



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Consideration of reports submitted by States
parties under article 9 of the Convention**

**Combined tenth and eleventh periodic reports of States
parties due in 2014**

Republic of Moldova*

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Introduction

1. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination¹ was ratified in 1991 by the Republic of Moldova pursuant to Parliamentary Decision No. 707-XII of 10 October 1991. The Convention entered into force for Moldova on 25 February 1993.
2. The Convention is a core document of the United Nations, based on the principles of human dignity and equality and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life, without distinction as to race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.
3. The present report — the combined tenth and eleventh periodic reports — was compiled by the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, in accordance with article 9 (1) (b) of the Convention, on the basis of the concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of the Republic of Moldova, adopted at the 2087th meeting of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/SR.2087 [not available]), held on 10 March 2011.
4. The report provides information on the basic results achieved between 2011 and 2014, following the consideration of the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of the Republic of Moldova at the Committee's 2073rd and 2074th meetings, held on 1 and 2 March 2011, and also following the adoption of the concluding observations on the reports of 10 March 2011 (CERD/C/SR.2087).
5. The Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, acting as coordinator at the national level in promoting the Convention and drawing up the periodic reports of its implementation, produced a translation of the Committee's concluding observations into the State language and transmitted it to the relevant ministries and other bodies for information, study and implementation.
6. With a view to their wide dissemination among civil society, ethnocultural non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the members of the Coordinating Board of Ethnocultural Organizations, the concluding observations were also translated into Russian, as the language of inter-ethnic communication, in accordance with the current law of the Republic of Moldova.
7. Acting with the relevant ministries, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations drew up a plan of action to implement the Committee's concluding observations. The plan was adopted at a meeting of the national commission on the drafting of initial and periodic reports on the implementation of international conventions of which the Republic of Moldova is a party.
8. At the same time, the text of the concluding observations and of the plan of action was posted on the Bureau's official website on www.bri.gov.md.
9. One year after the adoption of the concluding observations, in April 2012, the Bureau issued a notification, in accordance with recommendation 25, of the progress made in the implementation of recommendations 9, 11, 12 and 14. This notification was transmitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova.

¹ Adopted and opened for signature by the General Assembly under resolution 2106 (XX) of 21 December 1965. Entered into force on 4 January 1969, in accordance with the provisions of article 19.

10. In drawing up the report, the Bureau worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and the Family, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Bureau for Migration and Asylum, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, the Ministry of Health, the Procurator General's Office, the National Bureau of Statistics, the Human Rights Centre of Moldova, the Television and Radio Coordinating Council and local government authorities.

11. Over the course of four meetings in 2013 and 2014, the Coordinating Council of Ethnocultural Organizations attached to the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations discussed problems relating to the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination issued on 10 March 2011 and the procedure to be followed for the involvement of leaders of ethnocultural organizations in drawing up the report.

12. In the interests of transparency, this report has been published on the website www.bri.gov.md and www.particip.gov.md.

Part 1

Overview of government policy on preventing and combating racial discrimination

13. There have been notable developments in the legal and regulatory framework governing the human rights situation in the Republic of Moldova over the period 2011 to 2014. The observance of human rights thus remains high on the agenda and constitutes one of the main concerns of the Parliament and Government of the Republic of Moldova.

14. The Government has undertaken a series of legislative and practical measures to establish a comprehensive system for the protection of human rights, including the right of national minorities to preserve, develop and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity and to prevent and combat discrimination, ethnic hatred, intolerance, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other similar negative phenomena.

15. The Republic of Moldova currently has a legislative framework governing the provision and protection of human rights, including minority rights, that is in line with international standards and comprises a wide range of laws and other regulations.

16. Its international commitments, however, particularly its commitments on the protection of human rights and freedoms, require the Republic of Moldova to adopt protective policies, including anti-discrimination policies.

17. To that end, the authorities have made significant efforts to develop the country's legislative basis and bring it into line with international human rights law and European Union standards.

18. The principle of non-discrimination and the rights to freedom of expression and the development of ethnic identity are a central feature of the relevant legislation, which includes the Equal Opportunities Act, the amendments introduced to the Criminal Code and the Code of Offences and the Act on the Functions of the Council for Preventing and Combating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, among others.²

19. Parliament adopted Act No. 311 of 26 December 2012 on the Formulation of a Declaration by the Republic of Moldova on the International Convention on the

² See also part 2 of the report, recommendations 9, 10 and 13.

Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, pursuant to which the Republic of Moldova recognized the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals claiming to be victims of a violation by the Republic of Moldova of any of the rights under article 14 (1) of the Convention.

20. Under Government Decision No. 644 of 23 August 2013, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations was designated the body responsible for the implementation of article 14 of the Convention, under which the Government may submit comments concerning individual or collective communications against the Republic of Moldova addressed to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

21. Since the date that the Republic of Moldova recognized the Committee's competence, the Committee has received the first individual communication, which came from Mr. Salifou Belemvire of Burkina Faso (No. 57/2015), concerning a violation of articles 5 (a), 5 (b), 6 and 7 of the Convention. In accordance with the established procedure, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations is considering the complaint and engaging in consultations with the relevant national bodies, including the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Procurator General's Office, with a view to drawing up a written explanation or statement from the Government for submission to the Committee regarding the admissibility of the complaint.

22. One priority for the Government is the protection of national minorities and their integration into various areas of public life. During the reporting period, a number of long-term policy documents were adopted covering a wide range of issues, including the protection of ethnic minority rights, the prevention and elimination of discrimination and the provision of equality.

23. One such document was the Government's Programme of Action entitled "European integration: Freedom, democracy, prosperity 2013-2014",³ adopted pursuant to Parliamentary Decision No. 125 of 30 May 2013, which set out priority objectives and measures aimed at supporting ethnic minorities (chapters IV and IX).

24. The priority measures in chapter IV (Education and research) specifically relating to ethnic minorities include the following:

- Promotion of mother-tongue education for ethnic minorities and the diaspora, including second-generation migrants
- Development and promotion of a national programme to improve the quality of education in Romanian for persons speaking other languages.

25. Various aspects of the integration of ethnic minorities are set out in chapter IX (Integration of ethnic minorities), which identifies the basic challenges and objectives in this regard:

- To preserve and consolidate the cultural and linguistic heritage of ethnic minorities living in the territory of Moldova
- To promote an integrated government policy on ethnic minorities
- To develop a strategic basis for ensuring the integration of ethnic minorities into the country's social, administrative, cultural, political and economic life.

26. Chapter IX also sets out the following priority measures:

³ During its term of office, the previous Government implemented a programme of action entitled "European integration: Freedom, democracy, prosperity 2011-2014".

- To develop a legal basis for the protection of the basic rights and freedoms of ethnic minorities and for the development of the cultures and languages of ethnic minorities living in the territory of the Republic of Moldova
- To preserve and strengthen the cultural and linguistic heritage of ethnic minorities
- To promote social cohesion programmes in support of ethnocultural organizations registered in the Republic of Moldova.

27. One of the achievements during the reporting period was the adoption and implementation of the National Human Rights Plan 2011-2014, approved pursuant to Parliamentary Decisions No. 90 of 12 May 2011 and No. 327 of 27 December 2012, which had the objective of developing a human rights culture in the Republic of Moldova.

28. It is important to note that the adoption of the Plan is not only a symbol of the country's commitment to human rights but has contributed to a real improvement in the human rights situation, a greater level of understanding of the law and the elimination of negative factors that hinder the full enjoyment of basic human rights and freedoms.

29. The implementation of the priorities set out in chapter XI (Prevention and punishment of discrimination) led to a number of practical results. One example was the numerous national campaigns to promote non-discrimination, during which publications were issued and interactive radio and television programmes were broadcast on the topic for different target groups. Meanwhile, NGOs conducted campaigns aimed at raising awareness among the general public with a view to creating a culture of recognition of diversity and equality and preventing discrimination. The Council for Preventing and Combating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality was established, its policy was determined and its website set up (<http://www.egalitate.md>) and a guide for Roma families was issued in three languages — Romanian, Russian and Romany — to help them resolve social problems, receive medical services and education, register their civil status and so on.

30. One of the objectives set out in chapter XI to promote the rights of ethnic minorities was achieved with the drafting of the Strategy on the Integration of the Ethnic Minorities of the Republic of Moldova 2015-2020.⁴

31. The intention is that the Strategy will be the basic government instrument establishing aims and objectives in the medium term (six years) in such areas as the participation of ethnic minorities in public life, the facilitation of intercultural dialogue, the strengthening of identification with the Republic of Moldova, the creation of the necessary conditions for the study and use of the State language by citizens, including adults, speaking other languages, the development of the languages of ethnic minorities, the provision of access by ethnic minorities to information and media in their own languages and support for cultural diversity in society.

32. The Strategy on the Integration of the Ethnic Minorities of the Republic of Moldova thus comprises four areas of activity: (1) participation in public life; (2) language as a means of integration: policies relating to the State language and the languages of minorities; (3) intercultural dialogue and identification with the Republic of Moldova; and (4) access to the media.

33. The development of the Strategy, which the Government sees as a priority, has been included in the Programme of Action. It is in line with national legislation, with international agreements signed by the Republic of Moldova and with the positions adopted

⁴ The drafting of the Strategy was initiated by Mr. Knut Vollebaek, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities, and continues to be supported by Ms. Astrid Thors, who was appointed High Commissioner on 17 July 2013.

by the United Nations, the Council of Europe, OSCE and the European Union. The country's integration policy also reflects its aspiration to European integration.

34. The lead agency in developing the policy document is the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, with expert support from the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Once the procedures for obtaining the approval of the relevant ministries and public consultations with representatives of civil society have been completed, the draft strategy will be submitted to the Government for consideration and confirmation by means of a special decision.

35. Observance of minority rights is an important feature of the Government's European programme. The reporting period coincided with the implementation of the Republic of Moldova-European Union Visa Liberalization Action Plan.

36. The implementation of the Plan was set in motion by the adoption of the National Programme on the Implementation of the Republic of Moldova-European Union Visa Liberalization Action Plan under Government Decision No. 122 of 4 March 2011.

37. The National Programme provided, in particular, for stronger cooperation with civil society with a view to ensuring the observance of minority rights, promoting measures to support Roma in all social sectors, increasing public awareness of the existence in society of such phenomena as discrimination and encouraging intercultural dialogue and tolerance by organizing ethnocultural events, such as festivals, days of the mother tongue and days of culture.

38. The European Union-Moldova Association Agreement was signed on 27 June 2014. This Agreement will facilitate the harmonization of Moldovan legislation with European Union standards and cooperation in the areas of trade, policy, security and culture. Closer cooperation is envisaged in other fields, as well, such as the development of democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

39. The National Plan of Action for the Implementation of the European Union-Moldova Association Agreement 2014-2016 was adopted under Government Decision No. 808 of 7 October 2014 on the implementation of the Association Agreement.

40. In accordance with the provisions of the Association Agreement, the Plan of Action includes measures aimed at strengthening the process of observing fundamental human rights and freedoms, including those of members of ethnic minorities. These measures include the organization of round tables, seminars, conferences and other such events to raise public awareness in this regard. Action has also been taken to promote the principles of tolerance and cultural diversity and to implement the Plan of Action to Support the Ethnic Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova 2011-2015.

41. During the period 2011-2014, there were renewed efforts to establish the need for the Republic of Moldova to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe.

42. Working in conjunction with the relevant ministries, local government authorities and civil society organizations, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations embarked on a series of measures to that end.

43. These included continuing with the work of the working group on the preparation of the ratification of the Charter, which comprises representatives of ministries and local government authorities, the Ethnology Centre of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova and leaders of ethnocultural organizations.

