



Questionnaire

Part II

**Information provided by the Government of the Republic of Moldova
to the Questionnaire of the European Commission**

CHAPTER 26: EDUCATION AND CULTURE

May 2022

The areas of education and training, youth, sport and culture are primarily the competence of the EU Member States. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides that the Union shall encourage cooperation between Member States and support and supplement their actions, while fully respecting their responsibility for the content of teaching, organisation of education and vocational training systems, and their national and regional cultural diversity.

In the field of education, training, sport and youth, besides a Directive on education of the children of migrant workers¹ and the judgments of the European Court of Justice on cases related to nondiscrimination between nationals of an EU Member State and other EU nationals, the *acquis* mainly consists of Council Recommendations in a number of areas related to school, vocational, higher and adult education, youth volunteering and mobility, numerous Council Conclusions and Resolutions.

The governance framework for cooperation is set by a **Council Resolution on a European Education Area**, with regular joint reporting of the Commission and the Council. A similar framework is set by a **Council Resolution on the EU Youth Strategy**, also with regular reporting. The frameworks set common objectives, monitor progress through benchmarks and indicators, and the Commission facilitates various exchanges of experiences and peer learning.

The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond 2021-2030 integrates all actions in the fields of education and training at European level. It identifies five strategic priorities:

- Improving quality, equity, inclusion and success for all in education and training;
- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all;
- Enhancing competences and motivation in the education profession;
- Reinforcing European higher education;
- Supporting the green and digital transitions in and through education and training.

The following EU-level targets have been set:

- The share of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15%, by 2030;
- The share of low-achieving eight-graders in computer and information literacy should be less than 15%, by 2030;
- At least 96% of children between 3 years old and the starting age for compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education and care, by 2030;
- The share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 9%, by 2030;
- The share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 45%, by 2030;
- The share of recent graduates from VET benefiting from exposure to work-based learning during their vocational education and training should be at least 60%, by 2025;
- At least 47% of adults aged 25-64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months, by 2025.

¹ OJ L 199, 6/8/1977, p. 32–33.

The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 is a renewed EU policy initiative to support the sustainable and effective adaptation of the education and training systems of EU Member States to the digital age. The Action Plan is a key enabler to realising the vision of achieving a European Education Area by 2025. It sets out two priority areas: fostering the development of a highperforming digital education ecosystem (1) and enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation (2). The Action Plan was endorsed by the Member States in the Council conclusions on digital education in Europe's knowledge societies (2020/C 415/10).

In the area of vocational education and training (VET), the 2020 Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience aims to:

- modernise vocational education and training in the EU, adapting it to a more digital and greener economy;
- ensure that vocational education and training is agile, adapting swiftly to labour market needs and providing quality opportunities for young and adults alike;
- reinforce opportunities for work-based learning and apprenticeships;
- increase the flexibility of vocational education and training, including by encouraging modular and non-formal learning methods;
- boost the quality assurance of vocational education and training and promote Centres of Vocational Excellence.

It also defined three quantitative objectives to be achieved by 2025:

- the share of employed graduates should be at least 82%;
- 60% of recent graduates from vocational education and training benefit from exposure to work-based learning;
- 8% of learners in vocational education and training benefit from a learning mobility abroad.

The enhanced cooperation on vocational education and training, launched in 2002 in Copenhagen, has been driven by series of Ministerial meetings which have defined priorities in a form of Declarations and Communiqués, notably the 2010 Bruges Communiqué, the 2015 Riga Conclusions and most recently the 2020 Osnabrück Declaration. The Declaration complements the Council Recommendation on VET: while the latter provides the long-term strategic framework for EU VET policy, the Osnabrück Declaration defines the concrete actions to be completed both on EU and national level until 2025.

The Declaration outlines four areas of actions:

- Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET
- Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation
- Sustainability – a green link in VET
- European education and training area and International dimension of VET

Common objectives have also been agreed for the EU youth policies and a new **EU Youth Strategy**, based on a reinforced open method of coordination, was adopted for the period 2019-2027². This strategy builds on the need to have a strong cross-sectoral approach.

² Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member

In addition, Member States need to have the legal, administrative and financial framework as well as the necessary implementing capacity in place to ensure sound management, including financial management of all **education, training, youth and sport EU programmes** under indirect management (currently the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps). The Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes are mainly implemented under indirect management, by which the European Commission entrusts the programme implementation tasks to National Agencies. The national authority of a Member State designates the National Agency and bears a responsibility to supervise the work of the National Agencies according to the legal and administrative framework established by the European Commission. An independent audit body will be designated by the National Authority giving assurance on the adequate implementation.

As regards cultural policy, Member States need to uphold the principles enshrined in Article 167 of the TFEU and, in particular, ensure that their international commitments allow for the development and implementation of policies and instruments aiming at preserving and promoting cultural diversity. In accordance with these principles, **the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions**, ratified by the EU (and Moldova), is a major element of the *acquis* in the field of culture.

Following the 2007 European Agenda for Culture, the Commission adopted the **New European Agenda for Culture in 2018** to take into account the evolution of the cultural sector. The New Agenda provides the framework for cooperation on culture at the EU level. It focuses on the positive contribution that culture brings to Europe's society, its economy and international relations. The Agenda also sets out enhanced working methods with Member States, civil society organisations and international partners. Member States define the main topics and working methods for policy collaboration on culture through Work Plans for Culture, which are adopted by the Council of the European Union. Member States define their priorities for cultural policy making at EU level in multi-annual Work Plans adopted in form of conclusions by the Council of the EU.

The current **Council Work Plan for Culture** covering the period 2019-2022 sets out six priorities for European cooperation in cultural policy-making: sustainability in cultural heritage; cohesion and well-being; ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content; gender equality; international cultural relations, culture as a driver for sustainable development.

EU Sport Policy aims to create a European dimension in sport. Priorities for Member States and the Commission are defined in **EU Sport Working Plans**. The current Plan is valid from 2021 to 2024 and addresses action in three priority areas: protect integrity and values in sport; Socio-economic and environmental dimensions of sport and promotion of participation in sport and health-enhancing physical activity. Member States and the Commission cooperate to share good practice and address common challenges based on concrete examples, data and studies. In addition the Erasmus+ Sport Actions support cooperation and partnerships among European stakeholders in the fields such as healthy

States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European

lifestyles, participation in sport, good governance in sport, education in and through sport, social inclusion and anti-discrimination.

Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 (2018/C 456/01)

I. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH

A. Cooperation in the field of policies

Educational system covering all levels: early childhood education and care, school education, vocational education and training (initial and continuous education), higher education, adult education

1. Which authorities are responsible for education and training?

The authorities responsible for education and training according to the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova³ (Title X) are the Government of the Republic of Moldova, the Ministry of Education and Research, the local public administration authorities of the second level and of the ATU Gagauzia, the local public administration authorities of the first level, some ministries such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova: approves the state policies in the education area; ensures the development and approval of the draft legislative acts in the education area and submits them to the Parliament for examination and adoption; adopts normative acts to enforce the legislation in the area of education and to ensure education priority etc.

The Ministry of Education and Research⁴: develops and promotes the state policies in the education and research area; develops draft legislative and normative acts in the education and research area, and exercises the state control over the enforcement of such acts; carries out the management, monitoring and assessment of the national education system, including the research; coordinates the activity of initial and continuing training of the teaching and management staff in education; develops and approves the state educational standards and the National Curriculum, and exercises, through the authorized institutions, the control over their fulfilment; develops the strategic plan of expenditures for the national system of education and research, collaborating with the central and local public administration authorities etc.

The Ministry of Education and Research has the mission to promote and support lifelong learning. Based on the national development plans of actions of the governmental programs and sectoral strategies, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection develop national

³ Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130514&lang=ro#http://lex.justice.md/md/355156/

⁴ Government Decision No. 146/2021 regarding the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Education and Research, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=127622&lang=ro

policies and strategies on the development of human resources, including the qualifications and professional training of adults, which are submitted for approval to the Government.

The local public administration authorities of the second level and of the ATU Gagauzia, within the limits of the competencies set by the legislation: ensure the implementation of the legislation in the education area in the administered territory; manage, monitor, and evaluate the educational institutions whose founders they are; ensure the efficient operation of the network of general education institutions whose founders they are, based on efficiency, efficacy, and performance indicators; contribute to financing and developing the technical-material basis of the educational institutions from the administered territory; ensure adequate activity conditions for the teaching staff and pupils; support and encourage the activity of continuing professional training of teaching staff etc.

The local public administration authorities of the first level, within the limits of their competencies set by the law: contribute to ensuring the observance of the legislation in the education area in the administered territory; manage, monitor, and evaluate the educational institutions whose founders they are; ensure the collaboration of the educational institutions whose founders they are; contribute to financing and development of the material basis of the educational institutions from the administered territory; ensure adequate activity conditions for the teaching staff and pupils in the educational institutions whose founders they are and the maintenance conditions for children etc.

The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (NAQAER) is responsible for external evaluation of higher education institutions and programs, VET⁵ education programs, as well as the accreditation of institutions.

2. Please describe the structure of the educational and training system, including the role of private educational provision, and the level of public control.

The educational system of the Republic of Moldova includes preschool, primary, secondary, VET and higher education. Its basic structure, characteristics and mechanisms of transition from level to level are set up by the Education Code.

Education in the Republic of Moldova is structured by levels and cycles, in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-2011):

- **level 0** – early education:
 - pre-primary education;

⁵ <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/evaluari-externe> -external evaluations

- preschool education;
- **level 1** – primary education;
- **level 2** – lower secondary education, cycle I: gymnasium education;
- **level 3:**
 - upper secondary education, cycle II: lyceum education
 - secondary technical and vocational education and training;
- **level 4** – post-secondary technical and vocational education and training;
- **level 5** – post-secondary non-tertiary technical and vocational education and training;
- **level 6** – higher education, cycle I: bachelor’s degree;
- **level 7** – higher education, cycle II: master’s degree;
- **level 8** – higher education, cycle III: doctoral degree;
- **Adult education.**

In accordance with the education structure, educational institutions are classified as follows:

- pre-primary education institution – nursery, community centre for early education;
- preschool education institution– kindergarten, community centre for early education;
- primary education institution – primary school;
- secondary education institution, cycle I – gymnasium;
- secondary education institution, cycle II – lyceum;
- general education institution with combined programs – educational complex (primary school-kindergarten, gymnasium-kindergarten);
- institution of secondary technical and vocational education and training - vocational school;
- institution of post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary technical and vocational education and training – college;
- institution of technical and vocational education and training with combined programs – centre of excellence;
- secondary vocational education institution for arts, sport etc. – school;
- higher education institution – university, academy of studies, institute, high school, school of higher studies and others;
- specialized education institution for continuous training – institute;

- institution of extra-school education – school (of arts, theatre, etc.), creation centre, sport club;
- institution of special education – special school and auxiliary school.

Note: educational institutions which provide programs of study at several levels are classified according to the highest educational level provided.

Depending on the type of ownership, the educational institutions are classified as follows:

- public educational institutions ;
- private educational institutions.

Early childhood education is organised according to state educational standards.

The main goal of early education is the multilateral development of the child and preparation for integration in school.

Early education takes place in various types of institutions: nurseries, kindergartens and community centres and may be organised in residential institutions for children who are orphaned or left without parental care or in special educational institutions for children with chronic diseases.

Early education includes two cycles:

- pre-school education - pre-school groups, for children aged 0 to 2 years, which takes place in the family or, on request, can be organised in appropriate institutions;
- pre-school education - pre-school groups for children from 2 to 6 (7) years of age, including preparatory groups, in which, on request, all children are enrolled on a compulsory basis according to the corresponding school district.

Primary education is organised as a full-time education in grades I-IV.

The main aim is to develop the child as a free and creative personality, thus ensuring the development of the skills necessary for further studies in secondary education.

For children with learning difficulties caused by certain types of disabilities, primary education may be organised at distance or at home, based on regulatory documents approved by the Ministry.

All children are compulsorily enrolled in first grade according to the corresponding school district, without competitive examinations.

Secondary education is organised as a full-time education in grades V-IX.

The main purpose is to train the child as a free and creative personality, thus ensuring the development of the necessary skills in students, advising and guiding them in determining their individual path for further studies in secondary, secondary technical-vocational, or post-secondary technical vocational education.

Enrolment in secondary school is compulsory for all pupils according to the corresponding school district, without competitive examinations. For children with learning difficulties due to disabilities, secondary education may be organised at distance or at home, based on regulatory documents approved by the Ministry.

High school education is organised in high schools as full-time education in grades X-XII or part-time education in grades X-XIII.

The main aim is to develop the necessary competencies in pupils as defined by the National Curriculum and to advise them in choosing their individual educational or vocational pathway for further studies in higher education or post-secondary non-tertiary technical vocational education, according to potential, vocation, and performance.

Admission of students to secondary education is by competitive examination, based on the methodology approved by the Ministry.

Special education is organised in general education institutions, special education institutions, or through home education. The statute ensures the integration or inclusion of children and pupils with special educational needs in the education system through various characteristic approaches.

Special education for children and pupils with special educational needs is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the National Curriculum, the Framework Education Plans approved by the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Individual Education Plans.

Extra-curricular education is organised according to the interests and choices of children and young people and its main aim is to develop the cognitive, affective, and active potential of children and young people, to respond to their interests and choices for leisure time. It is carried out in general education institutions, public and private out-of-school education institutions, outside the curriculum, through activities that complement the educational process and in the form of specific educational activities.

Educational alternatives may be organised on request, with public or private status, to provide the right to differentiated education based on educational pluralism. They are established with the approval of the Ministry, by the legislation in force.

Accredited private educational institutions are part of the national education system and operate in accordance with the provisions of the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014⁶.

Assessment in general education is carried out:

- at the national level - by the Ministry of Education and Research and other authorized structures;
- at the local level - by the local education body of the second level, local public administration and of the ATU Gagauzia;
- at the institutional level - by the management of educational institutions.

The evaluation of the activity of general education institutions is carried out by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research based on quality standards approved by the Ministry of Education and Research, at the request of the head of the institution, as well as at the initiative of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research or of the local specialized educational body. The evaluation report of the general educational institution is published on the official website of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research, the local education authority, and the educational institution.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

According to the provisions of the Education Code (Title IV, chapter II, Art. 61)⁷ the Moldovan VET system has the following structure:

- Professional schools provide only secondary vocational technical education: ISCED 3;⁸
- Colleges provide post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary technical and vocational education and training: ISCED 4, 5;⁹

⁶ Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130514&lang=ro#

⁷ Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130514&lang=ro#

⁸ Ministerial Order no.840/2015 on the approval of the Regulation - framework for organization and operation of secondary technical vocational education institutions available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=113279&lang=ro

⁹ Ministerial Order no.550/2015 on the approval of the Regulation - framework for organization and operation of post-secondary technical vocational education institutions and non-tertiary postsecondary available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=113268&lang=ro

- Centres of excellence can provide combined programs: secondary vocational technical education; post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary vocational technical education: ISCED 3,4,5;¹⁰
- According to the current regulatory framework, private VET institutions are required to apply in the process of providing educational services the same provisions as public institutions in the following areas: accreditation and quality assessment¹¹, the educational process in all its complexity at all stages: (Framework Regulations organization and functioning of secondary, post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary technical vocational education institutions); study,¹² documents,¹³ etc. Therefore, public control is carried out through the mechanisms institutionalized by the Ministry of Education and Research and the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (NAQAER).

Higher education

Higher education in the Republic of Moldova is divided in three cycles:

- cycle I – Bachelor’s degree (ISCED level 6);
- cycle II – Master’s degree (ISCED level 7);
- cycle III – doctoral degree (ISCED level 8).

The higher education shall be organised in two fields: academic and advanced professional.

The research, development and innovation activities shall be carried out within the doctoral and postdoctoral training.

Education is a national priority and through its education policy, the state ensures the fundamental right to education for everyone. The Ministry of Education and Research develops and promotes state policies in the field of higher education and research. Both public and private higher education institutions operate under the same legal framework, in accordance with the principles of public accountability.

¹⁰Ministerial Order no.1158/2015 on the approval of the Regulation - framework for organization and operation of the Centre of Excellence available in Romanian at:
<https://www.legis.md/cautare/downloadpdf/90382>

¹¹ Government Decision no.616/2016 for the approval of the Methodology of the external quality evaluation in order to authorize provisional operation and accreditation of study programs and vocational technical institutions, higher education and continuous training available in Romanian at:
https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130031&lang=ro#

¹² Ministerial Order no.1214/2015 on the approval of the supplements at the study documents in Vocational and Training Education available in Romanian at:
https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ome_nr_1204_din_16.12.2015_cu_modificarile_si_completarile_ulterioare.pdf

¹³Ministerial Order no.1203/2015 on the approval of the format/model of study document Vocational and Training Education available in Romanian at:
https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=90492&lang=ro

Lifelong Learning

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Code (Title VII, Chapter I, Art. 123,124), lifelong learning is carried out in contexts of formal, non-formal and informal education.

1. The lifelong learning in the formal education context may be carried out in the following institutions or organizations:
 - General education, technical vocational and higher education institutions;
 - Public and private institutions or organizations providing professional training and education, provisionally authorized or accredited;
 - Enterprises or organizations providing provisionally authorized or accredited training programs to their own employees.

2. The lifelong learning in the non-formal education context is carried out in the following institutions or organizations:
 - Institutions and organizations provided in paragraph (1);
 - Extra-school institutions;
 - Centres for children's care and protection;
 - Enterprises;
 - Cultural institutions;
 - Professional, cultural, and trade-union associations;
 - Non-governmental organizations;
 - Other organizations.

3. The lifelong learning in the informal education context is carried out through activities organised in the family, at the workplace, in the community, within social networks, volunteering activities, sport, cultural or other activities of the same kind, which leads to building of competences and skills.

The certification of knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal and informal education contexts is realised by competent structures in this respect, based on a regulation approved by the Ministry of Education and Research.

The continuous professional training of adults, in the context of lifelong learning, depending on the complexity, is achieved through:

- Thematic courses and training/specialization programs – up to 90 hours;

- Short-term courses and programs of improvement/specialization – from 90 hours to 300 hours;
- Courses and programs of multidisciplinary training/specialization – from 300 hours to 600 hours;
- Additional qualification courses and programs for ISCED levels 3, 4, 5, corresponding to the same general field of study or training – from 540 hours to 900 hours;
- Additional qualification courses and programs for ISCED level 6, corresponding to the same general field of study or training – from 900 hours to 1800 hours;
- Training courses and programs for ISCED levels 3, 4, 5, corresponding to another general field of study or training – from 900 hours to 1800 hours;
- Training courses and professional retraining programs for ISCED level 6 corresponding to another general field of study or training – from 1800 hours to 2700 hours.

In lifelong learning, 840 adults continuing education programs are provisionally authorized/accredited and provided by 13 higher education institutions, 4 technical vocational education institutions, 4 continuing education institutions and NGOs, 78 economic agents with the right to provide continuing vocational training services for adults.

All institutions which provide continuing vocational training services are required to follow the provisional authorization/accreditation procedure in order to provide continuing vocational training courses for adults. The decision on the authorization of provisional operation, accreditation, non-accreditation or withdrawal of the right to organise a continuing professional training program shall be adopted by the Ministry of Education and Research based on the results of the evaluation carried out by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research. Therefore, public control is carried out through institutionalized mechanisms by the Ministry of Education and Research, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (NAQAER).

3. Statistics: Please provide data on pupils/students and teachers/trainers at the different levels and sectors of the educational system including Early Childhood Education and Care, school education, VET, higher education and adult learning. Provide statistics on public and, if possible, private resources allocated to education at national level (investment in education as a share of GDP and as a share of public expenditure).

In the academic year 2021/2022, primary and secondary education is organised in 1231 institutions, including 99 primary schools, 786 gymnasiums, 338 high schools, and 8 schools for children with physical or intellectual disabilities. Out of

the total number of 1231 institutions, 98.1% belong to the public sector; 74.3% of the institutions operate in rural areas¹⁴.

In the academic year 2021/2022, general primary and secondary education involves 26.5 thousand people, including 3.4 thousand people - management staff (12.8%) and 23.1 thousand people teachers (87.2%).

Table 1. Primary and general secondary education institutions by type and year of study

Total	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of institutions	1.243	1.246	1.255	1.241	1.231
Day education	<i>1.241</i>	<i>1.244</i>	<i>1.253</i>	<i>1.239</i>	<i>1.229</i>
Primary schools	102	103	104	106	99
Secondary schools	775	780	783	787	786
High schools	350	348	353	336	336
Special institutions and auxiliary schools	14	13	13	10	8
Evening education (high schools)	2	2	2	2	2
Number of pupils	335.621	334.159	333.144	334.375	336.713
Day education	<i>334.443</i>	<i>333.118</i>	<i>332.133</i>	<i>333.356</i>	<i>335.721</i>
Primary schools	10.881	10.859	11.045	11.243	11.426
Secondary schools	132.056	129.189	125.364	124.470	122.584
High schools	190.705	192.316	195.033	197.038	201.125
Special institutions and auxiliary schools	749	709	627	541	551
Classes in addition to colleges	52	45	64	64	35
Evening education (high schools)	<i>1.178</i>	<i>1.041</i>	<i>1.011</i>	<i>1.019</i>	<i>992</i>

In 2021, early education was organised in 1483 institutions, of which 811 units with the status of nursery-kindergarten, 566 kindergartens, 88 schools-kindergartens, 16 community centers, and 2 crèches.

¹⁴ National Bureau of Statistics, available in English at: <https://statistica.gov.md/category.php?l=en&idc=116&>

Table 2. Early education institutions by type

Total	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Early education institutions	1.458	1.484	1.486	1.485	1.483
Kindergartens	529	541	543	568	566
Crèches kindergartens	833	835	829	808	811
Nurseries	2	2	2	2	2
Schools kindergartens	73	83	89	90	88
Community centers	21	23	23	17	16
Children	149.216	149.513	149.702	134.158	137.113
Kindergartens	33.362	33.701	33.412	30.797	31.467
Crèches kindergartens	111.344	110.631	110.951	98.504	100.909
Nurseries	147	141	149	106	95
Schools kindergartens	3.711	4.342	4.469	4.248	4.189
Community centres	652	698	721	503	453

Out of the total number of 1483 early education institutions, 1468 institutions (99.0%) belong to the public sector, including 337 units operated in urban areas and 1131 units - in rural areas. There are 15 private educational institutions and all of them operate in urban areas.

In 2021, 31.3 thousand people were employed in teaching and non-teaching activities in early education institutions, including 12.8 thousand teachers and managers (41.0%). Out of 12.8 thousand teachers and managers, 10.3 thousand (80.4%) work as educators and methodologists.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

In the 2021/22 academic year, the number of students in VET education was 46.0 thousand people (2.5% more compared to the previous year of study), including 12.7 thousand students - in Centres of Excellence, 19.4 thousand students - in Colleges and 13.9 thousand people - in Professional Schools¹⁵.

¹⁵ National Bureau of Statistics, available in Romanian at:
<https://statistica.gov.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=7213>

The table below provides information on the dynamics of the number of students for the last 4 years:

Table 3. The number of students within the VET system

Study year	Total number of VET students, in thousands	The total number of VET students in Secondary VET	The number of students enrolled in Secondary VET	Number of graduates in Secondary VET	The total number of VET students in Post-Secondary VET	The number of students enrolled in Post-Secondary VET	Number of graduates in Post-Secondary VET
2021-2022	46,0	15,0	7,1	-	31,0	9,3	-
2020-2021	44,9	15,1	7,3	5,6	29,8	8,7	6,3
2019-2020	43,6	14,7	7,2	5,7	28,9	8,3	6,6
2018-2019	44,3	15,3	7,7	7,1	29,0	8,4	7,0

The number of teachers in the VET system for the last 3 years has decreased. Thus, if the educational and training activity in the VET system was provided by 4.1 thousand teachers in the 2018-2019 academic year, 3.9 thousand in 2019-2020, then in 2020-2021 and current academic year this activity has been provided by 3.8 thousand teachers.

Higher education

In the last 5 years the network of higher education institutions has decreased from 29 to 24 institutions in 2021-2022: 16 public institutions and 8 private institutions, out of which 20 institutions are based in Chisinau municipality, and 1 unit in each of the following cities: Balti, Cahul, Comrat and Taraclia.

Students. At the same time the number of students decreased from 65543 in 2017-2018 to 59700 in 2021-2022, of which, at Bachelor - 48.1 thousand, at Master - 11.6 thousand.

Graduates. The number of graduates, respectively, decreased from 18,142 (2018) to 14,084 (2021). In 2021/22, 50.2 thousand students are enrolled in public higher education institutions, 1.4% more than in 2020/21, representing 84.1% of all students. More than half of the students in public institutions study on a contract basis (56.6%).

Scientific and teaching staff. In the 2021/22 academic year, 4.0 thousand people (core staff) are working in higher education institutions, 2.4% less than in the previous academic year. Of the total number of staff, 2.4 thousand hold a scientific degree (or 60%). During 2021, more than 109 scientific and teaching titles were conferred and confirmed (99 associate professors and 10 university professors).

Table 4. Higher education institutions

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Institutions	31	30	29	29	27	24	24
Public	19	19	19	19	18	16	16
Private	12	11	10	10	9	8	8
Students	81,669	74,726	65,543	60,608	56,840	59,033	59,647
Public	66,938	62,108	55,341	50,620	47,745	49,549	50,197
Private	14,731	12,618	10,202	9,988	9,095	9,484	9,450

Of the total number of students, 63.0% are aged between 19-23 years (the age for tertiary education), a decrease of 0.7 p.p. compared to the 2020/21 academic year. At the same time, the number of students aged 30 and over is increasing (from 15.1% in 2020/21 to 16.7%).

Of the total number of students enrolled in higher education, 73.1% were enrolled in bachelor's degree programmes (-0.2 p.p. compared to 2020/21), 19.5% - master degree programmes and 7.4% - integrated degree programmes (+0.2 p.p. compared to 2020/21).

**Table 5. Students in higher education by degree programmes,
2020/21-2021/22**

	2020/21				2021/22			
	Total students	of which in institutions			Total students	of which in institutions		
		public		private		public		private
		total	on a contractual basis			total	on a contractual basis	
Total	59,033	49,549	27,814	9,484	59,647	50,197	28,437	9,450
Undergraduate studies (1st cycle)	43,257	35,347	22,368	7,910	43,621	35,822	22,765	7,799
Master's degree (2nd cycle)	11,504	9,930	3,991	1,574	11,594	9,943	3,997	1,651
Integrated higher education	4,272	4,272	1,455	–	4,432	4,432	1,675	–

To ensure the **continuous professional development** of teachers, due to the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Education and Research, about 22 million lei were allocated from the state budget for teacher training courses.

Thus, 18,000 teachers in 2017-2018, 6,900 teachers in 2019, and 5,866 teachers in 2020 benefited from free continuing education training.

According to Art. 213, p. (3) of the Labour Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 154/2003 at least 2% of the salary fund of the unit (institution/organization) is intended for the continuous professional training of employees, and the employer is obliged to create the necessary conditions and to favour the professional and technical training of employees following training in production, which is perfected or studied in educational institutions, without leaving the activity.

In 2020, approximately 17,887 teachers and managers developed their professional skills by participating in various training courses, and in 2021 about 15,442 teachers and managers.

To ensure the employment of adults, the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) with the National Employment Agency contributed to the professional training of adults by delegating about 6,570 citizens to various adult training courses, financed from the state budget, as follows: 2017 – 1,911 citizens, 2018 – 2,214 citizens, 2019 - 868 citizens, 2020 - 691 citizens, 2021 - 886 citizens.

Table 6. Public resources, including private resources allocated to education at national level (investment in education as a share of GDP and as a share of public expenditure)¹⁶

	2018	2019	2020	2021 approved	2022 approved
Total expenses for Education, million, lei	10462,1	12121,2	12583,1	13526,3	14788,8
% from GDP	5,4	5,8	6,1	6,1	5,8
% from NPB (national public budget)	17,6	18,4	17,2	16,6	15,4

4. Eco-system: Please describe the extent of cooperation by educational and training institutions with employers and businesses.

General education

In general education, according to the Framework Plan at all levels of primary, secondary and high school, economic and entrepreneurship education is present both through compulsory school subjects and optional subjects. Following the curricular reform of 2018-2019 general education is organised on the basis of competencies - key/transversal and transdisciplinary for each school stage, one of which is the formation of entrepreneurial skills. Thus, the organization of the educational process in the subjects of study is organised through the formation of subject-specific competencies in correlation with the system of key competencies. The compulsory subject Personal Development is structured into 5 modules and is based on a module Career Design and Entrepreneurship Development which focuses on understanding professions from a labour market perspective, career planning and career decision making, developing entrepreneurship as a career option, etc. On the optional component, students have the possibility to select for study the subjects of Economic and Entrepreneurship Education (grades I-XII) and Social and Financial Education (grades V-IX), which do not aim to train economists in school, but to educate the young generation to improve the quality of their lives. Both subjects are aimed at developing students' skills in designing

¹⁶ <https://mf.gov.md/ro/content/catalogul-de-date-deschise-al-mf-pentru-anul-2021>
<https://mf.gov.md/ro/buget/transparen%C8%9Ba-bugetar%C4%83/bugetul-pentru-cet%C4%83%C8%9Beni>

and promoting projects, with the goal of developing the fields of entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as financial planning skills.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Cooperation between the VET system and the labour market is taking place on several levels:

1. Institutional level. The VET institutions send annually to the Ministry the number of places that they have capacity to provide training for in different professions for the next academic year. Also, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), in partnership with the National Employment Agency and Labour Market Observatory, as a part of the Agency send the information regarding labour market requirements to the MER. The MER takes the information from MLSP into consideration and develops the Government Decision on the plans (State Order) which establishes the number of places for different professions. These provisions are mentioned in the Government Decision on the State Order for the academic year 2021-2022.¹⁷ This document takes the demands of the labour market, which come directly from companies, into account. The official approval takes place only after consulting in depth with the interested actors: trade unions, employers' associations, professional or business associations, the Moldovan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, and Sectoral Committees. The financing required to implement the State Order is provided by the Ministry of Finance.

2. Sectoral level. An important dimension is related to the cooperation with the Sectoral Committees, established through the Law No. 244/2017 on Sectoral Committees for vocational training.¹⁸ According to this Law, the Sectoral Committees are responsible for the elaboration and development of social partnerships in the field of vocational training within the economic sectors, in order to support vocational education, initial education and continuous training, and to correlate vocational education and training of employers and employees with the requirements of the labour market. Additionally, the Sectoral Committees are responsible for the elaboration and implementation of an informational and analytical support system for vocational education and training, based on the needs of the labour market.

Since the creation of these entities, Occupational Standards have been developed and approved, professional qualifications have been validated, curricula have been approved and other interventions in the field of VET system have been carried out.

Six Sectoral Committees were established in the fields of: Construction; Agriculture and Food; Light Industry; Trade, Hotels and Restaurants; Financial

¹⁷ The Government Decision no.98/2021 on the state order for the academic year 2021-2022 available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=126672&lang=ro

¹⁸ Law no. 244/2017 on Sectoral Committees for vocational training available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=120079&lang=ro#

Intermediation and Insurance, Real Estate transactions; Water Distribution, Sanitation, Waste Management, Decontamination Activities.

3. The level of VET institutions. An important aspect in the activity of the VET institutions is the cooperation with the economic environment: elaboration of the curricula depending on the requests of the companies and promotion of companies in the Managing Boards of VET institutions.

Representatives of the labour market are present in the examination commissions. The most important form of cooperation between the labour market and the educational institutions are student internships.

The following normative acts refer to student internships: MER Order No. 233 of March 25, 2016, on the approval of the regulation on internships in secondary technical vocational education, as well as MER Order No. 1086 of December 29, 2016, on the approval of the regulation on the organization and conduct of internships in post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary technical vocational education.

According to the Ministry's estimates, over 50% of students are employed by companies where they have completed the practical internship in the last year of study.

4. The development of Dual VET. According to the legal framework (The Law on Dual VET¹⁹ was approved by the Parliament on 21st of April 2022) the dual education is carried out within a VET institution and a company, based on the Cooperation Agreement. Thus, for Secondary VET, the training time is divided in relation of 20-30% to the normative duration of the program in the VET institution and 70-80% within the company, and for the Post-secondary VET the training time is 50% to 50% shared.

The implementation of dual VET in the Republic of Moldova started in 2014 at the initiative of one company and one professional school. During the following years, the dual VET system has extended gradually. As of today, it involves 28 VET institutions, and more than 90 businesses.

The table below provides information on the dynamics of the number of students for the last 5 years.

¹⁹ Law on Dual VET no.110/221, available in Romanian at: <https://www.parlament.md/ProcesulLegislativ/Proiectedeactelegislative/tabid/61/LegislativId/5916/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

Table 7

Study year	Total number of Dual VET students
2021-2022	1158
2020-2021	1228
2019-2020	1087
2018-2019	1294
2017-2018	661

Higher education

Higher education institutions collaborate with the business sector to train highly qualified professionals. The partnership relations between the higher education institutions and businesses are implemented through: establishing the roles, interdependencies, and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the professional training and insertion process; establishing a facilitating and cooperating framework for interaction between the higher education system and the labour market; establishing commercial companies to perform economic activities related exclusively to the purposes specified in the Institutional and Strategic Development Plan; implementing public-private partnerships.

