistance Monitor, No 3,

https://www.expert-grup.org/media/k2/attachments/Monitorul_Asistentei_Externe_editia_3.pdf p. 20

¹⁴⁶ Environment projects funded from external sources.

<https://mediu.gov.md/ro/content/proiecte-in-domeniul-mediului-finanțate-din-surse-externe>

contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as to the development of low-emission and climate-resilient economies in all six EP countries, in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. Project partners include OSDE, GIZ and the International Energy Agency¹⁴⁷.

The Water Supply and Sanitation Security in Moldova Project, 2022-2027), implemented by the International Development Association (part of the World Bank Group), with the Austrian Development Agency as a partner in the project. The implementation of this project, which aims to increase access to water for the population, is an important step towards increasing resilience to climate change¹⁴⁸.

Support to the Republic of Moldova in the sustainable management of the Dniester River, funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency with the amount of EUR 1 686 435.74. The overall objective of the project is to increase the capacity of the Government of the Republic of Moldova to sustainably manage the Dniester river basin, both at national and transboundary level. Among the expected results of the project are better water management and protection to prevent deterioration and improve the state of aquatic ecosystems, Improved water quality is achieved through a basin-wide approach to water management, Improved transboundary cooperation for joint management of the Dniester river basin, Better management of the Dniester HPC, taking into account social and environmental needs¹⁴⁹.

Strengthening the capacity of infrastructure in the field of radioactive waste management in Moldova, funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency with 651 690 Euro. The objectives of the project, which ran from 2020 to 2022, were to contribute to increasing the overall control and understanding of the radioactive waste management institution's work, environmental and radiological conditions and their future development at the national radioactive waste management facility, to protect human health and the environment from possible harmful effects of ionizing radiation resulting from Soviet legacy waste at the national radioactive waste management facility.¹⁵⁰

Reducing the environmental impact of plastic waste in border areas of Moldova, funded by the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation, Slovak Republic with € 47 615, for the period 2022-2024. The project focuses on the management of plastics and plastic packaging and their waste, preventing and reducing the generation of such waste. The project is in line with the cross-cutting themes of gender equality as well as environment and climate change. Its entire focus is on improving management, starting with legislative intentions, capacity building and raising professional and environmental awareness. The issue of plastic waste management is also linked to the gender issue, affecting the health of both genders¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁷ External Assistance Monitor, No 3, p. 20.

https://www.expert-grup.org/media/k2/attachments/Monitorul_Asistentei_Externe_editia_3.pdf

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 19

¹⁴⁹ Supporting the Republic of Moldova in the sustainable management of the Dniester River.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2565~language=en>

¹⁵⁰ Strengthening the capacity of the radioactive waste management infrastructure in Moldova.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2634~language=en>

¹⁵¹ Reducing the environmental impact of plastic waste in border areas of Moldova.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=2581~language=en>

Nuclear safety

Included were projects aimed at strengthening capacities to combat trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials, improving cooperation on nuclear forensics, support in preventing and combating illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive substances

CONTACT-Black Sea regional project - implemented by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) with financial support from the Governments of the USA, UK and Norway over the period 2020-2022. The project aims to strengthen capacities to combat trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials in the Black Sea basin region¹⁵².

Nuclear Smuggling Detection and Prevention (NSDD) Program - implemented with the support of the US Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). Timeframe: 2011 - timeframe for completion not covered by partner. The aim of the programme is to provide support in preventing and combating illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and other radioactive substances by installing technical systems for detecting and identifying these materials and substances at state border crossing points, as well as providing methodological support¹⁵³.

Improving inter-agency cooperation in response to nuclear security events. The project aims to further improve inter-agency cooperation on nuclear forensics in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (GUAM countries) and between nuclear forensics stakeholders in each country, with a greater emphasis on the inter-ministerial and multi-agency aspects involved in a nuclear forensics investigation. This is addressed in several dimensions. The first dimension is the tactical level, where agreed protocols are a condition for successful domestic, multi-agency operations in the field. The second dimension includes maximising technical capabilities to address the specific expertise required. The third dimension is regional cooperation and international partnerships¹⁵⁴.

Capacity building support National Agency for the Regulation of Nuclear and Radiological Activities in strengthening regulatory control over radiation use funded by the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority, the Kingdom of Sweden aimed to support the Republic of Moldova in strengthening its capacity to control ionizing radiation sources including the search for orphan radioactive sources, their characterization, transport and delivery to the authorized radioactive source repository with subsequent specialized control over them¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵² CONTACT Black Sea: preventing radiological and nuclear trafficking.