44. A round table was held for the working group on 6-7 October 2011 on the topic "Ratification by the Republic of Moldova of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages", organized by the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, with European Union

support. At the round table, European Union experts conducted a legal consultation and a question and answer session on the topic.

45. In order to provide legal assistance to the Moldovan authorities, the European Centre for Minority Issues⁵ drew up a proposal for a draft instrument on the ratification of the Charter.

46. The draft was submitted and discussed during a meeting held on 2-3 February 2012 between national experts and specialists from the European Centre, organized by the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations in partnership with the European Union. Those taking part in the meeting as national experts included representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of International Affairs and European Integration, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, the State Chancellery and representatives of ethnic minorities.

47. Following a consideration and discussion of the document, agreement was reached on the list of provisions of the Charter to be included in the draft instrument or law on ratification that would be binding on the Moldovan State with regard to Ukrainian, Russian, Gagauz and Bulgarian, which were classified as “regional languages or minority languages”.

48. At the same time, the following languages were defined as “non-territorial”: German, Polish, Yiddish and Romany.

49. In March and April 2012, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations conducted research into the possibility of the ratification by the Republic of Moldova of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

50. This research considered the relationship between the basic objectives and principles of the Charter and the regulations under current Moldovan legislation. It also looked at how the current position with regard to the use of languages corresponded with the provisions of the Charter. The research set out conclusions and proposals regarding the possible ratification of the Charter by the Moldovan Parliament.⁶

51. The Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations submitted the draft ratification instrument or law for consideration by the relevant ministries in April 2012.

52. Under a project to strengthen capacities in the administration of State policy, Ecorys consultants carried out similar research between June and August 2012 into the cost/expenditure figures involved in the ratification of the Charter by the Republic of Moldova.

53. In view of the fact that the topic was challenging, that the authorities had made insufficient preparations and that there were strict budgetary constraints, it was proposed, in accordance with recommendations made following the research by Ecorys, that, with the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the process of preparing for the ratification of the Charter would be extended. It was also proposed that there should be further internal consultations concerning the possibility of ratifying the Charter, identifying the unavoidable risks and determining the measures to be taken to overcome them.

54. In that context, research was conducted in 2014 and 2015 on the financial impact on the State budget of the ratification of the Charter in relation to the provisions contained in articles 8, 9, 10 and 11. The research was carried out under a project entitled “Strengthening the rule of law and human rights protection in Moldova”, financed by the

⁵ The European Centre for Minority Issues works in cooperation with the European Union.

⁶ The research into the possibility of the ratification by the Republic of Moldova of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages may be found on the website www.bri.gov.md.

Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-Moldova, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

55. Many opinions were expressed following the research and during the consultation process, including support for ratification of the Charter, inasmuch as it would help develop a harmonious climate of coexistence for the various minorities in the Republic of Moldova on the basis of the best existing international standards.

56. At the same time, in order to avoid financial difficulties, it was suggested that the provisions of the Charter not currently reflected in domestic legislation should be adopted gradually on the basis of action plans developed to that end.

57. The development of a national legal framework to regulate the provision and protection of human rights in various spheres is also reflected in part 2 of the report, which deals with the implementation of specific recommendations by the Committee.

Part 2

Information on measures taken by the Republic of Moldova on the implementation of the concluding observations adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its 2087th meeting (CERD/C/SR.2087), held on 10 March 2011, in particular those contained in section C (Concerns and recommendations)

Recommendation 8

Concerning the improvement of the data-collection system on the groups covered by the Convention

58. The latest population census was held between 12 and 15 May 2014, in accordance with the Population and Housing in the Republic of Moldova Census Act No. 90 of 26 April 2012 and Government Decision No. 967 of 21 December 2012.⁷

59. According to article 1 of the Act, the aim of a census is to establish information resources regarding the size of the population, its territorial distribution, its demographic, social, economic, ethnic and linguistic characteristics, its educational level, the housing stock and the people's living conditions.

⁷ The previous census in the territory of Moldova was held in 2004. According to its findings, the proportion of ethnic minorities stood at 28.5 per cent of the total population, including:

- Ukrainians: 282,406 (8.4 per cent)
- Russians: 201,218 (5.9 per cent)
- Gagauz: 147,500 (4.4 per cent)
- Bulgarians: 65,662 (1.9 per cent)
- Gypsies (Roma): 12,271 (0.4 per cent)
- Other ethnic groups (1 per cent)
- No ethnicity indicated (0.4 per cent).

Numbers of small ethnic minorities:

- Armenians: 1,829; Azerbaijanis: 891; Belarusians: 5,059
- Germans: 1,616; Greeks: 482; Georgians: 501
- Estonians: 77; Jews: 3,608; Latvians: 185
- Lithuanians: 259; Poles: 2,383; Tatars: 974.

60. Article 2 of the Act provides that the following categories of the population are subject to a census:

- (a) Persons usually residing in the Republic of Moldova;
- (b) Persons temporarily absent owing to work or education abroad;
- (c) Staff of diplomatic missions and consular offices of the Republic of Moldova;
- (d) Persons temporarily resident in the Republic of Moldova.

61. Under article 7 (1) (g) (h) (i) and (j) of the Act, the following information or data are collected during a census: nationality (name of the State of which the respondent is a national, including dual nationality); ethnicity (according to the respondent's self-identification); knowledge of languages; and religion (according to the respondent's self-identification).

62. These data are essential, both in order to ensure the proper functioning of the central and local authorities at every level and in order to identify the future prospects of the country's social and economic development.

63. The following were adopted under Government Decision No. 967 of 21 December 2012: the Plan of Action for organizing and conducting a population and housing census in the Republic of Moldova in 2014 and processing the information received; the establishment of the National Commission on the Population and Housing Census in 2014, chaired by the Prime Minister; and regulations on the operational procedures of the National Commission.

64. For the purposes of consultation and public discussion, the census questionnaires were made available from 11 December 2013 on the website of the National Bureau of Statistics, www.statistica.md, under the heading "Population and housing census 2014".

65. Questionnaire 2R relating to personal information in the section on demographic and ethnocultural characteristics contained questions concerning ethnicity (according to the respondent's self-identification); mother tongue; language of everyday use and knowledge of other languages; and religion (according to the respondent's self-identification): Orthodox or other.

66. Following the census, a number of partial preliminary results were published, notably the size of the population of the Republic of Moldova, which amounts to 2,913,281, information on the rural and urban population and the distribution of the population by development region, district and municipality.

67. According to the data of the National Bureau of Statistics, the processing of the data relating to ethnicity or language group has not yet been completed and information on this will be issued officially only once individual questionnaires have been fully processed.

Recommendation 9

Concerning the adoption of the Act on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and the development of a legislative framework in line with the relevant international standards, including the Convention

68. In view of the country's international commitments, especially those relating to the protection of human rights and freedoms, it is essential for Moldova to adopt and implement a protective policy in such areas as the fight against manifestations of racial discrimination.

69. In order to ensure the equality of every person in the territory of the Republic of Moldova, Equality Act No. 121 was adopted on 25 May 2012 and entered into force on 1 January 2013.

70. Under article 1 (1) of the Act, its purpose is to prevent and combat discrimination and to ensure equal opportunities and treatment for all persons in the Republic of Moldova in the political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres of life, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion or beliefs, sex, age, disability, opinion, political affiliation or any other similar criteria.

71. Article 10 of the Act designates the bodies that have the authority to prevent and combat discrimination and ensure equality, in particular the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality. Under article 11 of the Act, the Council is a collegiate body with the status of a legal entity of public law established to provide protection from discrimination and the provision of equality for all persons considering themselves victims of discrimination. The Council operates on the basis of the principles of impartiality and independence from the public authorities.

72. Under article 12 of the Act, the Council has the following functions: it considers complaints from persons who consider themselves victims of discrimination; it establishes whether an offence involving discrimination has been committed under the Code of Offences; and it informs the criminal prosecution authorities of cases in which discriminatory acts involving elements of crime have been committed.

73. Under article 17 of the Act, acts of discrimination are subject to the disciplinary, civil, administrative and criminal legislation in force.

74. Act No. 298 on the Activities of the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, of 21 December 2012, which entered into force on 1 January 2013, establishes the Regulations governing the Council's activities. According to the Regulations, the Council is a collegiate body with the status of a legal entity of public law, funded out of the State budget, whose mandate is to provide protection from discrimination, to ensure equality and to restore the rights of any person subjected to discrimination.

75. With a view to guaranteeing the Council's effectiveness and ensuring that its recommendations do not remain optional and non-binding, provision has been made for punishment in the form of a fine for interference in the Council's activities aimed at influencing its decisions. A fine is also imposed where a person fails to submit information required for consideration of a complaint within the time laid down by the Act, wilfully ignores or fails to implement its recommendations or hinders its activities in any other way. It should be noted that most of the members of the Council are representatives of civil society.

76. The Council drew up, and on 26 March 2014 adopted, a road map for the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Act for the years 2014-2016.

77. The Council's budget in 2013 was 2.6 million lei. In 2014, its total budget rose to 3.3 million lei.

78. The Council started operations in October 2013, focusing on its basic aims and objectives, which relate to public protection, State policies, prevention and protection from discrimination and institutional development.

79. Between October 2013 and August 2014, the Council registered 135 complaints, 30 per cent of which were dismissed for lack of grounds for appeal, while 70 per cent were considered and adjudicated upon. Of those, 48 were accepted. All the Council's decisions are published on its website, www.egalitate.md. Appeals were lodged against most of the

decisions and are currently under consideration by a court of appeal. All the appeals against the Council's decisions were lodged by State institutions. It is worth noting, by contrast, that defendants from the private sector by and large agreed to implement the Council's recommendations and did not lodge an appeal before the courts.

80. The most common subject of complaint addressed to the Council was discrimination regarding access to goods or services, to justice and to education services and discrimination in the workplace. The grounds for possible cases of discrimination identified to date were the following: beliefs, disability, social origin, language, sex, gender identity and HIV/AIDS status.

81. In 2014, the Council reviewed the contents of 10 pieces of legislation relating to social protection, health, education and access by persons with disabilities to goods and services that contained potentially discriminatory provisions. It also drafted and submitted to the relevant State bodies 11 advisory opinions concerning draft legislation and regulations, with recommendations that they should be brought into line with international standards on non-discrimination.

82. In view of the fact that current legislation does not contain enough provisions establishing criminal or administrative liability for certain discriminatory acts, amendments were made to the Criminal Code No. 985-XV of 18 April 2002 and the Code of Offences No. 218-XVI of 24 October 2008, pursuant to Act No. 306 of 26 December 2012 on amendments and additions to certain legislative measures.⁸

Recommendation 10

Concerning the proper implementation of the existing anti-discrimination provisions and the effective investigation and prosecution of racially motivated offences

83. In order to establish criminal liability for serious forms of discrimination and bring a number of criminal law provisions into line with the Equality Act No. 121 of 25 May 2012, Act No. 306 of 26 December 2012 on amendments and additions to certain legislative measures was adopted, introducing amendments to article 173 (Sexual harassment), article 176 (Civil rights violations) and article 346 (Incitement to national, ethnic, racial or religious hatred, discrimination or discord) of the Criminal Code No. 985-XV of 18 April 2002.

84. Also under Act No. 306 of 26 December 2012, the Code of Offences No. 218-XVI of 24 October 2008 was supplemented with three additional articles providing for administrative liability for discrimination, including discrimination in the workplace (art. 54), discrimination in education (art. 65 (1)) and discrimination relating to access to public services and goods (art. 71 (1)).

