



The Director-General



Secretary General

## **Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025**

**Updated in November 2023**

### **Country Level Implementation Plan – CLIP (*Republic of Moldova*)**

With the adoption of the Gender Action Plan III: An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action (GAP III) on 25 November 2020, the EU reaffirms the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment throughout EU external action at all levels and in all sectors.

This GAP III Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP), built on the updated Gender Country Profile (CGP) of the Republic of Moldova (2023) and United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Moldova Joint Gender Assessment (2022), covers both the programmatic and political commitments and propose specific actions and initiatives for promoting gender equality in the Republic of Moldova.

#### **1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country**

Moldova has made international and national commitments to promote gender equality and empowerment of women, in particular through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1953), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Beijing Platform and Action Plan (1995), the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, the corresponding Conventions of the International Labour Organisation, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), etc., as well as through national legislation such as the Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities between Women and Men enacted in February 2006.

In recent years, Moldova has intensified its efforts to bolster the legal and institutional framework for gender equality. Noteworthy developments include the approval of the Program for the Promotion and Ensuring of Equality between Women and Men for 2023-2027 and the National Programme on preventing and combating violence against Women and Domestic Violence for the same period. These programs align with international commitments and aim

to enhance gender equality across various sectors such as health, education, labour, entrepreneurship, social protection, and local development.

Another crucial initiative in 2023 was the adoption of the National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security. The plan focuses on promoting gender balance in the security and defense sector, reducing stereotypes, enhancing the efficiency of mechanisms for preventing and investigating violence, and increasing women's participation in international peacekeeping missions.

To support women's economic empowerment, Moldova launched a roadmap in May 2022, targeting five key objectives, including eliminating barriers to access resources and promoting female entrepreneurship.

In the legal framework, significant amendments have been introduced in labor and childcare sectors in 2022-2023. These changes encompass provisions for employers to provide childcare services, the principle of "equal remuneration for equal work or work of equal value," and enhanced measures against gender-based salary differences. Other improvements involve flexible work arrangements, paid paternity leave, and strengthened measures against workplace sexual harassment.

Sectoral examples of gender mainstreaming include the Ministry of Finance's expanded use of Gender budgeting tools and the Gender Assessment conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The institutional framework involves various authorities such as the Parliament, Government, Government Commission on Gender Equality, and specialized bodies within ministries. Notably, the Council for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality has been renamed the Equality Council, and its activity regulation was extensively revised in 2023 to enhance its effectiveness. Additionally, a new National Agency for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was established in line with the Istanbul Convention, focusing on coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

These recent developments signify Moldova's commitment to advancing gender equality by reinforcing legal frameworks, implementing targeted programs, and enhancing institutional mechanisms.

At the same time, according to the 2023 Country Gender Profile, the legal, policy and institutional framework in other thematic areas, such as energy, digital transformation, infrastructure, transport, climate change mostly remain gender neutral.

On 23 June 2022, the European Council granted candidate status to Moldova. It invited the European Commission to report to the Council on the fulfilment of the conditions specified in the Commission's opinion on the membership application. On 8 November 2023, the European Commission recommended to the European Council to start negotiations with Moldova about the EU accession.

The priority areas of EU cooperation with Moldova, to be supported financially by the Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP), are based on the Association Agenda for 2021-2027, in respect of the "policy first principle", which reflects the objectives of the joint communication

on the Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020, with the overarching theme of resilience. The priority areas and sectors of the MIP are:

- Resilient, sustainable and integrated economy

*Main gender sensitive results:* Small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular those from rural areas and owned by women, are developed; EU acquis related to ensuring equal pay for equal work or work of equal value is implemented in Moldova's legal framework; gender pay gap addressed; share of NEET, especially women, decreased; stereotypes against women in business addressed, women's access to credit and services ensured; Ukrainian refugees – mainly women – integrated in Moldova's labour market.

- Accountable institutions, the rule of law and security

*Main gender sensitive results:* Better gender parity in decision-making in all branches of the government at the national and subnational level, with a focus on security and defence sector; the Istanbul Convention is fully implemented in Moldova's law and practice; National Agency on countering GBV is fully functional; law enforcement authorities and the judiciary effectively identify, investigate and prosecute cases of violence against women; local multi-disciplinary teams work effectively in regions to prevent VAW and assist victims; public tolerance to violence against women is reduced; protection of women against discrimination and harassment is strengthened, gender-sensitive local public policies promoted.

- Environment and climate resilience

*Main gender sensitive results:* Improved living conditions of women and men also through improved access to drinking water; new green economic development and jobs created linked to the green transition, equally available to women and men; access to secure, affordable and increasingly green energy improved for men and women.