The provision of services by the higher education institutions and the business environment, as well as benefiting from these services, are tackled on the basis of equality and equity.

The involvement of businesses in the process of training the workforce is achieved through various specific forms: providing the basis for the organization of internships for students; involving employers in the design of programmes of study, the development of university curricula, participation in the committees for the completion of bachelor's and master's degrees; participation of practitioners in the committees of experts responsible for the development of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classification of occupations and professional standards; involvement of the highly qualified representatives from the business environment in monitoring and evaluation of the quality in higher education; gender mainstreaming in all relevant activities; providing opportunities for the youth to reconcile studies and family responsibilities; other activities and legal actions.

The monitoring of graduates' employment on the labour market is carried out by the higher education institutions, in collaboration with the employers.

In the segment of **continuing vocational training for adults**, cooperation between training systems is ensured on several levels:

- **Interinstitutional level:** The MER in collaboration with the National Agency for Employment (NAE) and the Local Specialized Bodies in the field of education, are developing adult education programs. The Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research, ensure accreditation of the programs. The database of institutions providing adult education services under accredited programs is available on the MER website.

- **Institutional level:** The Ministry of Education and Research distributes the aforementioned database to educational institutions, NAE and Economic Agents in order to ensure the continuous professional training of adults.

5. Stabilisation of reforms: What are the main challenges identified for the education and training systems in the country? What are the main objectives and the timetable for implementation of the most recent reforms efforts of the education and training systems in the country? What are the main obstacles/difficulties encountered or foreseen?

General education

Reforms in the education system are based on a systemic approach and their stability is of major importance for strengthening the quality of education and the efficient functioning of the whole education system. At the same time, this process is not isolated from the national and international context, which largely determines the conceptual orientations of the reforms.

The gradual implementation of the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014 in accordance with the Government Action Plans²⁰ and the Education Development Strategy for 2014-2020 "Education-2020", approved by Government Decision No. 944/2014²¹ determined the national context for the promotion of reforms and policy documents in education.

The main challenges:

- Curriculum: high degree of complexity of curricular contents, a low level of realization of interdisciplinary connections, a low level of synchronization between types of assessment (formative/current and summative/final), etc.;

²⁰ Plans and Activity Reports of the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova, available in Romanian at: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/planuri-si-rapoarte-de-activitate>

²¹ Education Development Strategy for 2014-2020 "Education-2020", available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=55069&lang=ro

- Learning materials: high degree of theorization of information/subject matter, low level of tasks that would stimulate active and individualized learning, critical thinking, etc.;
- Assessment of school results: the need to assess skills, not just knowledge, the need to diversify forms, methods, and procedures (traditional and modern) in assessing pupils' results, etc.;
- In-service teacher training : the need to clearly identify the training needs of teachers, the development of mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of in-service training, low level of self-training, etc.;
- School infrastructure: the inadequacy of some schools to meet infrastructure requirements, the need to improve learning conditions in schools, equipment for school cabins, etc.

Main reform objectives:

- To create a more flexible, better-equipped education system to provide education that meets the requirements of a modern economy;
- To improve the quality of curriculum content and bring it into line with the development needs of the child/pupil and society;
- To align the structure of school textbooks with curricular content;
- To improve the system for assessing pupils' school results;
- To increase the effectiveness of the in-service teacher training process;
- To improve the school infrastructure, equipping educational institutions with ICT and laboratory equipment for school subjects.

Reform efforts in the general education system, period 2017-2022:²²

In Early Education, the following education policy documents are being developed, approved, and implemented:

- Early Education Reference Framework in the Republic of Moldova;
- Standards for learning and development of children from birth to age 7;
- Curriculum for early education;
- Early Education Curriculum Implementation Guide.

On the dimension of primary, secondary, and high school education, the following educational policy documents are being developed, approved and implemented:

- National Curriculum Framework;
- National Curriculum for Primary Education;

²² Website of the Ministry of Education and Research, General Education section, available in Romanian at: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/invatamint-general>

- 19 subject curricula in secondary education;
- 16 disciplinary curricula in secondary education;
- Guidelines for the implementation of the disciplinary curricula in secondary education;
- Methodology on criteria assessment by descriptors in primary education, grades I-IV;
- Methodology on criteria evaluation through descriptors in the subjects: Music Education, Art Education, Technology Education, Physical Education, Education for Society, and Personal Development.

On the dimension of school textbooks:

- 93 titles (about 46% of all textbooks) were evaluated. Out of the 93 evaluated, 48 titles (about 52%) were approved and distributed to primary, secondary, and high schools.
- The remaining textbook titles will be published during the period 2022-2024.

Main obstacles/difficulties:

- Permanent shortage of qualified staff (teachers, nurses, and care staff);
- Inappropriate school infrastructure to child-friendly standards;
- the continuous decrease in the number of pupils and the highlighted migration phenomenon;
- The enrolment of a small number of young specialists in the education system, especially in rural areas;
- The increasing number of vacancies in pre-school, primary, secondary, and high school education;
- The diminishing role of the family in children's education;
- The deep economic crisis and underfunding of the education system.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

In the last decade, based on the Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy 2013-2020 approved by the Government Decision No. 97/2013, the VET reform implementation was focused on the following objectives:

- Restructure the VET system into two levels – secondary vocational education and post-secondary VET education, and reconfigure the network of institutions;
- Ensure that vocational training is based on competencies and adjusted to the labour market requirements, so that employment increases by 10%, from 51% in 2012, for graduates from the secondary vocational

education, and from 50% in 2012 for graduates from the post-secondary vocational education;

- Create and implement the quality assurance system in order to have a functional entity for the assessment and accreditation of these institutions by 2017; scientific, curricular and methodological provision of the VET, so that 100% of curricula are adjusted to the National Qualifications Framework by 2020;
- Increase the quality of the VET teaching staff, including upgrading the initial and continuing professional development of VET teaching staff and improving the motivation of these, so that, by 2020, the entire teaching staff is trained according to the National Qualifications Framework;
- Increase attractiveness and access to the VET, so that by 2020 the number of students increases by 10%.

In the context of the analysis regarding the degree of implementation of the document, the basic conclusion is that around 70% of the provisions of the Strategy have been implemented. However, the VET system faces a series of big challenges that have to be solved in the next strategic period.

According to the provisions of the draft of the new Strategy Education 2030 which has to be approved in the current year (2022), among the major challenges of the whole education system there are:

- Insufficient connection of education to the requirements of the labour market, the educational institution not yet offering all the relevant qualifications for the economic context of the Republic of Moldova, as well as a number of graduates that are only partially correlated with these needs;
- Significant decline in the school population, combined with increasing problems related to the access to education and a negative trend in the evolution of school participation indicators and learning outcomes (in national and international tests) - especially for children / pupils / students from vulnerable backgrounds, but also a low motivation trend for studies in VET and Higher Education;
- Limited progress in promoting school inclusion (pupils and students), especially for children/pupils/students with disabilities and/or special educational needs and of children/pupils/students from socio-economically disadvantaged families and pupils belonging to national minorities.

The specific objectives and actions will be developed in the Implementation Program of the Strategy. Based on the current challenges in VET system, the objectives of the Ministry of Education and Research will be oriented on the following components: increasing the connection of education to the requirements of the labour market (development of Dual VET, work based learning approach);

the capacity building of the VET institutions, including Centres of Excellence; curricular and methodological support for VET in accordance with the National Qualification Framework (focus on the development of textbooks; innovative teaching and evaluation methods, etc.); increase of attractiveness and facilitate access of VET system capacity building of the teaching staff (teacher training); the digitalisation process of the VET system; modernizing the VET institutions infrastructure.

Higher education

In the years after the declaration of independence of the Republic of Moldova, national higher education has undergone a profound process of change, both quantitative and qualitative changes in terms of structure and content. The most important reforms in higher education took place with the declaration of the intention to include higher education in the Republic of Moldova in the United European Area, in accordance with the Bologna Declaration. For the Republic of Moldova, the signing of the Bologna Declaration (May 2005) constituted a free assumption of responsibilities and active involvement in the process of reform/modernization of higher education with a view to European convergence.

Vision:

Focusing efforts for the Republic of Moldova to join the European Union with competitive higher education institutions, structured on 3 pillars:

- Improving participation in higher education;
- Flexible, relevant and high quality programmes;
- Strategic engagement with the economic sector.

In 2022, it is planned to approve the development of institutional strategies for attracting students to higher education, to provide financial incentives to ensure student attraction and retention, and to encourage higher education institutions to achieve gender balance in the number of students in each field of study.

Ongoing reforms:

- Implementation of the new higher education funding agreement financially supported by the World Bank, implementation of an E-admissions system;
- Implementation and refinement of the new per student funding formula in state higher education;
- Improving the quality and relevance of higher education programs in line with labour market needs;

- Develop qualification standards for international compatibility and comparability of qualifications and degrees.

Main objectives:

- Promoting research as a tool for advanced training and a vector for supporting performance and quality in higher education;
- Modernisation of the university curriculum in line with new curricular trends and concepts: cross-curricular focus, competence focus, learner focus.
- Development of the National Qualifications Framework and involvement of the business environment in the training of highly qualified specialists;
- Strengthening and modernizing the capacity of higher education institutions offering teacher training programmes through the implementation of genuine university autonomy;
- Modernising the system of career advancement of academics based on professional and research performance;
- Promotion of a culture of quality in higher education.

General challenges: massive youth migration, economic crisis, oversized education system, underfunding of universities, COVID crisis, impoverished population, etc.

The main obstacles/difficulties: in higher education, the accreditation process of at least one cycle of programmes is not completed (90% of bachelor, 5% of master)

- There are problems with the recognition of academic degrees due to non-accreditation of study programmes and institutions.
- The network of higher education institutions remains oversized, especially those with a pedagogical profile.
- The training of specialists for schools in rural areas remains problematic.

6. Governance and financing: Please describe arrangements for the governance and financing of education and training, giving details about the degree of financial and administrative autonomy of establishments and about stakeholder participation. Please address, in particular, the role of the social and labour market partners in various levels and sectors of education.

6.1. Governance

Primary and secondary education

According to the Framework Regulation on the Functioning of the Board of Governors of the Educational Institution,²³ the Board of Governors acts as the governing body of the educational institution with a decision-making role in administrative matters.

According to its area of competence, the Board of Directors participates in the governance process of the educational institution in the following ways: participates in the competition committee for the appointment and evaluation of the director and deputy directors of the educational institution; determines the development directions of the educational institution, approves the school component of the framework plan for the educational institution; engages with the community by collecting feedback on the institution's services and development priorities. In the area of financial administration: organises public hearings concerning the execution of the budget for the previous year and the approval of the budget for the budget year following the school year in which the draft is presented, as well as in other cases, participates in the drafting of the budget, ensuring the transparency of the process by organizing public hearings, and approves the budget of the educational institution and its amendments, manages financial resources from sources other than the budget, ensuring transparency and fairness in their use.

Monitoring the implementation of the Methodology of financing on the basis of standard cost per pupil is carried out at the central level by the Ministry of Education and Research jointly with the Ministry of Finance, and at the local level - by the education directorates jointly with the finance directorates.

Higher education

The higher education management is performed at two levels: at the national level by the Ministry of Education and Research, and at the institutional level – by the management and administrative entities of the higher education institution.

The system of management bodies in the higher education institutions encompasses the Senate, the Strategic and Institutional Development Council, Scientific Council, Faculty Council, Administration Council and Rector of the institution.

The higher education institution is administered by the rector, assisted by pro-rectors, with the support of the Administration Board.

The rector is the budget executor of the higher education institution.

²³ Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 269/2020 on the approval of the Framework Regulation on the functioning of the board of directors of the general education institution, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=120901&lang=ro

The rector is elected by the General Assembly of teaching and research staff and by student representatives in the Senate and the faculty councils, voted by the majority of members.

According to the provisions of the Education Code, the state guarantees the financing of higher education institutions for the entire duration of the studies in accordance with the admission plan (state order), approved annually by the Government.

The primary source of financing of the public education system is the state budget allocations for higher education institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Research, as well as other allocations from the state and administrative-territorial units for education.

The budgetary financing of higher education is done through standard financing: standard cost per student and adjustment coefficient, which is implemented on the basis of performance indicators in research, knowledge transfer, teaching and learning. In accordance with the provisions of the Methodology for budgetary funding of higher education institutions, approved by Government Decision 343/2020, the financial resources provided for the State Order are distributed in accordance with the three types of funding provided for in Art. 145 of the Education Code No. 152/2014; standard funding, compensatory funding, complementary funding.

The higher education institutions may accumulate and use, according to the law, their own revenues deriving from the fees paid by interested individuals and legal entities, including those from abroad, for training, professional development on contract basis.²⁴

6.2. Financing

Primary and secondary education

In the Republic of Moldova, public primary and general secondary schools under the second level of local public authorities are self-financing, using the Methodology of financing on the basis of standard cost per pupil²⁵. The head of the educational institution is the main budget executor, empowered with the right to make expenditures from the budget within the approved allocations. Educational institutions have the following powers and responsibilities:

- Prepare and submit budget proposals;

²⁴ Government Decision No. 343/2020 on the approval of the Methodology for budgetary financing of public higher education institutions, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=121812&lang=ro

²⁵ Government Decision No. 868/2014 on the financing on a standard cost basis per student of primary and secondary general education institutions subordinated to the local public authorities of the second level, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=118772&lang=ro#

- Set budget allocation limits according to budget classification;
- Make budgetary commitments and incur expenditures within the limits of budgetary allocations and for purposes strictly related to the activity of the educational institutions;
- Determine the staffing limits of the non-teaching staff of the educational institution within the limits of the budgetary allocations.

Information on the approved budget of educational institutions, its execution, and the results of monitoring the application of the Methodology is posted on the official webpage of the municipal/ district council.

Local government authorities have the right to supplement the funds allocated from the state budget with their own resources.

In addition, for educational institutions, districts receive from the state budget earmarked financial resources for:

- The feeding of pupils in grades I-IV for hot lunch;
- Teaching in national minority languages.

Pre-school education is carried out in the family, financed from the national public budget according to the legislation in force. At the request of parents, local public authorities may organise pre-school education, with funding from local budgets.

The state bears the costs of pre-school education and care services in public institutions for all children, including children with special educational needs.

Education for children and pupils with special educational needs is free of charge and is organised in general education institutions, including special education institutions, or through home education.

The financing of private educational institutions is made from the founders' sources and from tuition fees.

The financing of extracurricular education is made from the state budget and from the budgets of the administrative-territorial units of the second level and of ATU Gagauzia, from tuition fees, sponsorships, donations, and other legal sources.

The primary sources of financing for the public education system are:

- Earmarked transfers from the state budget to local budgets for pre-school, primary, secondary, and out-of-school education institutions;
- Allocations from the state budget, for technical vocational, higher, and other educational institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Research;

- Other allocations from the State and from administrative-territorial units for education.

Special-purpose transfers shall be made by the Ministry of Finance in accordance with the allocation formula proposed annually by the Ministry of Education and Research and approved by the Government.

Educational institutions may also benefit from other sources of funding, namely:

- Revenues from the provision of educational services against payment, as well as from research and technology transfer activities, under the conditions of the law;
- Income from the sale of items produced in the course of studies (in teaching households, experimental workshops, etc.) and from the rental/lease of premises, equipment, land, and other public or private property;
- Grants, sponsorships and donations;
- Other legal sources.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The new financing mechanism was developed and approved by Government Decision No. 1077/2016.²⁶ The new funding mechanism is based on the following criteria: the cost of professions/trades; the general cost per student; number of students; the possibility to establish the Competitive Fund for co-financing the cooperation between the VET institutions and the companies; the possibility to offer supplementary financing for training programs that are relevant for the labour market; the possibility to adjust the financing in case of drop out, etc. The finding mechanism is composed of a basic funding formula and performance oriented part.

One of the most important elements in the financing of VET was the approval of the Ministerial Order No. 897/2020 regarding the Regulation of the complementary financing and based on projects competition²⁷.

Based on the updated provisions, the budgetary authority (the founder: ex. MER) is entitled to create annually a fund (official name is “complementary financing”) for the expenses of the VET institutions, with a focus on the modernization of the infrastructure.

This fund (“complementary financing”) may be created based on the reorientation or reduction of the state budget allocations, planned for the state order, and adding

²⁶ Government Decision No.1077/2016 regarding the cost-per-student funding of public vocational education institutions available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=126743&lang=ro#

²⁷ Ministerial Order No.897 from 14.07.2020 regarding the Regulation of the complementary financing and based on projects competition available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordinul_807_cu_anexe.pdf

up to 3% for expenses of VET infrastructure modernization. The budget of the fund is approved annually.

Another provision is the funding based on projects competition amounting up to 3% for expenses of VET. The guidelines used in identifying the projects are developed by the MER. The beneficiaries of the fund are the VET institutions which are able to apply. This mechanism is annually implemented.

Concerning the degree of financial and administrative autonomy of the VET system, according to the Government Decision No. 1077/2016 the VET institutions are allowed to have banking accounts within the unique treasury account and are able to perform economic activities.

All the resources generated from economic activity can be managed differently and separately from the state budget resources. According to the mentioned provisions, the resources generated from economic activities must be used exclusively for the needs and the development of the institution. The way in which the resources are managed is decided by the Administrative Council of the institution and is evaluated by an internal and external audit. Thus, more responsibilities were transferred to the Administrative Council of the institution and to the manager. Also, a set of management functions were transferred from the MER to the VET institutions, maintaining some control mechanisms of the MER in the process.

The Sectoral Committees are involved a cooperation process with the VET system by providing information about the industries' needs, occupational profiles and standards, contributing to the development of the VET admission plan, participating in the development of Occupational Classifier, Nomenclature for VET qualifications, etc

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Moldova provides support and assistance in writing the contracts between apprentices from VET institutions and companies; approves in co-decision with the MER the curricula for professions in Dual VET; provides support and assistance to the companies interested or involved in the implementation of Dual VET; provides courses for masters in Dual VET, assessment of companies for their involvement in Dual VET, etc.

Other relevant social dialogue partners are Trade Unions, Employment associations, business associations, state and private companies which are interested in VET.

Higher education

According to the provisions of the Education Code, the state guarantees the financing of higher education institutions for the entire duration of the studies in

accordance with the admission plan (state order), approved annually by the Government.

The primary source of financing of the public education system is the state budget allocations for higher education institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Research, as well as other allocations for education from the state and administrative-territorial units.

The budgetary financing of higher education is done through standard financing: standard cost per student and adjustment coefficient. It applies a financing methodology based on performance indicators, both in research and knowledge transfer, as well as in teaching and learning. In accordance with the Methodology for budgetary funding of higher education institutions, approved by Government Decision 343/2020, the financial resources provided for the State Order are distributed in accordance with the three types of funding: standard funding, compensatory funding, complementary funding. (Art. 145 of the Education Code No. 152/2014)

The higher education institutions may accumulate and use, in accordance with the law, their own revenues deriving from the fees paid by interested individuals and legal entities, including those from abroad, for training and professional development on a contract basis.

7. Academic freedom: Please, indicate the level of protection for fundamental academic values, including academic freedom, institutional autonomy, student and staff participation in institutional governance.

Academic freedom in the Republic of Moldova encompasses four dimensions:

- **Organizational autonomy:** the freedom of the university to establish its structure, form of management and relations of subordination and responsibility.
- **Autonomy of human resources:** the freedom of the university to decide on issues related to human resources management, including recruitment and management (salaries, dismissals, promotions, mobility, etc.).
- **Academic autonomy:** the freedom of the university to manage internal affairs and various academic aspects, such as: student quota, admission procedures, content offered, quality assurance, initiation of new training programs, language of study.
- **Financial autonomy:** the freedom of the university to ensure income and to allocate financial resources, to establish tuition fees, dormitory accommodation fees, service fees, to finance and co-finance university research, to use and store financial resources, to apply independent procedures for an efficient management.

A study conducted by the European Association of Universities (EAU) in 28 states, concludes the following about the universities of the Republic of Moldova:

- Organizational autonomy is approximately 42%, placing our institutions the 27th place;
- Autonomy of human resources – 59%, placing our institutions on the 21st place;
- Academic autonomy - 51%, placing our institutions on the 23rd place;
- Financial autonomy - 49%, placing our institutions on the 20th place.

In order to implement university autonomy and ensure the public responsibility of universities, the new education law provides for dual governance in higher education institutions through the creation of the Strategic and Institutional Development Council (SIDC), which will ensure the objectivity of the institutions' decision-making processes.

According to the Education Code, the higher education institutions have the status of university autonomy, which ensures the right of the university community to determine its own mission, institutional strategy, structure, activities, organisation and functioning, management of material and human resources.

The university autonomy is the right of the university community for organization and self-management, exercising the academic freedoms without any ideological, political or religious interferences, assuming a set of competences and obligations in line with the national strategies and policies for the development of the higher education.

Since 1 January 2013, all public higher education institutions operate under the conditions of university autonomy, and therefore financial autonomy. This process has given more freedom to university management in decision-making, in promoting new curricula, admission methodologies, selection of academics, management of financial resources, etc. A central role in this process is played by the faculties, which, through their specialist departments, must strengthen their capacity to modernise the curriculum in order to match labour market requirements.

The management system of higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova is dual: on one hand, there is the classical structure comprised of the Rector, the Senate, the Scientific Council and the Faculty Council; on the other hand, there are the Councils for Institutional Strategic Development (CISD). CISD is responsible for management, organising the elections of rectors and monitoring of the economic activity of the institutions.

Student representation within the higher education institution is organised at the level of the academic group, the year of study, the vocational training programme and the study cycle. Student representation is also reflected in the institutional management structures, such as the Faculty Council, the Senate of the institution, the Ethics and Management Board and the Quality Assurance Commission. Students may also be delegated to a decision-making, advisory or administrative role within the subdivisions of the higher education institution.

8. Qualifications: Please describe national educational and vocational qualifications frameworks or systems and structures, including arrangements for validation of informal and non-formal learning (work experience, in-service training, self-learning, etc.). Describe how recognition of academic qualifications is organised, and what are the challenges.

The first National Qualification Framework (NQF) concept for the higher education system was adopted and implemented in 2010, in the context of Moldova's participation in the Bologna Process. In 2014, the Education Code extended the NQF for VET and Higher Education (HE).

The legal basis for the development and the implementation of the Republic of Moldova NQF includes laws which regulate the concept of NQF at VET and HE, the quality assurance of qualifications (Education Code/2014),²⁸ the responsibilities of sectoral committees for elaboration of occupational standards and validation of qualification standards (Law on sectoral committee/2017).²⁹

For the implementation of the NQF according to legal framework, the **Government approved the following normative acts**: the structure of NQF/2017,³⁰ National Register of Qualifications/2018,³¹ National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research /2018,³² External Quality Assurance Methodology/2016, 2022,³³ Methodology for the development of occupational standards/2020,³⁴ Nomenclature of qualifications/training fields: secondary VET training fields and trades/occupations/2015,³⁵ and post-secondary non-tertiary

²⁸ Code No. 152/2014 on the education, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=110112&lang=ro

²⁹ Law No. 244/2017 on sectorial committee for the professional training, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=105718&lang=ro

³⁰ Government Decision No. 1016/2017 on National Qualification Framework, available in Romanian at:

<http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=372759>

³¹ Government Decision No. 1199/2018 on National Register of Qualifications, available in Romanian at:

<http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=378836>

³² Government Decision No. 201/2018 on National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=119171&lang=ro

³³ Government Decision No. 616/2016 on External Quality Assurance Methodology, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130029&lang=ro#

³⁴ Government Decision No. 863/2014 on development of occupational standards Methodology, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=123326&lang=ro#

³⁵ Government Decision No. 425/2015 on Nomenclature of qualifications/training fields: secondary VET training fields and trades/occupations, available in Romanian at:

<http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=359703>

VET training fields, specialities and qualifications/2015³⁶; higher education fields of study and specialities level 6-8 NQF /2017, ISCED 2013-F).³⁷

The Ministry of Education and Research developed a series of **rules, procedures and methodologies for the implementation of the NQF according to the European Recommendations**: for the NQF governance and partnership dialog was established National Council for NQF/2018; for the quality of qualifications were elaborated methodologies; for the development, revision and validation of qualification standards/2019;³⁸ for implementing qualification standards by VET and higher education institutions/2020;³⁹ applying transferring professional competences in learning outcomes/2020;⁴⁰ the development of procedure of evaluation and certification of qualifications/2021;⁴¹ Regulation on the organisation of the final examination for certifications of qualifications: lower secondary education - gymnasium /2018;⁴² upper secondary education – National Baccalaureate/2018;⁴³ post-secondary qualifications⁴⁴, higher education⁴⁵ as well as regulations regarding procedures on validation of non-formal and informal

³⁶ Government Decision No. 853/2015 on Nomenclature of post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary VET training fields, specialities and qualifications, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=93926&lang=ro

³⁷ Government Decision No. 482/2017 on Nomenclature of fields of study and specialities in higher education, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=113823&lang=ro

³⁸ Ministerial Order No. 1617/2019 on the development, revision and validation of qualification standards Methodology, available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/metodologia_de_elaborare_revizuire_si_validare_a_standardelor_de_calificarea.pdf

³⁹ Ministerial Order No. 896/2021 on the implementing qualification standards by VET and higher education institutions Methodology, available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/metodologia_de_implementare_a_standardelor_de_calificare_de_catre_institutiile_de_invatamant_profesional_tehnic_si_superior_0_0.pdf

⁴⁰ Ministerial Order No. 238/2022 on the transferring professional competences in learning outcomes Methodology, available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ghid_metodologic_privind_transpunerea_competentelor_profesionale_in_rezultate_ale_invatarii.pdf

⁴¹ Ministerial Order No. 1442/2020 on the development of procedure of evaluation and certification of qualifications Guide, available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ghid_metodologic_privind_procedura_de_evaluare_a_calificarilor.pdf

⁴² Ministerial Order No. 48/2018 on Regulation on the organisation of the final examination for certifications of qualifications: lower secondary education - gymnasium, available in Romanian at:

https://ance.gov.md/sites/default/files/reg_gim_rom_mo_2018.pdf

⁴³ Ministerial Order No. 47/2018 on Regulation on the organisation of the final examination for certifications of qualifications upper secondary education – National Baccalaureate, available in Romanian at:

https://ance.gov.md/sites/default/files/reg_bac_rom_mo_2018.pdf

⁴⁴ Ministerial Order No. 1127/2018 on Regulation on the organisation of the final examination for certifications of qualifications of secondary, post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/examen_de_calificare_actualizat.pdf

⁴⁵ Ministerial Order No. 1047/2015 on Regulation on the organisation of the final examination for certifications of qualifications of higher education, available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordinul_nr_1047_din_29.10.2015_regulamentul_cadru_privind_organizarea_examenului_de_finalizare_a_studiilor_superioare_de_licenta.pdf

education/2019;⁴⁶ VET studies based on the Credit Transfer System/2016⁴⁷ and on the organization of Higher Education level 6, Level 7 and level 8 Doctorate/2014 updated 2019;⁴⁸ Framework Regulation on the organisation of post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary Methodology for establishing the correspondence of the level of training of qualifications obtained until the approval of the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Moldova/2019;⁴⁹ Supplements to education documents (qualifications credentials).⁵⁰

National Qualifications Framework/2017 is set out as a structured system, offering a classification of qualifications, according to the descriptors aligned to the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning/2008. Thus, it facilitates the comparison of national qualifications with the qualifications of the EQF and the QF-EHEA.

The main objectives of the Moldova NQF are to connect and coordinate national qualifications of different levels and types, improve transparency and quality of qualifications, increase employability and facilitate mobility.

The structure of the NQF comprises Levels of qualification, Descriptors of the levels, learning outcomes for each level, types of qualifications, profile and documents of awarding qualifications, volume of qualification.

Moldova NQF has 8 levels defined by a set of learning outcomes knowledge, skills and competences according to levels which follow EQF/2008:

Table 8

Knowledge	Skills	Competencies
described as theoretical and/or factual	described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).	described from the perspective of responsibility and autonomy, of the need for personal and professional development

⁴⁶ Ministerial Order No. 65/2019 on Regulation on validation of non-formal and informal education, available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/regulamentul_privind_validarea_educatiei_nonformale_si_informale_aprobat_prin_ordinul_mecc_nr_65_din_24.01.2019.pdf

⁴⁷ Ministerial Order No. 234/2016 on Regulation on the organisation of the VET studies based on ECVET, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ome_nr_234_din_25_martie_2016.pdf

⁴⁸ Government Decision No. 1007/2014 on the organization of Higher Education, III cycle, Doctorate, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=115655&lang=ro#

⁴⁹ Ministerial Order No. 1703/2019 on correspondence methodology the level of training of qualifications obtained up to the approval of the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Moldova, available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_1703_metodologie_de_satbilire_a_corespondentei.pdf

⁵⁰ Ministerial Order No. 1204/2015 Supplements to education documents (qualifications credentials) in VET (template), available in Romanian at: https://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/9290_Supliment%20studii%20profesionale.pdf

The above-mentioned descriptors are applied at the levels 3-8 of NQF. Within the general education, learning outcomes are described as transversal (key), general and specific competencies. They establish the complexity of learning outcomes for levels 1-3 EQF.

Table 9. The types of qualification, volume of the qualification, admission and qualification credentials (diplomas, certificates):

The level of qualification according to NQF	The type of the programme	Volume of the programme years/ credits	Access	Compulsory requirements for final evaluation and awarding the qualifications	Credentials (diploma/ qualification certificate)
Level 1	Primary education	4 years	n/a skills assessment for vocational profile	National assessment	No credentials
Level 2	Gimnazial education, I cycle, secondary education	5 years	at least primary education skills assessment for vocational profile	National graduation exams	Certificate of gimnazium education
Level 3	Lyceum education, II cycle, secondary education	3-4 years	at least gimnazial education, access based on completion	National Bacalaureat Exam	Diploma of Bacalaureat with annex
	Secondary professional education <i>1 trade</i>	2 years	at least gimnazial education	Qualification exam	Qualification certificate with descriptive supplement <i>Seria PTS</i>
	Secondary professional education <i>conex trade</i>	3 years			
	Secondary professional education <i>dual VET</i>	1-2 years			

	Secondary professional education <i>depends on complexity of trade</i>	1-2 years			
Level 4	Postsecondary technical vocational education and training	4 years 120 ECVET	at least gimnazial education	Qualification exam and/or thesis, optional National Bacalaureat exam	Diploma of professional studies and descriptive supplement, diploma of Bacalaureat (optional)
	choreography programme	3 years 60-90 ECVET			
	medicine and pharmacy	5 years 180 ECVET			
	Postsecondary technical vocational education and training	2 years 120 ECVET	lyceum education	Qualification exam and/or diploma thesis	Diploma of professional studies and descriptive supplement <i>Seria PTP</i>
	Postsecondary technical vocational education and training <i>depends on complexity of trade</i>	2-3 years 120-180 ECVET	secondary professional education	Qualification exam and/or diploma thesis	Diploma of professional studies and descriptive supplement <i>Seria PTP</i>
Level 5	Post secondary nontertiary technical vocational education <i>depends on complexity of trade</i>	2-3 years 120-180 ECVET	lyceum education with Diploma of Bacalaureat	Qualification exam and/or thesis	Diploma of professional studies and descriptive supplement
Level 6	Licentiate higher education, I cycle	180-240 ECTS	lyceum education with Diploma of Bacalaureat	Exam and/or licentiate thesis/ project	Diploma of Bachelor's Degree and Diploma supplement <i>Seria ALI</i>
	Licentiate higher	180 ECTS	lyceum education with	Exam and/or licentiate thesis/ project	Diploma of Bachelor's Degree

	education, I cycle		Diploma of Bacalaureat		and Diploma supplement Seria ALII
Level 7	Integrated higher education (Bachelor and Master's Degree) Medicine	300- 360 ECTS	lyceum education with Diploma of Bacalaureat	Exam/ thesis	Diploma of License in medicine and Diploma supplement Seria LMM
	Integrated higher education (1st and 2nd cycles) Pharmacy	300 ECTS	lyceum education with Diploma of Bacalaureat	Exam/ thesis	Diploma of License in Pharmacy and Diploma supplement Seria LMF
	Integrated higher education (1st and 2nd cycles) Veterinary Medicine and Architecture	300 ECTS	lyceum education with Diploma of Bacalaureat	Exam/ thesis or project	Diploma of integrated higher education (Bachelor and Master's Degree) and Diploma supplement Seria LMI
	Program of Master of Sciences	120 ECTS	Licentiate higher education, I cycle Diploma of Bachelor's Degree 180 ECTS	Public defend of master thesis/projects	Diploma of Master's Degree and Diploma supplement Seria MS
	Program of Professional Master	90 ECTS	Licentiate higher education, I cycle Diploma of Bachelor's Degree 240 ECTS	Public defend of master thesis/projects	Diploma of Master's Degree Seria MP
Level 8	Scientific Doctoral Program	3-4 years	Diploma of Master's Degree	Public defend of doctoral thesis	Diploma of Doctors Degree Seria DR
	Professional Doctoral program	3-4 years	Diploma of Master's Degree	Public defend of doctoral thesis	Diploma of Doctors Degree Seria DRP

The NQF includes full formal qualifications at all levels: general secondary education programmes correspond to NQF levels 1-3; VET programmes correspond to NQF level 3 (secondary VET), NQF level 4 (post-secondary VET) and NQF level 5 (post-secondary non-tertiary VET); NQF levels 6-8 (higher education programmes).