85. At the same time, the Ministry of Justice drafted a law providing for the elimination of omissions and legal discrepancies identified during the course of the implementation of Act No. 54 of 21 February 2003 on Combating Extremist Activities.

86. It was found that the implementation of the Act gave rise to a number of problems in applying the law on combating extremist activities. These problems have a destabilizing effect on society, threatening the constitutional order in the Republic of Moldova.

87. An assessment of the way in which the Act was implemented showed that some law-enforcement bodies lacked adequate legal powers and that there was no legislation providing for criminal penalties for certain extremist acts.

⁸ See part 2 of the report, recommendation 10.

88. The bill therefore provides for amendments and additions to the Public Associations Act No. 837 of 17 May 1996, the Criminal Code No. 985-XV of 18 April 2002 and Act No. 54 of 21 February 2003 on Combating Extremist Activities.

89. In addition to the information provided, it should be noted that the Ministry of Justice and the Procurator General's Office has not instituted any proceedings on the grounds that given information materials were extremist. Since neither the Ministry of Justice nor the Public Prosecution Service have access to the instruments required to identify extremist or unofficial organizations that may prepare or distribute in the Republic of Moldova subversive information materials with racist or xenophobic content, the bill provides for the strengthening of the powers of the Information and Security Service of Moldova, one of whose functions is to combat extremist activity.

90. In that context, and in view of the fact that the Information and Security Service keeps a record of persons and organizations involved in terrorist activity, it was decided to give the Service the task of maintaining the Register of Extremist Organizations and Extremist Materials. This will make the monitoring of radical movements that pose a threat to State security more effective.

91. The amendments made to existing legislation therefore have a positive effect on the work of combating discriminatory acts.

92. As regards complaints of racial discrimination, it should be noted that, between 2011 and 2013, the Procurator General's Office did not receive any complaints of discriminatory acts at the hands of prosecutors, the police or State bodies.

93. Meanwhile, according to information provided by regional prosecutor's offices on action to combat discrimination, racism and xenophobia in the Republic of Moldova, 32 complaints of discrimination and religious hatred were registered between 2010 and the first nine months of 2013. Of those, 25 were entered in register No. 1, which meant that they were to be further considered in accordance with the provisions of article 274 of the Code of Criminal Procedure No. 122 of 14 March 2003; 3 complaints were combined; and the remaining 4 were considered in accordance with the Submission of Petitions Act No. 190 of 19 July 1994.

94. Permission to institute criminal proceedings in 13 cases was denied, following a review of the circumstances; 3 complaints are currently under consideration; and in 9 cases criminal proceedings were instituted, 1 in accordance with article 176 of the Criminal Code and 8 in accordance with article 346 of the Code.

95. Criminal proceedings were discontinued in three criminal cases and suspended in one because no one could be identified as being the person to stand trial, while five criminal cases are at the prosecution stage. The examination of two complaints led to two proceedings being instituted for administrative offences on the basis of article 54 of the Code of Offences (Violation of the law on religious denominations) and article 354 of the same Code (Petty hooliganism).

96. Thus the Prosecutor's Office of the Soroca district reported that, on 11 August 2011, criminal case No. 2011328069 was initiated on the grounds that an offence had been committed under article 176 (b) of the Criminal Code, on the basis of a claim by the voluntary organization Bare-Rom of an offence committed by the management of the Skvazhina club in Soroca. In violation of the law, the management had introduced a ban, without any reason, on citizens of Roma ethnicity, erecting placards at the entrance to the club with the discriminatory message "Persons of Gypsy ethnicity are prohibited", thus violating their constitutional rights.

97. The representative of the Bare-Rom organization declined to feature as the injured party at the trial, on the grounds that neither he nor other persons of Roma ethnicity

suffered significant harm to their basic rights and freedoms. The district prosecutor's office terminated the proceedings on the grounds that the action in question did not constitute an offence. That decision was not contested.

98. Between 2010 and 2012, six criminal cases were instituted on the grounds of evidence that an offence had been committed under article 288 of the Criminal Code (Vandalism) with the motivation of social or ethnic hatred. Of those, two were brought to trial, one was terminated when charges were dropped against a minor in accordance with the provisions of article 54 of the Criminal Code and the three other cases are at the criminal investigation stage. The cases brought to trial concluded with the conviction of three persons.

99. The Prosecutor's Office of the Făleşti district reported that, on 28 July 2011, the Criminal Investigation Department of the Făleşti district police instituted a criminal case under article 288 (2) (b) and (c) of the Criminal Code in connection with damage to three memorial boards forming part of the Memorial Centre on Ștefan cel Mare street in Făleşti in honour of soldiers who died in Afghanistan and Transnistria. It was established, that during the night of 27-28 July 2011, S.B., acting by prior agreement with N.V., damaged three memorial boards at the Memorial Centre. Both were convicted and fined.

Recommendation 11

Concerning the organization of training for the police, prosecutors and judges on the application of anti-discrimination legislation and the Convention

100. The Ministry of Internal Affairs continues to play an important role in promoting equality before the law, guaranteeing equal legal protection and preventing any discrimination against ethnic minorities.

101. In pursuance of those ends, it undertook a range of measures between 2010 and 2014, including the organization of education and training courses for senior officials.

102. The Ministry has established the Internal Security and Anti-Corruption Unit, which is an independent body responsible for monitoring the investigation of complaints against officials. Its functions include providing internal protection, overseeing compliance with the law and discipline by the staff, preventing and combating corruption, taking action against persons engaged in corruption or corrupt behaviour and ensuring the safety, honour, dignity, professional reputation, rights and interests of Ministry staff.

103. Between 2009 and the present, a number of cases involving the conduct of Ministry staff have been investigated and persons who permitted the violation of legislation, internal regulations or policy have been punished.

104. It should be noted that there have been no recorded cases of abuse of power or misconduct by Ministry officials in relation to ethnic minorities.

105. According to the provisions of the Police Activities and Police Status Act No. 320 of 27 December 2012, recruitment into the police is conducted on the basis of a competition that anyone may enter, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, faith, financial status or social origin, who also fulfils specific requirements.

106. In order to raise the level of professional legal training and improve the use of practical skills in official activities, in accordance with Order No. 182 of 24 June 2011 on improving the qualifications and efficiency of Ministry of Internal Affairs units for the 2011/12 academic year, training courses were organized in the Ștefan cel Mare Academy on the topic "Work with ethnic minorities". These were attended by 34 officials in 2011

and by 68 in 2012. The curriculum included a specialized course on ethnic minorities, with 24 hours of tuition, which ended with a symposium.

107. The teaching staff of the relevant faculties of the Academy hold an annual series of lectures on human rights for units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, also addressing the problems arising in connection with inter-ethnic relations.

108. About 1,000 police officers undergo a course on the rights of ethnic minorities as part of their study of the legal protection of human rights. They receive initial training, further training and specialization.

109. Order No. 206 of 24 June 2013 on improving the qualifications and efficiency of Ministry of Internal Affairs units for the 2013/14 academic year provided for the organization of skills development courses in the Ștefan cel Mare Academy on the topic “Work with ethnic minorities”, at which 60 criminal prosecutors, investigators and local police officers from specialized units of the General Police Inspectorate would undergo training.

110. At the same time, under the National Human Rights Plan 2011-2014, judges, prosecutors and police officers underwent training courses aimed at improving their understanding of the importance of such phenomena as discrimination, racism and intolerance. The courses were taught by the National Institute of Justice, with support from public administration bodies and voluntary organizations working in those fields.

111. In 2013, continuous training for prosecutors and judges involved seminars on the topic “National and international standards on combating discrimination. National jurisprudence and the European Court of Human Rights”. The National Institute of Justice held seminars on 20-21 February, 12-13 March and 19-20 September 2013, which were attended by 43 prosecutors from all the country’s public prosecutor’s offices. In addition, prosecutors are regularly given methodological assistance in carrying out their functions.

112. On 20 January 2013, in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the National Institute of Justice held a series of seminars on the prohibition of any form of discrimination on any grounds. Judges, prosecutors and members of the Council for Preventing and Combating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality were given training on the subject of racial discrimination.

113. One feature of the training was a review by Mr. Claude Cahn, OHCHR Human Rights Adviser attached to the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Moldova, of the development of international law and national legislation on discrimination, with particular reference to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Ms. Doyna Streystyanu, a member of the Council for Preventing and Combating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, gave a presentation on the problems arising out of manifestations of racial discrimination in the Republic of Moldova.

114. The participants in the training course were given specific examples of people subjected to discrimination and additional comments were provided by Mr. Salfo Belemvire, Director of the Refugees Association, Mr. Nicolae *Radița*, Director of the National Roma Centre, and Mr. Sergiu Găină, Director of the Lawyers Legal Centre.⁹

115. In order to develop cooperation between civil society and the police, a round table was held on 29 November 2013, at which a project was launched on the topic “The police and Roma/Sinti: Positive experience of building trust and mutual understanding in the Republic of Moldova”. The event was organized by the National Roma Centre, in partnership with the General Police Inspectorate and with support from the OSCE Office of

⁹ <http://www.inj.md/node/798>.

Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw, with the aim of improving relations and communication between the police and the Roma community. The project is part of the Plan of Action to Support the Ethnic Roma Population, 2011-2015, as set out in the chapter entitled "Public administration, public order and documentation".

116. The aim of the project is, in cooperation with the police, to strengthen the role of civil society representing the Roma community, to make the police more effective in that regard and to train police officers in methods of work and relationships when dealing with multicultural communities.

Recommendation 12

Concerning the strengthening of the powers of the Parliamentary Advocate's Office

117. Parliament adopted the People's Advocate (Ombudsman) Act No. 52 of 3 April 2014, which entered into force on 28 November 2014, in order to improve the status and strengthen the functions of the previous Parliamentary Advocate's Office and to bring its functions and powers into line with the Paris Principles (General Assembly resolution 48/134).

118. The strategic direction adopted was to include in the Strategy on the Reform of the Justice Sector 2011-2016, adopted under Act No. 231 of 25 November 2011, and in the Plan of Action for the implementation of the Strategy 2011-2015 (chap. 6.2), adopted under Parliamentary Decision No. 6 of 16 February 2012, action to increase the powers of the Parliamentary Advocate's Office. These objectives are reflected in the National Human Rights Plan 2011-2014 (sect. 15).

119. The Act was drawn up jointly by specialists of the Ministry of Justice and a working group on the preparation of amendments to legislation governing the Human Rights Centre of Moldova and the national torture-prevention mechanism. Membership of the working group included representatives of the Centre, members of civil society, international experts and others.

120. The principal innovations in the People's Advocate (Ombudsman) Act No. 52 of 3 April 2014 are:

- The term "Parliamentary Advocate" is replaced by the term "People's Advocate (Ombudsman)", with a view to avoiding misunderstandings among the public about the role of the Office in the field of human rights
- Instead of the previous procedure, under which four parliamentary advocates were elected, the People's Advocate and a children's ombudsman are appointed
- The People's Advocate is selected and appointed on the basis of a competitive selection process
- The People's Advocate's mandate is extended from five to seven years and the holder of the post may not remain in office for two consecutive terms
- The Human Rights Centre of Moldova has become the People's Advocate's Office, headed by a Secretary-General
- A council on the prevention of torture, which will act as the national mechanism for the prevention of torture, has been established within the Office
- The financial independence of the Office has been strengthened with the adoption of its budget by Parliament

- The principles of the rule of law, equality, impartiality, transparency, social justice, democracy and humanitarianism are promoted.

121. Under the Act, the Office is required to ensure that human rights and freedoms are observed by State bodies, organizations and enterprises, whatever their form of ownership, by non-commercial organizations and by natural persons in positions of authority at all levels.