- Resilient digital transformation

*Main gender sensitive results:* Citizens and businesses, including women-owned, have equal access to high quality electronic communications infrastructure and services; IT solutions to increase efficiency, transparency and accountability for public administrations available, women, men and all populations equally benefit from both technical (STEM) education and services.

- Resilient, fair and inclusive societies

*Main gender sensitive results:* Community development is enhanced through capacity building and small scale initiatives implemented by CSOs; data management capacities of the national authorities (including in statistics services) are strengthened, and sex-disaggregated migration data are mainstreamed for evidence-based policy planning in all sectors; gender gap in care work is reduced; vulnerable groups, such as ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, refugees from Ukraine – mostly women and children – are included in the economy and social services system of Moldova.

The CGP and CLIP have been developed taking into account the priorities set up in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights & Democracy 2020-2024, Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy for the Republic of Moldova (2021-2024).

The following actors have been consulted in the 2023 update of the CLIP: the Government, (the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (Department for Gender Equality Policies) the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization, the Ministry

of Environment) EU Member States (EU MSs), women's organisations and other civil society actors, UN Country Team, notably UN Women and other UN Agencies, development partners and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Gender.

## **2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives**

The overall objectives of the EU action for gender equality and women's empowerment in Moldova is to support gender mainstreaming in EU accession process, strengthen women's participation in the economy, advance equal participation and leadership, and promote gender equality in education, health, green transition and digital transformations. Special attention shall be paid to intersectionality, notably gender specific needs of girls and women with disabilities, ethnic minorities and refugees.

The selected GAP III thematic engagement areas on gender equality and women's empowerment to be addressed with actions deriving from the MIP and to be promoted in the political and policy dialogues are:

1. Support Moldova through EU accession process in mainstreaming gender in policy and action
2. Promote strengthening of economic and social rights and empowering girls and women, with a focus on vulnerable groups
3. Advance equal participation and leadership, support the Government to promote Women, Peace and Security agenda and address gender-based violence
4. Capitalizing on existing leadership and ownership of the Government in gender policies development and implementation, further build capacity and provide targeted support to the Government in addressing specific gender barriers in education, health, green transition, digital transformation.

In all thematic areas, the EUD will integrate intersectionality to make a particular focus on underrepresented groups of women and women facing compound discrimination, such as rural women, youth and elderly, women from TN region, women from ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, HIV-positive women, LGBTIQ women.

### **1. Support Moldova through EU accession process in mainstreaming gender in policy and action**

To facilitate Moldova's integration into the European Union (EU) and ensure alignment with EU gender equality standards during the accession process, the EU will support:

- Harmonization of Moldova national gender equality legislation with EU standards, ensuring compliance with directives relevant to the accession process.
- Enhancing the capacity of existing gender-related institutions to meet EU accession requirements, focusing on effective implementation and monitoring.
- Collaboration with Moldovan authorities to formulate and implement gender-sensitive policies aligned with EU best practices, emphasizing the integration of EU accession criteria.
- Strengthening Moldova's statistical capabilities for collecting gender-disaggregated data, aligning methodologies with EU standards to meet accession criteria.
- Fostering collaboration between the government and civil society organizations to ensure effective implementation of gender policies in line with EU expectations for accession.

- Establishing robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating gender mainstreaming initiatives, emphasizing compliance with EU standards and incorporating feedback into the accession process.

## **2. Promote strengthening of economic and social rights and empowering girls and women, with a focus on underrepresented groups**

To meet the overall objective that women, men, girls and boys fully enjoy and exercise their equal economic, labour and social rights, the EUD will pursue the following specific objectives:

- Promoting Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP), decent work, equal pay and labour rights, and women's transition to the formal economy, among other by reducing labour market segregation, boosting women's leadership and increasing their bargaining and through promoting male engagement initiatives specifically for reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work.
- Recognising the unpaid care and domestic work and encouraging more balanced distribution of care work between men and women.
- Supporting women entrepreneurship and women-led businesses, including social entrepreneurship, by creating enabling environment and working with companies, trade unions, business associations.
- Support access to self-employment and business development opportunities by enhancing women's access to livelihood opportunities and building networks, with a focus on rural women and refugee women, through training programs, entrepreneurial activities, equipment support to join online trainings and online work
- Supporting reconciliation of family and private life through assisting the government in implementation of recent legal framework on childcare infrastructure and enhancing the capacities and possibilities of the employers to offer for their employees alternative childcare services for children up to the age of 3 in addition to those provided by the state.
- Supporting and empowering migrant and refugee women to develop skills, find employment or start business.