Qualifications credentials and Diploma supplements:

The qualification credentials are issued in two languages, in a format approved by the Ministry of Education and Research. In 2008 the National Register of qualifications credentials of all levels NQF was created. Additionally, the Ministry of Education and Research created a portal for public checking of validity of the diplomas, accessible through a link on official web page of the ministry.

The Diploma supplements are issued in two languages at levels 4-8 NQF. They are compulsory and free of charge, in line with the Europass format. Qualification titles are indicated according to the nomenclatures of VET training fields (NQF level 3), the nomenclatures of training fields, specialities and qualifications (NQF levels 4 and 5), or the nomenclature of higher education fields of study and specialities (NQF levels 6-8).

Application of ECTS/ECVET principles to NQF: In higher education, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) has been used since 2006 and was updated according to the ECTS user's manual/2015. One academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS credits and 1 credit counts to 30 hours. First cycle (NQF level 6) programmes shall have 180-240 ECTS credits; second cycle (NQF level 7) programmes – 90-120 ECTS, or 300-360 ECTS for the integrated programmes (in medicine, veterinary medicine, architecture).

In post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary VET, the credit system based on ECVET has been implemented from 2016. Higher education institutions may recognise up to 30 VET credits.

The Quality Assurance of NQF: Qualifications are developed based on qualifications standards, which should relate to general and professional competences specified in the occupational standards, occupational profiles (for VET qualifications), or competency standards (for higher education qualifications). Key competences are regulated by the Education Code. They correspond to the European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning/2006 and according to regulations on developing, the curriculum must be integrated in programs and units, learning outcomes at all levels. The qualification standard is the basis for curriculum development, assessment and recognition of qualifications.

The quality assurance mechanism is in place and is consistently applied by the National Agency of Quality Assurance for Education and Research. The

standards for quality assurance of Higher education qualifications are aligned to ESG/2015. For qualifications of other levels the standards are aligned to best practices and sectorial recommendations.

The governance of the NQF: The development of the NQF is coordinated by MER. For this purpose, the Department of National Qualifications Framework was created in November 2017. In 2018, the National Council for Qualifications, a consultative body of MER, was set up to facilitate the development, ensure the quality and transparency of the NQF. It includes representatives of the relevant ministries, the National Employment Agency, NAQAER, sectorial committees, social partners and educational institutions. Its main functions include the endorsement of qualifications standards for levels 3-8 NQF, reviewing legal framework and supporting dialogue on the NQF's development and implementation.

The National Register of Qualifications (NRQ) is under development. It will include accredited/ authorised qualifications of all levels and related information, including learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and qualification providers. The NRQ will be a publicly accessible information system of the Moldova National Qualifications Framework and will provide insight into all individual qualifications that can be obtained in the Republic of Moldova. The development of the NQF register of qualifications will be focused on: applying the register in the recognition of the Moldovan qualification abroad and foreign qualifications in the Republic of Moldova; archiving the qualifications; promoting the national qualifications and enhancing the competitions of qualifications; focusing the functions of register for various groups of final users (students, educational institutions, employers, human resource management, other interested parts); making it functionalities efficient (e. g. searching by key words), updating, and thereby guaranteeing accuracy of data in the register Moldova NQF etc.

The future development of NQF:

The Republic of Moldova is at the activation stage of NQF development and is looking to move to the next phase, aiming to make NQF operational. We developed tools and approaches for designing new, relevant qualifications. Now Moldova needs to move towards implementation and to deliver qualifications, which will increase employability, mobility, internationalization and extended, efficient cooperation within EHEA.

The NQF is continuously adapting to changing contexts and requirements. Currently, the new drafts of Government Decision on NQF⁵¹ are under public consultation. They extend the goals and functions of the NQF, as well as update the level descriptors according to the European Qualifications Framework for

⁵¹ The Draft of Government Decision on National Qualification Framework, available in Romanian at: <https://particip.gov.md/ro/document/stages/proiectul-hotaririi-guvernului-cu-privire-la-aprobarea-cadrului-national-al-calificarilor/7016>

lifelong learning. The draft regulation of NQF includes the Road map for its development for the 2022-2027 period.

The referencing of the Moldova comprehensive NQF is planned for 2025.

Arrangements for validation of informal and non-formal learning (work experience, in-service training, self-learning, etc.): In accordance with the provisions of the Education Code (Art. 123, paras. 10), the certification of knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal and informal education contexts can be made by competent structures in this respect, based on a Regulation approved by the Ministry of Education and Research.

The procedure of the certification of knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal and informal education contexts is provided in the Regulation for the validation of non-formal and informal education, approved by Order No. 65/2019, which is in the process of piloting.

In the Republic of Moldova nine Validation Centres were created in technical vocational education institutions. These centres offer the possibility for the resident citizens and migrants returning to the country to certify their professional skills, acquired in the workplace or in other contexts of non-formal and informal education. They provide 46 qualifications in fields such as: construction, food, education, ecology, textile industry, beauty industry, transportation, IT, renewable energy.

In 2021, 286 citizens validated their professional skills: 212 resident citizens and 74 migrants returned to the country, compared to a total of 39 citizens in 2020: 4 residents and 35 migrants and 30 citizens in 2019: 11 residents, 19 migrants.

Compared to 2020, in 2021 the number of people who have certified their professional skills increased by 86.4%, and compared to 2019 - by 89.6%.

Recognition of academic qualifications

In the Republic of Moldova, the academic and professional qualifications are assessed in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention/1999,⁵² and its subsidiary texts; Recommendation on criteria and procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications and as well as with other good practice and tools selected from the European Area of Recognition Manual. The recognition activities are based on the national legal framework: the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova (no. 152/2014, Art. 17 p. 9); the mutual recognition agreements. Other subsidiary normative acts on recognition and equivalence of study documents and qualifications are:

⁵² https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=59181&lang=ro

- Regulation on recognition and equivalence of study documents and qualifications obtained abroad, approved through Ministerial Order No. 1702/2019;⁵³
- Instructions for the recognition of study periods in general education, approved through Ministerial Order No. 472/2017(under review);⁵⁴
- Methodology for recognition and equivalence of periods of study in professional-technical education, approved through Ministerial Order No. 638/2018;⁵⁵
- Methodology on recognition of study periods in higher education for further studies, approved through Ministerial Orders No. 937/2018;⁵⁶
- Regulation on assessment of qualifications received in Transdnistria region⁵⁷ (under review).⁵⁸

Ministry of Education and Research (National Qualifications Framework Department) is in charge with the recognition and equivalence of study documents and qualifications, in general, and Ministry of Health with qualifications from the health sector⁵⁹.

For the purpose of admission to studies, the procedure for the recognition and equivalence of study documents obtained abroad is carried out as follows:

- by educational institutions and local bodies specialized in education - in the case of study documents issued by the signatory states of the Lisbon Convention;
- by the National Qualifications Framework Department, MER - in the case of study documents issued by non-signatory states to the Lisbon Convention.

The recognition is free of charge.

⁵³ The Regulation on recognition and equivalence of study documents and qualifications obtained abroad, approved through Ministerial Order No. 1702/2019 available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=120432&lang=ro

⁵⁴ The Instructions for the recognition of study periods in general education, approved through Ministerial Order No. 472/2017 available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/instructiunea_primar_gimnazial_si_liceal.pdf

⁵⁵ The Methodology for recognition and equivalence of periods of study in professional-technical education, approved through Ministerial Order No. 638/2018 available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_638_metodologia_recunoaster_ipt.pdf

⁵⁶ The Methodology on recognition of study periods in higher education for further studies, approved through Ministerial Orders No. 937/2018 available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/metodologie_superior_937_din_19.06.18.pdf

⁵⁷ The Regulation on assessment of qualifications received in Transdnistrian region available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=15598&lang=ro

⁵⁸ The Regulation on assessment of qualifications received in Transdnistrian region (under review) available in Romanian at: https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/194_0.pdf

⁵⁹ https://msmps.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordinregul_echiv_studii_strain_2013.pdf

9. Please provide information on transitions within the education and training systems, as well as from education to work transitions. What is the role of education and training institutions, the social and labour market partners? What guidance mechanisms, if any, are provided to support pupils and students to make well-informed choices?

Primary and secondary education

According to the educational goals established by Art. 11 of the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014, entrepreneurial skills and initiative are among the key competencies established for all levels of education in the Republic of Moldova.

In general education, according to the curricular reform of 2018, the compulsory school subject Personal development (grades I-XII) was introduced, one of the specific competencies being Career planning, by determining the school and/or professional path, from the perspective of the development of personal potential and labour market opportunities.

To this end, a module is designed for all grades, with emphasis on knowing individual potential, informing about professions from a labour market perspective, career planning, and career decision-making, developing entrepreneurship as a career option, etc., in accordance with age specificities.

During the 6 hours reserved annually for the subject area, teachers organise learning activities aimed at guiding students in their careers and supporting them in the process of career planning, with an emphasis on active involvement through tasks with a pronounced applied character.

Career information and guidance: The www.ipt.md portal informs students about: the qualifications offered in technical vocational education; the conditions for admission to studies; the success stories of the graduates. The portal of the National Agency for Employment (NAE) www.cariera.anofm.md provides a description of the occupations required by the labour market, including information on the necessary skills, labour market trends, average wages and the labour market forecast from the perspective of employers. The portal www.angajat.md provides information about the vacancies registered in the NAE database and the conditions for filling them. The National Qualifications Register www.mnc.sime.md is being developed by MER, which provides information to students on qualifications in vocational education at all levels, including through continuing education programs, accredited / authorized qualification providers, information on learning outcomes, assessment criteria for certification, occupations typical of the qualification.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Based on the estimations developed by the MER the share of employed VET graduates is approximately 50 %. The VET institutions as a result of the evaluation

of NAQAER indicate even more than 50 %. In Dual VET the share is 70%.⁶⁰ Based on the estimations of the VET institutions at least 30 % of VET graduates leave the country. Concerning the official data on the employment of the VET graduates, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (NAQAER) evaluates the VET institutions on the linkage with the labour market. However, the relevance of this data is limited.

Based on the provisions of the Education Code (Art. 67) the VET institutions are responsible for organizing internships for students. Within VET institutions there is a Deputy Director responsible for student internships. The internships are carried out within the workshops, labs and households of the respective education institutions, in enterprises, companies, institutions and other organizations interested to serve as basis for internship. Private companies may provide internships for students in VET institutions, in line with the agreements and contracts concluded with the respective educational institutions. The Education Code provides that partnerships between the VET institutions and economic actors are carried out through: distribution of graduate students on the labour market; providing places for internships; organization of dual education; organization of job fairs, etc.

The VET institutions organise visits to companies for their students and there are conducted surveys among students, right before graduation.

The module “Personal Development and Career Design” was developed and promoted in all VET institutions.

At the institutional level, 4 Career Guidance Centres were created within the territorial structures of the National Agency for Employment (NAE) in Soroca, Cahul and Chisinau.

The identification of internships is done by the VET institutions, but the post-employment monitoring is not assured. There is no record keeping.

Higher education

At the national level, the Career Counselling and Guidance Centres support pupils and students during the career design process and education achievement. The career counselling and guidance centres are established by the local public administration authorities, National Agency for Employment, educational institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and other private providers.

Career Guidance Centres and business incubators are created and operate in universities to advise students on the situation and requirements of the labour market, to establish relations with employers and business environment and to obtain additional professional skills. Due to the partnership between higher

⁶⁰ Report on the conducting of survey on the level of job placement and retention for the graduates of Dual VET programs

education and business, there are organized job fairs and scholarships, continuous vocational training, involvement of highly qualified business executives in monitoring and evaluating the quality of higher education, etc.

Student organizations (senate, council, association, society, league, alliance, parliament, etc.) are set up in 20 universities, most of which are public. Student organizations inform and advise students on their educational, professional, social, cultural, moral and economic issues, organize social and economic involvement, volunteering and career guidance events for students.

Administration of the systems

10. Status of education and training institutions: briefly describe the procedures for setting up educational and training institutions. Which is the authority that monitors the setting up and functioning of educational and training institutions? Are there different types of status for educational and training institutions (e.g. private, public, private subject to control, etc.)?

General education

Public institutions of early education (pre-school and pre-school education) and out-of-school education (local level) are established, reorganized, and liquidated by the local first level authorities. Public primary, secondary, high school, and extra-curricular education institutions (district level) are established, reorganized, and liquidated by the local public administration authorities of the second level and of ATU Gagauzia.

Local public administration authorities are obliged to ensure the proper functioning of these institutions in accordance with the regulations and standards approved by the MER.

The founding local public administration authorities are obliged to establish school districts for each public preschool, primary, and/or secondary school.

Public special education and technical vocational education institutions are established, reorganized, and liquidated at the initiative of the founders, with the approval of the Government.

Private educational institutions of all levels may be established, reorganized, and liquidated in the manner prescribed by civil law and by the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014.

Accredited private educational institutions are part of the national education system and operate in accordance with the provisions of the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014.

Public educational institutions may have the status of a legal person under the terms of the law.

On the initiative of local public administration authorities, central public administration authorities, public institutions, and with the consent of the Ministry of Education and Research, educational structures without the status of legal entity (branches) may be organized, depending on the local needs.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

According to the Education Code (Art. 59), the VET institutions are established, reorganized and closed by the Government, at the initiative of the founder. The Ministry of Education and Research has the role of founder in most VET institutions. From this perspective, at the initiative of the Ministry, the public VET institutions can be established, reorganized or dissolved.

The private educational institutions of all levels have to be established, reorganized and dissolved according to the civil legislation and provisions of the Education Code. The Civil Code (Art.299) defines the private institution as a non-commercial organization set up by a single person for non-commercial purposes, financed in part or in full by it.

The private VET institutions may be established, reorganized or dissolved at the initiative of individuals with the consent of the Ministry of Education and Research, in the forms provided by the civil legislation for non-commercial organizations. Based on the Law No.86/2020 on the non-commercial organizations,⁶¹ the private institutions have to be registered at the Agency of Public Services.

The VET institutions have to implement the provisions of the Government Decision No. 616/2016 for the approval of the External Evaluation Methodology of the quality in order to authorize provisional operation and the accreditation of study programs, educational institutions of vocational technical, higher education and continuous training.

All public or private VET have to be an object of the external quality assessment process in order to authorize the provisional operation, before starting to activate.

⁶¹ The Law No.86/2020 on the non-commercial organizations available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=129338&lang=ro#

Higher education

Higher education institutions are established, reorganized and liquidated by the Government at the initiative of the founder.

Private educational institutions of all levels may be established, reorganised and liquidated in the manner prescribed by civil law and the Education Code.

Any public or private legal entity, interested to provide higher education programs, shall be subject to the external assessment for provisional authorization before starting to function. The provisional authorization for higher education programs expires after the first class of graduates. Both the higher education institution and the study programs shall be subject to accreditation.

Accredited private educational institutions are part of the national education system and operate in accordance with legal provisions.

The higher education institution is administered by the rector, assisted by pro-rectors, with the support of the Administration Board.

Status of education and training institutions

Depending on the results of external evaluations of the higher education programmes offered, higher education institutions may carry out higher education studies in one or more areas of vocational training; carry out research, development, innovation or artistic creative activities; offer bachelor, master and doctoral higher education programmes.

11. Mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of the educational and training system and institutions: what are the mechanisms in place or in the process of being implemented for monitoring and evaluating educational and training establishments? What do they examine? What are the mechanisms/tools for monitoring external quality assurance in higher education and training? To what extent are they independent from governmental institutions?

General education

The external evaluation of the activity of general education institutions is carried out by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research, based on the quality standards approved by the Ministry of Education and Research. The evaluation is carried out at the request of the head of the institution, as well as at the initiative of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research or the request of the local specialized body in the field of education. The evaluation report of the general educational institution is published

on the official websites of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research, of the local specialized body in the field of education and of the educational institution.

The external evaluation of the activity of teachers in general education is carried out once every 5 years by the competent bodies, based on an evaluation methodology, approved by the Ministry of Education and Research. The evaluation of the activity of the management staff from the general education institutions is carried out by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research, based on the evaluation methodology approved by the Ministry of Education and Research. The assessment of general education management staff is mandatory at least once every 5 years.

The analysis of school results in national assessments aims to assess the level of development of students' competencies based on national educational standards. There are three final national assessments in the Republic of Moldova:

- the assessment at the end of grade 4, which evaluates the level of development of pupils' competencies at the time of primary school graduation;
- the assessment at the end of grade 9, which certifies the level of knowledge and main competencies of pupils at the end of secondary school;
- the assessment at the end of grade 12, which is an external assessment of the knowledge and basic skills of the graduates of secondary school.

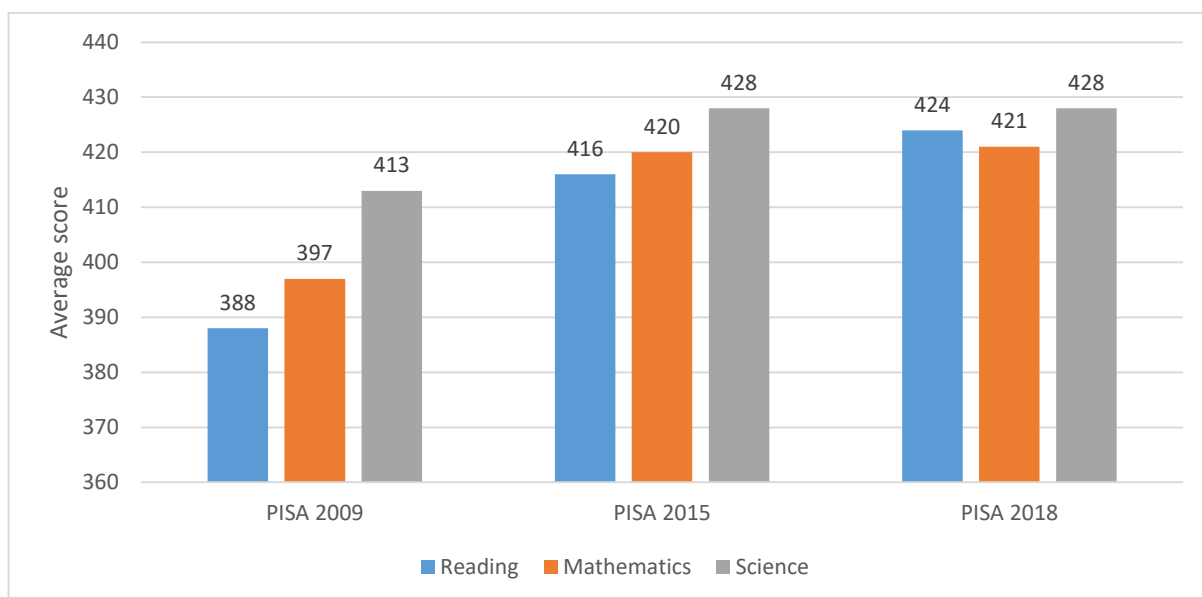
For monitoring and evaluation of the educational system at the lower secondary level, the Republic of Moldova participates in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The Republic of Moldova is at its 4th participation in PISA (PISA 2009+, PISA 2015, PISA 2018, and PISA 2022).

About 6900 students from 270 educational institutions from all districts and municipalities of the Republic of Moldova were involved in the PISA 2022 assessment.

In PISA 2018, the Republic of Moldova achieved the performance of not decreasing scores compared to PISA 2015, however, about 50% of students reach the minimum proficiency level in mathematics, 57% - in reading/reading and science⁶².

⁶² Report. Republic of Moldova in PISA 2018, available in Romanian at: https://ance.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_pisa2018.pdf

Table 10. Trends in average scores in reading literacy, mathematics, and science in the Republic of Moldova



The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Monitoring and evaluation of the educational and training system and institutions

At the functional level, the responsibilities of the MER are to coordinate the processes of elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of the sectoral policies in the field of technical vocational education, to control the implementation of legal framework on initial and continuous training from the part of VET institutions, to monitor the assessment of the achievement of state educational standards and quality assurance of professional training; to coordinate the process of management appointment in technical vocational education institutions.

This competence is realized through the reporting process of the VET institutions to the MER; methodological and technical recommendations and assistance to the VET institutions in the following areas: enrolment process; educational process; quality assurance process, including examination and certification.

Monitoring external quality assurance in VET system

The VET system is largely involved in the quality assurance process organized by NAQAER. In 2021, based on the decisions of the Board of Directors of the NAQAER, the accreditation of the following programs was adopted: 112 ISCED level 3 programs and 108 ISCED level 4 programs, as well as the temporary authorization of one ISCED level 3 program and 7 ISCED level 4 programs.⁶³

⁶³ Annual Ministry of Education and Research Report, 2021, available in Romanian at: <https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/planuri-si-rapoarte-de-activitate>

For each VET institution, an internal evaluation commission was created, and the staff of VET institutions was trained according to NAQAER methodologies. An internal self-assessment is regularly carried out by the school administration (at a level of each department).

NAQAER carries out every five years an external evaluation of VET institutions and offers study programmes at both initial and continuous levels, primarily for accreditation purposes. The assessment is performed according to The External Quality Assessment Methodology, which specifies external quality assessment criteria, accreditations standards as well as performance indicators. The External Evaluation Guide for Vocational Training Programs in Technical Vocational Education describes evaluation standards as mandatory minimum standards to be achieved. The dimensions assessed during the external quality assessment cover institutional capacities, education effectiveness including academic progression, the quality of programmes, institutional quality management and the conformity between internal assessments and the actual state of play.

For each external evaluation procedure, an external evaluation commission is set up, which consists of evaluation experts with relevant knowledge of VET. Each commission examines self-assessment documentation and organizes a visit to the institution. As part of the external evaluation process, NAQAER attends classes. After each visit, an external evaluation report is prepared, which identifies strengths and weaknesses of study programmes and develops recommendations for improving their quality. Such a report is then shared with the assessed institution.

The VET institution is responsible for the development of an action plan, according to which corrective measures are carried out. Such action plans are submitted to NAQAER. Each VET institution is responsible for the preparation of implementation reports summarising the progress made, which is presented as part of the self-evaluation dossier required for (re)-accreditation of an institution/programme.

Higher education

Quality management in higher education is ensured in the following ways:

- at national level - by the Ministry of Education and Research and the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research;
- at institutional level - by internal quality assurance structures.

A fully functioning quality assurance system involves two successive stages:

- provisional authorization, which is the act of establishment of the institution and grants the right to conduct the education process and organize the enrolment of students;

- accreditation, which additionally grants the right to organize the examination for the completion of studies, as well as the right to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognized by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Any public or private legal entity interested in offering higher education programmes must undergo an external evaluation process in order to obtain a provisional authorization to start their activity.

Provisional authorization of higher education study programmes expires after the first graduating class.

Both the higher education institution and the study programmes are subject to accreditation.

In higher education, accreditation of bachelor's degree programmes (cycle I) is done for each programme leading to a distinct university qualification.

Higher education institutions may not obtain provisional operating authorization or accreditation for master and doctoral programmes (cycles II and III) unless bachelor programmes (cycle I) in the same field are accredited.

The external evaluation for provisional operating authorization or accreditation is triggered and carried out according to the methodologies developed by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research and approved by the Government.

After obtaining accreditation, study programmes and higher education institutions are subject to periodic external evaluation for re-accreditation at least every 5 years.

In case of negative results in the external evaluation of higher education institutions, the Ministry of Education and Research withdraws the right of activity of the institutions or the right to organize study programmes, and students are assigned to similar programmes in other educational institutions until the reasons for the negative evaluation results are removed.

The Ministry of Education and Research (MER) shall make the decision on the provisional authorization to operate, accreditation, non-accreditation or withdrawal of the right of activity for a higher education institution or the organization of a study programme based on the results of the evaluation carried out by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research. However, the MER does not have the right to intervene in the decisions of the National Agency.

The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research is an administrative authority under the Ministry of Education and Research, established by the Government, financed from the state budget and from its own revenues.

12. Statistical data collection and processing facilities: describe the facilities and the type of data collected, including participation in international and European⁶⁴ surveys and databases⁶⁵. How are statistics collected on the destination of school leavers, VET and higher education graduates (tracer studies, graduate tracking)? How are data being collected on EU-level targets (i.e. European Education Area)?

General education

At the national level, to provide the Ministry of Education and Research with updated data on the education system for the development and implementation of education policies, monitoring, and evaluation of their impact, the Education Management Information System (EMIS)⁶⁶ is being developed.

EMIS is part of the state information resources of the Republic of Moldova and is intended to manage educational data, as well as to provide up-to-date information on the field of education to all interested parties (state authorities and institutions, educational institutions, civil society, citizens, etc.)

EMIS includes modules corresponding to the types of educational institutions:

- 1) Early education;
- 2) Primary and general secondary education (first and second cycle);
- 3) Technical vocational education;
- 4) Higher education;
- 5) Textbook register;
- 6) Electronic catalogue;

Modules 1), 4) and 5) are under development.

EMIS is an electronic tool for the analysis and strategic planning of education policies, the development, and monitoring of the implementation of education reforms, and the identification of dropouts and early school leavers.

To ensure correct evidence of the information resource and the accuracy of the EMIS data, the interaction of the system with various information resources, as well as integration with existing governmental electronic platform, in accordance

⁶⁴ For example Eurostudent

⁶⁵ For example the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) and the European Tertiary Education Register (ETER)

⁶⁶ The Government Decision No. 601/2020 on the approval of the Concept of the Management Information System in Education, available in Romanian at:
https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=122778&lang=ro

with the legislation on data exchange and interoperability, services are being continuously developed.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Concerning the VET policies, the MER collects and uses the following data: primary data (field surveys, group interviews) and secondary data (statistics, reports, and studies). The MER collects the relevant data from the VET institutions and provides analysis. The international official data of the UN, the World Bank, the OECD, and the IMF are partially used to compare the situation in the Republic of Moldova, based on the international indicators, to other countries’.

The educational system participates in different collections of data surveys organized by the European Training Foundation (ETF), EU-Moldova Sub-Committee meeting on Economic and Other Sector Cooperation – Cluster 4 on science and technology, information society, audio-visual policy, education, training and youth, culture, sport and physical activity where Moldova annually reports on VET progress and other international partners⁶⁷.

Regarding the trace study analysis, in December 2021-January 2022, a survey was organized on the level of job placement and retention for the graduates of Dual VET programs, as developed by the Moldovan Centre for Innovation and Policies (CIPM) in January 2022 and produced with the contribution of the GIZ Project “Support to Vocational Education and Training in the Field of Green Economy.”

The "Technical Professional Education" ("TVET") module is part of the EMIS.

The information on the academic year for each type of data (information about the institution, teaching staff, students, subjects, etc.) is introduced into the system. All modules in EMIS interact with each other, students can be transferred from one institution to another without the need for repeated data entry. Thus, the duplication of information about students who have graduated from general education and have been enrolled in one of the professional institutions is also excluded. The EMIS is being constantly improved.

Higher education

The National Bureau of Statistics is responsible for collecting data on the number of graduates in higher education – this information is used in the development of studies and policy documents. Currently, the Ministry of Education and Research is in the process of developing an information system (HEMIS) which will combine all data regarding enrolment, promotion, graduation of students in all higher education institutions in Moldova, and which will be

⁶⁷ The ETF forum for quality assurance in vocational education and training quality assurance in Vocational Education and Training. Country Fiche (February 2021); Torino Process

connected to a traceability information system collecting data on the professional track of university graduates, regardless of the form of ownership of the university.

As a member of EHEA and a part of the BFUG, the Republic of Moldova reports to the European Commission on the number of students, number of teachers (associate professors and full professors), number of mobility schemes, number of European projects, status of accreditations of study programmes/institutions according to the ESGs, and compliance of the National Qualifications Framework against the EQF.

Infrastructure

13. Please provide information on the criteria for setting up infrastructure: coverage of national territory; what variables are taken into account for setting up educational and training infrastructure (population density, geographical criteria, etc.)? According to what criteria is infrastructure set up for the education of children of national minorities?

General education

Local public authorities take decisions on the development and/or optimization of the network of general education institutions in the administered territory according to local needs (number of children, geographical criteria, access, etc.) and based on indicators of effectiveness, efficiency, and performance⁶⁸.

Local public administration authorities delimit the school districts of the public general education institutions; monitor activity of private education institutions; and provide free transport for pupils and teachers to education institutions in rural localities for distances exceeding 2 km.

In the 2021/22 academic year, the primary and general secondary education network comprised of 1231 establishments, consisting of 99 primary schools, 786 gymnasiums, 338 high schools, and 8 special schools (for children with disabilities). Out of the total number of establishments, 98.1% are public; 74.3% operate in rural areas; 1214 operate on their own premises, and 17 establishments rent. Out of the total number of institutions, 1018 are located in standardized rooms and 213 - in furnished rooms.

In 2021 early education was offered in 1483 institutions, of which 811 establishments were nursery-schools, 566 kindergartens, 88 nursery schools, 16 community centers, and 2 crèches. Compared to 2020, the network of early education institutions changed slightly - the number of kindergartens and nursery

⁶⁸ Education Code No. 152/2014, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130514&lang=ro

schools decreased by two units and the number of crèches increased by three units, of which two were in rural areas).

Out of the total of 1483 early education institutions, 1468 institutions (99.0%) are public, of which 337 units operate in urban areas and 1131 units - in rural areas. 15 establishments are private and all operate in urban areas.

The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova guarantees the right of education to every citizen. In accordance with the Constitution, the state guarantees the right to choose the language of education and training at all levels and stages of education.

The state guarantees the right of minorities to conduct pre-school, primary, general secondary and secondary vocational, higher university, and postgraduate education in Romanian and Russian, and creates conditions for the realization of the right to receive instruction and education in the mother tongue.

The right of citizens to education and training in their mother tongue is ensured by providing the necessary number of institutions, classes, and groups, and by creating optimal conditions for their functioning.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, there were 261 primary and general secondary educational institutions (21.20%) providing instruction/study of national minority languages and "History, culture, and traditions of the people" as part of the curricula.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The infrastructure of the VET system was created during the Soviet Union. After the independence of Moldova, the authorities invested in the modernization and maintenance of the VET infrastructure. In July 2014, with the EU Technical assistance for the VET Sector Support project, a mapping of VET institutions was conducted, which included the assessment of the VET infrastructure. (The report on the mapping exercise can be presented). The authorities have the list of institutions and the information about the situation of the infrastructure, which requires interventions in order to modernize it.

The geographical distribution of TVET institutions is as follows⁶⁹:

26 - Chisinau

10 - Balti

4 – Cahul; Soroca; Ungheni (3 regions)

3 – Comrat; Orhei (2 regions)

⁶⁹ This data is from the MER report of 2018. This distribution does not include the Universities of Agriculture and Medicine.

2 - Donduseni; Edinet; Floresti; Hincesti; Riscani - (5 regions)

1 – Briceni; Calarasi; Causeni; Ceadir Lunga; Cimislia; Criuleni; Drochia; Glodeni; Leova; Lipcani; Nisporeni; Ocnita; Rezina; Singerei; Stefan Voda; Taraclia; Telenesti; Vulcanesti –(18 regions).

Minorities children benefit from the same infrastructure as all children.

Higher education

The network of higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova is established based on the geographical criteria, and also takes into account the population density and trends in urbanization. Thus, according to the geographical criteria, there is one university in the north of the country, which serves the needs of almost 15 districts, and one university in the south, covering around four districts. There are two other public universities in the south, one is located in the Territorial Unit UTA Gagauziya and serves the needs of the cultural preservation of the Gagauz people, and another one, much smaller in size, serves the needs of the Bulgarian minority.

According to the urbanization trends and population density, all other public and private universities are located in the capital of the country, and provide study programmes in Romanian, and also in Russian upon request. During the first year of study, students are given courses in Romanian, and the last year of studies is taught in Romanian.

14. How does the education and training system respond to digital challenges? What statistics are available (e.g. number of pupils per computer, distance learning facilities)?.

General education

ICT equipment. In 2021, early education institutions had 5700 computers, out of which 3812 (66.9%) computers were used for educational purposes, compared to 3250 computers in 2020. 82% of the total number of computers had Internet connection, up 6.5% from 2020.

Primary and general secondary schools have 37000 computers used for educational purposes (about 23% more than in 2020/21), of which 18100 (48.9%) are connected to the common school network and 31400 (84.9%) have Internet connection. 20100 computers are used by pupils, 15900 by teaching staff, and one thousand computers are used in libraries. Compared to the academic year

2020/21, both the number of computers used by students and by teaching staff) increased by 17.5% and 31.4% respectively ⁷⁰.

Table 11. Provision of computers to primary and general secondary education institutions by area

	<i>Total number of computers, in thousands</i>	<i>Number of computers with Internet access</i>		<i>Number of computers used for teaching purposes</i>		<i>Number of computers used for teaching purposes per 100 pupils</i>
		<i>Total</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>in %</i>	
Total						
2016/17	27.566	18.167	65,9	24.111	87,5	7,2
2017/18	29.262	19.990	68,3	25.570	87,4	7,6
2018/19	30.528	21.117	69,2	26.712	87,5	8,0
2019/20	32.561	23.635	72,6	28.503	87,5	8,6
2020/21	34.440	27.625	80,2	30.114	87,4	9,0

In 2020-2021, to ensure children's access to online studies and to address the shortage of IT equipment, , MER purchased and distributed 13180 laptops for students and teachers in primary, secondary and high school institutions from the financial resources allocated from the state budget and from the resources provided by the World Bank.. With the World Bank support, 300 tablets and 100 laptops with specialized software for children with special needs were purchased and distributed to 100 Inclusive Education Resource Centres in the country.