122. The function of the People's Advocate is to protect human rights, to prevent any violation of such rights, to improve the relevant legislation, to engage in international cooperation and to keep the public informed about human rights and the mechanisms for their protection by applying the procedures laid down in the Act.

123. On 3 April 2015, Parliament confirmed the appointment of Mr. Mihai Kotorabay as People's Advocate, in accordance with the appointment procedure provided for in the Act.

Recommendation 13

Concerning the prevention of discrimination against non-citizens

124. With a view to establishing a unified legal and regulatory framework governing the issue of integrating foreigners into the country's economic, social and cultural life and ensuring their rights, freedoms and obligations, the following laws and long-term policy documents were adopted during the reporting period.

125. Regime of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova Act No. 200 of 16 July 2010, under which foreigners in the Republic of Moldova enjoy the same rights and freedoms as the country's own nationals. While temporarily or permanently in the territory of the Republic of Moldova, foreigners are required to observe Moldovan law and to be subject to and submit to the supervisory activities of the competent authorities. Foreigners have the right to work in the Republic of Moldova, provided that they have permission to do so from the relevant bodies. They are required to act in strict accordance with the purposes for which they were granted the right of entry and, where appropriate, the right to residence and also to leave the territory of the Republic upon the expiry of their stay.

126. Act No. 274 of 27 December 2011 on the integration of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova. Under article 4 (1) of the Act, the integration of foreigners in Moldova is achieved on the basis of the principle of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child and equal treatment. The coordinating role in this process is taken by the Bureau for Migration and Asylum, which is a unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

127. In that context, "integration" is defined as the active participation by foreigners who have been granted specific protection or the right of residence in the territory of the Republic of Moldova in the economic, social and cultural life of Moldovan society. They are fully entitled to realize their potential as members of Moldovan society, to exercise their rights and to comply with their obligations in their own interests and in the interests of the State without discrimination or social isolation.

128. The Act also governs the implementation of the measures required for the social integration of foreigners, through the joint efforts of State bodies, local associations and the relevant NGOs.

129. Particular attention is paid to cultural and linguistic adaptation, the provision of access to the education system, integration into the education system, including schools for children, access to the labour market, medical services and the pension system and other social rights.

130. Article 5 of the Act sets out the various forms of action adopted to integrate foreigners, including:

(a) Social and cultural exercises in adaptation, including the study of national values and traditions, the political system and the administrative organization of the Republic of Moldova;

(b) The organization of classes for learning the official language;

(c) The provision of information on access to the labour market, medical services and social protection;

(d) Professional orientation and preparation services with a view to simplifying the economic integration process, taking into account the opportunities and requirements of the Moldovan labour market.

131. Act No. 77 of 12 April 2013 on amendments and additions to certain legislative measures was adopted in order to provide for access to medical services under Act No. 274 of 27 December 2011 on the integration of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova.

132. Thus, under article 2 (1) (a)-(f) of Act No. 274, foreigners and stateless persons employed in the Republic of Moldova on the basis of an individual work contract, foreigners and stateless persons permanently resident in the country and refugees and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection have the same rights and obligations with regard to compulsory medical insurance as citizens of the Republic of Moldova under existing law, unless international treaties provide otherwise.

133. Foreigners and stateless persons who have been granted the right of temporary residence in the territory of the Republic of Moldova for reasons of family reunification, education or humanitarian or religious activities are required to pay a fixed sum for compulsory medical insurance, as citizens of the Republic of Moldova do, unless international treaties provide otherwise.

134. The National Migration and Asylum Strategy 2011-2020 was approved under Government Decision No. 655 of 8 September 2011. The Strategy constitutes a national document regulating the movement and mobility of citizens, in the interests of developing the prosperity and the social and economic development of the Republic of Moldova and providing rights and social security for migrants.

135. Paragraph 21 of the Strategy states that the freedom of movement of foreigners residing lawfully in the Republic of Moldova and of stateless persons is not subject to unjustified limitations, including discriminatory measures based on sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic characteristics, state of health (including HIV/AIDS status), language, religion or beliefs, political or other views, membership of an ethnic minority, financial status, disability or age.

136. The Plan of Action 2011-2015 for the implementation of the National Migration and Asylum Strategy 2011-2020 was adopted under Government Decision No. 1009 of 26 December 2011. It includes a range of measures aimed at realizing the principle of non-discrimination against foreigners in Moldova and respecting foreigners' right to express their own cultural identity (chap. III "Migration and development", sect. D "Politics of integration", paras. 26 and 27).

137. A working group has been established and has started work on drawing up a new plan of action for the implementation of the National Migration and Asylum Strategy for the next period, 2016-2020. The working group is made up of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and the Family, the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Culture,

the Ministry of Education and other institutions responsible for the implementation of the activities provided for under the National Migration and Asylum Strategy 2011-2020.

138. In order to improve the quality of services provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and to provide foreigners with information on the rights of migrants and refugees, the Bureau for Migration and Asylum has set up the website www.bma.gov.md. The site contains information on legislation relating to migration and the granting of asylum and a list of the documents required to obtain the right to temporary or permanent residence, along with the services provided by the Bureau and the price list for services.

139. The website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs — www.mai.gov.md — regularly contains information on events organized for asylum seekers and for persons enjoying other forms of protection in the Republic of Moldova. It also lists draft legislation, seminars and training courses on the procedure for the granting of asylum. One of the latest such events was World Refugee Day, which was celebrated at the Centre for the Temporary Accommodation of Foreigners on 19 June 2015 (<http://bma.gov.md/ru/content/7096>).¹⁰

140. With a view to improving the procedure for documenting foreigners who immigrate to the Republic of Moldova, the Bureau for Migration and Asylum has created a single window for documenting foreigners, in accordance with article 72 (3) of the Regime of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova Act No. 200 of 16 July 2010 and Government Decision No. 1187 of 22 December 2010.

141. For the same purpose, two regional services — “North” and “South” — were subsequently established to facilitate the documentation of foreigners, in implementation of supplementary measures under the National Programme for the Implementation of the Republic of Moldova-European Union Visa Liberalization Action Plan, adopted under Government Decision No. 130 of 24 February 2012. The two regional services were officially opened on 10 December 2012.¹¹

Recommendation 14

Concerning the right to freedom of religion

142. With regard to the right to freedom of religion, it is important to note the adoption of Act No. 278 of 27 December 2011 on amendments and additions to the Religious Denominations Act No. 125 of 11 May 2007.

143. The bill was drawn up by the Ministry of Justice and the United Nations Office in the Republic of Moldova, with contributions from a round table held in September 2011, at which interested parties and organizations held a discussion on the importance of introducing amendments to the Religious Denominations Act of 2007.

144. The advisory role of the round table provided a good example of the openness of the Moldovan authorities in their dialogue with civil society. Mr. Heiner Bielefeldt, the Human

¹⁰ World Refugee Day has been celebrated in Moldova since 2002.

¹¹ At the present time, 76 refugees, 131 beneficiaries of humanitarian protection and 67 asylum seekers are registered in Moldova. Between 1 January and 31 May 2013, 50 applications for asylum were lodged. In 2012, 104 applications for the status of stateless persons were lodged, of which 6 were granted and 9 refused, while the rest are currently under consideration. In 2012, the Bureau for Migration and Asylum received 162 applications for asylum, most of them coming from the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Turkey, Cameroon and Nigeria.

Rights Council Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, took part in the discussion.¹²

145. The following amendments were introduced under Act No. 278 of 27 December 2011:

- The name of the 2007 Act was changed to “Freedom of Conscience, Thought and Religion Act”. The amendment thus took account of the concept of freedom of thought, in addition to the concepts of conscience and religion.
- The registration procedure was clarified and the time frame for the consideration of documents was extended from 15 to 30 days.
- Provisions were included to allow the consideration of documents to be postponed, so that applicants could improve the content of their documents in order to bring them into line with legal requirements. The registration procedure for all categories of non-commercial organization was also made more consistent.
- Bearing in mind that suspending or terminating the activities of religious organizations constitute a serious punishment for religious associations, the relevant chapter was amended in such a way as to make it possible for religious associations to be given a warning in the event of any minor violations. Meanwhile, the activities of a religious organization are suspended or terminated in the event of more serious violations. Moreover, participation in political activity by engaging in electoral campaigns and/or providing financial or material support for candidates has been added to the range of activities that may be considered grounds for suspending religious activities.

146. The situation of Muslims in the Republic of Moldova has improved.¹³ Muslims are currently represented officially by the Islamic League of Moldova, which was registered by the Ministry of Justice on 14 March 2011 under the organizational and legal category of “Religious denomination and its constituent part”.¹⁴

147. The function of the League is to unite Muslim organizations in the Republic of Moldova and represent their interests at home and abroad.

148. One of the principal aims of the League is to help realize the right to freedom of religion by enabling Muslims to express their religious convictions and to maintain their traditions and the beliefs, rites and ceremonies that are characteristic of Islam, which have nothing to do with extremism, without any distortion based on individual beliefs.

149. The Muslims of the Republic of Moldova have therefore been able to state openly what religion they belong to, freely express their religious convictions and promote Islamic values.

150. It should also be pointed out that, every year since 2009, one of the most important Jewish festivals, Hanukkah, has been celebrated in Chişinău and other towns with Jewish communities.

151. Hanukkah was first celebrated in Moldova in modern times in 1992 and then a menorah was set up in one of the central public places in Chişinău. This tradition was

¹² [http://www.un.md/news_room/pr/2012/HR_Report/UN_Report_Heiner_rus %20\(1\).pdf](http://www.un.md/news_room/pr/2012/HR_Report/UN_Report_Heiner_rus%20(1).pdf).

¹³ According to the 2004 census, 1,667 persons said that they were Muslims, which amounts to 0.05 per cent of the total population. Most of them live in the capital, Chişinău, or in Bălţi.

¹⁴ It is registered under certificate No. 002924 in the State Register of Non-commercial Organizations, <http://rson.justice.md/organization/view/5928>.

resumed in 2009.¹⁵ In different years, the Hanukkah menorah was set up in front of the Kedem building,¹⁶ in the Holocaust Memorial Square and in other public places.

152. By agreement with Chişinău City Hall, a menorah was put up in the town centre, in the square in front of the Chekhov State Theatre, between 27 November and 4 December 2013.

153. The ceremony to mark the lighting of the first candle was attended by members of Parliament, politicians, representatives of the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations and other State bodies, the mayor of Chişinău, diplomats, including the ambassadors of Romania and the United States of America in the Republic of Moldova, leaders of ethnocultural organizations, the press and a large number of representatives of the Jewish community, for whom the feast is of the utmost significance.

154. According to reports published on the information sites <http://www.dorledor.info>, www.pan.md, www.canal3.md, <http://aif.md> and others, this event met with a lack of understanding on the part of some Orthodox Christians, who peacefully expressed their disapproval of the fact that Hanukkah was being celebrated in a public place.

155. It has become a tradition to put up a Hanukkah menorah in central Chişinău, in the square outside the Chekhov State Theatre. Candles were again lit between 16 and 24 December 2014 in the presence of a wide range of representatives of Jewish society, heads of international Jewish organizations, representatives of the Moldovan authorities and the media. The festival was celebrated in a friendly atmosphere.

Recommendation 15

Concerning efforts to combat discrimination against Roma and provide for special measures and programmes for the Roma population

156. When deciding on approaches to resolving the problems of the Roma community in the Republic of Moldova, the authorities seek guidance from the policies and instruments of the European Union, including the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, the Lisbon Strategy, Europe 2020, the European Platform for Roma Inclusion and the European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, among others, and the recommendations of international specialized bodies and mechanisms.