## **3. Advance equal participation and leadership, support the Government to promote Women, Peace and Security agenda and address gender-based violence**

To ensure that women and men participate equally and take on leadership roles in decision-making processes in all spheres and at all levels of political and public life, including in peace and security processes, and to strengthen GBV response, the EUD will pursue the following specific objectives:

- Capitalising on positive measures/quotas for elections, increasing the level of women participation, representation and leadership in politics, governance and electoral processes at all levels, via support for democracy and governance programmes and public administration reforms.
- Creating an enabling environment for women to emerge as leaders, with a focus on underrepresented groups of women and women facing compound discrimination, through training, visibility and space for participation and leadership, and encouraging young women and adolescent girls' civic engagement.
- Reducing gender stereotypes in media and other environments through: empowering and supporting women's rights as users, producers of information and as entrepreneurs and decision-makers in the sector; promoting positive masculinities and engaging men and boys as partners/agents of change for advancing gender equality and addressing GBV.

- Improving protection from gender-based discrimination, GBV and human trafficking through: supporting the government in developing and implementing legal and policy framework for implementation of international and national commitments on countering GBV, including new forms such as technology-facilitated GBV and online exploitation of women and girls; supporting the full-scale operation of the National Agency for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence; further strengthening the capacity of service providers to ensure access to a set of comprehensive multi-sectoral services (medical, case management, legal, MHPSS, shelters and safe spaces) using a survivor-centred approach; sensitising and training security forces, including police and border guard service, for identifying and providing support to survivors of GBV or human trafficking; expanding access to comprehensive sexuality education to girls and boys in formal and non-formal education settings as a form of GBV prevention; and supporting the establishment of specialized services for working with GBV perpetrators.
- Increasing women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes, and ensuring that women, including underrepresented groups of women and women facing compound discrimination, and CSOs working on gender equality are fully involved as equal partners in peacebuilding from the earliest stages.
- Support and reintegration of female refugees from Ukraine through humanitarian aid, counselling, facilitated access to critical services.

#### **4. Capitalizing on existing leadership and ownership of the Government in gender policies development and implementation, further build capacity and provide targeted support to the Government in addressing specific gender barriers in education, health, green transition, digital transformation**

To reach the overall objective that women influence decision-making processes on health, environmental conservation, climate change, digital transformation policies and actions, and that the system of education effectively empowers women and men, boys and girls, the EUD will pursue the following specific objectives:

- Targeted capacity-building programmes on gender-sensitive healthcare provision, reproductive health, and the integration of gender perspectives in health policies to enhance the overall gender responsiveness of the health sector.
- Supporting the integration of gender-sensitive content into educational curricula and practices through: building capacity of teachers to raise awareness about gender issues; promoting gender-inclusive teaching methodologies; eliminating gender stereotypes in education.
- Promoting girls' and women's participation and leadership in order to ensure gender-responsive strategies to climate mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and the inclusive and sustainable management of natural resources.
- Supporting women networks in green transition sectors such as sustainable forest management, textile industry, agriculture (including food processing and wines), transport and energy.
- Promoting digital education and skills for jobs and entrepreneurship while addressing the gender norms and stereotypes that steer women and girls away from technology, and addressing digital divide between genders, generations and rural/urban residents.
- Supporting women digital innovators and entrepreneurs across multiple industrial ecosystems to build an inclusive digital economy with the aim of closing the digital gender gap.

To reach the GAP III target that at least 85% of all new actions in each priority area/ sector of the MIP will have gender equality as a significant or principal objective, objectives and indicators from the MIP – GAP III corresponding thematic engagement areas, will be used in the design, formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the Annual Action Programmes (AAP). Implementing partners will be provided with guidance in integrating these in their proposals/ contracts.

Engaging with civil society has been critical in ensuring effective reforms, as it has supported ensuring gender equality in the Republic of Moldova. The civil society organisations will be involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of EU actions. One of the priorities of MIP is to increase CSO' capacity in implementing the provisions of the EU Gender Action Plan.

### **3. Targeted action(s) supporting gender equality and women's empowerment**

The overall objective of the G2 action<sup>1</sup> will be ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence (I), strengthening economic and social rights (II) and empowering girls and women and advancing equal participation and leadership (III). The bilateral action will have a budget of approximately EUR 5 million and will be funded under the AAP 2022 or 2023.

The G2 action will address root causes of inequalities and have a transformational impact, addressing structural issues, such as gender norms and stereotypes, contributing to shifting mind-sets and behaviours in order to achieve long-lasting change.