<https://unicri.it/News/CONTACT-BlackSea-preventing-radiological-nuclear-trafficking>

¹⁵³ Nuclear Smuggling Detection and Prevention (NSDD) Program of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) at the US Department of Energy.

<https://www.border.gov.md/index.php/ro/sustinerea-rm-in-implementarea-planului-de-actiuni-rm-ue-privind-liberalizarea-regimului-de-vize-firmm>

¹⁵⁴ Improving inter-agency cooperation in response to nuclear security events.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=1358~language=en>

¹⁵⁵ Support in strengthening the capacities of the National Agency for the Regulation of Nuclear and Radiological Activities in strengthening regulatory control over the use of radiation.

<https://amp.gov.md/aim/viewActivityPreview.do~public=true~pageId=2~activityId=1270~language=en>

The US Department of Energy (DoE)-funded "**Detection and Prevention of Nuclear Smuggling (NSDD) Program on Cooperation to Prevent Illicit Trafficking of Nuclear and Radioactive Substances/Materials**". Started in 2013 it is currently ongoing. The programme aims at cooperation in the field of prevention of illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials through technical and methodological cooperation, including the installation or improvement of technical systems for detection and identification of such materials at state border crossing points as well as on the territory of the Republic of Moldova¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵⁶ The Nuclear Smuggling Detection and Prevention (NSDD) program of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) at the US Department of Energy.
<https://www.border.gov.md/index.php/ro/sustinerea-rm-in-implementarea-planului-de-actiuni-rm-ue-privind-liberalizarea-regimului-de-vize-firmm>

List of projects implemented with the financial support of international partners

No.	Developing capabilities, defence capabilities and transforming defence modernisation
1	NATO DCBI project on strategic planning which aims to develop and review policy and planning documents (National Defence Strategy, Military Strategy and Long and Medium Term Plans).
2	NATO DCBI Project on Developing Military Medical Capabilities.
3	The NATO DCBI project on human resources management for the development of the human resources management system.
4	NATO DCBI Project on Defence Professional Development for Civilian Personnel (PDP)
5	NATO DCBI project on standardisation of logistics for all allied or partner countries.
6	NATO DCBI project for the development of the corps of sergeants, transition to Western standards. Transformation of the NCO Corps leadership system.
7	NATO DCBI project on defence resource management for the development of the national resource management system. We are currently in the process of promoting an initiative for the development of an electronic national resource register.
8	NATO DCBI Project on Force Development for Special Operations
9	NATO DCBI project on the development of cyber defence capabilities - the project only concerns non-lethal equipment, medical training, communications
10	NATO DCBI Integrity Building Programme in the Defence and Security Sector
11	EU EPF 2022 project on enhancing logistics, mobility and transport, command and control, communications, cyber, and research capabilities
12	Project EU EPF 2021.
13	EU EPF 2022 project on enhancing logistics, mobility and transport, command and control, communications, cyber, and research capabilities
14	Strengthening the Armed Forces for the safe transport, maintenance and storage of ammunition and dangerous goods
15	Project 67676 of the HMA (Humanitarian Demining Action). Program of the US Armed Forces Command Europe to develop infrastructure and increase the level of safety and security at Department of Defense compounds.
16	DOD Foreign Military Financing (FMF) Program.

17 Program Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM). Program for Small Arms, Light Weapons (SALW) and Conventional Ammunition (ca) in the Army

Security education

1 The European Union project - an area of justice, security and freedom

2 Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP).

3 Professional Development Programme

4 DOD - International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program

Security and defence policy development

1 Project Providing the necessary assistance to the national authorities of the Republic of Moldova in the process of developing the national security strategy

2 EU TAIEX project "Implementation of the Regulation implementing the new Customs Code"

3 Security Sector Reform (SSR) Project

StratCom and Disinfo

1 EU Regional Communication Programme for the Eastern Neighbourhood ('EUNEIGHBOURS east')

2 Strategic communication and media support in the Republic of Moldova

3 VIGILANT-Intelligence vital for investigating illegal disinformation

4 Covid-19: resilience and sustainability of civil society

5 Supporting Independent Media and Information Resilience (SIMIR) in Moldova

6 EU support for local media institutions in Moldova

7 MEDIA-M: Media Enabling Democracy, Inclusion and Accountability in Moldova / MEDIA-M: Media Enabling Democracy, Inclusion and Accountability in Moldova