In 2019, the MER approved the Minimum Standards for equipping primary, middle, and high schools with ICT means⁷¹.

Curriculum. In order to implement ICT in education, a number of optional subjects were developed over the last seven years, with the objective of building digital skills and effective use of modern information technologies (e.g. Information and Communication Technologies in Education, Robotics, Mobile Application Design and Development, Website Design and Development, Introduction to IT Security, Graphic Design, Artificial Intelligence, etc.). In 2018, as part of the curriculum development in primary education, a new module - Digital Education - compulsory for all grades I-IV, has been included in the Technological Education subject. Also, digital support for students in the Digital Education module was developed.

⁷⁰ National Bureau of Statistics, available in Romanian at: <https://statistica.gov.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=7234>

⁷¹ Ministry of Education and Research Order No. 489/2019, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_489_din_070519_standarde_minime_de_dotare_cu_tic.pdf

Training and development of teachers' digital skills.

In 2015, Digital Competence Standards were developed:

- Standards of digital competencies for general education teachers⁷²,
- Standards for digital competencies of primary, secondary, and high school pupils⁷³

In 2020, the Ministry of Education and Research launched the National Digital Literacy Programme (NDLP) to reduce the digital gap and develop IT skills among teachers. As a result, in 2020, 20.045 primary, secondary, and high school teachers were trained (75.61% of the total number of primary, secondary, and high school teachers), and in 2021, 10.285 early education teachers were trained (80.35% of the total number of early education teachers).

The distance learning process was also supported through specialized platforms for online learning and official websites that centralized MER initiatives in this field. In partnership with Google, free accounts were offered to the GSuite for Education resources, the SIME electronic register.

For the development of the digital library⁷⁴, 7 652 lessons were uploaded, including 4490 lessons in Romanian and 3162 lessons in Russian for students of grades I-XII in 15 school subjects, developed in partnership with the Municipality of Chisinau. The MER also developed multiple video lessons for national exam preparation for middle and high school graduates, which are available on the MER website⁷⁵.

Online safety

In order to cultivate safe and responsible online behavior of children, to increase their resilience to online dangers, to ensure a comprehensive approach to online safety in schools by involving all actors in the education system, in 2021 MER developed the Standards for the protection and safety of children/students in the online environment⁷⁶. The standards are intended to ensure the implementation of the Safe Online School Model - a comprehensive approach to online child safety in schools, based on international best practices in the field. In the 2021-2022 study year the Standards were piloted in six educational institutions across the country.

⁷² Standards of digital competencies for general education teachers, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/cnc4_finalcompetente_digitale_profesori_22iulie2015_1.pdf

⁷³ Standards for digital competencies of primary, secondary, and high school pupils, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/cnc4_final_competente_digitale_elevi_22iulie2015_1.pdf

⁷⁴ Digital library, available in Romanian at: <https://educatieonline.md/>

⁷⁵ Website of the Ministry of Education and Research, National Exams section, available in Romanian at: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/examenele-nationale-2020>

⁷⁶ Ministry of Education and Research Order no. 872/2021. Standards for the protection and safety of children/students in the online environment, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_aprobare_sso.pdf

After the pilot, the results will be analyzed and, subsequently, the standards will become mandatory for all educational institutions in the country.

The implementation of these standards will also contribute to the achievement of targets set in the national legislation and international commitments:

- **The Lanzarote Convention**, ratified by the Republic of Moldova in 2012.
- **Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals No. 4** "Quality Education" and **No. 16** "Stop child abuse, neglect, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture".
- **European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children** - key policy document at the European level (approved in 2012).
- **European Framework for Competent Online Educational Organizations** (DigCompOrg).
- **Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on promoting digital citizenship education**, which encourages the CoE Member States, including the Republic of Moldova, to review their legislation, policies, and practices to promote digital citizenship education.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The total number of computers for the academic year 2020-2021 in VET system⁷⁷ was 7008, in comparison with 6139 in the academic year 2019-2020. The 6019 computers were used for teaching purposes.

The average number of computers used for teaching purposes per institution for the academic year 2020-2021 was 66 in comparison with 57 in the academic year 2019-2020.

The number of computers used for teaching purposes per 100 students for the academic year 2020-2021 in VET system was 13,4 in comparison with 12,0 in academic year 2019-2020.

The VET system faces digital challenges in the following ways:

- **Increasing teaching staff's capacity to implement ICT technologies in the educational process**, especially in the context of the pandemic . The national authorities with the support of external partners organized and conducted several national trainings (Digital Literacy Program for teachers in partnership with the Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Education (CICTE)); disseminated training materials to teachers; initiated the the development of digital

⁷⁷ https://statistica.gov.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Educatia/Educatia_editia_2021.pdf

materials; ensured training for teachers on how to develop materials; delivered training for psychologists from VET institutions; identified the digital platforms/educational software to be used; conducted trainings in the field of digital assessment in the context of distance/online learning; and published relevant methodological materials on the MER website.

- **Increasing access of the students and teachers to ICT technologies:** ensuring access to free Internet for students and teachers during the pandemic and providing ICT equipment to students in VET education, including dual VET with external partners' support..

Higher education

The COVID pandemic highlighted two crucial problems in the digitalization of the system: the need for digital skills for both teachers and students, and access of all to a computer or other digital device, especially for students with special needs.

In higher education, during the last two years, all 24 public and private universities acquired systems and set up platforms for online learning, thus enabling each student and teachers to fulfill the study programmes. In terms of access of students and teachers to personal computers/laptops, currently there is no generalized data on this indicator, as each institution manages its own infrastructure funded by different donors/development partners and own funds.

All higher education institutions are provided with computing technology from their own sources, from international projects, etc.

According to the data provided, most institutions have integrated digital educational content management systems or platforms into their study system to diversify and facilitate the online study process. MOODLE was the most popular platform, integrated in 19 institutions out of the 24 total.

Across all institutions, more than 50 platforms are integrated such as: Cisco, SPSS Sisteminformatic 1C, UNINETTUNO, Electronic Library Collection Catalog, Netop School, Trello, Chemcraft, VM3, Mercury, GaussView 6, NeuLog, SHELX 27, Virtual Labs, Crocodile chemistry, Origin, Spectrum, Socrative, Kahoot, E-learning and training hours, OnDemand, Romexis Viewer, Blue Sky Plan, ILIAS, etc.

The following learning resources were developed:

- Moodle platform usage guides (for teachers and students);
- specific guides for setting up VPN connections;
- guides for setting up SI at home;
- guides for remote connection;

- MS Office 365 Teams user guide with installation and configuration instructions;
- Webex Meeting user guide;
- OneDrive file synchronization guide in Windows, file access at home;
- the guide for using and configuring IP telephony services;
- instructions with recommendations on data protection and the need to make backups (Backup) etc.

15. Provision of accommodation for students/trainees not living at home: what facilities do exist?

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

For VET students not living at home, there is access to dormitories at affordable prices. According to the Government Decision No. 99/2007⁷⁸ and updated in 2017, the monthly accommodation fee for students from state VET institutions represents 15 percent of the calculated and established cost by the Government. In Professional Schools the state provides one free meal per day.

The VET system is socially oriented. An important measure of the Ministry of Education and Research is to ensure free access to different categories of people. Based on this approach, the Ministry annually offers 15 % of the total number of seats (for each specialty/profession in VET institutions) to the following categories of candidates: Roma children; children with severe, accentuated and medium disability; children without parental care and support; children who have parents with severe disabilities; children from families with four and more, children. These provisions are mentioned in the Ministry Order No.459/2020⁷⁹.

Higher education

Currently, all state-owned higher education institutions have dormitories. There are 82 student dormitories in the country, accommodating approximately 15000 university students and 2369 master's program students, equaling to about 80 percent of all applications.

Accommodation fee. The amount of the monthly accommodation fee is established in accordance with the Government Decision No. 99/2007 on accommodation fees in the dormitories of state secondary vocational, secondary specialized, higher and

⁷⁸ The Government Decision No.99/2007 on accommodation taxes in the dormitories of state institutions of secondary technical vocational education, technical vocational post-secondary, higher and in science and innovation in Romanian is available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=121335&lang=ro

⁷⁹ https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordinul_459_cu_anexe_0.pdf

science and innovation institutions for students financed from the state budget and on a contract basis⁸⁰.

Out of 24 higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova, 16 public institutions have dormitories for students, 60% of the fee is paid by the Government. Also, the number of dormitories depends on the capacity of the university. Private institutions do not have their own dormitories. There are Medical Centres for students at the dormitories.

The slots in university dormitories are distributed according to the Regulation on the functioning of higher education institutions, approved by Government Decision in 2007⁸¹.

16. What are the facilities and provisions, at all levels and sectors of education, for persons with special needs; both in terms of physical facilities and teaching/learning methods.

General education

The education for children with special educational needs, including children with disabilities, is carried out in general education schools, special boarding schools and auxiliary schools. Access to one of the above-mentioned forms of education, is based on the particularities of the child's development needs and the need for a specific form of education in the best interest of the child.

The support of children with special needs, is carried out through the development of support services in the institution at the district level (Resource Centre for Inclusive Education, support teacher, team developing the Individualised Educational Plan, Intra-school Multidisciplinary Commission), (District/Municipal Service for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance) and at the national level (Republican Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance).

Support services and support staff have been developed to ensure appropriate inclusion in mainstream schools for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

In 2021, the following early education institutions were operating: 978 Resource Centres for Inclusive Education, approximately 1280 support teachers, 303 speech therapists, 440 psychologists, and 25 psycho-pedagogues,

⁸⁰ The Government Decision No. 99/2007 on accommodation fees in the dormitories of state secondary vocational, secondary specialized, higher and science and innovation institutions for students financed from the state budget and on a contract basis, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=85225&lang=ro

⁸¹ The Government Decision No. 74/2007 on approval of the Regulation on the functioning of higher education institutions, available in Romanian at: <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=320357>

In terms of adaptation of spaces for children with special educational needs, 637 general education institutions are provided with access slopes/ramps; 231 institutions are provided with adapted sanitary facilities, and 24 educational institutions have special rooms, arranged for remedial/therapeutic activities with pupils with special educational needs.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

In the academic year 2020-2021⁸², the VET system included 805 students with Special Education Needs (SEN).

The distribution by types of institutions of VET students with SEN:

- Professional Schools: 411 students, including the Professional School No. 11 with 101 students with SEN. This VET institution provides professional training for people with sensory difficulties (weak-sighted, blind-sighted, hearing-impaired)⁸³.
- Centres of Excellence: 199 students with SEN;
- Colleges: 195 students with SEN;

Due to the social orientation of the Secondary VET, Professional Schools are more attractive for SEN students.

In order to implement Inclusive Education in the VET system, the Ministry of Education and Research approved Order No. 1430/2018⁸⁴. The Ministry developed the Methodological recommendations regarding inclusive education in VET in the following components: access of persons with SEN to VET institutions; organizing the educational process in the VET institution from the perspective of inclusive education; individualization of the educational process; internships and the educational process; evaluation of the teaching process; facilitation of employment; and management of IE within VET system.

With the support of external partners the following important activities were implemented: the Republican Centre of Psycho Pedagogical Assistance (CRAP) and all 35 Services of Psycho Pedagogical Assistance (SAP)s representatives were trained in assisting VET institutions in Inclusive Education; inclusive education was implemented at 9 VET institutions; 7 Centres of Excellence trained inclusive education specialists (22 people), who will support VET schools in implementing inclusive education; guidelines on Inclusive Education in VET were developed - a manual for inclusive education in VET; and the possibility of individualization of curriculum for SEN students was introduced.

⁸² The internal information provided by the Ministry of Education and Research (VET Department)

⁸³ The site of the Professional School no.11 in Romanian is available at: <http://sp11.educ.md/>

⁸⁴ The Ministerial Order no.1430/2018 on Methodological recommendations on inclusive education in technical vocational education available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/repererele_pentru_site.pdf

Higher education

Out of 24 higher education institutions, only 14 are equipped with ramps for disabled people, although all dormitories have been adapted either by installing ramps or by providing the first floor to disabled students.

In the teaching/learning process, disabled students are allowed to have individual study plans, which will accommodate courses to their needs. Also, in case of inability to access the university facilities, the students can be allowed to be assessed remotely.

In terms of teacher training programmes, a compulsory course on Inclusive education was introduced, credited with 2 ECTS, in order to equip future teachers with the necessary skills and abilities to work in a multispectral environment. There was also training on this subject for teachers from all 24 higher education institutions.

In the adult education segment, all public or private institutions/ organizations that have continuing vocational training programs provide training courses in physical and online format, thus ensuring access to continuing education for all adults, including persons with special needs.

Teachers and trainers

17. Please describe the requirements for the qualification of teachers, school principals, trainers and leaders of education or training establishments and other staff at all levels and sectors of education and training, including staff in early childhood education and care.

General education

The minimum qualification requirements for teaching positions are:

- early education: a qualification of at least ISCED level 4 - post-secondary technical vocational education;
- primary education: a qualification of at least ISCED level 5 - non-tertiary post-secondary technical vocational education; in secondary education - a qualification at least ISCED level 6 - higher education degree, as well as passing the psycho-pedagogical module;
- secondary education: a qualification of at least ISCED level 7 - higher master's degree, as well as passing the psycho-pedagogical module;
- technical vocational education: a qualification of at least ISCED level 5 - post-secondary non-tertiary technical vocational education, in

programmes in the certain field, excluding masters, and passing the psycho-pedagogical module;

- higher education - a qualification of at least ISCED level 7 - higher master studies.

In arts and sports education, honorary titles and prizes obtained in national and international competitions, recognized by the relevant central bodies, confer the right to occupy teaching posts.

To hold a scientific and teaching post in higher education, a qualification of ISCED 8 level - higher doctoral studies - is required.

For teaching positions, graduates of non-pedagogical higher education programs are required to take the psycho-pedagogical module corresponding to 60 transferable study credits.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

According to the Education Code (Art.71), the teaching staff includes teachers, master-trainers, methodologists, psychologists, psycho-pedagogues, concert masters, circle mentors, choral directors, and orchestra directors.

According to the Education Code (Art.72), the initial training of teachers, methodologists, psychologists and psycho-pedagogues for the technical and vocational education and training is carried out in the higher education institutions, and the initial training of teachers for specialized subjects and the social pedagogues from the pupils' hostels is carried out in the post-secondary non-tertiary vocational and higher educational institutions within the profile programs. People with qualifications and professional experience in the area, regardless of the initial training, may be employed as master-trainers. Specialists from the economic or artistic sectors take a psycho-pedagogical training module to obtain the right to practice as teachers.

Concerning the minimum qualification requirements for the teaching staff, according to the Education Code (Art.132), in the technical and vocational education and training it is necessary to hold a training qualification of at least ISCED level 5 - post-secondary non-tertiary vocational education and training,- for profile programs, except for master-trainers and specialists who teach the psycho-pedagogical module. To hold teaching positions, graduates of non-pedagogical higher education programs must attend a psycho-pedagogical module (60 ECTS credits.)

Higher education

The teaching, scientific-teaching, scientific and management staff in education has to ensure the implementation of the state educational standards of general education, and initial and continuing professional training.

The teaching, scientific-teaching, scientific and management staff may obtain teaching and managerial degrees, scientific and scientific-teaching titles according to the existing legislation.

At least 50% of all scientific-teaching positions in the higher education institutions shall be filled in by the titular teaching staff.

The qualifications needed for accessing a profession in higher education are as follows:

- at least level 7 EQF qualification, a master degree (for accessing the position of university assistant)
- in order to obtain a scientific-didactic position in higher education, it is mandatory to have a level 8 EQF (doctoral degree).

18. Please describe the provision and organisation of initial education and continuous professional development for teachers, trainers and academic staff. To what degree are the programmes ready to train teachers for student-centred teaching and competence-based learning? To what degree do the programmes train teachers for the use of digital technologies in the pedagogical process?

The professional development of teaching, scientific and managerial staff is carried out in higher education institutions and/or in continuing vocational training institutions by other accredited educational service providers, on the basis of accredited training programmes, through:

- training periods in educational and research institutions or accredited organizations at home and abroad;
- participation, as partners, in national and international educational and/or research projects;
- participation with communications and/or papers in international conferences, seminars, symposia and exhibitions.

An important reference system for self-assessment of the level of performance of teachers in general education is presented by the Standards of Professional Competence of Teachers⁸⁵.

⁸⁵ Standards of Professional Competence of Teachers, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/standarde_cadre_didactice.pdf

The Standards constitute a reference framework for the continuous development of professional competencies in relation to educational needs, existing trends and the teaching level required, motivating self-training and the achievement of quality teaching. Initial and in-service training programmes offered by the higher education institutions with a pedagogical profile and/or in continuing professional development institutions, as well as by other accredited educational service providers, are carried out according to the Standards of Professional Competence for Teachers in General Education. There are modules referring to digital competence training, use of educational platforms and implementation of ICT in education, with the aim of ensuring the Standards of Digital Competence for Teachers in General Education⁸⁶.

The competence areas of the Digital Competence Standards for Teachers in General Education were determined in accordance with national and international documents under the domain of the European Parliament and European Council's framework document on key competencies for lifelong learning. Competencies necessary for a teacher to carry out professional activities have been included in Digital Competence Standards for Teachers in General Education: access to the best educational resources and content; communication with colleagues, parents and within professional networks; and carrying out the management of teaching activities through digital tools.

Defining teachers' competencies in the form of a framework document, which guides their training and professional development throughout their careers, is one of the major conditions for raising the level of student achievement. These standards are the basic benchmarks in the organization of the process of teacher evaluation, professional development and career progression.

Teaching, scientific and educational staff have the right to choose and use teaching technologies, textbooks and teaching materials approved by the MER, and alternative ones, which they consider appropriate to achieve the state educational standards.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

In VET education, in the pedagogical field, the initial training is carried out for the specialty of Early Education. Students can obtain the following qualifications: Kindergarten teacher, Music Conductor, Assistant of the Kindergarten teacher and in the specialty Primary education - the qualification of a Teacher.

⁸⁶ Digital Competence for Teachers in General Education, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/cnc4_finalcompetente_digitale_profesori_22iulie2015_1.pdf

Higher education

Initial teacher training is undertaken by eight higher education institutions that have accredited programmes. Future teachers are trained either in 180 ECTS study programmes mono-degree (a degree specializing only in one subject), or in 240 ECTS double degree (a degree specializing in two subjects simultaneously). In the first case, graduates are obliged to take 120 ECTS master programme, and in the second - a 90 ECTS master programme. The full approach of the teaching process in Moldova is competence-based and student-centred as provided in the Education Code. Specialized courses in digital pedagogical technologies are integrated in the teacher training programmes, and full master degrees are specialized in digital technologies and the use of digital technologies in the process of teaching.

For the accession to the scientific-didactic positions in universities, candidates are required to possess a doctoral degree.

The professional development of the teaching, scientific-teaching, scientific and management staff is compulsory during the entire professional activity and is regulated by the Government.

The professional development of the teaching, scientific-teaching, scientific and management staff is carried out in the higher education institutions and/or continuing professional training institutions and by other service providers.

The following accredited training programs are available: professional training internships in the educational and research institutions or accredited organizations in the country and abroad; participating as partners in the international and national educational and/or research projects; and participating with communications and/or works in the international conferences, seminars, symposiums, and exhibitions.

In accordance with Art. 134, para. (4) lit. b) of the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova, the teaching staff has the right, guaranteed by the state, to professional training courses in the field of teaching activity, at least once every three years.⁸⁷

According to Art. 213, para. (3) of the Labor Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 154 of 28.03.2003 at least two percent of the salary fund of the unit (institution/organization) is intended for the continuous professional training of employees, and the employer is obliged to create the necessary conditions and to favor the professional and technical training of employees.⁸⁸

In order for all teachers and management staff to have access to continuing education courses, 13 higher education institutions and four continuing education

⁸⁷ Law No. 152/2014 on approval of Education Code, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130514&lang=ro#

⁸⁸ Law No. 154/3 on approval of the Labour Code, available in Romanian at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_mec_2021_1.pdf

institutions / NGOs developed and accredited 193 vocational training programs for the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research.⁸⁹

In accordance with the provisions of the Methodology for elaborating programs for continuous professional training of teachers, approved by Order No. 92/2019⁹⁰, institutions providing continuing vocational training services offer teachers the following types of continuing vocational training programs:

- Thematic or modular continuous training programs, of short duration: from 30 to 90 hours / 1-3 credits;
- Medium-term continuing education programs - 300 hours / 10 credits
- Long-term multimodular continuing education programs - 600 hours / 20 credits
- Additional qualification programs - 1800 hours - 60 credits;
- Professional requalification programs - 3600 hours - 120 credits.

Medium-term, multimodular, additional qualification and professional requalification continuing education programs contain modules specific to specialized teaching, personal development, and the ICT module in education. The teaching methods learned by the teachers in the specialized didactic module are based on the learner needs. At the same time, in the ICT module in education, teachers are continuously developing their digital skills.

In order to support the continuous professional development of teachers, according to the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Education and Research, about 22 million lei were allocated from the state budget for teacher training courses.

18 thousand teachers in 2017-2018, 6900 teachers in 2019, and 5866 teachers in 2020 benefited from free of charge continuing education courses.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Government Decision No.616/2016 pentru aprobarea External quality assessment methodology for the authorization of temporary operation and accreditation of study programs and technical, higher education and continuing education institutions and the Regulation for the calculation of fees for services provided in the external evaluation of the quality of study programs and of technical, higher education and continuing education institutions, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130031&lang=ro#

⁹⁰ Order No. 92/2019 on approval of The methodology for elaborating the programs of continuous professional training of teachers, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/metodologia_de_elaborare_a_programelor_de_formare_profesionala_continua_a_cadrelor_didactice.pdf

⁹¹ Reports of the Activity of the Ministry of Education and Research available at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_mec_2018.pdf
https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_de_activitate_al_mec_pentru_anul_2019.pdf
https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_anual_consolidat_al_ministerului_educatiei_culturii_si_cercetarii_2020.pdf
https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_mec_2021_1.pdf

With the 2 percent of the salary fund of the educational institution, per the Labor Code, approximately 17,887 teachers and managers were trained in 2020, and about 15,442 teachers and managers - in 2021.

19. Are there any specific provisions for academic careers? What are the requirements for promotion and evaluation of teaching/academic staff?

General education

In the first three years of their activity, teaching staff that is employed in public educational institutions have the following rights: a compensation from the state budget for the costs of renting accommodation, heat and electricity consumption; support for on the job training , including a 75% reduction of the teaching hours; and assistance from the mentor teacher.

Teaching, scientific and teaching staff of educational institutions who have shown excellence in teaching and education may be awarded with state distinctions under the law.

Certification of teachers is a voluntary process and is carried out every five years. Following certification, a teacher can obtain a second, first or higher teaching grade. A teaching grade entitles the teacher to another pay grade, increased by up to five grades. To maintain their qualification, teachers must confirm their teaching grades every five years.

The certification of teachers and managers is carried out by the Ministry of Education and Research, relevant ministries, and district (municipal) general directorates for education, youth and sport in cooperation with trade unions.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

According to the Education Code (Art.73 and Art. 74), the internal assessment of teaching staff in the VET education has to be carried out annually based on the assessment methodology approved by the Ministry of Education and Research.

The external assessment of teaching staff in the VET education has to be carried out once every five years by competent authorities, based on the assessment methodology approved by the Ministry of Education and Research. Based on the Ministerial Order No. 1091/2020 and Regulation⁹², attestation of teachers in general, technical and vocational education within the psycho-pedagogical assistance structures is voluntary. New specialists and holders of master's degrees in education sciences / in the taught subject, who have initial higher education in

⁹² The Ministerial Order No.1091/2020 on Regulation attestation of teachers in general, technical and vocational education within the psycho-pedagogical assistance structures available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/regulament_atestare_pentru_publicare_in_monitorul_oficial_0.pdf

the field of activity or in the taught subject, are entitled to participate in the certification process after at least two years of teaching activity.

The teaching and management staff in technical and vocational education and training institutions may be awarded the following teaching and management degrees: second, first and senior.

The procedure for awarding teaching and management degrees is established by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Admission to the second teaching degree increases the salary by 30%.

At the policy level, there is support for new teachers for continuing professional development through access to a teaching degree: two years after employment for the holders of Bachelor degrees, and after one year – for the holders of Master degrees, Admission to the second didactic degree increases the salary with 5 classes.

Higher education

Besides the doctoral degree for accessing an academic career, there are specific criteria for promotion to the position of associate professor and university professor, with indicators related to the number of articles published in international journals, participation in international projects, elaboration of monographies and teaching aids, etc.

The evaluation of staff involved in teaching and research in higher education is part of the quality assurance system and is carried out periodically in accordance with institutional regulations. The evaluation of staff involved in teaching and research in higher education is carried out on the basis of teaching performance, research performance, participation in academic life and other criteria laid down in the institutional regulations.

The evaluation of scientific and teaching staff is carried out by:

- the administration of the institution;
- the head of department or chair;
- the quality assurance committee;
- peers and experts; and
- students.

The Regulation approved by the Ministry Decision provides the conditions of occupation of academic positions in higher education⁹³ and establishes the framework for academic progress and competitiveness in the system.

Curricula

20. Which authorities establish the curricula at each level of education and training? What degree of autonomy do educational establishments have in implementing curricula at the level of schools? What level of autonomy do higher education institutions have (including academic freedom, hiring of rectors and other staff)?

General education

The Ministry of Education and Research is the central authority that approves state educational standards, regardless of the type of ownership and legal form of organization of the educational institution.

The normative document that is compulsory for all school education institutions is the framework plan for primary, secondary, and high school education, in which the compulsory and optional subjects and the school disciplinary curricula are established.

At the same time, teachers have freedom and responsibility in the choice of teaching-learning-assessment technologies. The teacher is responsible for the design of the teaching process. Each teacher's competencies are reflected in the pupils' results. From this perspective, the subject-based curriculum guides the teacher to apply formative teaching strategies; apply active and interactive methods; apply learning activities focused on problematization, investigation, heuristics, case studies, etc.; focus on the formation of competencies and values; establish the interconnection between contents and teaching strategies; carry out instruction through cooperation and reverse connection; and carry out a permanent evaluation of school performance.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The curricula development for VET system is based on several normative acts, such as:

- The reference framework of the curriculum for technical vocational education (Order of the Minister of Education no. 1128/2015) - the first document of educational policy, which establishes the structure and

⁹³ Order No. 126/2021 on approval of the Regulation of the conditions of occupation of academic positions in higher education, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/regulament_ocuparea_functiilor.pdf

procedures for the elaboration and implementation of the curriculum for VET education⁹⁴;

- Methodological support for curriculum design in secondary technical vocational education approved by the Order of the Minister of Education no. 676/2016⁹⁵;
- The practical guide for the elaboration of the curriculum for post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary technical vocational education (Order of the Minister of Education no. 296/2016)⁹⁶.

According to these documents, which establish the normative and methodological framework, the Ministry of Education and Research approved the mechanism to assure the curricula implementation throughout the Framework plan for post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary technical vocational education based on the System of transferable study credits approved by the MER Order on 16.12.2015⁹⁷ and the framework plan for the secondary technical vocational education study programs approved by the MER Order on 07.05.2019.

The responsibilities of the stakeholders regarding the curricula implementation:

- The Ministry of Education and Research has the role of coordinating the process of elaboration and approval of curricular documents, coordination and monitoring of the implementation process. The curriculum by modules/subjects in the technical and vocational education and training is developed by experts in the area, by levels of education (secondary, post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary), has to be coordinated with the Sector Committees and is approved by the Ministry of Education and Research, through coordination with the relevant central bodies (Education Code, Art. 64, paras.2);
- NAQAER has the responsibility for the accreditation;
- Centres of Excellence have the leading role in curricula development;
- The VET institutions participate in the development and curricula implementation.
- The optional training is part of the curriculum that is decided by the VET institutions, which aims to respect the right of students to choose and to ensure the managerial autonomy. The institution offers students optional subjects in accordance with their interests, their skills and the specifics

⁹⁴ The Ministerial Order No. 1128/2015 The framework of reference of the curriculum for vocational education technical in Romanian is available at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/cr_ipt-30.11.pdf

⁹⁵ The Ministerial Order No. 676/2016 on the Methodological support for curriculum design in secondary technical vocational education is available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/suport_metodologic_web.pdf

⁹⁶ The Ministerial Order No. 296/2016 on The practical guide for the elaboration of the curriculum for post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary technical vocational education is available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ome_296_din_21.04.2016_1.pdf

⁹⁷ Ministerial Order No. 1205/215 Framework plan for post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary technical vocational education in Romanian is available at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_cu_anexa_plan_cadru.pdf

of their chosen profession. There is a list of optional disciplines included in the framework plan for the VET system. For the Secondary VET for two-year study programs, the share of the general training is 25,89 %; specialized training - 70,32% and optional component - 3,79%. For the three-years study programs the share of general training is 34,4 %; specialized training - 63,4% and optional component - 2,2%.

For Post secondary VET, optional course units are scheduled throughout the training. Their share in the curriculum constitutes at least 10 percent of the number of credits allocated for the training program.

Free choice course units ensure the expansion of knowledge and the development of skills of students in the chosen field of vocational training or in other adjacent fields. Their share in the curriculum is at most 10 percent of the number of credits allocated for the training program. Each student, depending on their professional development aspirations and prospects of employment, will choose an individual educational path of professional training from the optional and free-choice course units included in the curriculum. Optional course unit at the time of signing the annual study contract becomes mandatory.

In the field of **continuous professional training**, in accordance with the provisions of point 27 of the Regulation on the continuous training of adults, approved by the Government Decision No. 193/2017⁹⁸, the continuous professional training programs by fields of activity are elaborated by the adult training providers and are coordinated with the line ministries and the Ministry of Education and Research, in accordance with the methodological norms approved by the order of the Minister of Education. Curriculum is an integral part of continuing education programs.

In order to provide methodological support to institutions providing continuing education services in the development of programs and curricula, the Ministry of Education and Research has developed two methodologies:

- The methodology for elaborating programs and curricula within the lifelong learning, approved by Order no. 70/2019⁹⁹
- The methodology for elaborating the continuous professional training programs for teachers, approved by Order no. 92/2019¹⁰⁰.

All institutions providing continuing education services under public or private law are entitled to develop different types of continuing education programs/curricula based on the training needs of teachers, following the

⁹⁸ Government Decision No. 193/2017 on approval of Regulation on continuous training of adults, available in Romanian at: <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=369645>

⁹⁹ Order No. 70/2019 on approval of Methodology for developing programs and curricula in lifelong learning, available in Romanian: <https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/uspee.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ Order No. 92/2019 on approval of Methodology for developing in-service teacher training programs, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/metodologia_de_elaborare_a_programelor_de_formare_profesionala_continua_a_cadrelor_didactice.pdf

accreditation procedure at the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research.

Higher education

The curriculum in higher education institutions is developed in accordance with the provisions of the National Qualifications Framework, for each study cycle and field, and is approved by the institution's senate.

The matching of the curriculum offered by the higher education institution to the qualification awarded upon graduation from a higher education programme is a mandatory criterion for assessing the quality of the higher education institution.

University autonomy is prescribed in the Education Code in the following way:

- the liberty to establish own curricula, although the study programmes should be designed within the boundaries of the Framework Plan for Higher Education¹⁰¹;
- the liberty to manage finances;
- the liberty to choose management staff (deans, heads of departments, etc);
- the liberty to choose the Rector (elected by the academic community).

According to the Framework-Plan for Higher Education the study programmes should be developed taking into account the following points:

- The curricula for undergraduate study programmes will contain course units/module: fundamental, general, specialist and socio-human subjects grouped by subject categories (compulsory, optional, elected), in the proportion determined as optimal for the formation of knowledge, skills and competences required to obtain the qualification.
- The core course units/modules will constitute a minimum of 65% of the total number of credits allocated to the study programme.

The general skills and competences training component is compulsory and will include:

- a course in a foreign language of international circulation with application to the field of training,
- a course in information communication technologies, which will include the following modules: Information Culture, Information Technologies, Use of Information Technologies in the training field, New software and risks of IT use in the field of training, Communication techniques based on the use of IT, etc.

¹⁰¹ Order 120/2020 on approval of Framework Plan for Higher Education cycle I, Master degree cycle II and integrates studies, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_8.pdf

- a course in Romanian language communication for students in the groups of non-Romanian speakers, including Communication techniques, Business correspondence, etc.;
- a separate course in Ethics and Professional Culture or the inclusion of subjects relating to ethics and professional culture in the contents of specialist course units/modules;
- a course in Educational Management for students in the field of Educational Sciences.

The curricula, in the case of bachelor programmes, will contain a compulsory course in physical education for students in years I and II, which shall not be quantified by credits, but which shall be assessed with a grade of "passed" as a prerequisite for admission to the final examination for higher education studies of bachelor's degree.

The curricula for Master's programmes will include 50% of the total number of credits allocated to the programme activities and research activities.

In cycles I and II, the course unit/module shall consist of teaching activities or direct contact with students (lectures/lectures, seminars, laboratory work, practical work, project work, teaching, clinical and other forms approved by the Senate) and teaching activities non-audit activities (projects or bachelor/master thesis; individual study, etc.). Direct contact/individual study will be established according to the field of training, the speciality/master's programme, the study objectives, the specifics of the course unit/module, the degree of novelty and/or complexity and the methodical and didactic provision. This ratio shall be established by the department, based on a specific methodology for each general field of study, approved by the Senate, on the proposal of the Faculty Council organising the study programme.