157. In order to improve the situation of Roma in various spheres and ensure their effective participation in the public and political life of the country, new regulations to supplement the existing legal framework were introduced in the form of the Plan of Action to Support the Ethnic Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova 2011-2015, adopted under Government Decision No. 494 of 8 July 2011, with amendments introduced under Government Decision No. 56 of 31 January 2012.

158. The adoption of the Plan of Action constituted an acknowledgement of the need for prompt intervention to promote Roma inclusion and to combat the marginalization and prejudice that this population group encounters.

¹⁵ Information on an incident relating to the setting up of a menorah in Chişinău Central Park in December 2009 was given in the periodic report of the Republic of Moldova on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination for the period 2008-2009, which can be found on the website www.bri.gov.md.

¹⁶ Kedem, the Jewish centre in the Republic of Moldova, is one of the largest ethnocultural centres in the country, established in the interests of developing the Jewish community and meeting the cultural needs of the Jewish population in the capital.

159. The Plan of Action was drawn up by the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, together with the interdepartmental working group and Roma NGOs, including organizations accredited to the Bureau.

160. The Plan of Action was based on the European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, the Strategy of the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and that Office's 2008 Status Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area, as well as European Union and United Nations recommendations. The European Union and United Nations offices in Moldova provided expert advice on the drafting of the Plan of Action at every stage of its preparation.

161. The Plan of Action addresses seven priority issues: promotion of a community-based mediation service for the Roma community; education; employment and economic prosperity; health and social protection; culture and media; public administration, public order and documentation; and living conditions.

162. A key element of the new Plan was the introduction and promotion at the national level of social mediation services to facilitate access by Roma to public services, to simplify the process of communication between State institutions and Roma communities and to overcome discrimination against Roma.

163. Another important aspect of the document is the research carried out and the statistical data collected, disaggregated by various categories, in order to establish an accurate picture of the situation of Roma.¹⁷

164. Pursuant to Government Decisions No. 494 of 8 July 2011 and No. 56 of 31 January 2012:

- The bodies responsible for the implementation of the Plan of Action are the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and the Family, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, the National Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, the Landownership and Registration Agency, the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, the National Television and Radio Public Company Teleradio-Moldova and local government authorities.
- The implementation of the measures set out in the Plan of Action is paid for out of the budget provided for that purpose by the institutions listed above and out of any other sources provided for under existing legislation.

165. Between 2011 and 2014, the local and central authorities undertook a range of specific measures with a view to implementing the Plan of Action to Support the Ethnic Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova 2011-2015.

Implementation of goals 1 and 2 of the Plan (Promotion of a community-based mediation service for the Roma community), on the basis of information provided by the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and the Family

166. Under Act No. 69 of 5 April 2013, adopted to supplement article 14 of the Local Administration Act No. 436-XVI of 28 December 2006, local councils decide on the creation of posts of community-based mediator in localities mainly populated by Roma or where Roma live with other ethnic groups.

¹⁷ According to the 2004 census, there were 12,271 Roma living in Moldova, which amounted to 0.4 per cent of the total population. As of 19 September 2013, the State Population Register listed only 14,074 Gypsies/Roma and a further 270 were registered after the beginning of 2013.

167. For the implementation of Act No. 69 of 5 April 2013, framework regulations on the organization of the activities of community-based mediators were drawn up and adopted under Government Decision No. 557 of 17 July 2013.

168. Under the framework regulations, a community-based mediator is a Roma person from a locality mainly populated by Roma or where Roma live with other ethnic groups. Such a person is responsible for engaging in productive communication with the relevant authorities in that locality to ensure that clients have full access to social assistance, education, medical assistance, employment, documentation and housing services and other essential services.

169. The data that emerged from the mapping of localities mainly inhabited by Roma in the Republic of Moldova conducted by the UNDP Office in Moldova at the request of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and the Family in 2012 showed that an additional 48 posts of community-based mediators should be established in 44 localities mainly or partly inhabited by Roma.

170. The regulations on services for socially vulnerable persons from the ethnic population provide for one community-based mediator per 150 clients.

171. The process of recruiting community-based mediators under the State budget began in 2013. The first budget allocation for this purpose was 462,600 lei for 15 community-based mediator posts in 14 localities.

172. The medium-term budget 2014-2016 provided for a total expenditure of 16,198,000 lei for the recruitment of 33 additional mediators in 30 localities in 2014. Between January 2013 and January 2014, the Government allocated 2,082,400 lei in order to put the community-based mediation service on a sound footing. The conditions were thus created to ensure access to such mediation services in all 44 localities mainly inhabited by Roma or populated by mixed communities.

173. Moreover, activities are organized on a regular basis, in cooperation with civil society, to train and educate community-based mediators in accordance with the job requirements.

In implementation of goals 3-6 of the Plan (Education), the Ministry of Education has focused its attention on the following measures:

- Promotion of action by local authorities to engage Roma children in the schooling process and to ensure that they are not denied school attendance. The issue of compulsory school attendance for children, including Roma children, in order to improve their situation, is high on the agenda of regional and municipal councils and regional directorates of education, youth and sport. Joint commissions, made up of staff of education departments, educational institutions and police departments, have also continued their activities for that purpose. The members of the commissions visit families to raise awareness among pupils and their parents. As a result of these measures, the number of Roma children not entered in the school system has fallen significantly. Whereas, on 1 October 2012, 46 Roma children aged 7 to 16 years did not attend school, by 15 October 2012 the number of children not entered in the educational system had fallen to 32, and by 25 May 2013 to 21. The reasons for non-attendance at school include a poor financial situation, homelessness, change of residence and parental refusal.
- Provision of free travel for children from localities mainly inhabited by Roma to the nearest educational institution, if it is located not less than 3 kilometres away.
- Provision of school dinners for children, including Roma children, in accordance with Government Decision No. 234 of 25 February 2005 on the provision of food

for schoolchildren and Government Decision No. 198 of 16 April 1993 on the social protection of children and economically disadvantaged families. According to data provided by Departments of Education, Youth and Sport, 1,989 pupils of Roma ethnicity were registered in Moldova.

- Provision of textbooks rented from the Special Textbook Fund for pupils, including Roma pupils, in the pre-university education system. Pursuant to Government Decision No. 1040 of 5 October 2005, children in the first to fourth grades receive free textbooks. A practice has developed of giving first-grade pupils a primer as a present.
- Financial assistance from local authorities for pupils of Roma origin for the purchase of clothes, shoes and school supplies at the beginning of each academic year.
- Introduction of after-school programmes for Roma children to help them do their homework and engage in additional activities. Teaching staff, including school heads, are involved in the process of continuous training in intercultural education.
- Opening of early-learning centres in Vulcănești, Schinoasa and Călărași, which are mainly inhabited by Roma, with support from local authorities, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Roma National Centre.
- Organization of summer schools for Roma children. In 2014, in partnership with the Tyrna Rom Association, two summer schools were organized for 123 Roma children in Vulcănești and Călărași.
- Access by young Roma to higher education. Regulations introduced in 2012 on the organization and implementation of entry into higher educational establishments in Moldova established a 15 per cent quota of subsidized places, in every speciality and form of education, for a range of applicants, including young persons of Roma ethnic origin. Inclusion in the quota is effected at the request of the candidate.
- Cooperation with Roma NGOs and voluntary organizations with a view to their inclusion in deciding on issues relating to the inclusion of children in the educational process.

Practical measures were adopted in implementation of goals 7-8 of the Plan (Employment and economic prosperity) with a view to eliminating the obstacles to access by Roma to the employment system and the application of professional skills

174. Between 2010 and 2012, the regulations governing employment and social protection for job seekers were amended with a view to improving active and passive measures applied to the labour market, including measures directly affecting the Roma population.¹⁸

175. Article 8 of Act No. 102-XV of 13 March 2003 on employment and social protection for job seekers guarantees access to public employment services for all, prohibiting any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnicity, sex, opinions, political affiliation, material or property status or social origin or on any other grounds.

176. All job seekers, including Roma, may apply to local employment agencies and obtain services providing for integration into the labour market.

177. Job seekers are also entitled to request free practical information from employment call centres concerning an employment agency's database listing services and vacancies.

¹⁸ According to data provided by the National Employment Agency, the number of Roma registered unemployed rose from 0.9 per cent (698 persons) in 2010 to 1.4 per cent (740 persons) in 2012.

Another service for providing help with seeking employment is the Labour Market Information Centre. In order to diversify avenues of access to information and services for both employers and job seekers, including persons of Roma ethnicity, the website www.angajat.md was set up in January 2012 to provide people with the opportunity to display their curriculum vitae and seek work independently.

178. A programme to provide women with greater economic opportunity through the creation of job opportunities on the labour market in Moldova, carried out jointly by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and the Ministry of Finance, with support from the Government of Sweden, introduces a new concept of service provision at the local level. The concept is based on the idea of using a “single information window”, whereby a single office provides information and services. This innovative approach makes it possible to obtain information and services relating to employment, social protection, business activities, agricultural development and legal and land issues in a coordinated way. In addition to its day-to-day functions, the office runs mobile units, staffed by representatives of all the bodies providing services and job placement for the local population, including Roma. The office currently operates in 19 districts across the country and similar arrangements are planned for every district.

179. In order to help Roma integrate into the labour market, the National Employment Agency works with its local offices to organize seminars and round tables on the problems of promoting the Agency’s services and job placement opportunities. Thus, on 25 February 2013, at the invitation of the National Roma Centre, the agency took part in a meeting of a discussion club on the topic “Reasons for lack of Roma employment in the labour market”. The meeting was organized as part of a project on reducing discrimination through the implementation of social and governmental policies, run by the National Roma Centre between September 2012 and September 2013, with financial support from the Embassy of the Netherlands in Kyiv through the Human Rights Trust Fund.

180. In 2013, the local offices of the National Employment Agency registered 638 Roma. Out of the total number of registered job seekers, 6 per cent found employment.

181. In 2014, the Agency’s local offices registered 528 unemployed Roma, including 235 women, who were provided with all the necessary information and advisory services.

A range of measures was adopted in implementation of goals 9-12 of the Plan of Action (Health and social protection), on the basis of information provided by the Ministry of Health

182. In order to expand access to reproductive health services and information among the Roma population, the Ministry of Health, working with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Moldova, ran a social information campaign between 10 September and 31 October 2009 in towns mainly inhabited by Roma, with the slogan “Don’t forget! Your health affects your family’s health”.

183. Forty medical workers have undergone training in reproductive health and family planning (family doctors, doctors from reproductive health units and middle-ranking medical staff working for family doctors) and are active in towns with a high proportion of Roma inhabitants.

184. The campaign reached 535 Roma: 150 young people, 250 women and 135 men. Obstetrician-gynaecologists and family doctors distributed information on family planning, modern contraceptive methods and ways of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, among other issues.

185. According to regional data, family doctors have 21,611 Roma patients on their books, including 6,850 children under the age of 18 years, which represents 32 per cent of the total Roma population.

186. In 2012, 176 children with disabilities under the age of 18 years received supportive and remedial treatment as inpatients or outpatients. A total of 144, or 82 per cent, as against 54 per cent in 2011, received rehabilitation treatment in the country's child rehabilitation centres.

187. Interdepartmental cooperation in social medicine with a view to preventing and reducing infant mortality and mortality among children under 5 years of age resulted in the provision of care for 509 Roma children in 2012 and 593 in 2011. Their families were given material assistance and infant formulas.

188. In various years, 213 pregnant women (and 330 in 2011) were under medical care in medical institutions, receiving iron supplements and folic acid. They were treated in accordance with the highest medical standards and attended pregnancy classes.