8 On disinformation from door to door

Democratic governance, institution building and resilience

1 Strategic Communication and Media Support in the Republic of Moldova

2 Compass for an Enabling Environment and Empowering CSOs

Capacity building

- 1 Improving spatial data services in the Republic of Moldova according to EU standards,
- 2 Ensuring the integrity, efficiency and independence of the Moldovan justice system,

Good governance

- 1 Governance Progress Board for the Eastern Partnership
- 2 Partnership for Good Governance (PGG) (2023-2027).
- 3 Project Support for structured political dialogue, coordination of the implementation of the Association Agreement and improvement of the legal approximation process
- 4 The program Strengthening Security Sector Governance in Moldova (SSGM)
- 5 Advanced Technologies for Physical Resilience of Critical Infrastructures (APRIORI) Project.
- 6 „Comunitatea Mea”.
- 7 Resilient CSOs + responsible budgeting = implementation

Strengthened participative democracy

- 1 Inclusive and participatory political processes in Moldova
- 2 Transparency and Democratic Accountability Programme
- 4 Civil Society Resilience Project

Strengthening Social Cohesion

- 1 Moldova Resilience Initiative / Moldova Resilience
- 2 Promoting Democracy and Stability in Moldova
- 3 Civic education, citizen participation and public responsibility
- 4 Improving access to justice to live in dignity

Anti-corruption and integrity

- 1 Strengthening the rule of law and anti-corruption mechanisms in the Republic of Moldova, running from 2020-2024.

- 2 EU for Integrity - Open Government Partnership (OGP) for the Eastern Partnership
 - 3 EU for Integrity - The OECD Anti-Corruption Network
 - 4 Project "Action against Corruption in the Republic of Moldova (AIC)
 - 5 Strengthening the Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Regime in the Republic of Moldova
 - 6 Action against Corruption in the Republic of Moldova - Phase 2 INL
 - 7 INL Assistance Programme in the areas of justice and law enforcement
 - 8 Programme for Strengthening Integrity in the Security and Defence Sector (Building Integrity Initiative
 - 9 Justice Reform and Anti-Corruption
 - 10 Project Support to the Pre-Vetting Secretariat (SSPV)
 - 11 Justice Reform and Anti-Corruption Project
 - 12 Justice and anti-corruption reformactivity (JARA).
 - 13 Improving youth crime and drug prevention through legality education and awareness campaigns that address the threats of organised crime and corruption.
- Human security: respect for human rights, gender equality**
- 1 Democracy, Transparency and Accountability Programme Project
 - 2 Resilient Civil Society and Media respond to the Ukraine War.
 - 3 EU4 Gender Equality.
 - 4 PGG III: Women's Access to Justice: implementing Council of Europe's gender equality and violence against women
 - 5 Partnerships for Women's Leadership and Good Governance
 - 6 EU Health Security Initiative
 - 7 USAID Economic Development, Governance and Enterprise Growth (EDGE) Project
 - 8 Strengthening social cohesion through inclusive participation
 - 9 Strengthening humanitarian support to vulnerable and conflict-affected communities and local authorities in the Republic of Moldova

10	Journalists guarding democracy
11	Multidimensional response to emerging human security challenges
12	Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the Republic of Moldova
	Dialogue and conflict management
1	EU Programme Confidence Building Measures (V) - Confidence Building Measures along the Dniester River, Component IV Modernisation of the health sector, implemented in 2019-2022.
2	EU-UNDP Confidence Building Measures Programme"/Social and economic development of both banks of the Dniester River
3	EU-UNDP Program "Confidence Promotion Measures"/Social and economic development of both banks of the Dniester River.
4	Development of export capacities on the banks of the Dniester (AdTrade).
5	Consolidation of human rights on both banks of the Dniester.
6	PGG III: Promoting equality and non-discrimination: towards more resilient and inclusive societies.
	Home affairs and security, crisis management, exceptional situations
1	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Container Control Programme
2	EU Training and Operational Partnership against Organised Crime Project (TOPCOP)
3	EU project "COARM V".
4	Operational Assistance Initiative Project in Moldova
5	INTERPOL-Moldova Operational Assistance Initiative
6	Reducing Explosive Risks at Small Arms and Light Weapons (ALW) and Conventional Ammunition (CA)
7	Stockpiles in the Republic of Moldova Firearms and Ammunition in South Eastern Europe
8	TENSOR. rusted Biometric Technologies to Assist Law Enforcement Authorities in Combating Terrorism and Organised Crime
9	Response to Natural and Man-Made Disasters in Eastern Partnership Countries - Phase 3 (PPRD East3).
10	Increasing the protection of the population in emergencies caused by natural disasters in the cross-border area