In the process of allocating study credits to the educational activities contained in the allocation of study credits to educational activities in the Educational Plan, it shall be taken into account that 30 study credits are allocated for an academic semester. (i.e. 60 study credits for one academic year) and the student's annual workload (direct contact and individual study) is about 1800 hours. For a module it is recommended to allocate 4-6 study credits.

The syllabus will expressly indicate the form of semester assessment of the course/module unit, and the form of the final evaluation of the higher education studies (bachelor, master), including the deadlines for organisation, as well as the number of credits associated with this activity.

21. What is the core/compulsory curriculum in primary and secondary education? What type of curricula or similar documents exist for early childhood education and care?

The national curriculum in general education includes the reference framework, the framework plan for primary, secondary and high school education, the curriculum for early education, the curriculum for compulsory and optional subjects, school textbooks, and methodological guidelines for implementing the curriculum and other learning resources.

The National Curriculum Reference Framework is the document that defines the conceptual, methodological and praxeological foundations of curricular policies for general education.

The framework plan for primary, secondary and high school education is a normative document, approved by Order of the MER, compulsory for all general education institutions and regulates the organization of the educational process¹⁰².

In primary education, the compulsory document is the Curriculum for Primary Education. It is part of the National Curriculum and is a regulatory and normative document to be implemented in the educational process in primary classes (I-IV). The purpose of the Primary Education Curriculum is to give concrete expression and value to educational policies at the primary school level.

In secondary education, the compulsory documents are represented by the Curriculum of Compulsory Subjects and the Curriculum of Optional Subjects. Both categories of curricula are part of the National Curriculum and are regulatory and normative documents to be implemented in the educational process in the secondary grades (V-IX), in order to make the teaching-learning assessment process at the secondary school level more efficient¹⁰³.

The educational policy documents, which regulate the educational process in early education, are the Framework of Reference (2018), the Standards of Child Learning and Development from Birth to Age 7 (developed in 2010 and refined in 2018), and the Curriculum of Early Education (2018). Curriculum reform, implemented in the preschool education system in the Republic of Moldova in 2014, has been inspired by international trends in the field of child-centred education - the child's needs and interests and the child's own pace of development. These documents are based on the holistic/global approach to the child, from the perspective of the following areas of development: cognitive, socio-emotional, physical and linguistic, ensuring the well-being of the child; approach from the perspective of gender equality and child/children's rights; child competence-centered curriculum; an integrated approach to curricular/activity areas through cross-curricular competencies of early education; linking developmental areas with curricular/activity areas; the desire to learn in both mother tongue and foreign

¹⁰² The framework plan for primary, secondary and high school education, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/plan-cadru_2021-2022_pt_siteul_mecc_plasat_la_20.04.2021.pdf

¹⁰³ Website of the Ministry of Education and Research, General Education section, available in Romanian at: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/invatamint-general>

language; ethnic and multicultural education; a socio-educational partnership in the best interests of the child (direct involvement of family/community/society in the process of upbringing, care, education), creation/insurance of a safe educational environment, use of formal/non-formal/informal forms of organization; and open and closed educational resources recommended to facilitate interactive learning activities through play.

Linking areas of development with curricular/activity areas; willingness to learn in both mother tongue and foreign language; ethnic and multicultural education; a socio-educational partnership in the best interests of the child (direct involvement of family/community/society in the process of upbringing, care, education), creating/ensuring a safe educational environment, making use of formal/non-formal/informal forms of organization; open and closed educational resources recommended for facilitating interactive learning activities through play.

The Early Childhood Education Reference Framework (ECERF) of 2018 is the core document of national education policy in the field of early childhood education. This document concretizes the vision of the child; establishes the specific aspects of the educational process; ensures the convergence of efforts in extending, deepening, developing the child's education from birth to seven years and correlating it with the multiple needs of the child and the family, ensuring the child's well-being and ensuring equal access and opportunities to quality education for every child.

ECERF establishes the defining characteristics of early education, which will be respected in all processes of updating educational policies, including curricular ones, and defines early education in the education system of the Republic of Moldova as being based on the holistic approach to child development and the child-centred approach in the educational process. Therefore, physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and language development in childhood factors are decisive aspects for the future adult.

ECERF is both a condition and a consequence of the process of developing and promoting educational policies in the early education dimension.

ECERF Framework addresses:

- early childhood education policymakers;
- policymakers;
- curriculum developers, experts and specialists in the field of early education;
- authors of educational resources;
- teachers and lecturers, students in academic settings;
- managers and educators/teachers in mainstream early education institutions;

- parents and other interested institutions/persons (donors, economic agents, national and international NGOs, etc.).

The Standards for Children's Learning and Development from Birth to Age Seven - developed in 2010 and reviewed in 2018, is a framework of expectations about what children should know and do. The standards guide educational actors in the growth and development of children from birth to school entry, both in-home environment and in early education settings. These documents reflect the aims of educational actions, guide and improve practices in accordance with the specific development of the child during this period of life, taking into account, in a holistic way, all areas of his/her development.

The *Standards for Children's Learning and Development from Birth to Age Seven* recognise:

- the uniqueness of each child;
- the holistic and integrated nature of their development;
- the child's active role in self-formation and learning;
- the importance of respecting the child's fundamental rights;
- the fundamental role of the adult in the early care, upbringing, development and education of the child.

The Standards for Children's Learning and Development from birth to Age Seven promote a child-centred approach to supporting children in their learning and development, but its mission of guiding and promoting quality is about the whole early education, care and development system. For teachers, the standards are a point of reference in organising and designing educational activities with children, as well as monitoring and evaluating their development in early education institutions.

The Curriculum for Early Education (2018) reflects the pedagogical conception of the education and development of children from birth to school entry. In its integrity, as a concept, purpose, content, process/action, product, *The Curriculum for Early Education* ensures the functionality and development of early education, in correlation with *The Standards for Child Learning and Development from Birth to Seven Years* and *The Reference Framework for Early Education in the Republic of Moldova*.

The Curriculum for Early Education is based on psychological and pedagogical theories, which emphasize the need for the holistic and individual development of children and value multi-aspectual concepts, such as best interests of the child, child's well-being and joy of learning through play, holistic approach to child development and educational act, integrated activities, competency-based curriculum, linking child development areas with activity areas, secure educational environment, socio-educational partnership.

General competencies, related to early education set out in the *Curriculum for Early Education* are defined and formed throughout the period of early education (pre-school 1.5-3 years and pre-school 3-7 years). These are:

- showing autonomy and respect for self and others in different contexts;
- openness to lifelong learning, showing activism, creativity and responsibility;
- orientation in the value system (Good versus Evil etc.) as a young citizen;
- demonstration of the necessary prerequisites for entry into primary school: psychosocial and emotional behaviour, self-control, cognitive, psychomotor and communication skills.

The current Early Education Curriculum in the Republic of Moldova contains five areas of activity: Health and Motor Skills; Me, Family and Society; Language and Communication; Science and Technology; Arts. These correlate directly with the four developmental domains of children up to seven years: physical, cognitive, socio-emotional and linguistic. The 2018 curriculum developed two new areas - "Me, family and society" and "Digital education" (for children in the preparatory groups).

22. Please describe VET and higher education curricula delivery methods and learning environments (e.g. modular, credit-based)? What kind of arrangements exist for credit transfer and recognition (i.e. credits from domestic and/or foreign educational institutions) and for recognition of foreign qualifications/degrees? Is the Diploma Supplement¹⁰⁴ issued automatically, free of charge and in a widely spoken language to each higher education degree?

Recognition of foreign qualifications/degrees

In the Republic of Moldova, the academic and professional qualifications are assessed in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention¹⁰⁵, ratified in 1999 and its subsidiary texts; Recommendation on criteria and procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications and other good practice and tools recommended by the European Area of Recognition Manual and the European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions. The recognition activities are based on national legal framework: the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014, Art. 17 p. 9); the mutual recognition agreements and

¹⁰⁴ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/higher-education-initiatives/inclusive-andconnected-higher-education/diploma-supplement>

¹⁰⁵ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=59181&lang=ro

Regulation on recognition and equivalence of study documents and qualifications obtained abroad approved through the Ministerial Order No. 1702/2019¹⁰⁶.

The recognition and transfer of credits for learning outcomes obtained in various contexts, including abroad, is carried out in accordance with the principles applied in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), to which the Republic of Moldova acceded in May 2005, as well as in accordance with the provisions of the Guide for the implementation of the National Credit System, approved by Order METS No. 140/2006¹⁰⁷, the ECTS users' guide 2015¹⁰⁸ and the Framework Regulation on academic mobility in higher education, approved by Government No. 56/2014¹⁰⁹. Academic mobility is carried out only in accredited study programmes.

Bilateral recognition agreements, inter-institutional agreements on academic mobility and joint study programmes facilitate the recognition and transfer of study credits.

Academic mobility is one of the indicators in the external quality assessment standard and the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The organization of studies in VET education is implemented in two ways:

- In Secondary VET, the educational process is implemented based on the Modular curricula according to the Framework Plan¹¹⁰
- In Post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary VET, the educational process is implemented through the system of transferable credit studies¹¹¹.

At the end of the studies, there is an issuance of the corresponding study certificate for the graduates¹¹² (Certificate of studies/diploma of professional studies) and the supplement of the study certificate¹¹³.

¹⁰⁶ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=120432&lang=ro

¹⁰⁷ https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordinul_nr_140_din_27.02.2006_ghid_de_implementare_a_sistemului_national_de_credite_de_studiu_snc.pdf

¹⁰⁸ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/da7467e6-8450-11e5-b8b7-01aa75ed71a1>

¹⁰⁹ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=351368>

¹¹⁰ The Ministerial Order No.488/2019 on the approval of the Framework Plan for Secondary VET is available in Romanian at:

https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordinul_488_din_07.05.2019.pdf

¹¹¹ The Ministerial Order No.234/2016 Framework plan for post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary technical vocational education implemented through the system of transferable credit studies in Romanian is available at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/ome_nr_234_din_25_martie_2016.pdf

¹¹² Ministerial Order No.1203/2015 regarding the approval of the models of study documents in technical vocational education in Romanian is available at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=90492&lang=ro

¹¹³ Ministerial Order No. 1204/2015 Regarding the approval of the supplements to the documents of studies in technical vocational education in Romanian is available at:

Higher education

As a signatory of the Bergen Communiqué –(Bologna Process in 2005), study programmes in the Republic of Moldova are organized on the basis of ECTS (180-240 ECTS for bachelor degrees, and 90-12 ECTS for master degrees). Internal and international mobility is fostered by the system, with credits obtained abroad being recognized in the domestic institution automatically.

The diploma supplement is freely and automatically offered to the graduates both in Romanian and in English, and follows the latest pattern of the Paris Ministerial Conference approved DS model.

Higher education institutions are free in recognizing international degrees and periods of study and accepting foreign students to study in Moldovan institutions. It is no longer a centralized exercise.

23. How are quality assurance systems set up (including internal quality assurance measures)? How accreditation of degree programmes/institutions are made?

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Regarding the accreditation of degree programmes/institutions for the VET system and quality assurance system, according to the Education Code (Art.65), these functions are carried out based on the national reference, accreditation standards and methodology developed by NAQAER and approved by the Government. The Methodology for External Evaluation of quality in order to authorize provisional operation and the accreditation of study programs and educational VET institutions, higher education and continuous training was approved by the Government Decision No. 616/2016 and represents the key document on the quality assurance process.

The quality assessment in VET includes several components: institutional capacity; educational efficiency, including academic outcomes; quality of the training programs; institutional management of quality; and correlation between the internal assessment and the real situation.

The quality assessment in VET is based on the dual approach: the assessment of the training programs and the assessment of institutions providing training programs.

The internal assessment of the quality in VET system has to be carried out by the institutional structures for quality assurance, based on the national reference and accreditation standards, as well as on the institutional regulation.

At the institutional level, according to the Ministerial Order No.323 from 29.03.2019¹¹⁴ regarding the approval of staff number and the Methodology for allocating working time of teachers in VET institutions, the function of the Head of quality assurance department as a part of management staff is established in every VET institution.

At the methodological level, the VET institutions implement the Self-assessment guide for internal quality assurance in technical vocational education approved by the Ministerial Order no. 609 from 19.12.2017¹¹⁵ and the Quality Management Guide in technical vocational education approved by the same Ministerial Order.

Concerning the implementation of the quality assurance policies at the level of VET institutions, the relevant document is the Ministerial Order no. 1014 of July 2, 2018 on the action plan of the external evaluation of the technical vocational training programs in the technical vocational education institutions.¹¹⁶

Higher education

Quality assurance in higher education is achieved through a set of actions to develop institutional capacity for curriculum development, planning and implementation, building and strengthening the confidence of beneficiaries that the educational provider meets and improves quality standards in accordance with its mission. Quality management in higher education is ensured:

- at national level - by the Ministry of Education and Research and the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research;
- at institutional level - by internal quality assurance structures.

A fully functioning quality assurance system involves two successive stages:

- provisional operating authorisation, which authorized the establishment of the institution and grants the right to conduct the educational process and organise admission to studies;
- accreditation, which additionally grants the right to organise the examination for the completion of studies, as well as the right to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognised by the Ministry of Education and Research.

¹¹⁴ The Methodology for allocating working time of teachers in VET institutions available in Romanian at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_323_-_modificat_1550.pdf

¹¹⁵ The Ministerial Order No. 609/2017 Self-assessment guide for internal quality assurance in technical vocational education in Romanian is available at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/anexa_2_integral.pdf

¹¹⁶ The Ministerial Order No. 1014/2018, regarding the action plan of the external evaluation of the technical vocational training programs in the technical vocational education institutions in Romanian is available at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_cu_anexe_0.pdf

At the national level, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research is responsible for accreditation of study programmes and institutions, according to the Yerevan approved ESGs.

It is an ENQA affiliate and is in the process of being evaluated by ENQA for EQAR registration.

There are two decisions that the Agency can offer: authorization (for new programs, allowing enrollment, but not issuing of degree) and accreditation (allowing both enrollment and issuing of degree)

Also, study programmes and higher education institutions can invite international EQAR registered agencies to be evaluated. All 24 higher education institutions have set up internal quality assurance structures.

Evaluation for accreditation/authorization is undertaken based on the Accreditation/ Authorization Methodology drafted by the Agency and approved by the Government. The Agency issues decisions on accreditation/authorization/nonaccreditation/nonauthorization, while the Ministry of Education and Research approves the decisions by the Ministry Order. This does not diminish the autonomy of the Agency, as the Ministry does not have the right to intervene in the decisions of the accrediting body it is a bureaucratic measure, provided for by law.

24. Teaching of the official languages of the European Union: Please describe the teaching of languages provided at the various levels of the education system. Please provide information on existing translator and interpreter training programmes at postgraduate level.

General education

The study of foreign languages is covered by Art.10 of the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014 which stipulates that the educational process is conducted in Romanian and, within the possibilities of the educational system, in one of the languages of international circulation.

At the same time, according to Art. 11 of the same Code, one of the educational purposes is reflected in the formation of communication competence in foreign languages.

In the Republic of Moldova, the following foreign languages are studied: English, French, German, Russian, and Spanish.

The study of international languages is provided at all levels of education primary, secondary and high school - both as the first and second language of study. In primary education, the first language of study is taught from the second grade, two or three hours a week, and the second language of study - from fifth grade. Both

options are provided throughout the secondary school. The development of communicative competence in a foreign language is based on the Foreign Language Curriculum, 2018, 2019 edition, the contents of which have been adjusted to the indicators described in the Supplementary Volume of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2018)¹¹⁷.

The official languages taught in General education in The Republic of Moldova in the school year 2021/2022

Language	Number of pupils		
	Primary Education	Secondary education	High school education
English	70.778	111978	26133
French	17534	45248	9762
German	1755	5529	3494
Italy	456	898	362
Chinese	75	142	15
Hebrew	365	470	165
Polish	33	17	0
Spanish	267	468	305
Turkish	394	661	442

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

In the VET system of Moldova, the official languages of the European Union are taught, especially English and French. The selection of the language takes into consideration the desire of students, parents and the capacities of VET institutions to provide the courses.

For the Post secondary VET, according to the Framework plan for post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary technical vocational education based on the System of transferable study credits, the general vocational skills training component (compulsory) includes a foreign language course with application and relevance in the field of vocational training, offered from the first year of studies. It is also recommended for educational institutions to set up and expand the education system teaching of course units in foreign languages of international circulation.

¹¹⁷ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment, available in English at: <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

For the Secondary VET, based on the framework plan for the secondary technical vocational education study programs, for the two-years' study programs, the foreign language is taught at the second year of study, two hours per week during 16 weeks.

For the three-years' study programs, the foreign language is taught during the first year of study (68 hours); second year of study (60 hours) and the third year of study (24 hours).

The translator and interpreter training programmes are not provided in the VET system.

Higher education

According to the Framework Plan for Higher Education, the general skills and competencies training component is compulsory and will include a foreign language course (English, French, or German) with application in the field of vocational training, offered from the first year of study. It is recommended that higher education institutions set up and expand the system of teaching units in foreign languages. Depending on the possibilities of the institution, two foreign languages may be taught and the study of the specialty in a cross-cultural context (particularly recommended for fields oriented towards international activity) ¹¹⁸.

With reference to the study programs in the field of translation and interpreting, in the Republic of Moldova, four higher education institutions carry out programmes in this field, both at bachelor and master level.

The bachelor degrees in Translation and Interpretation lasts three years (180 ECTS) and can jointly specialize in two languages simultaneously, while master programmes offer an in depth detailing on theoretical aspects.

Also, doctoral programmes exist in the respective field, annually three-four students per system being enrolled in specialized programmes at the level of doctoral studies.

25. Digital competences: Please describe how digital skills are taught at the various levels of the education system.

General Education

The reform of the school curriculum has required the modification of teaching processes, educational strategies, and technologies, the development of learning

¹¹⁸ The Order No. 120/2020 on approval of Framework Plan for Higher Education cycle I, Master degree cycle II and integrates studies, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_8.pdf

tools using ICT in the classroom and at a distance, the development of elements of institutional management using management platforms at all levels, and the application of best practices in achieving the objectives of improving education through the implementation of ICT. Digital competencies are an integral, compulsory part of all core curricula in the training/qualification of all teachers.

Digital competence is one of the key competencies of the education system in the Republic of Moldova. Digital competence involves the confident, critical and responsible use of digital technologies in the context of learning, work, and participation in social activities. It includes digital literacy, media literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including online well-being/comfort and cyber security skills), respect for intellectual property, problem-solving and critical thinking.

The Ministry of Education and Research signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Google on the implementation of the Google for Education package in the Republic of Moldova. Through this Agreement, more than 1200 general education institutions (97.48%) received accounts for Google for Education package and received consulting and technical support for the integration of the Google for Education suite of applications into the training process and use. More than 20000 general education teachers (about 51% of the total number) were trained in the use of the Google for Education suite of applications.

In order to contribute to the training and development of digital competencies of the young generation, as well as to achieve the Digital Competence Standards for primary, secondary, and high school students, in the process of developing the National Curriculum in 2018-2019, several school subjects were reconceptualized, including the subject of Informatics and Technological Education, by introducing the Digital Education module and other ICT-based optional courses. The development of digital competencies and the implementation of ICT in the educational process became a basic requirement in all school subjects.

In order to meet the educational needs of students and to help them train, improve and test their necessary digital skills, the concept of "Classroom of the Future" is being promoted in the country's education system, with school premises and laboratories being equipped with state-of-the-art digital equipment.

In order to develop students' digital skills according to their personal interests, the curriculum offer has been diversified to optional subjects focused on training students' digital skills and effective use of modern information technologies: Robotics, Mobile Application Design, and Development, Web Design and Development, Initiation in IT Security, Graphic Design, Artificial Intelligence. Currently, these optional ICT subjects are taught in more than 330 schools (26.8%), benefiting more than 25,000 pupils (about 8%). Pupils' interest in these subjects is growing year by year.

In the majority of kindergartens in the Republic of Moldova there is at least one computer that can be used in the teaching-learning activity, as computer-assisted

instruction further stimulates children's interest in new technologies, In 2021, early education institutions had 5700 computers, of which 3812 (or 66.9%) computers were used for educational purposes compared to 3250 computers in 2020. Of the total number of computers, 82% had an Internet connection, up by 6.5% in 2020. According to the Early Education Curriculum, in kindergartens, computers can be used during the day: in the stage of games, in optional activities or in activities with the whole group of children, using interactive digital educational resources that help learning-oriented discovery. The Digital Education dimension of Science and Technology is applied from the age of 5 to 7 years.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

In the VET system, the training of digital skills is implemented in two directions. One of the directions is the transversal /cross cutting approach which is focused on the training of basic skills in the IT field in the context of the qualification that will be obtained at the end of studies. In this sense, the subject Information Technology¹¹⁹ is taught in the technical training programs and assures the training and development of professional skills of skilled workers in the field of information and communication technology, masters-instructors, technicians and other categories of specialists in technical vocational education.

The second direction is the training of IT skills through the professional study programs.

At the level of Secondary VET education, the study programs in the IT field are the following: Introduction for the operator, data validation and processing and computer support operator¹²⁰.

At the Post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary VET there are five specialties in the IT field, as follows¹²¹: Computers, Administration web applications, database administration, computer networking, and programming and analysis of software products.

According to the Methodology for elaboration of the programs of continuous professional training of teachers, approved by the Order No. 92/2019, the institutions providing continuing vocational training services for teachers develop multimodule Continuing Vocational Training Programs, which contain the ICT Module in education.

¹¹⁹The Ministerial Order No.848/2020 on the approval of the Modular Curriculum for Secondary VET programs in Romanian is available at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/curriculumtic_actualizare.pdf

¹²⁰ The link with the developed curricula for Secondary VET system in Romanian is available at: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/curriculum-invatamintul-profesional-tehnic-secundar>

¹²¹ The link with the developed curricula for Post Secondary VET system in Romanian is available at: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/curriculum-invatamintul-profesional-tehnic-postsecundar>

13 higher education institutions and four continuing education institutions and NGOs provide 193 accredited continuing education programs for teachers, which contain the ICT Module in education¹²².

During 2017-2021, 18000 teachers benefited from continuing education courses following the ICT module in education¹²³.

Higher education

According to the regulatory framework, higher education institutions are obliged to offer ICT courses to the first and second-year students. As a rule, it can be offered inter-relationally to the specialized field of studies.

In the context of the development of digital competences through the development and application of digital educational content in the educational process and ICT usage skills:

- The number of study programmes with digital educational content at 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle:

Within the 24 institutions that provide bachelor's degrees, cycle I, and master's, cycle II, digital educational contents are applied to 553 bachelor's and master's study programs. Most study programs with digital educational content were registered at the State University of Moldova - 75, the Technical University of Moldova - 72 and the State Pedagogical University "I. Creangă" – 71..

- Number of subjects/course units in the study programme with digital educational content by faculties:

Overall, 5100 course units with digital educational content were registered at cycle I and II. The leader in this respect is the State Agricultural University of Moldova with 850 subjects in 51 Study Programmes, followed by the Technical University of Moldova with 617 subjects in 72 Study Programmes, and the State University of Physical Education and Sport with 513 subjects in 24 Study Programmes.

Digital educational content management systems/platforms (e.g. MOODLE):

According to the data provided, most institutions have integrated digital educational content management systems or platforms into their study system in

¹²²The database of programs accredited by the Ministry of Education and Research in Romanian is available at: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/baza-de-date-programelor-acreditate-de-ministerul-educatiei-culturii-si-cercetarii>

¹²³The information on the continuing education courses following the ICT module in education can be found in the Ministerial Report for 2018 in Romanian is available at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_mec_2018.pdf
https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_de_activitate_al_mec_pentru_anul_2019.pdf
https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_anual_consolidat_al_ministerului_educatiei_culturii_si_cercetarii_2020.pdf
https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_mec_2021_1.pdf

order to diversify and facilitate study processes. Moodle is the most popular platform, integrated in 19 out of the 24 institutions concerned.

Across all institutions, more than 50 platforms are integrated: Cisco, UN COMTRADE Platform, TRADINGECONOMICS Platform, WxMaxima, Online Problem Solving Platforms: www.reshmat.ru, www.wolframalpha.com, Google drive, Google apps Kahoot, Eviews, SPSS 1C computer system, UNINETTUNO, Electronic catalogue of library collection, Netop School, Test Mooze, Trello, Biodigital, PlantNet, Youtube, Quiziss test, Educational blog, Online magazine - Ritm ProBiologic, ChemOffice, Mendeleev, GAUSSIAN, GAMESS, Hyperchem, Chemcraft, VM3, Mercury, GaussView 6, NeuLog, SHELX 27, Virtual Labs, Crocodile chemistry, Origin, Spectrum, Socrative, Kahoot, Wakelet, Goconquer, Google sites, Google Forms, Weebly, Vocaroo, SIMU, PACS, Radiant DICOM, E-learning and training hours, OnDemand, Romexis Viewer, Blue Sky Plan, ILIAS.

2799 academics are involved in the development of course programmes with digital educational content, which include in full or in part: online courses, seminars, webinars, teleconferences, online tests or assessments, individual work, self-assessments on computer, etc., carried out in a traditional and or virtual learning environment.

During the study year 2018-2019, in cycles I and II, within the course units, approximately. 33 000 students benefited from the digital educational content: . the Technical University of Moldova - 7574 students, constituting more than 92% of all students at this institution, the State University of Medicine and Pharmacy - 5713 students, constituting 100% of all students at this institution, and the State University of Moldova - 2547 students, or about 29% of all students at this institution.

In order to involve academics in the process of the development and promotion of digital educational content, most state institutions applied financial and non-financial methods of incentives, such as norming teaching activities with a coefficient from 1.25 to 2 units; the use of the performance indicator which is quantified as a monthly, yearly performance supplement or as an indicator taken into account for promotion through competitions;-competitions with prizes for the "Best Online Course"; and recognition diplomas, gifts, or incentive leave.

Adapting to change

26. What are the identified skill needs and/or shortages for the labour markets? What are the responses from the educational and training systems to meet current and future skills needs (e.g. by the labour market)?

General education

The results of the study "*Labour Market Forecast for 2022 from the employers 'perspective'*"¹²⁴, conducted by the National Agency for Employment, also highlights the fact that employers in the Republic of Moldova are facing a shortage of the necessary skills among employees: job-specific professional knowledge and skills, the desire to learn new things, mother tongue language skills (the ability to read and understand, as well as write at a level relevant to the job), digital, but also social and civic skills.

In order to face the challenges of the contemporary world (globalization, internationalization, digitalization, technologicalization, crisis of values, etc.), but also to ensure the implementation of the Education Development Strategy "Education-2020", international documents governing the European space for education, the following actions have been taken in general education in 2018-2019:

- developed a new National Curriculum Reference Framework ¹²⁵;
- developed/updated curricula for school subjects;
- reconceptualized the subjects of Technological Education and Personal Development;
- developed the Framework Plan by offering alternative Framework Plan models¹²⁶;
- diversified the offer of optional school subjects;
- promoted the implementation of digital educational resources and ICT in education.

Analyzing the conceptual, methodological and praxiological foundations of general education curricular policies that are implemented in the education system of the Republic of Moldova following the recent curricular reform, they will meet the challenges mentioned in the study conducted by the National Agency for Employment and will contribute to training necessary skills among employees in the country.

¹²⁴ The Study "Labour Market Forecast for 2022 from the employers 'perspective'", available in Romanian at: https://anofm.md/view_document?nid=19888

¹²⁵ The National Curriculum Reference Framework, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/cadrul_de_referinta_final_rom_tipar.pdf

¹²⁶ The Framework Plan, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/plan-cadru_2021-2022_pt_siteul_mecc_plasat_la_20.04.2021.pdf

The Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education

At the institutional level, several entities are involved in the identification of the skill needs . The correlation of the labour market needs with the VET system has to be carried out annually on the basis of the forecasts of the National Employment Agency.

The forecast has to provide information on the structure of employment by activity, job creation, labour shortages, and employers' cooperation with territorial employment agencies in vocational training programs.

Concerning the labour market research, this activity is supervised by the Labour Market Observatory which is part of the National Employment Agency. This structure has its own regulation and work plan, approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The main function of the Observatory is to develop analyses of the labour market and inform the education system about labour market needs and requirements. This entity should identify the skills gaps, skills mismatches, future needed skills, structural changes within the workforce per sectors of economy.

The Observatory research results should inform the state institutions, companies, the unemployed, educational institutions, and other relevant partners.

The methodologies are used only on a short-term basis: it is a questionnaire with modules with different sets of questions. It is based on data available and the barometer is used also for the analyses.

The connection of the labour market with the VET system is realized through the cooperation with social partners (Trade Unions, Employment association, Sectorial Committees), the Chamber of Commerce and Industries from Moldova, etc.

Another form of the involvement from the labour market is the requirement by companies to include new professions/specialties in VET education.

At the technical level, identified skills need are transformed into the VET education process through the Occupational Standards, Standards of Qualification, Curricula, and Educational Plans. These educational documents are coordinated with the labour market representatives. The VET system has direct cooperation with the labour market during internships of students. Another important intersection is the evaluation process of the VET graduates. The involvement of the private sector representatives is required in the evaluation.

Regarding the degree of employers' satisfaction with VET graduates, there is no relevant data on this issue. Based on the permanent communication, employers stated that there was a general lack of qualified workforce and lack of soft skills. There are several soft skills that lack among VET graduates: communication skills with employers, colleagues; job interviews; professional ethics of students;

communication in foreign languages; entrepreneurial skills; the ability to cooperate between students for the development of projects, start-ups during the study period, etc., critical thinking, adaptability in various social contexts, and problem-based learning.

The National Agency for Employment of the Republic of Moldova, a structure subordinated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, as well as the platforms for permanent dialogue with the Sectoral Committees for Vocational Training, representatives of employers' associations, professional associations and economic agents identify the skills needs required by the labour market.

The Labour Market Observatory of the National Agency for Employment develops the annual Short-Term Labour Market Forecast¹²⁷ in order to anticipate labour market requirements and reduce the gap between the training offered by educational institutions and the needs of economic agents. A special section in the Forecast is the Skills module, which presents information on the most demanded skills as identified by employers and how the lack of skills affects their business. This module is reviewed every three years. The Forecast for 2022 contains employers' recommendations (Fig. 1) for adjusting the training process of specialists to ensure the training of competences and skills required by the labour market. These recommendations are taken into account when developing occupational standards, qualification standards and curricula for vocational training programmes to reduce the gap between the skills demanded by the labour market and the learning outcomes provided by the education system.

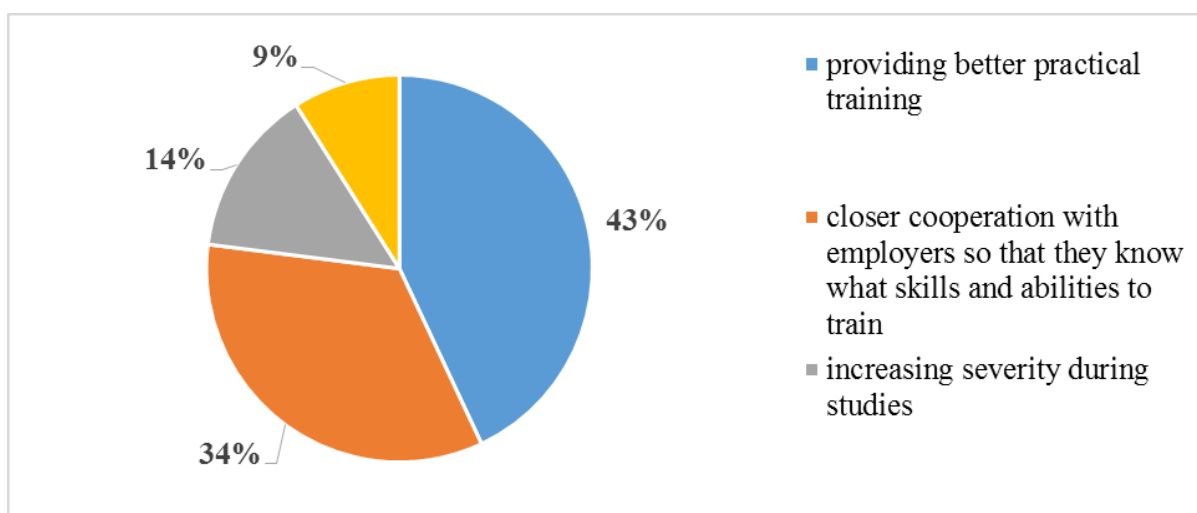


Fig. Employers' recommended changes in the education system to address the skills and competencies gap required in the labour market, %

According to the legal framework, professional training in vocational-technical education, levels 3-5 NQF, is carried out based on occupational standards, developed by labour market representatives in accordance with the Government

¹²⁷ The Short-Term Labour Market Forecast available in Romanian at: https://anofm.md/view_document?nid=19888

Decision No. 863/2014¹²⁸ Methodology for the development of occupational standards, qualification standards developed in accordance with the Methodology for the development, revision and validation of qualification standards¹²⁹/2019 and the Guide for the transposition of vocational competences into learning outcomes¹³⁰, by working groups including representatives of the education system and labour market representatives. Qualification standards, training curricula and education plans are coordinated and validated by the Sectoral Committees for Vocational Training, a structure representing the labour market and coordinated with the relevant ministries.