189. An important issue remains the immunization of Roma, both adults and children. The immunization of Roma is carried out free of charge. In 2012, the number of Roma vaccinated increased. The vaccination level among Roma children in 35 administrative and territorial units inhabited by Roma varies between 66.6 per cent in the Vulcănești district and 100 per cent in the Criuleni, Ialoveni, Leova, Rezina, Ungheni, Ceadâr-Lunga and Comrat districts.

190. As regards the vaccination of Roma adults, a positive trend has been observed over the past few years, but it has been uneven. Thus, in the 35 administrative and territorial units inhabited by Roma, the percentage of vaccination varies between 18 per cent in the Onița district and 100 per cent in the Vulcănești, Cimișlia and Cantemir districts.

191. Measures to improve the quality of medical services for the Roma population include the establishment of mobile specialist teams to monitor Roma in rural areas far away from medical institutions. Depending on local requirements, the mobile teams are made up of specialists in various fields, including paediatricians, obstetrician-gynaecologists, cardiologists, eye and ear specialists, neuropathologists and others. In 2011 and 2012, the teams made 1,176 trips to rural areas: 575 in 2011 and 601 in 2012. In 2014, they made 980 trips.

192. In 2014, the Ministry of Health, working with the Roma youth organization Țarina Rom, drew up a methodological guide on the practical activities of community-based mediators in the area of social health, the aim being to provide such mediators with methodological help in their work, in order to bring a larger number of Roma into the compulsory medical insurance system.

In implementation of goals 13 and 14 of the Plan (Culture and the media), the Ministry of Culture adopted the following measures

193. There are a number of Roma folklore groups in Moldova that receive support from the Ministry of Culture. These are:

- The Gypsy song and dance group Enigma Romilor, which plays at the Ginta Latina Culture and Arts Centre in Chișinău. The group plays in most of the concerts and cultural programmes organized by the Centre. It has also played in concert programmes in a number of other districts — Nisporeni, Florești, Soroca, Edineț and others — and undertaken a tour of Romania. The Ginta Latina Centre acquired musical instruments for the group in 2012.

- The Amari folklore group from the town of Sîngerei and the Rotnex light music group from the village of Merenii Noi in the Anenii Noi district, which have both received the honorary title of “Model Group”.
- The Nistrenii orchestra from Soroca, which is directed by the Honoured Artist George Duminike.

194. The public television channel Moldova 1 and the public radio station Radio Moldova continues to put out the weekly programme *Petalo Romano* in Romany. The programme reflects the history and life of Roma in the Republic of Moldova, gives coverage to cultural events in the Roma community and promotes the idea of integrating Roma into public life.

In implementation of goals 15-18 of the Plan (Public administration, public order and documentation), a number of practical measures were adopted

195. The State Information Resource Centre (Registru), which is part of the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, organizes regular information campaigns for Roma on the need to obtain identification documents and the advantages of doing so. The campaigns are conducted on local television and in local newspapers, which put out broadcasts or articles on the services provided by the Registru, including that of issuing documentation, on the benefits provided for various categories of citizen when they acquire identification documents and on other useful information.

196. The Registru drew up an internal plan of action in 2013 with the aim of providing support for Roma. The main focus of the plan was to provide more information and to involve the media more closely. One feature of its information campaigns is that local offices of the Registru send notices and announcements by post to mayors’ offices and schools.

197. In implementation of goal No. 19 of the Plan of Action to Support the Ethnic Roma Population of 26 February 2013, the term “Roma” was added to the classification of ethnicity in the State Population Register, while the term “Gypsy” was also retained. As of 19 September 2013, the State Population Register contained 62 persons who identified themselves as Roma.

198. Government Decision No. 497 of 6 July 2012 on the provision of certain exemptions from payment for services on the issue of civil status documentation was adopted in order to resolve the problems faced by the Roma population in the Republic of Moldova in processing identification documents. Under the Decision, Roma were exempt from paying for the processing of identification documents for a period of six months, beginning on 1 October 2012.

On the implementation of measures to coordinate and monitor the introduction of the Plan of Action and an assessment of its impact on the situation

199. As the body responsible for assessing the effectiveness of existing programmes and plans to improve the situation of ethnic Roma, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations set up an interdepartmental working group, meeting four times a year, comprising representatives of various ministries. The working group also includes representatives of two NGOs representing Roma and accredited to the Bureau. At its meetings, the group considers issues related to the process of implementing the Plan of Action and decides on the most effective ways of addressing any problems that may arise. Representatives of international organizations and leaders of Roma communities are invited to meetings of the working group.

200. In March 2012, the Bureau organized a visit to the Republic of Moldova by the Ad-Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers Issues (CAHROM) of the Council of Europe with a view to exchanging experiences on the growing role of national and local authorities in implementing national strategies or plans of action to integrate Roma and increase their contribution to the development of national plans of action, in cooperation with State bodies and Roma representatives.

201. Also in 2012, the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights provided the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations with assistance in raising awareness among the general public of the Plan of Action at both the regional and the local level. Three regional workshops were organized in Chişinău, Soroca and Cahul for local authority personnel from 17 districts of the Republic of Moldova and representatives of Roma civil society. Over 70 representatives of various local authority bodies and Roma activists took part in the workshops, the aim of which was to provide training in how public policy affecting ethnic Roma could be implemented more effectively at the local level and to develop skills for drawing up local plans of action to address Roma problems.

202. Recognizing the need to improve the capacities of the interdepartmental working group, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations conducted a project between 1 November and 31 December 2013, with financial support from the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, entitled “Strengthening the capacities of the interdepartmental working group responsible for the implementation of the Plan of Action to Support the Ethnic Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova 2011-2015”. The project involved organizing and conducting three-day training courses for members of the working group under five thematic headings: successful methods of monitoring and assessing the Roma integration process, effective negotiations, the collection and integration of information provided by local and regional authorities, effective budget planning and cooperation with the Roma community. The courses were interactive, thus bringing the participants together as a team, and included information on the progressive experience of the work of similar bodies in Europe.

203. As part of the project, the Plan of Action to Support the Ethnic Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova 2011-2015 was translated into Russian and Romany and published as a booklet for distribution to local authority bodies and civil society organizations. The Guide for Roma Families was also published in three languages, Romanian, Russian and Romany.

204. In March 2011, on the initiative of the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, Mr. Nicolae *Radiţa*, the head of the National Roma Centre, was designated the Moldovan expert on CAHROM. In November 2012, Mr. *Radiţa* was elected Vice-Chair of CAHROM. In 2014, again on the proposal of the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, Mr. Ion Duminica, a research associate of the Moldovan Academy of Sciences and Executive Director of the NGO Porožan, was appointed to CAHROM as the Moldovan national expert.

205. On 8 April 2014, to mark International Roma Day, the first meeting took place between the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova and groups of Roma students and community-based mediators in order to discuss the issue of Roma integration and the prospects for further cooperation. At the meeting, the representatives of the Roma community also discussed with the Prime Minister the question of providing access by Roma to education and social integration. The meeting was organized in connection with the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the first documentation of the first Roma settlements in Moldova and the tenth anniversary of the first academic research on Roma in the Republic of Moldova.

206. Also in honour of International Roma Day, 6-12 April 2015 was designated Roma Integration Week, during which many events were organized, including round tables,

training courses, meetings of discussion clubs, flash mobs and book launches, organized by the Government in partnership with NGOs and international organizations, with a view to identifying and discussing the problem of discrimination, exchanging experiences relating to education, health and culture and determining the way forward for promoting diversity in Moldovan society.

207. On 8 April 2015, with support from the OHCHR Office in the Republic of Moldova, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations conducted a round table on achievements and challenges in implementing the policy of Roma integration. This event was attended by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova and representatives of the central and local government authorities, the diplomatic corps and international organizations, together with community-based mediators and heads of Roma NGOs. Topics discussed at the round table included the social integration of Roma, the implementation and monitoring of government policy, the role of State institutions, the importance of cooperation with development partners in this process and the prospects for the adoption of a new plan of action to support the ethnic Roma population for the years 2016-2020.

208. The Bureau plans to draft the new plan of action in the fourth quarter of 2015.

Recommendation 16

Concerning linguistic integration, the learning of the State language, participation in public life, public administration and the representation of ethnic minorities in all levels of the executive

Learning the State language

209. Respect for the rights of ethnic minorities in the Republic of Moldova is also seen in the context of social integration and equal opportunity. One of the most sensitive issues that arises, therefore, is the question of the linguistic integration of ethnic minorities, which determines their subsequent opportunities for access to employment at various levels in public administration. Knowledge of the State language increases the chances of promotion to civil service posts.

210. During the reporting period, considerable progress was made with regard to the linguistic, social and professional integration of ethnic minorities, the promotion of inter-ethnic tolerance through the development of a system to teach the adult population of the Republic of Moldova the State language and the creation of a favourable linguistic environment.

211. Activities to promote the State language and the linguistic education of the adult population are carried out in accordance with the country's existing legislation, with support of various kinds, including financial support, from the Government.

212. The Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations has been instrumental in involving representatives of ethnic minorities, especially from among the adult population, in the process of teaching the State language. In doing so, it has worked with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, local authority bodies and the National Association of European Teachers of Moldova (ANTEM).¹⁹

¹⁹ ANTEM is an NGO specializing in social, professional, cultural and linguistic integration, in organizing the teaching of the State language to ethnic minorities and foreigners, in promoting intercultural dialogue and in improving standards of conversational skills in the State language of the Republic of Moldova.

213. Between 2010 and 2013, on the initiative of the Bureau and with support from the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, ANTEM carried out the second stage of a project entitled “Language learning programme for the ethnic minorities of the Republic of Moldova”, aimed at teaching the State language to public sector staff from the northern and southern districts, and from Chişinău itself, in accordance with European educational standards, to primary level. The programme also provides for the inclusion of learners in the activities of discussion clubs set up to develop conversational skills in the State language by discussing current problems of Moldovan society, such as environmental protection, intercultural communication, gender equality and tolerance.

214. The Programme is thus targeted at civil servants and other professional groups from various regions of the country and offers language courses, with the emphasis on the specific terminology used by the various categories of staff.

215. In 2010, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations was instrumental in the adoption of a special government decision to allocate the sum of 90,000 lei from the State budget for the publication of textbooks for learning the State language, adapted for adults.