11 Improving the response time for emergencies in the cross-border area by renovating the infrastructure for training the population

12 Romania-Moldova cross-border cooperation area a safer area by improving the operating infrastructure of the mobile emergency, resuscitation and rescue service (SMURD), increasing the level of preparedness and maintaining staff capacity

13 Proiectul Disaster Readiness.

Border security

1 Export Control and Border Security Programme (EXBS) Alignment with European border security standards

2 EU Border Security Project

Improving the institutional capacities of the General Inspectorate of Border Police and the operational capacities of customs workers

1 Improve the institutional capacities of the IGPF by strengthening the security of identity and travel documents to prevent and combat illegal migration and trafficking in human beings.

2 UE TAIEX, running from March to May 2023

3 EU project Support for the modernisation and evaluation of integrated border management

4 Project Supporting Protection, Transit, Voluntary and Informed Return and Reintegration of Eastern Partnership Citizens and Third Country Liabilities Affected by the Conflict in Ukraine

5 iMARS – image Manipulation Attack Resolving Solutions.

6 Development of a concept of joint police patrolling of roads in the border area between the Republic of Moldova and Romania

7 DoE Pilot NSDD Green Border Security Initiative

Airspace surveillance

1 Establishment of the aerial monitoring unit within the Border Police of the Republic of Moldova,

2 Border UAS - Technologies to enhance border and external security.

3 Innovative concept of relocatable aerial surveillance for border security

Migration and the refugee problem

1 Project Strengthening resilience of Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Moldova, host communities and local and national authorities in Moldova

- 2 Strengthening access to justice through legal assistance for refugees in the Republic of Moldova
- 3 Protection and Livelihoods for Ukrainian Refugee Claimants (PLUS) Project
- 4 Strengthening the response to people affected by the Ukrainian crisis in the Republic of Moldova Emergency relief and protection of internally displaced persons affected by the conflict in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees in Moldova
- 5 Food Assistance for Conflict Displaced Populations Project
- 6 Strengthening the response to people affected by the Ukrainian crisis in the Republic of Moldova Emergency relief and protection of internally displaced persons affected by the conflict in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees in Moldova
- 7 Project Strengthening Migration Management System in the Republic of Moldova
- 8 Project IOM Appeal - Ukraine and Neighbouring Countries
- 9 Project Capacity Building for the Protection of Ukrainian Refugees, Third Country Responsibilities and Host Communities in Moldova
- 10 Peaceful and gender-equal societies through capacity building of local NGOs to prevent conflict and respond to crises and emergencies

Cyber security and digitisation

- 1 Future Technologies
- 2 Critical Infrastructure Digitisation and Resilience Programme (CIDR)
- 3 The Rapid Cyber Security Assistance Project for the Republic of Moldova
- 4 Assistance to the Armed Forces of Moldova - Cyber Defence Component
- 5 EU4Digital: Improving Cyber Advancing Cybersecurity Capacities for Digital Transformation.
- 6 Project "EU4Digital: Supporting the Digital Economy and Society in the Eastern Partnership"
- 7 EU4digital: connecting research and education communities (EAPCONNECT2)
- 8 Digitisation and modernisation of the customs system
- 9 Project for the implementation in the Republic of Moldova of the Electronic Data Exchange System SEED+
- 10 FLEXICROSS - Flexible and enhanced border crossing experience for passengers and authorities
- 11 Government Services Modernisation Project

Energy security

1	Moldova Energy Security.
2	Strengthen energy security and resilience in Europe and Eurasia E&E region, parte a proiectului U.S.-Europe energy bridge.
3	The Moldova development policy.
4	Project Emergency response to people in Moldova affected by the crisis in Ukraine
5	EU4Energy Phase II EU4Energy: Green Growth Fund (GGF).
6	EU4Energy - Promoting the Clean Energy
7	Transition Security of Natural Gas Supply Project
8	Power System Development Project
	Environmental security
1	European Union for the Environment
2	European Union Climate Project" (EU4Climate)
3	Project Security of Water Supply and Sanitation in Moldova
4	Supporting the Republic of Moldova in the sustainable management of the Dniester River
5	Strengthening the capacity of the radioactive waste management infrastructure in Moldova
6	Reducing the environmental impact of plastic waste in border areas of Moldova
	Nuclear safety
1	CONTACT - Black Sea.
2	Substance Smuggling Detection and Prevention (NSDD) Program
3	Improved interagency cooperation in responding to nuclear security events
4	Support in strengthening the capacity of National Nuclear and Radiological Regulatory Agency to strengthen regulatory control over radiation use
5	Programme for "Detection and Prevention of Nuclear Smuggling (NSDD)"