At national level, the action will provide support to the Parliament and Government to adopt and implement gender transformative laws, policies and budgets in selected sectors, by:

- Reforming and strengthening the gender mechanism for effective gender mainstreaming in laws and sectoral policies, by piloting in employment (address the pay gap, equal access to jobs, access to finances and care services), education, healthcare, digitalisation and infrastructure;
- Advancing equitable public financing and accountability through Gender Responsive Budgeting;

At local level, the action will capacitate Local Public Authorities (LPAs), GBV service providers, and empower Civil Society Organisations, coalitions, women and youth from communities to engage in gender mainstreaming at local level in selected districts, by:

- Strengthening the economic and climate resilience and inclusion of women in local development to address impact of the war of aggression against Ukraine, inflation, energy crisis;
- Enabling youth civic activism for gender equitable local governance and empower local women leaders to act as agents of change;
- Improving protection from gender-based discrimination and GBV through access to legal services via survivor-centred approach.
- Building LPAs capacity on: participatory and representative decision-making, social norms, cross-sectoral collaboration; evidence-based planning, implementation and monitoring of policies on women's leadership and economic empowerment, prevention and countering GBV, Women Peace Security agenda, responsible fathering, and addressing gender stereotypes.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as G2 actions in line with OECD gender maker [G2](#). These actions should aim at achieving a long-lasting change tackling harmful gender norms and stereotypes, by implementing a comprehensive and gender-transformative approach.

The action will address root causes towards elimination of patriarchal social norms and apply intersectionality and feminist approach in line with the Global Acceleration Plan on Gender equality.

**Specific indicators under each area of engagement:**

**Area of engagement I. Support Moldova through EU accession process in mainstreaming gender in policy and action:**

- Percentage of Moldova's national gender equality legislation harmonized with EU standards.
- Percentage of staff of gender-related institutions of Moldova trained to meet EU accession requirements related to gender, focusing on effective implementation and monitoring.
- Number of gender-sensitive policies formulated in collaboration between the government and civil society and implemented in alignment with EU acquis and best practices.

**Area of engagement II: Promote strengthening of economic and social rights and empowering girls and women, with a focus on vulnerable groups**

- Percentage of women and men of working age in formal employment, with disaggregation by vulnerability factors.
- Average wage ratio between men and women (gender pay gap)
- Time (hours per day or week) men and women dedicate to care work (child and eldercare, house chores)
- Number of women and girls: (a) studying Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields, (b) employed at STEM professions, with disaggregation by vulnerability factors.
- Number of beneficiaries of empowerment programmes for women's participation and leadership, with disaggregation by vulnerability factors.
- Number of alternative childcare services established by employers.
- Number of children aged 1-3 and 4-6 covered by childcare services.
- Number of individuals supported to engage in entrepreneurship, including provision of grants, equipment, counselling, business-related legal advice and access to financial services, disaggregated by sex, age and vulnerability factors.
- Number migrant and refugee women who were supported to develop skills, find employment or start business.

**Area of engagement III: Advance equal participation and leadership, support the Government to promote Women, Peace and Security agenda and address GBV:**

- Proportion of seats held by women in: (a) national parliament and (b) local governments.
- Number of women with increased management and leadership skills through participation in leadership building programmes, with disaggregation by vulnerability factors.
- Extent to which local and national media, opinion leaders and influencers, including traditional, religious and community leaders, challenge discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes about women's and girls' participation and leadership.
- Number of men and boys participating in positive masculinity courses, programmes.

- Percentage of men who do not share stereotypes on women's and men's roles in society and family (to be measured through public opinion polls).
- Extent to which the new National Agency for the Prevention and Combating of VAW and Domestic Violence is functional.
- Number of service providers trained on identifying, providing services to GBV survivors and on inter-agency coordination, disaggregated by sex.
- Proportion of GBV survivors in the previous 12 months who reported to competent authorities, disaggregated by sex and vulnerability factors.
- Number of police and other law enforcement personnel trained on identifying and providing support to survivors of GBV or human trafficking, disaggregated by sex.
- Number of GBV perpetrators covered with specialized services and programmes, disaggregated by sex and vulnerability factors.
- Number of women at decision-making positions in government institutions dealing with WPS agenda.
- Number of women's rights organisations, civil society organisations, including those representing groups facing vulnerabilities that report having greater influence and agency to work on WPS agenda.
- Number of female refugees from Ukraine receiving humanitarian aid, counselling, facilitated access to critical services.