Statistical trends of the language learning programme for the ethnic minorities of the Republic of Moldova 2010-2013

Table 1
ANTEM teachers

<i>Period</i>	<i>All teachers</i>	<i>Working teachers</i>	<i>Reserve teachers</i>
2010/11	52	20	32
2011/12	61	20	41

Table 2
Students involved in the programme

<i>Period</i>	<i>Level A1-A2</i>	<i>Level B1-B2</i>	<i>Level C1-C2</i>	<i>Total</i>
2010/11	290	273	235	798
2011/12	281	261	50	592
2012/13	332 planned			332
Total	903	534	285	1 722

Table 3
Statistics by locality

<i>Period</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Total</i>
2010-2011	Basarabasca, Taraclia, Briceni, Rîşcani, Otaci, Glodeni, Chişinău, Gagauzia (Ceadr-Lunga, Comrat, Vulcăneşti and the commune of Svetlii)	11
2011-2012	Taraclia, Cahul, Cimişlia, the village of Troiţcoe, Briceni, Drochia, Otaci, Bălţi, Chişinău, Gagauzia (Ceadr-Lunga, Comrat, Vulcăneşti, Etulia)	12
2012-2013	Cahul, Cantemir, Stoianovca village, Taraclia, Briceni, Bălcauţi village, Bălţi, Drochia, Rîşcani, Nihoreni village, Ocnia, Chişinău, Gagauzia (Ceadr-Lunga, Comrat, Vulcăneşti)	15

216. In 2014, 250 staff from the budget sector attended three courses in the Romanian language under the programme, where they studied at levels A1-A2 and B1-B2.
217. Between 2008 and 2015, a total of 5,000 civil servants, doctors, teachers, police officers and other professionals completed the courses in the Romanian language organized by ANTEM.
218. Educational programmes at four levels were also developed under this project, based on European standards. Teaching manuals were published, accompanied by audio recordings for various groups of professionals learning the State language.
219. In addition, in 2013, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations put forward the argument that financial resources should be allocated from the Government's reserve fund to develop the programme. Pursuant to Government Decision No. 924 of 20 November 2013, an allocation of 150,000 lei was made. With those resources, the Bureau acquired special equipment for a project on the distance learning of Romanian, which it is planned will reach about 600 learners.
220. In view of the specific situation in the country's southern region, the project aims to enable young people to engage in distance learning and integrate into society through a course of cultural and linguistic immersion.
221. Under article 10 (3) and (4) of the Education Code No. 152 of 17 July 2014, the study of the State language of Moldova is mandatory in all educational institutions. Requirements for teaching and learning are governed by the State's regulations on education.
222. The conditions for introducing and developing communication skills in Romanian for students at educational institutions where the teaching is in Russian or in a language of an ethnic minority will be improved with the implementation of the National Plan of Action to Improve the Quality of the Teaching of Romanian to Speakers of Other Languages 2013-2017.
223. In 2011, the Ministry of Education launched an educational project, which was approved under Order No. 751 of 20 August 2011, on the social and linguistic integration of students speaking another language by increasing the number of school subjects taught in Romanian. A pilot project is currently being conducted in 23 pre-university educational establishments in the southern, northern and central regions of the country, with 51 teachers giving their classes in Romanian in eight school subjects. Pupils in 125 classes are given the opportunity to improve their Romanian language skills.
224. At the same time, there is an increasing trend in the number of schools teaching speakers of another language in Romanian. Some parents have also advocated including Romanian in the educational programme in kindergartens.
225. A two-year special programme for Gagauzia was launched in Comrat in 2015 on simultaneous education in Romanian and Gagauz. The programme is being carried out by ANTEM, with support from the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, in cooperation with the Governor of Gagauzia, the Ministry of Education and the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations.
226. The objective of the programme is to create the conditions for the simultaneous teaching in Romanian and Gagauz for 150 students. Such teaching will be provided both for adults and for children aged between 3 and 10 years of age in 10 kindergartens in Comrat, Ceadăr-Lunga and Vulcănești. The programme is thus aimed at promoting a more effective use of language and social and professional integration, while retaining the ethnic identity and cultural independence of the Gagauz minority.

227. There are 50 kindergartens in Gagauzia. The programme of simultaneous teaching in Romanian and mother tongue will eventually be extended to all preschool institutions in the region and the languages of other ethnic minorities, particularly Bulgarian and Ukrainian, will also be included.

Participation by ethnic minorities in public life

228. Article 22 of the Act on the Rights of Members of Ethnic Minorities and the Legal Status of their Organizations (No. 382-XV of 19 July 2001) applies in this context.

229. Under this article, one of the mechanisms for the participation of ethnic minorities in public life, through which their opinions and interests can be taken into account, is the Coordinating Council of Ethnocultural Organizations of the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, which operates at the national level.

230. The Coordinating Council, which has the status of a deliberative advisory body pursuant to Act No. 382-XV, acts as the connecting link in the constant dialogue and consultation with ethnocultural organizations regarding the formulation and implementation of government policy on cultural, educational, linguistic and other issues related to the needs of the country's ethnic minorities. It is the barometer for public opinion on the situation of inter-ethnic relations, action against manifestations of discrimination, promotion of the principles of tolerance and the development of intercultural dialogue.

231. Acting as mediator between ethnic minorities and the authorities, the Council plays a positive role in formulating and voicing the social and cultural interests of the minorities concerned.

232. The Council strictly complies with the principle of equal representation. The leaders of all the ethnocultural public organizations accredited to the Bureau that enjoy national status thus sit on the Council, regardless of the size of the ethnic minority concerned and the number of its registered public organizations.

233. In 2014, the membership of the Council included the leaders of 89 ethnocultural associations accredited to the Bureau, representing 30 ethnic minorities, including 8 Ukrainian organizations, 9 Russian, 4 Gagauz, 7 Bulgarian, 3 Jewish, 1 Belarusian, 10 Roma, 2 German, 5 Polish, 2 Tatar, 4 Armenian, 3 Azerbaijani, 1 Georgian, 1 Uzbek, 1 Ossetian, 1 Chuvash, 3 Lithuanian, 1 Latvian, 1 Estonian, 2 Greek, 1 Korean, 1 Italian, 2 representing African and Asian peoples and others.

234. The Bureau coordinates the Council's activities, organizes meetings between its members and the current Prime Minister, the President and members of Parliament and international experts visiting Moldova. It has become a tradition for meetings and discussions to be held with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

235. Participation in the Council thus makes the role and the significance of the ethnocultural organizations of ethnic minorities stronger as a component of civil society and also provides representatives of national minorities with the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, to discuss draft legislation and to contribute to the drawing up of recommendations and assessments of action taken by the authorities on issues closely related to their interests.

Information on the participation of members of ethnic minorities in local government in areas where they live in large numbers

236. Information is given below on the ethnic composition of the elected municipal and district councils in Bălți, Edineț and Chișinău, in the context of article 24 of Act No. 382-XV of 19 July 2001.

237. There are 34 councillors on Bălți²⁰ municipal council, of whom 10 are Moldovans, 10 Ukrainians, 9 Russians, 1 Pole, 1 Bulgarian, 1 Romanian, 1 Gagauz and 1 Chechen.

238. In the Edineț²¹ district, the ethnic minorities in local government are represented as follows: out of 33 district councillors, 5 are Ukrainian, 4 Russian and 1 Azerbaijani. Out of the total number of 354 town or village (commune) councillors, ethnic minorities are represented by 68 Ukrainians, 11 Russians, 3 Gagauz, 1 Bulgarian and 1 Roma.

Table 4

Composition of the staff of the Mayor's Office of the municipality of Chișinău²²

<i>No.</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>
1.	Moldovans	100	107	112	128	130
2.	Romanians	9	8	8	8	7
3.	Russians	1	3	4	6	6
4.	Bulgarians	-	-	-	1	1
Total		110	118	124	143	144

Participation of members of the Roma community in public life

239. Over the past few years, significant progress has been made in the Republic of Moldova with resolving problems arising out of the integration of the Roma community in the structure of Moldovan society and in combating intolerance and stereotypes relating to this ethnic group. The Roma community receives support from the central and local authorities.

240. The status of the Roma population in the Republic of Moldova does not differ from that of other ethnic minorities or groups. No legislative or regulatory text contains any restrictions preventing the Roma from the free exercise of their basic human rights, including the rights to participation in decision-making and full participation in public and political life.

241. The best possible conditions have been created to enable the Roma to realize their right to set up their own associations. There are 40 Roma ethnocultural organizations active in the Republic of Moldova at the national and the local level.

242. The Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations works with all the Roma organizations, supports their statutory activities and assists with the implementation of a variety of projects and initiatives.

243. The leaders of 10 Roma organizations accredited to the Bureau that have national status are members of the Coordinating Council of Ethnocultural Organizations of the Bureau and have their own representative on the bureau of the Council.

²⁰ According to the 2004 census, the population of the municipality of Bălți comprised 52.4 per cent Moldovans, 1.8 per cent Romanians, 23.7 per cent Ukrainians, 19.2 per cent Russians, 0.68 per cent Poles, 0.32 per cent Jews, 0.23 per cent Bulgarians, 0.21 per cent Gypsies/Roma, 0.2 per cent Gagauz and 1.2 per cent other ethnicities.

²¹ According to the 2004 census, the ethnic composition of the Edineț district was 58,749 Moldovans, 16,084 Ukrainians, 5,083 Russians, 143 Gagauz, 446 Romanians, 91 Bulgarians and 792 other nationalities.

²² According to the 2004 census, the ethnic composition of the population in the municipality of Chișinău was as follows: 68.62 per cent Moldovans, 9.17 per cent Ukrainians, 15.72 per cent Russians, 1.01 per cent Gagauz, 1.41 per cent Bulgarians, 0.44 per cent Jews, 0.13 per cent Poles, 0.05 per cent Gypsies and 3.44 per cent other ethnicities.

244. It should be noted that Roma leaders and members of their organizations are increasingly active in the educational field, training young people, undertaking research and publication work, supporting the community-based mediator services for Roma and working with government bodies and international organizations.

Recommendation 17

Concerning action against prejudice and stereotypes, the promotion of the principle of diversity in the field of teaching, education, culture and information and the strengthening of the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations

Action against prejudice and stereotypes and promotion of the principle of diversity through the media and through teaching, education and culture

245. Many national campaigns were conducted between 2011 and 2014 to promote the principles of non-discrimination. Thematic, interactive television and radio programmes were broadcast, new subjects were taught in schools and universities and ethnocultural events and other activities were organized.²³

246. The Television and Radio Coordinating Council carried out a range of activities aimed at supporting the rights of ethnic minorities, generating a spirit of tolerance, developing intercultural dialogue and combating discrimination through the media.

247. With assistance from a joint European Union and Council of Europe programme to support democracy in the Republic of Moldova, the Coordinating Council organized a training course, held on 27-28 September 2011, on the topic “Monitoring the media on respect for human dignity and child protection: Standards and principles”. The course involved learning about best European practices in combating discrimination of any kind, including ethnic, linguistic or religious discrimination.

248. Public consultations about current problems were organized with regional radio broadcasters. Between 2011 and 2014, a series of local seminars was held in Bălți, Comrat and Chişinău, at which broadcasters learned about the procedure for applying the provisions of the Television and Radio Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 260-XVI of 27 July 2006, about European standards and about the monitoring methods used by the Coordinating Council.

249. The result of these activities was that all those engaged in radio and television production in Moldova recognized and accepted the need to combat all manifestations of intolerance, to encourage mutual respect and understanding and to promote diversity and the cultural and linguistic heritage of ethnic minorities.

250. The Coordinating Council devised a way of supporting regional audiovisual output by organizing a competition for projects and a national competition for radio and television production, two categories of which were “Best programme in the language of an ethnic minority” and “Best programme about the culture of ethnic minorities”.

251. Beginning in the 2009/10 academic year, the subject “Civic education” was introduced into the curriculum of grades 1-12 in pre-university educational establishments. The objective was to mould Moldovan citizens to meet the requirements of the modern world: children should learn about basic rights and obligations, develop skills to exercise those rights and obligations in everyday life, receive an education based on universal democratic values, learn to develop feelings of responsibility for their actions and grow in civic awareness.

²³ See also part 2 of the report, recommendation 11.