For higher education training of levels 6-8 NQF qualifications, in accordance with existing and prospective labour market requirements regarding professional skills, curricula are developed and updated on a periodic basis, based on Competence Standards developed by representatives of the education system and the labour market, validated by professional associations and coordinated with the relevant ministries. The competence standards form the basis for the development of qualification standards, which translate the professional competences required by employers into learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy) and determine the final assessment of the qualification. The curricula are developed in accordance with the qualification standards and are regularly updated as the standard is updated.

In this way, the regulatory framework for the training of specialists of all qualification levels in the national education system is developed, validated and coordinated with all stakeholders in the training of competent and competitive specialists for the national economy.

27. Please provide information on the following:

a) Which measures related to the adaptation of education and training to the requirements of the labour market and twin green and digital transition are in place?

General Education

The priority directions of activity of the Ministry of Education and Research on the dimension of sustainable development in education derive from the national

¹²⁸The Government Decision No. 863/2014¹²⁸ Methodology for the development of occupational standards, qualification standards available in Romanian at :

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=123326&lang=ro#

¹²⁹The Methodology for the development, revision and validation of qualification standards available in Romanian at

[:https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/metodologia_de_elaborare_revizuire_si_validare_a_standardelor_de_calificare.pdf](https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/metodologia_de_elaborare_revizuire_si_validare_a_standardelor_de_calificare.pdf)

¹³⁰ The Guide for the transposition of vocational competences into learning outcomes available in Romanian at :
https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ghid_metodologic_privind_transpunerea_competentelor_profesionale_in_rezultate_ale_invatarii.pdf

and sectoral policy documents implemented. The Education Code guides the pedagogical community towards achieving:

- one of the visions of the state policy in the field of education - "education is a national priority and the primary factor for the sustainable development of a knowledge-based society" Art. 4, the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014);
- one of the missions of education - is "the development of human potential to ensure the quality of life, sustainable growth of the economy and the well-being of the people" (Art. 5 of the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014).

The Framework Plan for primary, secondary, and high school education, one of the priority areas promoted by the Ministry of Education and Research in Education for Sustainable Development, guides teachers in the formation of transversal competencies in students, not only through compulsory subjects but also through optional subjects.

The Education for Sustainable Development priority area aims to use the competencies developed in pupils in the field of environmental education to identify solutions to local, national, and global problems, as well as those related to sustainable development, the environment, green economy, energy conservation/use of alternative energy sources/ promotion of energy efficiency measures, etc.

Currently, education for sustainable development in educational institutions in the Republic of Moldova is carried out in three directions:

- in compulsory classes,
- in optional classes,
- in extracurricular activities.

In the framework of the curricular reform in 2018-2019, one of the emphases was placed on the development of ecological culture and the promotion of sustainable development, as well as the green economy by extending the curricular content to compulsory subjects with direct relation to the field of reference.

In primary education, the development of environmental and sustainable development skills in the younger generation of pupils takes place through the subject of Science. The specific competencies proposed in the Science Curriculum for training pupils focus on human relations with nature and the environment, guiding pupils to show a critical attitude towards the promotion of environmental values in the context of education for sustainable development. Pupils of grades I-IV participate in various activities of environmental protection, care, and sanitation, in order to develop interest and attitude toward the active promotion of environmental values and a healthy way of life.

In the middle and high school education, the development of pupils' competencies for environmental education, green economy, and sustainable development continues through all subjects of study, with emphasis on Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Geography.

One of the priorities of the educational system in the Republic of Moldova is the promotion of sustainable development and green economy based on the training and development of students in:

- personal values in environmental education and sustainable development;
- skills that contribute to the students' accommodation and integration into the real-life conditions;
- competences in the field of education for sustainable development and green economy through all educational activities.

Regarding the digital transformation in the general education system, the digitalization policies are oriented on:

- the reconceptualization of the subjects of Technological Education and Informatics;
- diversification of the curricular to offer optional disciplines in the field of ICT (Robotics, Design and Development of Mobile Applications, Design and Development of Web Pages, Introduction to IT Security, Graphic Design, Artificial Intelligence, etc.).
- providing ICT equipment to schools;
- equipping institutions with the necessary ICT equipment to provide online lessons, depending on the needs of each institution;
- development of the electronic school register offered free of charge to schools;
- strengthening the capacities of teachers in the use of ICT by organizing training courses on the implementation of ICT in education; mentoring, guidance, and support services for teachers;
- development of digital teaching materials (e.g.: guides, video lessons, digital textbooks, etc.) and placement on the special platform developed for this reason¹³¹;
- development of ICT endowment standards for general education institutions¹³²;

¹³¹ The Digital library, available in Romanian at: <https://www.educatieonline.md/>

¹³² ICT endowment standards for general education institutions, available in Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_489_din_070519_standarde_minime_de_dotare_cu_tic.pdf

- development of the Digital Competence Standards for teachers in general education¹³³;
- development of Digital Competence Standards for primary, secondary, and high school students¹³⁴;
- development of Standards for the protection and safety of children/students in the online environment¹³⁵.

Over 360 schools and over 870 teachers in the Republic of Moldova are part of the eTwinningPlus¹³⁶ school community in Europe. Over 1900 projects have been implemented since 2013.

The National Center for Digital Innovation in Education "Class of the future" was created in 2019 to digitally transform education in Moldova, to implement the new concept in pedagogy, with an interdisciplinary and innovative approach, using digital technologies that promote student-centered learning/ ,¹³⁷. The Class of the Future is based on the successes of the national Educational Robotics project o, - both are STEAM education initiatives (science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics). These lead the transformation of the Moldovan education system, emphasizing the importance of the scientific, technological, engineering, arts, mathematics, entrepreneurship, and design fields and the cultivation of the skills and competencies of the 21st century.

The Minister of Education and Research is continuously updating the regulatory framework of the National Qualifications Framework and qualification standards in order to ensure relevancy of qualifications, matching skills with the demand of emerging sectors, contributing to job creation and increasing the employability of graduates. Competencies for the digital and green transition have been included in the list of key competencies in the new NQF draft of the Government decision¹³⁸ and in the list of transversal competencies recommended in the Methodology for the development, revision and validation of qualification standards/2019 for the development of qualification standards and curricula for education and training programs for levels 3-8 NQF¹³⁹. It is recommended to education providers for use in the process of developing curricula and evaluating the learning outcomes based on the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp 2.2), the EU Framework Competence Digital skills for ICT professionals, the Digital skills for

¹³³ Digital Competence Standards for teachers in general education, available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/cnc4_finalcompetente_digitale_profesori_22iulie2015_1.pdf

¹³⁴ Digital Competence Standards for primary, secondary, and high school students, available in Romanian at:

https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/cnc4_final_competente_digitale_elevi_22iulie2015_1.pdf

¹³⁵ The Standards for the protection and safety of children/students in the online environment, available in

Romanian at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_aprobare_sso.pdf

¹³⁶ eTwinningPlus Moldova, available in Romanian at: <https://e-twinning.utm.md/>

¹³⁷ The National Center for Digital Innovation in Education "Class of the future", available in English at:

<https://www.clasaviitorului.md/despre-noi/>

¹³⁸ <https://particip.gov.md/ro/document/stages/proiectul-hotaririi-guvernului-cu-privire-la-aprobarea-cadrului-national-al-calificarilor/7016>

¹³⁹ https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/metodologia_de_elaborare_revizuire_si_validare_a_standaardelor_de_calificare.pdf

non-ICT workforce, including SMEs, the Digital skills in education (digital skills for educators, youth and students) and the EU Competence Framework for Green Skills.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Regarding the green transition in the VET system, with the support of external partners, the educational package for two green professions was developed - green skills of future specialists for a Green Economy in the construction and energy efficiency field. The Ministry of Education and Research provides support for activities of the "Alliance for the Promotion of GREEN VET in the Republic of Moldova."

Regarding the digital transformation in VET system, the digitalization policies are oriented on several pillars:

- providing ICT equipment to teachers, master instructors from the educational institutions and students from VET, and apprentices from dual education, who do not have access to the ICT equipment (e.g. computers, laptops);
- strengthening the capacities of teachers in the use of ICT by organizing training courses for teachers, instructors on the implementation of ICT in education; mentoring, guidance, and support services for teachers;
- supporting the development of digital teaching materials and the necessary educational software and their distribution (e.g.: digital textbooks, guides, video lessons, etc.) and placement in the iCloud;
- equipping VET institutions with the necessary ICT equipment to provide online lessons, depending on the needs of each institution.

Higher education

In accordance with the Education Code No. 152/ 2014, based on Art. 29 of the Law No. 60/ 2012 on social inclusion of persons with disabilities¹⁴⁰, Art. 15 of the Law No. 140/ 2013 on special protection of children at risk and children separated from their parents¹⁴¹ and on the Regulation on studies of foreigners in educational institutions in the Republic of Moldova, approved by Government Decision No.

¹⁴⁰ Law no. 60/ 2012 on social inclusion of persons with disabilities, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=110494&lang=ro

¹⁴¹ Law No. 140/ 2013 on special protection of children at risk and children separated from their parents, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=110518&lang=ro

504/2017¹⁴², the Minister of Education and Research annually draws up a plan (state order) for the training of specialists with funding from the state budget for higher education, approved by the Government.

The following aspects shall be taken into account when drawing up the Admission Plan:

- The provisions of the Activity Plan of the Government and the Ministry of Education and Research.
- The needs of the labour market, as determined by the analysis of the labour market forecast prepared by the **National Employment Agency**.
- Proposals from ministries and higher education institutions.
- Accreditations and provisional authorisations of study programmes.
- Results of admission to studies in the last academic year, reflecting the applications of study candidates.

In higher education, the annual state plan (state-funded slots for different fields of studies) was developed on the basis of the *Nomenclature for professional training fields and specialties of higher education*, approved by Government Decision no. 482/2017. For Bachelor degrees, the State Nomenclature is fixed, as approved by the Government, which makes it somewhat inflexible, although changeable, while Master programmes are developed by universities themselves, and are quite flexible as institutions have the possibility of developing different programmes depending on the needs and requests from the labour market.

The Covid pandemic sped up the digitalization process, with universities now providing training for part-time students and master students via online platforms.

b) What activities are undertaken to stimulate initiative and entrepreneurship, and use of digital tools as a basic competence for young people within the different levels of education.

General Education

The national education system, now in its fourth curricular reform in general education, is geared toward preparing students to become adults capable of managing their future at a time when the digital revolution is transforming the economy and society, bringing prosperity, social development and inclusion. Tackling the gap between education and the labour market is a challenge for

¹⁴² Government Decision No. 504/2017 on approval of Regulation on studies of foreigners in educational institutions in the Republic of Moldova, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=99963&lang=ro

education systems around the world so that they can provide students with the opportunity to move towards the skills required by the market.

The educational policy documents of the educational system of the Republic of Moldova treat Economic and Entrepreneurship Education as an integral part of the modern educational concept and practice through the educational ideal formulated in the Education Code, Art. 6. One of the priority goals of the education system of the Republic of Moldova is the key competencies mentioned in Art.11 paragraph h) - entrepreneurial skills and initiative. The educational offer of the latest generation of disciplinary curricula (2018, 2019 editions) includes aims that allow students to acquire a range of skills necessary to ensure success in personal, social and professional spheres, ability to relate to their communities, personally and digitally, and to learn throughout life.

The flexible offer of the Framework plan for all cycles of general education includes the curriculum package developed for the optional subject of Economic and Entrepreneurship Education (revised in 2020) and implemented in 240 educational institutions (66 primary, 96 secondary, 78 high schools) by 313 teachers (121 primary, 132 secondary and 60 high school teachers).

The development of partnerships to promote entrepreneurship education in general education was achieved through:

- "Supporting Entrepreneurial Education in Europe and Eurasia" programme (2020-2022) implemented by Junior Achievement Moldova in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research and the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Centre for Digital Innovations in Education "Class of the Future"¹⁴³;
- Regional Centres of Excellence in Entrepreneurship Education (3 centres opened in 2021 in Drochia, Chisinau, Leova) where young people from schools in the region have access to participate in various competitions/events, such as Innovation Camps, Forums, Professionals and Beginners, Entrepreneurship Day, Zonal Olympiad in Economics, etc. Teachers have the opportunity to meet in different training activities in the field of economic-entrepreneurial education, and educational institutions have the opportunity to develop relations between them and the business environment (private companies), the associative environment and public institutions in the region.

In order to stimulate the use of digital tools by pupils in general education, the ICT curriculum has been developed. According to the provisions of the Curriculum for Early Education, the Digital Education is applied starting with the age of 5-7 years.

¹⁴³ Junior Achievement Moldova, available in Romanian at:
<https://www.facebook.com/JuniorAchievementMoldova/>

Since 2018 the discipline of Digital education is taught from the primary school to develop of IT skills, , l. At the national level, various competitions and Olympiads are held, such as:

- Olympiad in Computer Science;
- National Science and Engineering Fair for students "MolSEF";
- National Robotics competitions: FIRST LEGO League Moldova, FIRST LEGO League Junior, SumoBot Challenge;
- The "Tekwill Junior Ambassadors" competition is run by the "Tekwill in every school" project. In 2022, 600 teams -1200 students and about 400 teachers - participated in all 6 categories: Entrepreneurship; Graphic Design; Web Design and Development; Mobile Apps; Artificial Intelligence; and Algorithm Programming in C/C++.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

In order to stimulate initiative and entrepreneurship skills, the “Entrepreneurship Basics” curriculum¹⁴⁴ was developed and now is one of the compulsory subjects of the VET system.

Another subject is the Exercise Company¹⁴⁵, which aims to carry out transactions within a virtual enterprise virtually.

Competitions are organized every year, such as the *Best Business Plan*¹⁴⁶ and *The National Fair of Exercise Firms*¹⁴⁷.

For the development of IT skills in the technical training programs, the subject of *Information Technologies*¹⁴⁸ is taught. It ensures the training and development of professional skills in the field of Information and Communication Technology for skilled workers, foremen, technicians and other categories of specialists in technical vocational education.

¹⁴⁴ The “Entrepreneurship Basics” curriculum available in Romanian at : https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/curriculum_ba.pdf

¹⁴⁵ Ministerial Order No. 863/2015 on the National Fair of Exercise Firms in Romanian is available at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/curriculum_firma_de_exercitiu.pdf

¹⁴⁶ The Ministerial Order No. 1054/2014 regarding the organization of the national contest of the business plan in Romanian is available at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/regulament_concurs_pa.pdf

¹⁴⁷ https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/regulament_targul_national_al_firmelor_de_exercitiu.pdf

¹⁴⁸ Ministerial Order No. 848/2020 on the approval of the Curriculum for Information Technologies in Romanian is available at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/curriculumtic_actualizare.pdf

Higher education

One of the most important measures regarding the matching of the university academic curricula with the requirements of the labour market is the promotion of entrepreneurial education.

The structure of the university curriculum is established by the Framework Plan for Higher Education and the Reference Framework for University Curricula. The curricula for both cycles are continuously refined and approved/coordinated by the Ministry. In the context of curricular autonomy and in accordance with the mentioned documents, the Ministry of Education and Research recommended that higher education institutions develop and implement an entrepreneurship training course. Currently, this course, as a standalone unit or as a component of a module, is compulsory in the curriculum for specialties in the field of Education Sciences, and optional for other specialties within the Socio-Humanistic Component at 12 universities.

In order to provide correct and strategic guidance in the field of career choice, as well as to advise students on the situation and requirements of the labour market in the Republic of Moldova, Career Guidance Centres/Business Incubators have been created and are functioning in the seven biggest higher education institutions in the country.. It is planned to open such career counseling centres in all higher education institutions with the goal of establishing and developing relations with economic agents, potential employers, placing graduates in the labour market and monitoring the career advancement of young specialists.

A successful example of mobilising financial and human resources towards youth entrepreneurship development was the launch of the National Youth Economic Empowerment Programme (NEEAP) in 2008.

The launch of the National Youth Economic Empowerment Programme aimed to create about. 1000 businesses started by young people aged 18-30 from rural areas of the country by providing loans of 300 thousand lei for up to five years and grants of 40 percent of the investment value.

The Ministry of Education and Research provides ongoing support for the implementation of projects aimed at stimulating initiatives and developing entrepreneurial skills among young people and facilitating their employment. For example, the following projects were financially supported through the 2020 Grants Programme:

- „Promotion of economic-entrepreneurial activities among young people" in partnership with AO Junior Achievement Moldova. The project had 6000 young people as direct unique beneficiaries.
- „Increasing the personal skills of young people for a successful career" in partnership with the National Association of Young Managers. The project had 381 young people as unique direct beneficiaries.

The new draft of Government decision on NQF¹⁴⁹ updates the list of key competences according to the provisions of Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning, and regulates their integration at all levels of the NQF. At the levels 3-8 NQF, the key competences for LLL are included in the list of transversal competencies recommended for the elaboration of qualification standards and the curriculum for education and training programs. At the levels 1-3 NQF, the new list of key competencies will be included in the curriculum in 2025, when the of current curriculum is updated.

c) What activities are undertaken to promote transversal skills, citizenship education and education on European values/European perspective in education?

General Education

Education for citizenship is a priority of the Ministry of Education and Research, following the 2018 curricular reform, through which the subject Civic Education was conceptualized in Education for Society. It was carried out with the support of the Council of Europe project "Education for Democracy in Moldova" and implemented with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The aim of the project is to contribute to an inclusive, peaceful, and democratic society in the Republic of Moldova by strengthening the capacity of the education system to develop the knowledge and skills students need to become active and responsible citizens. The project, which started in 2019, promoted the Council of Europe's approach to citizenship education according to the Reference Framework of Competences for a Democratic Culture (2018) - an integrated approach to knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, with a focus on the democratic functioning of schools and the integration of young people's civic experiences in the community aspects embedded in the didactic concept of the subject as well as in school governance.

The gradual implementation in general secondary education of the conceptualized subject Education for Society was assisted by the Council of Europe experts and national experts. The team of national experts developed guidelines (7) in the subject for teachers and systemic teacher training in the subject - aspects that contributed to the understanding and participation of facilitators in the implementation process. Another important aspect is the piloting of the methodological guide "Democratic governance of schools in the Republic of Moldova" in 50 educational institutions (April 2021 - November 2022) with the aim to help schools to increase the level of stakeholder participation in daily work and governance.

¹⁴⁹ <https://particip.gov.md/ro/document/stages/proiectul-hotaririi-guvernului-cu-privire-la-aprobarea-cadrului-national-al-calificarilor/7016>

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The citizenship education and education on European values are part of the subject “Education for the Society” which is taught in the VET system as a component of general education. In cooperation with the external partners, an important objective is fostering active citizen engagement for VET students. The key elements of this subject are to support VET students to become engaged citizens and participate in their schools’ and communities’ decision-making processes etc.

Higher education

In higher education, developing transversal skills and citizenship education is a slightly easier task, as it is already embedded in the third mission of the university. Taking into account academic freedom, and the fact that Moldova is part of the EHEA since 2005, university programmes are set to develop and focus on European values and perspectives. It was after the approval of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture that recommendations were made to integrate the Framework in the methodology and pedagogy of university studies.

After the beginning of the curricular reform in secondary education in 2018, universities which offer teacher training programmes (there are eight teacher training universities in the Republic of Moldova) have been recommended by the Ministry of Education and Research to implement in their programmes the latest revised curricula for general education and adjust the needed hours according to the needs of the students and the learning outcomes of the corresponding course.

All universities have revised their study plan for either Primary teacher training or teacher training with subject specialization programmes.

In university education, there is the specialty of Civic education, which is usually offered in combination with another discipline, and trains future teachers in teaching Education for society, or correspondent disciplines (Civic education/History, Civic education/English language, Civic education/Primary school education).

In 2020-2021, the Ministry of Education and Research organized, with the support of the Council of Europe, several training sessions for the teachers involved in Teacher Training programmes, in the context of the implementation of the Reference Framework of competencies for democratic culture (FCDC), thus raising awareness on the document and on the European values and attitudes as a whole.

d) Which innovative teaching methods are used and in what way are they integrated into the education and training provision?

General education

In the teaching-learning process in primary and secondary education, the students are engaged in problem-solving through research, which fosters learning through problematization and discovery. It also provides favorable conditions for the pathway of acquired knowledge in various areas, including everyday life and the area determined by the curriculum area. In this respect, the teachers use every opportunity to exemplify the applications of school subjects in everyday life and in different areas. Thus, a teacher:

- takes into account the possibilities offered by school textbooks for making interdisciplinary connections (integrative problems, problem-situations present in the textbook text; integrative items present in the assessment tests, etc.);
- systematically organizes practical activities, including fieldwork, laboratory work, graphic work with an interdisciplinary and/or applied aspect;
- selects integrative problems from teaching and methodological materials and proposes them to pupils during various events (lessons, extra-curricular activities, Olympiads, etc.);
- carries out STEM and STEAM projects jointly with teachers of different school subjects.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Most teachers use traditional teaching methods, increasingly using digital tools. At the same time, more efficient institutions are trying to diversify the use of teaching methods: on-line evaluation; management and creation of digital educational resources, etc

The Ministry of Education and Research is promoting the usage of the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu) which provides a general reference frame to support the development of educator-specific digital competences in Europe. Also, the VET institutions with the support of external partners piloted and started to implement the SELFIE (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational technologies) which is a free tool designed to help schools embed digital technologies into teaching, learning and assessment.

With the support of European experts, a website www.iptdigital.md was developed as a repository for digital learning materials for teachers and students from VET

system. Digital competences of VET teachers from Centers of Excellence were strengthened with the idea that they are becoming disseminators of information across the network of VET institutions.

Higher education

The main teaching methods used in higher education are:

- Lectures
- Seminars and tutorials
- Laboratory and practical learning
- Problem-based/enquiry-based learning. Problem-based learning (PBL) is a rather recent teaching method introduced in higher education and as an instructional method in which students learn through facilitated problem solving, student learning centers on a complex problem that does not have a single correct answer. Students work in collaborative groups to identify what they need to learn in order to solve a problem. They engage in self-directed learning (SDL) and then apply their new knowledge to the problem and reflect on what they learned and the effectiveness of the strategies employed. The teacher acts to facilitate the learning process rather than to provide knowledge.

One of the major accomplishments of the higher education system in terms of introducing innovative teaching methods was the implementation of the project “Introducing Problem Based Learning in Moldova: Toward Enhancing Students’ Competitiveness and Employability” (PBLMD), funded with the European Union support under the Erasmus+ program.

The result of this project consisted in the re-design of 6 higher degree programs according to a new concept at the most requested specialties offered by the universities of the Republic of Moldova by introducing innovative teaching-learning methodologies based on problem solving, according to the PBL model – Problem Based Learning: “Software Engineering”, “Law”, “Business Administration”, “BA in Public Health” “Entrepreneurship and Business Administration”, “Public Administration”

The new programs of university studies are implemented from September 1, 2017. The students benefit from modern methods of teaching-learning mainly in the foreign language (English), and, starting with the second year of studies, of academic mobility at the partner institutions in the EU.

- Project elaboration
- E-learning.

A specific focus in higher education is offered to Independent study and group work in project elaboration and project proposals.

e) Are any measures in place to monitor the tracking of graduates beyond their educational careers?

General Education

In the Republic of Moldova, compulsory education ends at the age of 16 with completion of secondary education. Every year, the Ministry of Education and Research, together with the local education bodies (OLSDÎ) and general education institutions, monitors the path of graduates after completing compulsory education, their enrolment in studies, or employment of secondary school graduates.

The pathway of secondary school graduates over the last 5 years is reflected in the table below:

Year of graduation	Total number of graduates	Obtained secondary school certificates (in %)	Continuing their studies (No. pupils / %)				Employed	Not determined	
			In theoretical high schools	In technical vocational education	Abroad	Total		(No. pupils / %)	Of which under 16 (No. pupils / %)
2021	30471	<i>98,11</i>	12880/ 42,27	13846/ 45,44	1096/ 3,6	27822/ 91,31	816/ 2,68	1833/ 6,01	294/ 0,96
2020	30547	<i>99,34</i>	13143/ 43,03	13454/ 44,04	975/ 3,19	27572/ 90,26	794/ 2,60	2180/ 7,1	269/ 0,88
2019	29947	<i>97,28</i>	11967/ 39,96	13641/ 45,55	1559/ 5,2	27167/ 90,71	1167/ 3,89	1613/ 5,38	252/ 0,84
2018	30550	<i>97,88</i>	12026/ 39,37	13999/ 45,82	1468/ 4,81	27493/ 90	1153/ 3,77	1904/ 6,23	274/ 0,91
2017	29982	<i>97,4</i>	11882/ 39,63	13975/ 46,61	1249/ 4,17	27106/ 90,41	1178/ 3,93	1698/ 5,66	331/ 1,1

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Concerning the official data on the employment of the VET graduates, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (NAQAER) evaluates the VET institutions on the linkage with the labour market. The VET institutions check the employment of their graduates and report to the Ministry of Education

and Research and NAQAER. However, the problem is in the relevance of these data. In practice, there is no very concrete information about what happens to those students.

At the same time, in Dual VET the tracking of students was done for the graduates of 2020 and 2021. The new methodology for tracking of VET graduates will be developed and institutionalized.

Higher education

Placement of the graduates of educational institutions of different levels is carried out in accordance with labour legislation. The right to work of the young person is ensured by the Constitution, by the studies he/she has, by his/her practical skills formed in the educational institution and in the enterprises, organizations in which he/she carries out internships.

The current job placement mechanism is based mainly on offers from ministries, which have vocational education institutions, central and local public authorities, including economic agents.

Thus, the graduates of the Military Academy of the Armed Forces and those of the "Stefan ce Mare" Academy, who have completed their studies on a budget basis, are compulsorily placed in the labour market, according to the allocation of the relevant ministries. Their records are kept by the specialised services of the respective ministries.

In accordance with the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova No. 1396/2003 On the training of resident doctors and pharmacists and the placement of young specialists in the labour market¹⁵⁰, the training of doctors and pharmacists through postgraduate studies in residency, with funding from the state budget, is carried out exclusively on the basis of individual contracts concluded with the Ministry of Health. The Decision in question approved the Model Contract on Residency Training and Work Placement of Doctors and Pharmacists, which stipulates that after graduation from postgraduate studies through residency, doctors and pharmacists, young specialists, are assigned by the Ministry of Health for work placement, according to the needs of the state, for a period of three years.

The Ministry of Education annually places in the labour market graduates of higher and secondary education institutions who have completed their studies in pedagogical specialties with budgetary funding. Placement places are identified on the basis of offers received from district (municipal) education, youth and sport

¹⁵⁰ Government of the Republic of Moldova No. 1396/2003 On the training of resident doctors and pharmacists and the placement of young specialists in the labour market, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=111717&lang=ro

directorates, as well as from republican subordinate institutions: colleges, secondary vocational education institutions

Currently, there are no systems monitoring the career path of graduates in place, although the Government is in the process of developing a Information System for Monitoring the career track of university graduates, set to start to be implemented in 2024.

f) Are there provisions in place for transparency, valuation and support of short learning options, including micro-credentials?

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Regarding the short learning options in VET there is an option to study only for 1 (one) year. However, this option is not very popular for the VET students. Based on the annual Report of the Ministry of Education and Research for 2021, in the enrolment process only 0.5% of students have chosen a profession with a duration of 1 year. There are also the short continuous training courses delivered by the VET institutions.

According to the Law on the promotion of employment and insurance of unemployment no.105/2018¹⁵¹, the National Employment Agency assures for unemployed people the short courses and training for different professions. In this context, the Agency based on the procurement legislation selects the training providers. Among these training providers, there are also the VET institutions which receive the state financing for the training of the unemployed people.

Taking into account the information of the National Agency for Employment (AGE), as a result of the analyzes carried out by these institutions, the Ministry of Education and Research in collaboration with the Institutions providing services Adult education develops continuing education programs to meet all requests for continuing education of citizens. Database on institutions providing adult education services based on accredited programs is accessible on the MER website¹⁵².

The most requested continuing education courses for adults are in the fields: construction, public catering, education, ecology, textile industry, beauty industry, transport, IT, renewable energy.

¹⁵¹ The Law on the promotion of employment and insurance of unemployment No.105/2018https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130921&lang=ro#

¹⁵² The Database on institutions providing adult education services based on accredited programs is accessible on the MER website: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/baza-de-date-programelor-acreditate-de-ministerul-educatiei-culturii-si-cercetarii>

According with the provisions of the Regulation on continuous training of adults, approved by Government Decision No. 193/2017¹⁵³, the providers of continuing education services offer the following types of accredited continuing education courses and programs:

- Thematic courses and training/specialization programs – up to 90 hours;
- Short-term courses and programs of improvement/specialization – from 90 hours to 300 hours;
- Courses and programs of multidisciplinary training / specialization – from 300 hours to 600 hours;
- Additional qualification courses and programs for ISCED levels 3, 4, 5, corresponding to the same general field of study or training – from 540 hours to 900 hours;
- Additional qualification courses and programs for ISCED level 6, corresponding to the same general field of study or training – from 900 hours to 1800 hours;
- Training courses and programs for ISCED levels 3, 4, 5, corresponding to another general field of study or training – from 900 hours to 1800 hours;
- Training courses and professional retraining programs for ISCED level 6 corresponding to another general field of study or training – from 1800 hours to 2700 hours.

Credits obtained as a result of an adult continuing education program are recognized in other trainings.

At the same time, in order to recognize the professional skills of adults acquired in contexts of non-formal and informal education or at work, the Ministry of Education and Research has since 2019 developed the system of certification of professional skills.¹⁵⁴

In this sense, nine Validation Centers have been created, which ensure the certification of professional skills acquired in non-formal and informal education contexts for 46 qualifications in the fields: construction, public catering, education, ecology, textile industry, beauty industry, transport, IT, renewable energy.

During the years 2019-2021, a number of 355 citizens validated their professional skills and were employed.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ The Regulation on continuous training of adults, approved by Government Decision No. 193/2017 available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=113312&lang=ro#

¹⁵⁴ The system of certification of professional skills available in Romanian at: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/validarea-educatiei-nonformale-si-informale-0>

¹⁵⁵ Ministerial report available in Romanian at: https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_mec_2021_1.pdf

Higher education

The Ministry of Education and Research supports the idea of offering micro-credentials in continuing training programmes to open up learning opportunities for citizens, including those in full-time employment, as included in the draft Regulation on the application of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in continuing vocational training programmes in higher education institutions, developed with the contribution of the ERASMUS+ project.

Higher education institutions will thus be able to offer citizens a short course or module, assessed in a transparent way for people who wish to consolidate their knowledge without following a full continuing vocational training programme, or to improve their skills in order to meet the needs of the labour market or to develop professionally after starting work.

g) What type and implementation status of lifelong learning policies and strategies are in place, in society at large, also in view of vulnerable groups?

The Ministry of Education and Research in collaboration with the institutions providing Adult education services, develops continuing education programs to meet all requests for continuing education of citizens. Database on institutions providing adult education services based on accredited programs is accessible on the MEC website¹⁵⁶.

The most requested continuing education courses for adults are in the fields: construction, public catering, education, ecology, textile industry, beauty industry, transport, IT, renewable energy.

According to the provisions of the Regulation on continuous training of adults, approved by Government Decision no. 19/2017¹⁵⁷, the providers of continuing education services offer the following types of accredited continuing education courses and programs:

- Thematic courses and training/specialization programs – up to 90 hours;
- Short-term courses and programs of improvement/specialization – from 90 hours to 300 hours;
- Courses and programs of multidisciplinary training / specialization – from 300 hours to 600 hours;

¹⁵⁶ The Database on institutions providing adult education services based on accredited programs is accessible on the MEC website <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/baza-de-date-programelor-acreditate-de-ministerul-educatiei-culturii-si-cercetarii>

¹⁵⁷ The Regulation on continuous training of adults, approved by Government Decision No. 193/2017 available in Romanian at https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=113312&lang=ro#

- Additional qualification courses and programs for ISCED levels 3, 4, 5, corresponding to the same general field of study or training – from 540 hours to 900 hours;
- Additional qualification courses and programs for ISCED level 6, corresponding to the same general field of study or training – from 900 hours to 1800 hours;
- Training courses and programs for ISCED levels 3, 4, 5, corresponding to another general field of study or training – from 900 hours to 1800 hours;
- Training courses and professional retraining programs for ISCED level 6 corresponding to another general field of study or training – from 1800 hours to 2700 hours.

Credits obtained as a result of an adult continuing education program are recognized in other trainings.

In order to recognize the professional skills of adults acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, the Ministry of Education and Research has developed since 2019 the system of certification of professional skills.¹⁵⁸

9 Validation Centres have been created, which ensure the certification of professional skills acquired in non-formal and informal education contexts for 46 qualifications in the fields: construction, public catering, education, ecology, textile industry, beauty industry, transport, IT, renewable energy. During the years 2019-2021, 355 citizens validated their professional skills and were employed¹⁵⁹.

h) How is worked based training integrated in education programmes and how are pathways between general and vocational education organised?