**Area of engagement IV: Capitalizing on existing leadership and ownership of the Government in gender policies development and implementation, further build capacity and provide targeted support to the Government in addressing specific gender barriers in education, health, green transition, digital transformation**

- Extent to which educational curricula and practices are gender-sensitive, to be measured by compliance of textbooks and teaching methodologies with gender sensitivity requirements, and number of educators trained on gender sensitivity.
- Extent to which the healthcare system is gender-sensitive, to be measured by the number of gender-responsive health services, number of healthcare facilities providing gender-responsive health services to women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, number of health professionals trained on gender-sensitive health service provision.
- Number of women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, participating in events on climate action and environment justice, including at decision-making levels, disaggregated by sex and vulnerability factors.
- Number of women, men in all their diversity, getting new green jobs (sustainable forest management, textile industry, agriculture (including food processing and wines), transport and energy), disaggregated by sex.
- Number of women and girls accessing services or programmes offered by the digital hubs/tech parks, etc.
- Number of people having access to public digital services, disaggregated by sex and vulnerability factors.
- Number of women, men, girls and boys participating in digital hackathons or other digital start-ups events, disaggregated by sex and vulnerability factors.

Additional funds to implement GEWE actions will be available under the global call for proposals for CSOs (e.g. European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and Civil Society Organisations instruments).

Specific support will be provided by the EU and EU MSs to national gender machineries/networks. Women organisations and organisations working on gender equality will receive support in the framework of the civil society facility, civil society organisations and European instrument for democracy and human rights call for proposals. Notably, Sweden will continue providing support in various ways: core support, programmes/projects support, strategic note support. The focus is on areas, such as: increasing women's political participation and representation in decision-making bodies; enhancing women's economic empowerment with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises; and ensuring a life free of violence for women and girls. Sweden will continue supporting the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in particular within technical expertise of UN Women. Also, feminist foreign and development policies are a priority in Germany's foreign policy and development cooperation, realising gender equality, reducing discriminatory structures and overcoming all forms of discrimination and violence are mainstreamed across all sectors of cooperation and expanded through targeted measures.

#### **4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment**

The EU and EU MSs will continue actively engaging on GEWE with the Government and other relevant stakeholders, including CSOs. This shall be achieved through joint letters with international partners, extensive consultations with CSOs, including women's organisations, opening speeches at roundtables, media interviews, press conferences, and statements disseminated on Twitter and Facebook on gender based violence, as part of the EU's toolbox on strategic communication and public diplomacy.

GEWE is specifically discussed during the EU-Moldova Human Rights dialogue meeting. Additionally EU facilitates and coordinates informal discussions on gender equality issues with EU member States, both on a working level and in Heads of Missions meetings.

Traditional media like television, radio and newspapers continue to play an important role in Moldova and these will be further used to advance EU positions on key areas in the field gender equality. The EUD's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram accounts will remain important tools to make the EU's voice on gender equality heard.

No regular dialogue on gender equality and women's empowerment in the framework of the CSO Roadmap is foreseen, however civil society organisations are regularly consulted by the EUD in the framework of policy documents formulation, AAPs and specific issues related to gender equality.

#### **5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities**

The following high level events on gender equality are foreseen during the period 2023-2025 by the EU in cooperation with the EU MSs.

- International Women's Day (8 March) events.
- Events related to EU accession (possible decision of the European Council to start negotiations with Moldova on accession and further events in this field) – these events should be used as a platform to highlight the importance of gender mainstreaming in Moldova's EU accession process.
- Gender Debates Café and Democracy talks' type of events: in the framework of which it will be explored how art can be used to help promote gender equality, women's contribution in art, feminism in a post-soviet country, emerging challenges for women artists.
- Photo exhibition dedicated to the Generation Equality

- Street Art performances (graffiti) on gender equality and elimination of violence against women
- Events around Generation Equality Forum and Action Coalitions at country level
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence: the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day.

## **6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation**

No specific amount has been earmarked in the EUD's cooperation facility to support the implementation of GAP III at country level, however, considering that gender is mainstreamed in the MIP, sufficient financial support shall be committed in order to achieve the objectives/indicators foreseen in the present CLIP.

Technical assistance for updating the Gender Country Profile, gender mainstreaming, trainings, reporting and communication purposes that support the implementation of GAP III at country level shall be provided with the support of the regional programme EU4Gender Equality Reform Helpdesk.

Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania, Austria and Sweden will continue implementing specific programmes to facilitate gender mainstreaming in Moldova.

*Date: 30/11/2023*

*Signature by Head of Delegation: Janis MAŽEIKS [e-signed]*