ABBREVIATIONS

ADA - Austrian Development Agency

BAFA - Federal Office of Economics and Export Control

EBRD - European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

WB - World Bank

EC - Council of Europe

FCDO - Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

FFP - Women's Fund for Peace

GIZ - German International Cooperation Agency

KAS - Konrad Adenauer Stiftung,

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OMV - World Customs Organization

OSCE - Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

UNDP - United Nations Development Fund

EU - European Union

UN WOMEN - United Nations (UN) dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowering women

UNECE - United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme

UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

USAID - U.S. Agency for International Development



Elena Marzac – Expert in strategic communication and security topics, Director of the Platform for Security and Defense Initiatives. Researcher and coordinator of studies "Mapping civil society in the security and defense sector", "Legislation of the Republic of Moldova in the field of security and defense" (DCAF), "The role of external assistance in reforming the security and defense sector", "Information warfare of the Russian Federation in Romania and the Republic of Moldova" chapter "The influence of Russian propaganda on the national security of the Republic of Moldova", "The Women, Peace and Security Agenda (NATO), various analytical notes on strategic communication in the security and defense sector, the role of civil society and the development of CSO capacities their etc. Mrs. Elena Marzac has a degree in International Relations, a master's degree in Business Administration, she is a PhD student in International Relations with the research topic "Strategic communication in the security and defense sector". Elena studied at the NATO School in Oberammergau (Germany), the NATO College in Rome (Italy) and the Swedish Defense University.



Rodica Panța has a degree in International Relations, a master's degree in European Studies, Phd in political science ("Public diplomacy of the Republic of Moldova in the context of European integration - doctoral thesis of excellence in political sciences of the II degree, within the national competition "Doctoral theses of excellence, 2015") and university lecturer at the Department of International Relations and Journalism, ULIM (2003 - present). She is the author of more than 70 scientific articles in the field of foreign policy, diplomacy, security and innovative methods of teaching and improving university curricula, of the monograph "Models of contemporary public diplomacy", the course support "Public Diplomacy" and co-author of the works: " The defense. Pocket dictionary", "Security. Explanatory Glossary" and "Security culture. Methodical guide". Mrs. Panța is project manager at the Platform for Security and Defense Initiatives (PISA), previously holding this position within the NATO Information and Documentation Center and the European Institute of Political Studies in Moldova.



Sanda Sandu she is an expert in security and human rights, holder of a master's degree in Public Policy from the Central European University, and graduated from the Riga Law School. Sanda currently works as a Human Rights Fellow at the Wikimedia Foundation and provides security expertise and advice to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. As Co-Founder of the Platform for Security and Defense Initiatives, she is recognized for her security expertise. She was involved in several national and international research projects that investigated topics such as ensuring integrity, reforming the security and governance sector, disinformation and strengthening resilience in Moldova and Eastern Europe, ensuring human rights within tech platforms. With over 10 years of experience in civil society and international organizations, specialized in identifying corruption risks and developing integrity and anti-corruption policies.



DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is dedicated to improving the security of states and their people within a framework of democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and gender equality.

Since its founding in 2000, DCAF has contributed to making peace and development more sustainable by assisting partner states, and international actors supporting these states, to improve the governance of their security sector through inclusive and participatory reforms. It creates innovative knowledge products, promotes norms and good practices, provides legal and policy advice and supports capacity-building of both state and non-state security sector stakeholders. DCAF’s Foundation Council members represent over 50 countries and the Canton of Geneva. Active in over 70 countries, DCAF is internationally recognized as one of the world’s leading centres of excellence for security sector governance (SSG) and security sector reform (SSR). DCAF is guided by the principles of neutrality, impartiality, local ownership, inclusive participation, and gender equality.



PISA - The Platform for Security and Defense Initiatives is a non-governmental organization that aims to promote the culture of security among the citizens of the Republic of Moldova and to support government institutions in reforming the security and defense sector.

PISA was founded on July 29, 2021 by a collective of experts and 15 non-governmental organizations and legally registered as a public association in August 2022. It currently has 22 members.

PISA supports the vision of a resilient Moldova, where a robust security and defense sector is an essential foundation for the development of a prosperous nation. In this context, PISA actively collaborates with the state institutions of the Republic of Moldova, with civil society, the academic environment, the mass media and with the accredited diplomatic representations in Chisinau.