General education

- The educational offer for pupils in secondary school (compulsory education in the Republic of Moldova according to the Education Code) and in high school, applied during their studies, includes the portfolio of optional subjects (the flexible component of the Education Framework Plan) which contributes to the orientation of pupils in determining the optimal individual path towards secondary school, secondary technical vocational education or post-secondary technical vocational education.
- The diversity of optional subjects (primary cycle - 20, secondary cycle - 40, secondary cycle - 39) provides, on the one hand, the motivation and preparation of pupils for understanding, identifying, and expressing the areas of personal competence they would like to develop, and, on the

¹⁵⁸ <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/validarea-educatiei-nonformale-si-informale-0>

¹⁵⁹ https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_mec_2021_1.pdf

other hand, the possibility for each pupil to opt for different optional subjects based on the areas: Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation; Education for Sustainable Development, Intercultural Education, Education for Health and Quality Life, Citizenship and Patriotic Education.

- Within the compulsory school subject, Personal Development (grades I-XII) the module Career Planning (6 hours per year) ensures the preparation of students for determining the optimal individual career path.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The work-based learning, as a part of the national VET system is implemented through the apprenticeship, being a part of the Dual VET, which assures the connection with labour market system. The dual VET is correlated with the needs of companies. The companies participate at the enrolment process; recruit the students, and participate in the development of Educational Plan and other Educational documents.

In order to promote the work based learning it is extremely important to expand the engagement of the companies in VET system; to support the companies to create the appropriate learning environment and to share the responsibility for the quality of training with the VET institutions; to offer the training opportunities not only for VET students but also for unemployed people, etc.

Regarding the pathways between general and vocational education, according to the Education Code of (Art. 60), the admission in the technical and vocational education institutions is based on gymnasium or lyceum studies. The people with certificates of lyceum or equivalent education may be admitted in the technical and vocational education institutions only for the secondary and post-secondary training programs.

Based on the Education Code (Art.62), the secondary technical and vocational training programs shall end with taking the qualification exam and issuance of qualification certificate and descriptive annex to the certificate, according to Europass. The qualification certificate shall allow the employment on the labour market, according to the obtained qualification, as well as continuation of studies in theoretical lyceums and/or post-secondary technical and vocational training programs depending on the previously obtained training level in the fulfilled educational programs, under the conditions established by the Ministry of Education and Research.

An important element of attractiveness is accessible requirements for studies in VET. Based on the Education Code, the persons who have not graduated nine classes, but turned 16 years old may be included in the groups of pupils for two-year secondary technical and vocational training programs, with the agreement of the Ministry of Education and Research.

According to the Education Code (Art.63) the admission in the Post secondary technical and vocational education institutions is based on gymnasium, lyceum studies, professional certificate depending on the duration of the studies that student desires to join. The post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary technical vocational education is finalized with the issuance of the professional studies diploma, which gives the holder the right to be employed and to participate in the competition for admission to the first cycle of higher education in a specialty in the studied field.

i) What is the share of work-based learning in programmes and the permeability between general and vocational streams of education?

General Education

The educational offer for pupils in secondary school (compulsory education in the Republic of Moldova according to the Education Code) and in high school, applied during their studies, includes the portfolio of optional subjects (the flexible component of the Education Framework Plan) which contributes to the orientation of pupils in determining the optimal individual path towards secondary school, secondary technical vocational education or post-secondary technical vocational education.

The diversity of optional subjects (primary cycle - 20, secondary cycle - 40, secondary cycle - 39) provides, on the one hand, the motivation and preparation of pupils for understanding, identifying, and expressing the areas of personal competence they would like to develop, and, on the other hand, the possibility for each pupil to opt for different optional subjects based on the areas: Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation; Education for Sustainable Development, Intercultural Education, Education for Health and Quality Life, Citizenship and Patriotic Education. Within the compulsory school subject, Personal Development (grades I-XII) the module Career Planning (6 hours per year) ensures the preparation of students for determining the optimal individual career path.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The share of practical training in Secondary Dual VET is about 70-80%, more than 50 % in Post-Secondary Dual VET and graduate students can be eventually employed within the training company. The students benefit from the salary and scholarships.

The companies involved in Dual VET can benefit from tax deduction. The employer can benefit from tax deduction expenses related to dual VET, for the following categories: the salary of trainers in enterprises and the salary of the student involved in dual VET; procurement of teaching materials for students

(equipment, tools, etc); assurance of working space for students. The main idea is that all financial resources invested in dual training benefit from tax deductions and exemptions.

Regarding the classical VET system, the internship is usually carried out directly at the company. At the request of the company, the VET institution, depending on the specifics of the profession, can approve its transfer for a longer period.

Youth

28. Is there an active, updated and youth co-designed national youth strategy? Is there an active Youth Council in place? Have youth representatives a specific role in decision-making or consultation?

a) Is there an active, updated and youth co-designed national youth strategy?

The areas of intervention in the field of youth and the competences of the authorities are outlined in Law No. 215/2016 on youth.

The main authority responsible for the development of youth policies is the Ministry of Education and Research, and the authority for the implementation of policies is the National Agency for the Development of Youth Programs and Activities.

The national strategy for the development of the youth sector 2014-2020 was submitted to the Ministry impact assessment in 2021. Following the evaluation, the elaboration of a new policy document was initiated.

The Youth Sector Development Strategy "Youth 2030" and the Implementation Program are being developed. Following public consultations with key players in the sector (youth, youth organizations, youth workers, youth centers, youth councils, etc.), the Ministry has developed a concept of the document that outlines the guidelines: youth participation, development of youth work, youth services, entrepreneurship and employability of young people, etc.

The strategy is developed by the Ministry of Education and Research, with the contribution of a youth organization selected and funded through competition, with the support of external donors (GiZ, UNICEF, UNFPA), in a joint Working Group. The document is consulted at each stage of elaboration by a Reference Group created by the Ministry, with the broad participation of all actors with responsibilities in the field (external partners, youth organizations, youth, youth centers, local and central public administration, private sector, etc.).

b) Is there an active Youth Council in place?

The National Council of the Youth in Moldova (CNTM) - is an associative structure of 38 youth organizations, which promotes the rights of young people and represents the interests of youth organizations in the process of developing, implementing and evaluating youth policies, founded in 1999.

CNTM is the main partner of the Ministry of Education and Research in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating public policies in the field. CNTM is a member of the European Youth Forum.

c) District / local youth councils - Associative structures of young people,

without legal personality, which promote and guarantee the participation of young people in the decision-making process aimed at young people (budget, strategy, activities) with local public authorities level 1 and 2 .

All councils are united in the National Network of Local Youth Councils of the Republic of Moldova, a non-governmental organization and partner of the Ministry in implementing the Support Program for strengthening district / local youth councils.

The territorial coverage rate of the Councils is approx. 75.7% of the level II administrative-territorial units (23 district / municipal councils) and 14.9% of the total number of level I ATUs (134 local / community youth councils).

d) Have youth representatives a specific role in decision-making or consultation?

The role and responsibilities of youth organizations and youth in the process of consultation and participation in the decision-making process is stipulated in Law no. 215/2016 on youth.

The local public authorities, based on the Collaboration Agreements signed with the Ministry of Education and Research for taking part in the government programs and benefit from the support, undertake to collaborate and involve in the decision-making process the Local Youth Councils.

All elaborated normative acts aimed at young people are submitted to CNTM for approval.

Law No. 215/2016, Art. 9 paragraph (2) letter f) The Ministry of Education and Research consults youth organizations, youth work institutions, other targeted structures in order to develop, implement and evaluate youth policies.

Commissions for Youth Policy :

Advisory bodies, set up on the basis of parity between the representatives of the public authorities and the youth association sector, which aim to ensure the participation of young people in the decision-making process in areas that concern them.

The Government Commission for Youth Policy was created in 2011 but has been inactive lately.

The Ministry of Education and Research has developed a Framework Regulation on the organization and functioning of youth policy advisory committees to be approved and will stimulate the creation of commissions at both central and local levels.

29. What, if any, are the national strategies encompassing one or several of the following fields: youth employment and youth entrepreneurship, non-formal education of young people, creativity, youth participation, health/well-being of young people, social inclusion of youth, youth volunteering?

The 2030 Youth Strategy and Implementation Program aims to address the issue of non-formal youth education and the promotion of youth work in line with the European Agenda for Youth Work, as well as youth participation, volunteering as a tool for multilateral development and promotion. active citizenship and social cohesion.

Employability and entrepreneurship among young people, as areas of competence of other public administration authorities, should be addressed as a separate element in the same strategy.

30. Which institution is in charge of the overall coordination of youth issues in the country? Crosssectoral cooperation on youth matters between various concerned Ministries is a very important aspect of the EU Youth cooperation framework. Please provide information on how such crosssectoral cooperation is ensured.

Coordination of all youth issues is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research as the central public authority as the national instrument, and the local public authorities as the local instrument. The National Agency for the Development of Programs and Youth Activity has competences in consulting the target groups when developing the programs. The intergovernmental platform for addressing youth policy issues is the Government Commission for Youth Policy. Such co-management platforms are to be set up and supported locally.

There are thematic, cross-sectorial working and reference groups created by the Ministry of Education and Research on narrow topics:

- Coordinating the process of elaborating the 2030 Youth Strategy and the Implementation Program;
- Elaboration of the roadmap for the implementation of the European Agenda for Youth Work;

- Coordinating the implementation of the Program for the development of Youth Centers and the extension of youth-friendly services;
- Digitization of the certification process of the host institutions of the volunteer activity and promotion of volunteering among young people;
- Development of programs to support young people at local (rural) level.

31. In which mechanisms established under the Youth Open Method of Coordination would Moldova be particularly interested to participate?

In terms of Youth Open Method of Coordination, the Republic of Moldova would be interested in participating in:

1. Identify and jointly define the objectives that need to be achieved in the field of:
 - Development of youth work in accordance with the provisions of the European Youth Work Agenda;
 - Developing mechanisms for the participation of young people and youth organizations in the decision-making process in all aspects of policies that affect them, including through co-management platforms;
2. Benchmarking and exchange of best practices:
 - Certification of skills acquired by young people in a non-formal learning context. Taking over the YouthPass model;
 - Establishment of training and professionalization course for youth workers;
 - Integration of media education in institutions working with young people;
 - Integration of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds for their socio-economic integration and building inclusive societies;
3. Common impact measurement tools (statistics, indicators, guidelines):
 - Impact and quality of services provided by Youth Centers (award of quality certificates).

B. Access to education and training

32. Education and training of children of EU nationals: Please provide information on the estimated number of EU nationals working in Moldova and having children residing there at the age of compulsory school attendance under domestic law. Please indicate whether there are special provisions for education of these children and what are their main countries of origin.

General education

Currently, in the Republic of Moldova, there is no system of indicators for monitoring the inclusion of children of EU citizens in general education institutions in the country. At the same time, the State guarantees foreign children and young people equal access to all levels and forms of general education, without any form of discrimination.

The admission of foreigners to studies is carried out under the conditions applied to citizens of the Republic of Moldova and is subject to prior recognition and equivalence of the educational documents presented by the candidates. (Art. 150, Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014).

The enrolment of foreigners in the higher educational institutions is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Regulation on the studies of foreigners in educational institutions of the Republic of Moldova, approved by Government Decision No. 504/2017. Foreigners are enrolled in educational institutions of the Republic of Moldova in accordance with the national legislation in force, international treaties, international/regional projects/programmes to which the Republic of Moldova is party, agreements concluded between educational institutions, accredited in the established manner, as well as individual contracts concluded between foreigners and educational institutions

The training of foreigners is carried out, as a rule, in Romanian or Russian, or in an international language, depending on the possibilities of the educational institutions and within the limits of the allocated budgetary means.

According to data held in the Education Management Information System of the Ministry of Education and Research, in the 2021-2022 school year, more than 350 children with EU citizenship are enrolled in primary, secondary, and high school education. Most of them are from Romania - 176 pupils, Italy - 78, Portugal - 21, Greece - 15, Germany - 14, Bulgaria - 13, Latvia - 10, Czech Republic - 7, Austria - 6, Belgium - 6, France - 5, Poland - 4 pupils, etc.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

There is no information on EU nationals who study in the VET system of Moldova. However, there are students, Moldovan citizens that have the second citizenship of Romania.

There are 2 options for EU nationals to be enrolled in VET and higher educational institutions:

- In state and private VET on places with the payment of tuition fees under the contract concluded with educational institution;
- On places financed from the state budget for foreigners admitted to study in accordance with international treaties in the field of education to which the Republic of Moldova is a party.

Higher Education

In the academic year 2021-2022 in the higher education institutions of the Republic of Moldova, in all cycles of higher education, there are 5741 foreign students, of which 5503 are studying on a contract basis, with fee, and 238 - on scholarships, financed from the state budget, under the international treaties to which the Republic of Moldova is a party.

In higher education, foreign nationals come from about 50 countries of the world, mainly from Romania, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, India, Israel, Turkey and other states.

The most requested universities by international students are the State University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Nicolae Testemitanu" – 1908 students; "Ion Creanga" State Pedagogical University - 567, State University of Moldova - 169. Among the private universities we mention the Free International University of Moldova, with 1783 foreign students and the University of European Political and Economic Studies "Constantin Stere" with 574 foreign students.

33. Equal access: Describe arrangements to ensure equal access to education and training regardless of gender, ethnic origin, mother tongue, religion or disabilities. Describe the measures in place to support learners with fewer opportunities, including disadvantaged learners and minorities (including Roma).

General Education

The education system in the Republic of Moldova is organized according to the principles of general education, contemporary requirements, and the rule of law and is a structure developed to ensure the right to education of all beneficiaries.

The legal framework to ensure the respect of the rights to education is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, Law No. 338/1994 on the rights of the child, Law No. 279/1999 on youth, the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014. The principles of non-discrimination, universality, and equality of rights are reinforced by the Law on Ensuring Equality No. 121/2012.

A minimum package of inclusive education services has been developed to accommodate all pupils in mainstream educational settings: municipal/district psycho-pedagogical support service and support services at the institution level (support teacher and resource center for inclusive education). In order to create conditions and educational support services, financial resources are allocated annually from the district education component up to 2%.

In order to ensure didactic-methodical support with reference to the inclusion of children and young people with disabilities, have been developed provisions for the realization of the individualized educational plan; methodological guide on curricular adaptations, and evaluation of school progress in the context of inclusive education; final evaluation and certification of students with special educational needs included in compulsory education.

Comprehensive assessment of the development of children with disabilities is carried out in the presence of parents or legal representatives by the district/municipal psycho-pedagogical assistance services, whose work is monitored and assisted by the Republican Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance. The existing 35 district/municipal psycho-pedagogical assistance services develop recommendations on the educational inclusion of children, provide psycho-pedagogical assistance services to children and provide methodological assistance to specialists in education and related fields in achieving educational inclusion.

Specialized assistance to children with disabilities in general education institutions is carried out by organizing multidisciplinary in-school committees, setting up teams to draw up and implement individualized educational plans, employing support teachers, and setting up and equipping resource centers for inclusive education at the level of educational institutions.

In the Republic of Moldova, there is a wide network of general education institutions that ensure access for all children, including Roma children.

The Ministry of Education and Research monitors the compulsory schooling of school-age children, including Roma children, based on the document developed and approved Instruction on preventing and combating dropout and absenteeism in general education¹⁶⁰. The Ministry is also working with local public administration authorities (LPAs) of the first and second level and with non-governmental organizations promoting Roma inclusion, in order to solve problems related to the inclusion of Roma children in the educational process, to implement a mechanism for identifying Roma children who do not attend school and pupils who are absent from classes. In order to ensure equal access to education for Roma children and to provide continuity in actions, the Ministry of Education and Research has developed the draft Government Decision on the approval of the Program for the support of the Roma population in the Republic of Moldova for

¹⁶⁰ Website of the Ministry of Education and Research, General Education section, available in Romanian at: <https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/invatamantul-general>

the years 2022-2025 and the Action Plan for its implementation, which are subject to public consultations¹⁶¹.

In order to facilitate the process of Roma children's inclusion in education, the Ministry of Education and Research has carried out a series of actions:

- providing Roma children with breakfast;
- free transport for children from densely populated Roma settlements more than 2 km from the nearest educational institution;
- organization of homework preparation and tutoring based on the extended study timetable for Roma children;
- elaboration and approval of the school curriculum for the subject "History, culture and traditions of the Roma in the Republic of Moldova" for primary classes (in Russian, Romanian and Romani languages);
- drafting the Guide for Community Mediators (chapter "Education");
- development and piloting of the Instrument for monitoring the child's readiness for school, with the application of techniques and methods in providing support for the child in the process of preparing for school (period 2020-2021);
- put in place the Methodology for monitoring and evaluating the development of children aged 1.5-7 years;
- involve teachers in educational institutions in the process of continuous training on intercultural education;
- organization of training sessions on cultural differences in preschool and school education in partnership with Roma organizations.

During 2020-2021, in partnership with UNICEF Moldova, the Ministry of Education and Research, several actions were carried out aimed at ensuring equal access to education for all children, including Roma children:

- development and approval of the Parental Education Module for the initial training of parental educators (Curricula and Course Support (theoretical and practical), approved by the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy of UPS "Ion Creanga" and piloting within the specialties of Preschool Pedagogy and Social Pedagogy;
- development of the Parenting Education Curriculum for continuous training, the Methodology for organizing Parenting Education Programs (PEP) and working with parents, 2-course materials (theoretical and practical guide) for the parenting educator, containing 4 Parenting Programs addressed to categories of parents (pregnant/new parents - with children aged 0-1, 1-3, 3-5 and 5-7).

¹⁶¹ Website of the Ministry of Education and Research, Public consultations section <https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/modul-de-participare>

- organization of the training of 15 national trainers/parenting educators in the application of the Curriculum, the Methodology of working with parents, and the Parenting Programs. These products were piloted in 15 early education institutions.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The VET system is social oriented. An important measure of the Ministry of Education and Research is to ensure the unimpeded access for different categories of people. Based on this approach, the Ministry annually offers 15 % of the total number of places (for each specialty/profession in VET institutions) provided in the state budget financing of enrolment plan for the following categories of candidates: Roma children, children with severe, accentuated and medium disability; children without parental care and support; children who have parents with severe disabilities; children from families with four and more, children. These provisions are mentioned in the Ministry Order No.459 from 20.05.2020¹⁶².

There are several elements which are attractive for youth from vulnerable groups to integrate in the VET system: scholarships, especially for the Secondary VET (Professional schools); the access to dormitories at the accessible prices. Another advantage is the fact that in Professional Schools the state assures once per day a free of charge meal.

Concerning the students of secondary VET by language of instruction, for 2020-2021, 86 % of students studied in Romanian, and 14 % in Russian language¹⁶³.

Regarding the students of Post-secondary VET by language of instruction, for 2021-2022, 87% of students studied in Romanian, 11 % in Russian language, and 2 % in other languages.

The distribution by gender of students in secondary technical vocational education in the academic year 2021-2022 reveals a share of 73.3% of boys and 26.7% of girls. In post-secondary education, the proportion of girls is 54.5% and boys 45.5%.

Higher education

In the Republic of Moldova, university studies are carried out on the basis of the *Nomenclature for professional training fields and specialties of higher education*¹⁶⁴, developed according to the recommendations of the International

¹⁶² https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordinul_459_cu_anexe_0.pdf

¹⁶³ Source: National Bureau of Statistics:

https://statistica.gov.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Educatia/Educatia_editia_2021.pdf

¹⁶⁴ Government Decison No. 482/2017 on approval of Nomenclature for professional training fields and specialties of higher education, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=121862&lang=ro

Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-F 2013), which includes 70 training fields and 173 specialities at the first cycle, bachelor's level.

According to the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014, admission to each cycle of higher education is organized by competition, based on the methodology of the higher education institution, within the limit of the enrolment capacity established by accreditation or provisional authorization of operation. The criteria for the organisation of the admission competition are determined by the Framework Regulation on the organisation of admission to the first cycle - bachelor's degree, approved by the Order of the Minister of Education and Research.

Citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, mother tongue, religion or disability, are guaranteed access to higher education: to slots financed from the state budget, within the limits set annually by the Government; and to places with tuition fees, paid by individuals or legal entities.

Over the past few years, the Ministry of Education and Research has taken concrete steps to ensure access to higher education for orphans, children with disabilities, children of Roma origin, etc.

In the admissions sessions, special provisions in the regulations for the organisation and conduct of admissions include young people from Roma families in the category of candidates who enjoy facilities. Thus, the Regulations on the organization and conduct of admission to higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova, sets a quota of 15 percent of the total number of places (in each specialty / field of vocational training and form of education, according to the admission quota), provided for in the plan of budget-funded enrolment for a number of categories, including young Roma, with priority given to young people from vulnerable families, including:

- orphans and those left without parental care;
- with a severe or marked degree of disability, enabling them to pursue studies and practice their chosen profession;
- with both parents with a degree of disability, etc.

Enrolment for this quota is at the request of the candidates. Candidates in the above categories may take part in the general admission competition at the same time.

34. Tuition fees and other conditions of access to higher education establishments (public and private): how are they regulated? Are they different for citizens and for foreigners? Describe if there are financial support systems in place for students in higher education (grants, loans, scholarships).

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Higher education

Higher education in the Republic of Moldova can be accessed either on a state funded position or on a tuition fee position. Yearly, the Government offers around 5000 state funded slots, distributed to the 6 wider professional fields, according to the requirements of the labour market and the requests from public higher education institutions. It is to be mentioned that the state does not fund students in private higher education institutions nor does it offer vouchers or support to students enrolled there.

Tuition fees are relatively low compared to the expenses of the Government for one slot/position for a specific programme.

Also, based on collaboration protocols with other countries, the Government also offers state funded positions for foreign students who want to pursue their studies in public universities in Moldova, based on international treaties.

The access of foreign citizens to education is regulated by Art. 150 of the Education Code / 2014¹⁶⁶ and the Regulation on the study of foreigners in

¹⁶⁵ Government Decison No. 482/2017 on approval of Nomenclature for professional training fields and specialties of higher education, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=121862&lang=ro

¹⁶⁶ https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordinul_459_cu_anexe_0.pdf

institutions of education in the Republic of Moldova, approved by Government decision No. 504/2017¹⁶⁷.

Foreigners who are admitted to study in educational institutions obtain the right of temporary residence for studies and the temporary residence permit under the conditions provided by Law No. 200/2010 on the regime of aliens in the Republic of Moldova¹⁶⁸.

The admission of foreigners to study at education institutions is carried out under the conditions applied for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova and is conditioned by the prior recognition and equivalence of the study documents submitted by the candidates. Foreign candidates have access to education exclusively in accredited educational institutions and accredited study programs.

Foreigners studying in the Republic of Moldova, except for those who benefit from scholarships granted by the state, pay tuition fees in accordance with the normative acts and on the university governance body decision, based on the financial autonomy principles, Art.79, p.3 lit c) Education Code¹⁶⁹.

The foreigners, members of the staff of diplomatic missions, consular offices and international bodies based in the Republic of Moldova, as well as their family members during their missions in the Republic of Moldova are admitted to study at any level of education system, based on reciprocity, without paying tuition fees, in addition to the plan financed by Government.

The enrolment of foreigners in national educational institutions request the consent of the Ministry of Education and Research. This coordination does not apply in the case of citizens from the signatory states of the Lisbon Convention on the recognition of qualifications for higher education in the European region/1997, ratified by the Republic of Moldova by Parliament Decision No. 465/1999¹⁷⁰.

Foreigners are admitted to higher education in the Republic of Moldova, cycle's I-III (bachelor's, master's and doctorate), integrated higher education programmes, residency, and postdoctoral studies, based on the education credentials that allow access to the appropriate level of education.

¹⁶⁷ The Regulation on the study of foreigners in institutions of education in the Republic of Moldova, approved by Government decision No. 504/2017 available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130514&lang=ro#

¹⁶⁸ The Law No. 200/2010 on the regime of aliens in the Republic of Moldova available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=110101&lang=ro#

¹⁶⁹ The Education Code available in Romanian at :

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=124308&lang=ro

¹⁷⁰ The Lisbon Convention on the recognition of qualifications for higher education in the European region/1997, ratified by the Republic of Moldova by Parliament Decision No.

465/1999 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130514&lang=ro#

C. EU programmes

35. Are there any national programmes to support youth and education organisations (including NGOs) and their activities? If so, please provide information about their structure and management modalities.

- National grants program for youth organizations¹⁷¹ – the Ministry of Education and Research each year has a grants program for youth organizations that implement youth programs and projects. It offers approx. 6.5 million lei annual of irredeemable funds to youth organizations in order to implement innovative ideas. The evaluation committee is composed of 50% representatives of the Ministry and 50% of civil society organizations.
- Local grants program for initiative groups and youth organizations – the Ministry of Education and Research co-finances local grants programs that are being implemented by the public local authorities. The initiatives focus on local challenges and issues of young people. The evaluation committee is formed of representatives of local authority, central authority and young people.
- Youth Organizations Laboratories – The Ministry of Education and Research develops a program through which it offers co-working spaces, free of charge, to youth organizations in order for them to implement an action plan agreed with the Ministry. The program is still in the development phase and it should start in late 2022.
- National Youth Capital¹⁷² – The Ministry of Education and Research offers a grant of 1.5 million lei for youth activities implemented in a local/rural area. The program is implemented by a local authority in partnership with youth civil society organizations.
- Start for Young People Program – implemented by ODIMM (Organization for the Development of the Small and Medium Enterprises Sector), it offers training, mentorship and finance to young people in order to start-up innovative businesses. It is managed by a Coordination Committee formed of representatives of relevant institutions, organizations and authorities.
- EU Education and Mobility Programs - Erasmus +, eTwinning offers pupils, students and young people opportunities for academic mobility and communication to improve the quality of teaching and training and modernize curricula. At national level, these programs are coordinated by the Ministry in cooperation with the Erasmus + National Office and the National eTwinning Support Agency.

¹⁷¹ The National grants program for youth organizations available in Romania at: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/programul-de-granturi-pentru-organizatiile-de-tineret>

¹⁷² The National Youth Capital https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=121725&lang=ro

36. What services of the relevant ministries are in charge/are planned to be in charge of the supervision and monitoring of the different EU programmes under indirect management for the whole of Moldova? How are they staffed/planned to be staffed? Do these ministries have audit services?

- The Ministry of Education and Research – the main public authority responsible for developing youth-related policies in the Republic of Moldova. It has an Youth Department consisting of 5 people and an audit service.
- The National Agency for Developing Youth Programs and Activity is the institution subordinated to the Ministry that is responsible for policy implementation and coordination. It has a team of 19 employed people and has an audit service.
- Youth civil society organization – serves as a focal point for some related EU projects (Erasmus+ and Solidarity Corps etc.) and works closely with the ministry as a partner organization and a strategic partner.

II. CULTURE

A. Cooperation in the field of policies

37. What, if any, are the support systems in the following fields: artistic creation, innovative cultural projects, improvement of skills for artists and cultural operators, cultural cooperation with other countries, access to culture?

The Department of Professional Arts and Cultural Industries, which is a part of the Ministry of Culture, is responsible for the development of the legal and regulatory framework for the support systems in the professional arts fields. Moreover, one of the main aims of the Department is to promote, preserve and sustain cultural values through the cultural project's mechanism.

According to the Government Decision No. 503/2019¹⁷³, the Regulation on the way of financing from the state budget of cultural projects carried out by non-commercial organizations was approved. Pursuant to para. 1, Chapter I of the Regulation on the financing of cultural projects carried out by non-profit organizations in the state budget, this Regulation establishes the method of financial support from the state budget of non-profit organizations in the Republic of Moldova, in order to encourage cultural projects, creative potential and the formation of appropriate conditions for the development of cultural activities promoted by civil society and its integration in the national objectives process in the field of culture. According to para. 4, chapter II of the Regulation, the financing of cultural projects is made on the basis of the project application competition, which is organized annually and is announced on the official website of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (now Ministry of Culture according to the Government Decision No. 147/2021¹⁷⁴), promoted in the media, no later October 25 for the following financial year. In an 11-year period (2010-2021), there have been a total of 537 projects that managed to win the allowance provided from the state-budget. In 2021, there were a total of 93 applicants, and a total of 35 winning projects.

Pursuant to Art.10, a), b), chapter V of the Law No. 116/2014¹⁷⁵ on Cinematography, the cinematographic activity in the Republic of Moldova is financed from the following sources: the state budget and the own revenues of the National Centre of Cinematography. Following Art. 11¹, chapter V, of this Law, the allocations from the state budget intended to finance the cinematographic activity are granted through the National Centre of Cinematography and can be used for:

¹⁷³ Government Decision No. 503/2019 for the approval of the Regulation on the financing from the state budget of cultural projects carried out by non-commercial organizations and the abrogation of Government Decision No. 834/2014, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=118597&lang=ro

¹⁷⁴ Government Decision no.147/2021 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Culture, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=129937&lang=ro#

¹⁷⁵ Law No.116/2014 on Cinematography, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106013&lang=ro

- the production of films of all kinds;
- development of film projects;
- film distribution;
- participation of local films and filmmakers from the Republic of Moldova in international festivals;
- organization of film festivals and events in the Republic of Moldova;
- restoration of films and materials from the National Film Archive.

Just as there is a system for supporting cultural projects (Government Decision No. 503/2019), so there is a financing system for the development of film projects, film production and co-produced films. According to Arts.13¹, 14¹ and 15¹, chapter V of the Law No. 116/2014, the funding for the development of cinematographic projects, cinematographic production and co-produced films, is granted by the National Centre of Cinematography following the competition for cinematographic projects, based on the evaluations carried out by the Council of the Centre, according to the provisions of the Law and the Regulation on cinematographic financing.

There is also a Regulation on the selection, editing and acquisition of the national book from the financial means provided in the state budget, according to Government Decision No. 256/2013¹⁷⁶. According to chapter I of the Regulation, in order to support the editing of the national book and the acquisition of the book (hereinafter – publishing/acquisition of the book), the central or local public authorities provide annually in their own budget's financial means, within the limits provided in the respective budgets. Based on paras. 3 and 4, chapter II, of the Regulation, the distribution of the allocations according to the provisions of para. 2 is carried out on the basis of the selection of offers, which is organized by competition once in a financial year. The tender for the selection of books for publication/purchase is organized by the central or local public authority in accordance with the legislation in force on public acquisition and with this Regulation.

When it comes to the access towards cultural heritage, there is a similar support system as mentioned above. Based on the Government Decision No. 53/2020¹⁷⁷, there is a Methodology of institutional funding of public law organizations in the fields of research and innovation. Pursuant to para. 2, chapter I of the Methodology, institutional funding aims to ensure institutional strengthening, improve public infrastructure in the fields of research and innovation, promote excellence in research and innovation, and redress staff policy in the areas

¹⁷⁶ Government Decision No. 256/2013 on the approval of some normative acts for the implementation of Law no. 228 of November 25, 2011 for the amendment and completion of Law no. 939-XIV of April 20, 2000 regarding the publishing activity, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=10823&lang=ro

¹⁷⁷ Government Decision No.53/2020 on the approval of the Methodology for the institutional financing of public law organizations in the fields of research and innovation, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=120178&lang=ro

mentioned to increase scientific potential. In accordance with the para. 12, Chapter II of the Methodology, as required, institutional funding shall be granted annually on the basis of a grant application submitted to the founder by public law organizations in the fields of research and innovation for:

- realization of research and innovation projects won as a result of national, bilateral and international competitions of projects in the fields of research and innovation;
- fulfilling the functions and attributions provided by the statute of the public law organizations in the fields of research and innovation, as well as the actions from the National Program in the fields of research and innovation for the years 2020-2023, approved by the Government Decision No. 381/2019¹⁷⁸.

Some Institutions that usually benefit from this institutional funding (Government Decision No. 53/2020) and provide access to new cultural heritage project are the National History Museum of RM and the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History.

When it comes to bilateral cooperation in field of culture exists based on the bilaterally signed treaties and cooperation programmes with the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, China, Croatia, Cuba, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hellenic Republic, Hungary, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia, Spain, United States of America, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

38. Describe the authorities responsible for the cultural policy. How is the policy implemented?

Pursuant to para. 2, chapter I of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Culture, approved via Government Decision No. 147/2021¹⁷⁹, the Ministry of Culture is the central specialized body of public administration that ensures the development and implementation of government policy in the areas entrusted to it. According to para. 4, chapter I, of the Regulation, the Ministry is governed by the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, by Law No. 136/2017¹⁸⁰ on the Government and other normative acts, the decrees of the President of the Republic of Moldova, the ordinances, decisions and dispositions

¹⁷⁸ Government Decision No. 381/2019 on the approval of the National Program for Research and Innovation for 2020-2023 and the Action Plan for its implementation, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=115747&lang=ro

¹⁷⁹ Government Decision No.147/2021 on on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Culture, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=129937&lang=ro#

¹⁸⁰ Law No. 136/2017 on the Government, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=125861&lang=ro#

of the Government, as well as the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Culture.

In accordance with para. 5, chapter II of the Regulation, the Ministry has the mission to analyse the situation and the problems in its fields of activity, to develop effective public policies in the areas referred to in para. 6 (culture, cultural heritage and tourism), to monitor the quality of policies and normative acts and to propose justified state interventions, which is to provide effective solutions in the areas of competence, ensuring the best ratio between the expected results and the expected costs.