252. After taking civic education classes, a pupil acquires knowledge in such areas as:
- Human rights and basic freedoms
 - Principles of intra-group and intergroup relations in a democratic society
 - Legal provisions defining the status of a citizen
 - Human rights protection mechanisms at the local and national level
 - Institutions of a democratic society
 - Problems that may arise within a community or society and ways of settling them equitably.
253. As part of a national campaign entitled “Tolerance — the fundamental principle of civic activity and participation”, the Human Rights Centre of Moldova organized a series of events.
254. Thus, in implementation of the Plan of Action on the European Year of Citizens 2013, adopted under Government Decision No. 88 of 19 April 2013, the Centre carried out more than 50 activities aimed at encouraging tolerance and combating discrimination of any kind.
255. A campaign conducted from 15 to 20 November 2012 to promote tolerance included 26 events. In view of the country’s aspiration to become a full member of the European family, the objective of the campaign was to promote the principles of informed participation by citizens in the decision-making process by fostering equality, peace, the rule of law, solidarity and human rights.
256. “Tolerance is democracy” is the theme of a radio competition run by the Human Rights Centre of Moldova, jointly with Teleradio Moldova. As part of a campaign to promote tolerance, the Centre organized three regional meetings in the north, the south and the centre of the country, in Rîșcani, Cahul and Chișinău. Among the topics discussed was the current human rights situation of members of ethnic minorities in the Republic of Moldova, in the context of the European Union Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
257. The parliamentary advocates and the Human Rights Centre of Moldova have put out more than 60 broadcasts, briefings and articles in the press on combating all forms of discrimination, developing intercultural dialogue and promoting tolerance.
258. On the initiative of the National Human Rights Institute, a number of educational establishments conducted an hour of civic education on the topic “Intercultural dialogue. Unity through diversity”, on which the children then wrote essays.²⁴
259. Every year, an inter-ethnic camp for children called “Sources of tolerance” is organized, as one of the ways to educate young people. The basic objectives of the camp are to promote intercultural dialogue between the various ethnic groups in the country, to educate the younger generation in the spirit of inter-ethnic tolerance, to create a high level of civic responsibility among young people speaking another language and to teach the children about the country’s ethnic minorities.²⁵ Every year, 100 children of various ethnicities take part in the camp, with the opportunity of getting to know the history, language, literature, folklore, culture and art of various peoples through seminars and cultural or educational events.

²⁴ <http://www.ombudsman.md/ro/stiri/cpdom-organizat-anul-2013-mai-multe-actiuni-contextul-companiei-nationale-toleranta-principiul>.

²⁵ The camp is organized by the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, in cooperation with the Moldovan Jewish Congress and the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress.

260. International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January) is observed in the Republic of Moldova every year, as well as Holocaust Day, which honours the heroism of European Jews, and other dates from the tragic pages of the history of the Jewish people. Events marking these dates are traditionally attended by high-ranking government officials, the general public, the media and representatives of ethnic minorities.

261. A round table on the Holocaust was held, for the first time in the Republic of Moldova, on 28 January 2014, organized by the Ministry of International Affairs and European Integration and the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, together with the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and the Jewish community of the Republic of Moldova.

262. The purpose of the round table was to help raise levels of public awareness of the Holocaust and to increase understanding of the importance of observing human rights and respecting the dignity and value of every individual.

263. The round table was an expression of the moral responsibility that the Moldovan authorities have to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and underlined their role in that process. It also addressed the issue of how the Holocaust is reflected in the educational process.

264. An international conference to mark the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, held on 29 January 2015, was widely attended by senior government officials, representatives of civil society and foreign missions accredited to the Republic of Moldova. The conference was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations, together with the European Union.

265. Holding events dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust helps to strengthen the country's efforts to combat anti-Semitism and all other manifestations of racism, xenophobia, racial discrimination and intolerance.

266. The Football Against Racism in Europe Movement has been widely supported in the Republic of Moldova. Events to promote the Movement were initiated and organized by the Fatima Association for the Protection of Children of African Origin, set up by representatives of mixed-race African-Moldovan families in 1999.²⁶

267. To break down the barriers of racism and discrimination, the Fatima Association chose sport as an instrument of education and dialogue among ethnic communities and as a way of bringing society together as a whole.

268. Every year, as part of the Football Against Racism in Europe Action Week, Fatima organizes football matches involving young people from various ethnic communities, refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented persons, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

269. According to Keita Abdraman,²⁷ the head of Fatima, discrimination and racism can be overcome if all parties form a common front, including State institutions, sports clubs, fans and everyone who wants to achieve that goal. It is a great challenge, but the activists of the Football Against Racism in Europe Movement hope to change society for the good.

270. Various activities are conducted to that end: banners with slogans are displayed, information materials are distributed and young people are given sports shirts and logos. These initiatives are carried out thanks to support from the Football Against Racism in

²⁶ Fatima provides social, humanitarian and physiological assistance and endeavours to integrate disadvantaged children into society.

²⁷ <http://theanalyticon.com/?p=6513&lang=ru>.

Europe international organization, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Affairs, the Moldovan Football Federation, sponsors and volunteers from many NGOs.

Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations

271. During the reporting period, the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations focused its activities on strengthening and extending institutional capacities for addressing inter-ethnic relations, on the basis of the aims and challenges set out in the Government's programmes and plans of action (see also part 1 of the report).

272. It is worth noting the Bureau's most important activities, which show how it strengthened its institutional capacities by making a rational and effective use of its internal resources.

273. As part of its work on drafting policy documents, the Bureau initiated the drafting of the Plan of Action to Support the Ethnic Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova 2011-2015, which was adopted under Government Decision No. 494 of 8 July 2011, with amendments introduced by Government Decision No. 56 of 31 January 2012. The Bureau thus showed its openness and ability to address the problems of the Roma population, with a view to bringing about a significant, long-term improvement in the situation of the Roma community. The Bureau coordinates the activities and organizes the meetings of the interdepartmental working group responsible for the implementation of the Plan of Action, monitors that implementation and organizes training seminars at the local and national level for government officials and leaders of Roma ethnocultural organizations (see also part 2 of the report, recommendation 11).

274. In order to facilitate the linguistic integration of ethnic minorities and to promote and provide tuition in the State language for the adult population, the Bureau coordinates the organization of events aimed at creating favourable conditions to achieve those aims (see also part 2 of the report, recommendation 15).

275. Pursuant to Government Decision No. 644 of 23 August 2013, the Bureau is designated the body responsible for implementing the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and for submitting the Government's comments regarding individual and collective claims against the Republic of Moldova addressed to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination²⁸ (see also part 1 of the report).

276. The Bureau is the lead agency in drafting the Strategy on the Integration of the Ethnic Minorities of the Republic of Moldova 2015-2020. The Strategy was drafted with expert support from the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

277. The Strategy on the Integration of the Ethnic Minorities of the Republic of Moldova 2015-2020 will be the basic government programme document, establishing aims and objectives in the medium term (six years) in such areas as the participation of ethnic minorities in public life, the facilitation of intercultural dialogue, the strengthening of identification with the Republic of Moldova, the creation of the necessary conditions for the study and use of the State language by citizens, including adults, speaking other languages, the development of the languages of ethnic minorities, the provision of access by ethnic minorities to information and media in their own languages and support for cultural diversity in society.

²⁸ Government Decision No. 644 of 23 August 2013 was adopted in implementation of article 2 of Act No. 311 of 26 December 2012 on the Formulation of a Declaration by the Republic of Moldova on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

278. Once the procedures for obtaining the approval of the relevant ministries and public consultations with representatives of civil society have been completed, the draft Strategy will be submitted to the Government for consideration and confirmation by means of a special decision.

279. The Bureau actively worked with international donor organizations with a view to attracting outside funding to set up a procedure for discussing and resolving current problems relating to inter-ethnic relations. It organized 15 educational events, in the form of seminars, conferences and training courses, some of them in the field, aimed at various groups and interested parties — both government bodies and NGOs — in other parts of the country, with financial support from specialized structures of the European Union, OSCE and others.

280. The Bureau works closely with the Coordinating Committee, which is the public advisory body attached to the Bureau, as set out in article 25 (3) of the Act on the Rights of Members of National Minorities and the Legal Status of their Organizations, No. 382-XV of 19 July 2001.

281. The leaders of all the ethnocultural organizations accredited to the Bureau are members of the Coordinating Committee, regardless of the size of the ethnic minority concerned. Altogether, 30 ethnic minorities are represented on the Coordinating Committee.²⁹

282. Every year, the Bureau organizes ethnocultural events, in cooperation with ethnocultural organizations, involving a wide range of young people from various ethnic backgrounds in organizing and conducting them. It thus helps to promote the principles of tolerance and prevention of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, descent or ethnic origin through culture and intercultural dialogue and to encourage their distinctive spiritual heritage. In the course of 2014 alone, the Bureau organized 450 events, including festivals, conferences, round tables, seminars, national celebrations, exhibitions and others, providing financial support in the amount of 394,000 lei out of its budget.

283. The Bureau's activities are financed out of the State budget of the Republic of Moldova. The amount of money allocated to the Bureau, including funding for ethnocultural events, remained unchanged during the period 2011-2014.

Recommendation 18

Concerning the ratification of international human rights instruments that have not been ratified, particularly the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990)

284. There is currently no need for the Republic of Moldova to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, in view of the fact that it has signed and ratified 44 labour conventions. Social rights, the right to access to medical services and employment and the right of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova for the purpose of work not to be discriminated against are guaranteed through the implementation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181) and Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) and the European Convention on the Legal Status of

²⁹ There are 89 associations accredited to the Bureau, registered with the Ministry of Justice and enjoying national status. About 100 ethnocultural organizations are active at the local level, not only in Chişinău and Bălţi but also in the regions: in Sorooca, Taraclia, Edineţ, Rezina, Şoldăneş, Cahul, Drochia, Criuleni, Glodeni, Donduşeni, Ungheni, Rîşcani, Orhei, Călăraşi, Străşeni and Floreşti.

Migrant Workers, No. 93, of which the Republic of Moldova is a party, in addition to the European Social Charter (Revised) (see also part 2 of the report, recommendation 13).

Conclusion

285. This periodic report of the Republic of Moldova on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has been prepared on the basis of information provided by central and local government authorities, voluntary associations of ethnic minorities and other sources.

286. In respect of the concluding observations adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its 2087th meeting, held on 10 March 2011 (CERD/C/SR.2087), the Republic of Moldova, as a State party to the Convention, acting in implementation of its international obligations, has achieved substantial results in preventing and combating discrimination based on race, ethnic or national origin, including the observance of the rights of ethnic minorities and members of a number of religious and socially vulnerable groups, such as Muslims, Roma and others.

287. The basic achievements in this regard between 2011 and 2014 may be summed up as follows:

- The Moldovan authorities have taken effective measures to develop a national legislative framework and bring it into line with the rules of international human rights law and European Union standards. The principle of non-discrimination and the right to express and develop ethnic identity is the central element of the legislation adopted, which includes the Equal Opportunities Act, the Act on the Activities of the Council for Preventing and Combating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality and amendments to the Criminal Code, the Code on Offences, the Education Code and other legislation.
- The procedure for integrating foreigners and stateless persons into Moldovan society has been made easier.
- The ethnocultural and social situation of Roma has been improved and the Plan of Action to Support the Ethnic Roma Population of the Republic of Moldova 2011-2015 has been adopted and implemented to that end.
- The capacities of the institution of parliamentary advocates have been strengthened and the post of People's Advocate has been created.
- The situation with regard to the right to freedom of religion has been improved and the Muslim League of the Republic of Moldova has been registered.
- Favourable conditions have been created for providing tuition in the State language for adults speaking another language, with a view to ensuring the social and linguistic integration of members of ethnic minorities in the life of society.
- The Republic of Moldova has recognized the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and designated the Bureau for Inter-Ethnic Relations to be the lead agency in implementing the provisions of article 14 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
- A population census was held in 2014.

288. It should also be noted that the report does not contain information on the implementation of the Convention in the western part of the Republic of Moldova (Transnistria), in view of the fact that the country's territorial integrity has not yet been

restored and that the districts on the left bank of the Dniester are not under the jurisdiction of the official authorities of the Republic of Moldova.