In conformity with para. 7, chapter II, of the Regulation, the basic functions of the Ministry of Culture are:

- Elaboration of ex-ante analysis, policy documents, draft regulations in the areas referred to in para. 6, including those for ensuring the execution of normative acts and decrees of the President of the Republic of Moldova, after their publication in The Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova, in collaboration with relevant representatives of the civil society and the business community;
- Collaboration, in accordance with national law, with specialized institutions from abroad in the fields referred to in para. 6;
- Monitoring the score and position of the Republic of Moldova in the international indicators and rankings related to its specific areas and developing proposals for their improvement;
- Monitoring the perception of citizens and economic agents regarding public policies, normative acts and state activity in the specific fields of activity of the Ministry and elaborating proposals for its improvement;
- Monitoring the quality of public policies and normative acts in the fields of activity specific to the Ministry, including in collaboration with civil society and the private sector;
- Drafting normative acts and implementing international treaties of the Republic of Moldova in the fields provided in para. 6, drawing up reports on their execution;
- Examination and approval of draft normative acts prepared by other public administration authorities and submitted for examination;
- Elaboration and presentation of budget proposals in the areas provided for in para. 6, elaboration of the annual activity plan, as well as annual monitoring of the degree of implementation through the elaboration and publication of the respective reports;
- Organizing the systems of planning, execution, accounting and budget reporting within the Ministry and, as the case may be, within the subordinate budgetary authorities/institutions ;

- Coordinating and monitoring the activity of subordinate administrative authorities and public institutions in which the Ministry has the quality of a founder;

The overall decision-making system and the development of a cultural policy is regulated through the Government Decision no.386/2020¹⁸¹, and it stipulates as follows. **The cultural policy is developed by the structural subdivisions within the Ministry of Culture, with the support of the subdivisions of analysis, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and with the participation of other central administrative authorities and stakeholders.** After finalizing the concept of the cultural policy document, which contains:

- the name of the document;
- the type of cultural policy document that is proposed to be developed;
- the issue addressed;
- the purpose of elaborating the cultural policy document;
- concordance with the National Development Strategy, the National Development Plan, the Medium-Term Budget Framework, etc.;
- the planned period for the elaboration of the cultural policy document;
- the parties involved;

then the Ministry of Culture sends a written notification to the State Chancellery regarding the initiation of the elaboration of the cultural policy document, with the presentation of its concept. And within 15 days, the State Chancellery issues written recommendations to the Ministry of Culture, notifying the Ministry of Finance, of the necessary changes to comply with the requirements of the draft public policy documents, according to the criteria for assessing the quality and compliance of projects public policy documents. The Ministry of Culture places the concept of the cultural policy (with the recommendations of the State Chancellery) on the website of the ministry and informs the interested parties about the initiation of the elaboration of the policy document. After the end of the public consultation period of the cultural policy document, the project is examined during the meeting of the General Secretaries of the ministries, and then it is voted/ supported during the meeting of the members of the Government. It is important to take into account that, according to Art. 5 of Law no. 100/2017¹⁸² on normative acts, **stipulates that policy documents are approved by Government Decision.** If the implementation of these policies requires the involvement of administrative authorities that are not subordinate to the Government, the policy documents are approved by the Parliament. The policy documents of the autonomous public authorities are approved by them if they do not imply the involvement of other administrative authorities subordinated to the Government. The local level policy

¹⁸¹ Government Decision No.386/2020 on the planning, development, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policy documents, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=121921&lang=ro

¹⁸² Law No. 100/2017 on normative acts, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=105607&lang=ro

documents are approved by the decision of the representative authority of the administrative-territorial unit. As soon as the final draft has been approved, the main authorities, institutions and public organisations in the institutional framework that manage and regulate culture are the Ministry of Culture, all the Agencies, Councils and Commissions that are in the subordination of the Ministry, Local Public Authorities of the First Level (LPA1), Local Public Authorities of the Second Level (LPA2) and the Cultural Directions/Sections (subordination of the LPA2).

The Ministry of Culture has under its subordination 1 administrative authority - the State Agency for Moral Protection. Also, it has the position of founder of 3 public concert institutions, 11 public theatrical institutions, 2 libraries, 7 museums, 3 institutions with competences in the safeguarding of the cultural heritage and 8 other public institutions.

In the field of performing arts, the main body responsible for the performing arts sector are the following:

- Ministry of Culture (MC);
- Arts and Cultural Industry Department at MC;
- National Film Centre;
- National Book Chamber of Moldova.

The **National Centre of Cinematography**, is a public institution empowered to implement state policies in the field of cinematography. The Centre elaborates and proposes for approval to the Government draft legislative and normative acts regarding its field of activity. It elaborates and submits budget proposals for financing the activity of the Centre and the cinematographic activity; it ensures the efficient administration, in conditions of maximum transparency, of the financial resources destined for cinematography; analyses the use of financial resources for cinema and takes legal measures to recover them in case of non-compliance with legal provisions and contractual financing clauses; elaborates drafts of normative acts that regulate the relations between the natural and legal persons involved in activities in the field of cinematography, both nationally and internationally; ensures the functioning and administration of the Cinematographic Register, a unitary tool for recording films and of natural and legal persons carrying out activities in the field of cinematography and, ensures the efficient management and enhancement of the National Film Archive.

National Centre of Cinematography was created in 2016, and in 2017 it launched its financing program. Since then, about 40 films have been funded, mostly short films. Three projects, in particular, have had a good international run-in recent years, i.e., they have been present in important festivals: the feature-length documentary “The Soviet Garden” (2019), by Dragos Turea, selected at Sarajevo and other festivals and the winner of the Best Film Award at the first edition of the Filmmakers’ Gala, organized by the Moldovan Film Union, the short

animation “Sigh” (2019), by Vlad Bolgarin, and the fiction short film “Salix Caprea” (2018), by Valeriu Andriuta.

The National Book Chamber of Moldova is the main state institution that holds the documentary source of the written national culture and has the following attributions: constitutes, processes, develops, preserves and values the fund of documents that are the object of the legal deposit; organizes the legal deposit according to Art.18; performs the national bibliographic control as part of the international bibliographic control; elaborates the national bibliography of Moldova and the national repertoire of publications; performs cataloguing before publication (CIP); keeps editorial statistical records and, assigns international standard numbers for books (ISBN), for printed music (ISMN), for serial publications (ISSN).

As the lead institution of the **cultural heritage sector** in the country, the Ministry of Culture and its related Agencies are the main institutions responsible for cultural heritage implementation.

The Agency of Inspection of Monuments was created on the basis of the Government Decision No. 1114/2006¹⁸³ a specialized public institution, subordinated to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova. It has the goal to establish effective control in the field of inspection of historical and cultural monuments, bringing their documents in line with UNESCO's requirements, creating a digital public database of monuments and under Art. 11 of Law No. 1530/1993¹⁸⁴ on the Protection of Monuments. The Agency is the state institution for monument protection of the Republic of Moldova and operates in accordance with its regulation and the documents of UNESCO and the Council of Europe on the protection, preservation and enhancement of historical monuments, assemblies of monuments and sites. According to the Art. 4238 of the Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 218/2008¹⁸⁵, the Agency is the ascertaining agent on the contraventions regarding the historical monuments and monuments of public squares of national importance.

National Archaeological Agency is a public institution that implements the state policies in the field of protection and promotion of the archaeological heritage. It was created on the basis of the Government Decision No. 230/2012¹⁸⁶. The main attributions of the Agency are implementation of the strategies, policies and national paradigm regarding the archaeological heritage; elaboration of management plans for the archaeological sites; organization of the archaeological excavations, researches, safeguarding and promotion activities. According to the

¹⁸³ Government Decision No. 1114/2006 on the establishment of the Agency for the Inspection and Restoration of Monuments, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=24784&lang=ro

¹⁸⁴ Law No.1530/1993 on the protection of monuments, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130151&lang=ro#

¹⁸⁵ Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 218/2008, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=125094&lang=ro

¹⁸⁶ Government Decision No. 230/2012 on the creation of the National Archaeological Agency, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=10253&lang=ro

Art. 4238 of the Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 218/2008, the National Archaeological Agency is the ascertaining agent on the contraventions in the field of archaeological sites and cultural goods.

Among other, it establishes that the NAA: is a specialized public institution, created by the Government in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 218/2010¹⁸⁷ It is subordinated to the Ministry of Culture which acts as founder, with distinct legal status, separate budget and bank accounts; exercises its powers in close cooperation with the central and local public administration authorities, archaeological research institutes, design institutions in the field of construction and landscaping, with legal or physical persons whose activities cause soil damage in depth, international organizations and civil society; funds its activities on the basis of the budgetary allocations and special means held by the institution.

The National Centre for the Conservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage ensures the implementation of the policies in the field of intangible cultural heritage in the localities of the Republic of Moldova, especially in the communities. It supports the viability of the intangible cultural heritage and its transmission to the young generations. The institution is responsible for the documenting and safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage and for the promotion of the elements included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Humanity. The Centre was created in 1934, and in 2011 it was reorganized and designated responsible for the implementation of the Law No. 58/2012 on the protection of the intangible cultural heritage and the provisions of UNESCO Convention on the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage that was adopted in Paris on October 17th of 2003 and ratified by the Law No. 12/2006.

The Ministry of Culture is the founding authority for seven museums, four of them have the status of national museums.

1. **The National Art Museum** is the single museum with an art profile from the Republic of Moldova. It was created in 1939 and has in its patrimony almost 40 000 exhibits that reflect the development of arts since the XV century until nowadays.

2. **The National Museum of History of Moldova** was founded on December 21st 1983, when the Order of the Ministry of Culture No. 561 was issued. Now it has more than 350 000 cultural goods with different typology that represent the evolution of the historic territory of Moldova during the centuries, from the prehistoric era until the contemporary epoch, attesting the human habitat, events, and portraits of personalities.

3. **The National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History** is the first public museum in the Prut-Dniestr area and it was created in the autumn of 1889.

¹⁸⁷ Law No.218/2010 on the protection of the archaeological heritage, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106616&lang=ro

It has a collection that counts more than 150 thousand objects from different fields: palaeontology, zoology, botanic, petrography, archaeology, numismatics, ethnography, traditional art, old books, religious objects, photography and urban culture.

4. **The National Museum of Literature „Mihail Kogălniceanu”** was created in 1965 under the auspices of the Moldova Union of Writers and in 2012 it was transmitted to the Ministry of Culture. The collection of the Museum counts more than 100 000 pieces: old books and documents, objects of art.

5. **The Cultural Naturale Reserve „Orheiul Vechi”** was established by the Law No. 251/2008¹⁸⁸ as a public law institution, subordinated to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova. The Reserve includes historical and cultural heritage assets (archaeological sites, cave complexes, vernacular architecture complexes, ethnographic objectives), traditional settlements), natural heritage goods (geological and landscape ensembles, flora and fauna), terrestrial and aquatic surfaces in which the regulated capitalization of natural resources is carried out, agricultural, industrial and tourist activities are practiced.

Within the territory of the Reserve, the heritage site *Orheiul Vechi Archaeological Landscape* was established in 2014, and in 2017 it was included in the UNESCO Tentative List, according to the provisions of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

6. **The Museum „A.S. Puşkin”** was created in 1948 and it is dedicated to the Russian poet Aleksandr Puşkin. It hosts a collection of 33 000 pieces that are representative of the XIXth century, when the poet lived in Chişinău.

7. **The Museum of History of Jewish People from the Republic of Moldova** was created by the Government Decision No. 1019/2018. It has the goal to preserve, research and promote the Jewish cultural heritage from the Republic of Moldova. By the Decision of Government No. 1216/2018, the Jewish Cemetery from Chişinău was transferred as a branch of the Museum.

In order to ensure the implementation of the policies in the field of cultural heritage, the Ministry of Culture created some consultative bodies that have the goal to assist the central authority and the subordinated institutions in the process of preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage.

The National Commission for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage assists at the implementation of state policy in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. It was established in 2012 and it works according to the provisions of the Regulation approved by the Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 1678/2019.

¹⁸⁸ Law No. 25/2008 on the Code of Conduct for Civil Servants, available in Romania at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=107130&lang=ro

The specialized body representing the scientific-methodological authority in the field of state protection of historical monuments is the **National Council of Historical Monuments**. The Decision of Government No. 73/2014¹⁸⁹ sets the structure and the regulation of the Council. The Decision regulates its mission, its basic duties, functions and rights as well as the organization of its activity.

The National Council for the Public Square Monuments is an independent specialized scientific body in the field of public square monuments. The Council was established by the Law on Monuments of the Public Square No. 192/2011¹⁹⁰ and its functioning is regulated by the Government Decision No. 851/2012¹⁹¹.

The National Commission of Museums and Collections is the scientific and consultative body of the Ministry of Culture in the field of museums and national mobile cultural heritage. The establishment of the Commission was set by the Law No. 262/2017¹⁹² on museums and the Regulation of the organization and functioning was approved in 2018.

The Art.13 of Law No. 218/2010 on the protection of the archaeological heritage sets the functions of **the National Archaeological Commission**. The Law establishes that the National Archaeological Commission is an advisory body representing the scientific authority in the field of archaeological heritage protection and activities within the Ministry of Culture. It elaborates and proposes to the Ministry of Culture for approval of plans of actions for the implementation of national strategies, policies and programs regarding the protection, research and valorisation of the archaeological heritage. The Regulation was approved by the Order of the Ministry of Culture No. 38/2017.

The independence and scientific and technical opinion of the bodies' members is to be guaranteed, in adopting decisions which fall within their competence.

The UNESCO National Commission of the Republic of Moldova was established by the Government Decision No. 198/1995¹⁹³ as a consultative body of the Government that performs the tasks of communication and administration related to UNESCO. The Ministry Culture coordinates the administrative and technical tasks for the needs of the National Commission. The Commission contributes to appropriate promotion of the objectives and activities of UNESCO,

¹⁸⁹ Governmental Decision No. 73/2014 on the organization and functioning of the National Council of Historical Monuments, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=18571&lang=ro

¹⁹⁰ Law No.192/2011 on Public Monuments, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106450&lang=ro

¹⁹¹ Government Decision No. 851/2012 on the approval of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Council for public monuments, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=19873&lang=ro

¹⁹² Law No.262/2017 on Museums, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=115926&lang=ro#

¹⁹³ Decision of Government No. 198/1995 on the approval of the Statute of the UNESCO National Commission of the Republic of Moldova, available in Romanian:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=46348&lang=ro

by implementing different programs and projects in the field of education, culture, science, ICT.

During the last 20 years, the European Union has been an important development partner for the country and since 2009, European Union support has been intensified. Nowadays, cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union (EU) is guided by the EU-Moldova Association Agreement (AA) which was signed in June 2014. Under Art. 132 of AA, the parties concentrated their cooperation on a number of fields such as cultural cooperation and cultural exchange, intercultural dialogue, policy dialogue on cultural policy, cooperation in international organizations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe in order to preserve and develop cultural and historical heritage, promote the participation of cultural actors from the Republic of Moldova in cultural cooperation programmes.

Culture sector is regulated by the following laws:

- Law No. 1530/1993 on the protection of monuments, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130151&lang=ro#
- Law No. 413/1999 on Culture, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=108404&lang=ro
- Law No. 160/2017 on Libraries, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=120694&lang=ro
- Law No. 39/2000 on publishing activities,
- Law No. 1421/2002 on Theatres, Circus and Performing Art Organisations, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=125734&lang=ro#
- Law No. 262/2017 on Museums, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=115926&lang=ro# ;
- Law No. 17/2010 on Archaeological Heritage;
- Law No. 251/2008 on Formation of Cultural and Natural Reservation "Orheiul-Vechi";
- Law No. 218/2010 on the protection of the archaeological heritage, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106616&lang=ro
- Law No. 192/2011 on Public Monuments, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106450&lang=ro
- Law No. 280/2011 on Protection of National Movable Cultural Heritage, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106379&lang=ro

- Law No. 58/2012 on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106304&lang=ro
- Law No. 21/2013 on Artists and Artists' Unions, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=113042&lang=ro
- Law No. 135/2003 on Folk artistic crafts, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/search/getResults?doc_id=27751&lang=en
- Law No. 116/2014 on Cinematography, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=21484&lang=ro
- Order of the Ministry of Culture No. 38/2017 on the approval of the Regulation of organizing and functioning of the National Archaeological Commission, available in Romanian at: <http://lex.justice.md/md/369462/>

39. What, if any, are the programmes in support of the cultural and creative sectors in your country?

In conformity with the signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the construction of the first national centre dedicated to the creative industries "Creative Hub", between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (now the Ministry of Culture - Government Decision No. 147/2021) and the Competitiveness Project from Moldova, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Sweden, the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts (AMTAP) and the Association of Creative Companies of Moldova (COR), in 2019, took place the launch of "ARTCOR" - Center for Creative Industries of Moldova. ARTCOR is an engine of innovation that contributes to the development of creative entrepreneurship and stimulates the exchange of know-how and various creative ideas. Moreover, the Centre provides assistance to companies in the field and provides:

- coworking space for creative young people, five offices, space for events (workshops, conferences and master classes, etc.), meeting room, library;
- creative services for graphics, audio and video products, interior design, architecture, animation, online game creation, etc.;
- Alternative education that involves participation in various acceleration programs, specialized courses, mentoring programs, etc.

In autumn of 2021, "MEDIACOR"- Media Technology Centre was launched, based on the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (now Ministry of Culture), the USAID, Sweden, UK aid, the State University of Moldova and the Association of Creative Companies COR, for reconstructions and technical equipment. The main beneficiaries of this project are the students from the State University of Moldova but also other educational institutions and companies in the field of creative industries (video production, audio, digital media). The centre offers capacity building courses in the fields of

multimedia, TV, film, music, and digital technologies. This is also where co-working spaces are created. Creative and mediapot start-ups can find offices at MEDIACOR where to carry out their activity.

Furthermore, starting with 2021, there is a Partnership Agreement "Start Innovation in the Creative Industries and Digital Media" between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova and the Technologies of the Future Project, funded by USAID and Sweden. The agreement lays the foundations of the National Program "Creative Moldova" which will capitalize on the creative potential and drive technological innovation in digital media and creative sectors. The development of creative skills will also be supported through the ARTCOR and MEDIACOR Centres of excellence. The signatory partners will launch international campaigns to attract foreign investors in the sector and to promote Moldova as a creative destination.

Another support program for the creative and cultural sectors is Creative Europe. Cultural operators in the Republic of Moldova were eligible to apply to all components of the Culture sub-program and to 4 of the components of the Media sub-program of the Creative Europe program starting with 2015. In the period 2015-2020 there were two winning projects submitted by organizations from the Republic of Moldova. The International Documentary Film Festival "Cronograf" (Chronograph) was funded in 2016 by the Media sub-program with a total of 35 thousand euros. While in 2018, the Musical-Choral Association together with 12 other similar organizations from 10 other European countries were selected in a project worth 200 thousand euros, that takes place since 2018 till now, and involves exchanges of experience between the orchestras involved.

Furthermore, as mentioned above (question 37 of point A- Cooperation in the field of policies), Republic of Moldova has several programmes and systems that are aimed to support the cultural and creative sector.

40. What legal regime applies to book pricing? Are there any fixed price regulations?

The legal regime that regulates the activity of enterprises/economic agents, including those in the publishing field, and which determines the legal, organizational and economic principles of this activity, is Law No. 845/1992¹⁹⁴ on entrepreneurship and enterprises.

According to art. 6 point 1 of the mentioned Law, the enterprises / economic agents have the right to establish, independently, their types of activity, to form their production program, to choose their suppliers and beneficiaries of the manufactured production (works and services provided), to execute, on the basis

¹⁹⁴ Law No. 845/1992 on entrepreneurship and enterprises, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=129115&lang=ro#

of a contract, works commissioned by the state; to establish the prices and tariffs for the manufactured production (works and services provided).

In this sense, publishers use the supply-demand mechanism dictated by the market.

41. What legal regime applies to the sale and movement of cultural goods?

The legal regimes that apply to the sale and movement of cultural goods, are the following:

- Law No. 280/2011 on Protection of National Movable Cultural Heritage, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106379&lang=ro
- Customs Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 1149/2000, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=120483&lang=ro
- Law No. 1569/2002 on the method of introduction and removal of goods from the territory of the Republic of Moldova by individuals, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=108665&lang=ro
- The norms for the commercialization of the movable cultural goods, approved by the order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 1727/2019.

According to Art. 18 para. (1) of Law No. 280/2011 on the protection of the mobile national cultural heritage, the classified movable cultural goods that are in the public property of the state, of the administrative-territorial units are inalienable, imperceptible. These may be temporarily transferred to the management of another institution for the organization of exhibitions or for the realization of cultural projects. The procedure is carried out by order of the Minister of Culture. At the same time, natural and legal persons under private law may lend to public institutions, legal persons under private law classified movable cultural property. Classified movable cultural property belonging to religious denominations may be lent to public institutions, to legal persons under private law with the approval of the heads of religious cults.

The removal of classified movable cultural goods outside the Republic of Moldova is a temporary export operation, which is carried out on the basis of a temporary export authorization, issued by the Ministry of Culture in accordance with the legislation in force. The tariffs for issuing the export authorizations of the classified movable cultural goods are established by the Government, at the proposal of the Ministry of Culture.

The temporary export of movable cultural goods classified in the "Treasury" category, regardless of the owner or holder of other real rights, will be carried out on the basis of a temporary export authorization, issued by order of the Minister of Culture, with the approval of the National Commission of Museums and collections.

Removal from the country by any means of classified cultural property classified without temporary export authorization is illegal.

Classified movable cultural goods owned by the state or administrative-territorial units are exported only temporarily and only for the organization of exhibitions abroad, for laboratory investigations, for restoration or expertise.

Movable cultural goods classified in the "Fund" category which are owned by private individuals or legal entities may be definitively exported only in the context of an exchange of cultural goods of comparable value and significance, which are unique or rare for the national movable cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova. This exchange is approved by order of the Minister of Culture, with the approval of the National Commission of Museums and Collections.

Cultural goods of contemporary production, including works of fine and photographic art, ethnographic works of folk craftsmen, works of decorative or cult art, any other works of living authors (fine artists, freelance artists, amateur artists, craftsmen, artisans, students, pupils) created independently or within an instructive-educational process are not subject to classification and can be exported permanently or temporarily without an export authorization, circulating without restriction.

Law No. 1569/2002 stipulates the manner of introduction and removal of goods from the territory of the Republic of Moldova by natural persons. According to Art. 9 of the mentioned legislative act, natural persons have the right to introduce cultural values on the territory of the Republic of Moldova provided that the customs body presents the authorization issued by the competent authority of the sending state (Ministry of Culture), observance of economic policy measures declaration in the prescribed manner. In case of suspicion regarding the moved object as if it has cultural value, but the natural person does not have the respective authorization issued by the competent authority of the sending state, the customs body will allow the transfer of the mentioned property provided the authorization issued by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova, which will confirm its cost and the fact that the object has no cultural value.

Customs Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 1149/2000 contains provisions regarding the smuggling of cultural goods. Thus, according to Art. 224, crossing the customs border of goods, evading or concealing customs control, committed in large or particularly large proportions, either repeatedly or by a group of persons who organized for smuggling, or by a responsible person making use of the service situation, or by fraudulent use of customs documents and other documents, or accompanied by non-declaration or their inauthentic declaration in the customs documents or other documents, such a passage of cultural values, as well as the non-return on the customs territory of the cultural values taken out of the country, if their return is obligatory, it is considered smuggling and is punished in accordance with the Criminal Code.

Sanctions for violating the movement of movable cultural property are provided in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 985/2002. Art. 133 defines the term cultural values: "Religious or secular cultural values shall mean the values set forth in the United Nations Convention on Education, Science and Culture of 14 November 1970 concerning measures to prohibit and prevent the illicit introduction, removal and transmission of the right to property over cultural values. According to Art. 248, the crossing of the customs border of the Republic of Moldova of cultural values, evading the customs control or hiding them by hiding in places specially prepared or adapted for this purpose, as well as the non-return on the customs territory of the Republic of Moldova of cultural values out of the country, if their return is mandatory, they are punished with imprisonment from 3 to 8 years, and the legal entity is punished with a fine in the amount of 5,000 to 10,000 conventional units with deprivation of the right to exercise a certain activity or with the liquidation of the legal entities.

At present, the Ministry of Culture has drafted the draft amendment to Law No. 280/2011 which was submitted to the Government for approval and which provides for the institutionalization of a new structure under the Ministry of Culture - Service of evidence and movement of movable cultural property. In the field of movement of cultural goods, the purpose of the Service is to facilitate the access of citizens to the services of expertise of movable cultural goods and issuance of export certificates and certificates, notifications on import of cultural goods, effective collaboration with the Customs Service and other relevant bodies. mobile cultural products due to their export/import outside / in the space of the Republic of Moldova. The concentration of the attributions within a single entity subordinated to the Ministry of Culture will ensure the monitoring of the movement of movable cultural goods outside and on the national territory of the Republic of Moldova, will contribute to the protection of the national cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova, to counteract the illicit import/export of movable cultural goods on the national territory of the Republic of Moldova and abroad and to facilitate the movement of legal holders of cultural goods by harmonizing the legislative and normative framework in force with the customs legislation of the European Community.

According to the same project, the process of movement of movable cultural goods is to be regulated by the Regulation on the movement of movable cultural goods which will partially transpose into national law Regulation No. 116/2009 / EC, in accordance with the National Action Plan for the implementation of the Association Agreement Republic of Moldova – European Union in the period 2017–2019, approved by Government Decision No. 1472/2016.

The procedure for selling movable cultural goods is regulated by Law No. 280/2011 on the protection of the mobile national cultural heritage. According to Art. 19 of the cited Law, the sale of classified movable cultural goods that are in private property or the intermediation of the sale will be carried out only by economic agents authorized by order of the Minister of Culture, with the approval

of the National Commission of Museums and Collections. movable cultural property, approved by the Ministry of Culture.

The economic agents authorized to sell movable cultural goods are obliged:

- to display in a visible place the Norms for the commercialization of the movable cultural goods;
- to keep a register, in which to mention correctly and completely the name and address of the bidder, the description and the price of each good. The information in the register is confidential;
- to inform in writing, within 5 days from the date of the offer, the Ministry of Culture about the existence of some goods susceptible to classification;
- to inform in writing, within 5 days from the date of the offer, the owner of the goods about the possibility of initiating the classification procedure.

The commercialization norms of the movable cultural goods were approved by the Order of the Minister of Education, Culture and Research No. 1727/2019. They regulate the process of conducting trade in movable cultural goods, the manner in which tenders are kept and the Ministry of Culture is informed of the existence of movable cultural goods that may be classified. The sale of privately owned movable cultural property is carried out only by economic agents authorized by order of the Minister of Culture, with the prior approval of the National Commission of Museums and Collections. The norms do not regulate the sale of cultural goods for contemporary production, which according to Art. 18 para. (14) of Law No. 280/2011 on the protection of the national mobile cultural heritage are not subject to classification.

By the same normative act, the Rules on the authorization of economic agents trading in movable cultural goods were approved, which regulate the procedure for issuing the operating license of economic agents trading in movable cultural goods.

42. What legal regime applies to the preservation and protection of cultural heritage?

In order to protect the cultural heritage, the Republic of Moldova has approved several legislative acts, which have been developed in accordance with the principles promoted by international bodies, such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe, ICOM. They aim to facilitate the development of the system of protection of the cultural heritage and to safeguard the national cultural heritage in the perspective of the European integration of the Republic of Moldova.

The Republic of Moldova is a party to international conventions and treaties, as follows:

- European Cultural Convention, adopted on 19 December 1954 in Paris and ratified by Parliament Decision No. 98/1994;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 19 December 1966, ratified by Parliament Decision No. 217/1990, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=115566&lang=ro
- Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted on 23 November 1972 in Paris, ratified by Law No. 1113/2002, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=29454&lang=ro
- Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in Paris on 17 October 2003, ratified by Law No. 12/2006;
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted in Paris on 20 October 2005/2006;
- Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, adopted in Grenada on October 3, 1985, ratified by Law No. 533/2001, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=4667&lang=ro
- Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, adopted in Faro on 27 October 2005, ratified by Law No. 198 / 2008, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=23646&lang=ro
- Convention on the European Landscape, adopted in Florence on 20 October 2000/2001;
- Convention on Measures to Be Taken to Prohibit and Prevent Illicit Operations of the Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Goods, adopted in Paris on 14 November 1970, ratified by Law No. 141/2007;
- European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised), adopted in Valletta on 16 January 1992, ratified by Law No. 533/2001, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=4667&lang=ro
- Decision of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the Concept of Cooperation of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the field of culture, adopted in Minsk on 19 May 2011, approved by Government Decision No. 672/2011;
- Agreement on co-production of films, signed in Chisinau on November 14, 2008, approved by Government Decision No. 535/2009;
- Agreement between the CIS Member States on the establishment of a Fund to support cultural cooperation between the CIS Member States, signed in Moscow on 11 September 1998.

The normative framework in the field of cultural heritage protection is ensured by the following legislative acts:

Law No. 280/2011¹⁹⁵ on Protection of National Movable Cultural Heritage, regulates the legal regime of goods belonging to the national movable cultural heritage, as part of the national cultural heritage, as well as specific activities in the field of identification, research, inventory, classification, conservation, security, maintenance, preparation, restoration and enhancement of movable cultural goods. For the purposes of this law, *national movable cultural heritage* represents a set of movable cultural goods, classified in the national cultural heritage with special or exceptional historical, archaeological, documentary, ethnographic, artistic, scientific and technical value, literary, cinematographic, numismatic, philatelic, heraldic, bibliophile, cartographic, epigraphic, aesthetic, ethnological and anthropological, representing material testimonies of the evolution of the natural environment and of the human relationship with this environment, of the potential human creator. The phrase *protection of the mobile national cultural heritage* means a set of measures of a scientific, legal, administrative, financial, fiscal and technical nature, designed to ensure the identification, research, inventory, classification, conservation, security, maintenance, preparation, restoration and enhancement of the mobile national cultural heritage in view of the democratic access to culture and the transmission of this heritage to future generations.

Art. 3 provides that the protection of the national mobile cultural heritage is done through central and local public authorities, specialized institutions such as museums, art galleries, public and private collections, memorial houses, archives, libraries, religious services, non-governmental organizations responsibilities in the field. The state shall ensure, in accordance with the legislation in force, the material basis and the financial means necessary for the protection of the mobile national cultural heritage.

The normative act also contains provisions regarding:

- rights to the mobile national cultural heritage;
- the procedure for classifying movable cultural property under public or private law;
- establishing and completing the Register of the mobile national cultural heritage;
- downgrading of movable cultural property;
- inventory of the mobile national cultural heritage;
- ensuring the security of the mobile national cultural heritage;

¹⁹⁵ Law No.280/2011 on Protection of National Movable Cultural Heritage, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106379&lang=ro

- execution of copies, moulds, facsimiles, posthumous prints on classified movable cultural goods;
- conservation and restoration of classified movable cultural assets;
- movement and sale of classified movable cultural property;
- financing specific activities for the protection of the mobile national cultural heritage;
- the hierarchy of the system for the protection of the mobile national cultural heritage and the specific attributions of the institutions with competences in the field;
- return and recovery of movable cultural property which has been the subject of illegal import or export.

In order to implement the mentioned legislative act, a series of secondary normative acts were elaborated and approved:

- The norms for classifying movable cultural goods;
- Rules for the conservation and restoration of movable cultural property;
- Accreditation norms of experts in the field of mobile national cultural heritage;
- Accreditation norms of conservators and restorers in the field of mobile national cultural heritage;
- The norms regarding the authorization of laboratories and workshops for the conservation and restoration of the mobile national cultural heritage;
- The norms regarding the execution of copies, moulds, facsimiles, posthumous prints on movable cultural goods;
- The norms regarding the authorization of the economic agents that sell movable cultural goods;
- Rules for the sale of movable cultural property.

Law No. 218/2010¹⁹⁶ on the protection of the archaeological heritage, was approved in order to ensure a coherent legal framework for the protection and safeguarding of the national archaeological heritage, adjusted to the provisions of the conventions and recommendations of UNESCO and the Council of Europe on this important field, to which the Republic of Moldova is a party. For the purposes of this Law, the *archaeological heritage* is a set of material goods, arising as a result of past human activity, preserved in natural conditions above ground, underground or underwater, in the form of archaeological sites (settlements, necropolises, isolated tombs, mounds, cities , waves, constructions, churches, buildings, household annexes, etc.) or movable goods (objects or fragments

¹⁹⁶ Law No.218/2010 on the protection of the archaeological heritage, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106616&lang=ro

thereof), which, in order to be identified and studied, require the application of archaeological methods.

The normative act contains the following provisions:

- Hierarchy of the archaeological heritage protection system
- Mechanisms for protecting the archaeological heritage
- Preventive archaeological research
- property rights over the archaeological heritage
- The legal regime of the lands with archaeological heritage
- The legal regime of the discovered treasures / treasures
- the tasks of the competent authorities in the field
- tools for protecting the archaeological heritage
- areas of priority archaeological interest
- research, conservation, restoration of the archaeological heritage
- financing the activity of protecting the archaeological heritage.

In order to implement the mentioned legislative act, a series of secondary normative acts were elaborated and approved:

- Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Archaeological Commission;
- Regulation on archaeological research and expertise;
- Regulation on the National Archaeological Repertory;
- Regulation on the National Archaeological Register;
- Regulation of the archaeological cadastre;
- Regulation on the record and classification of the archaeological heritage;
- Regulation on the Register of Archaeologists of the Republic of Moldova;
- Register of archaeologists from the Republic of Moldova;
- The deontological code of archaeologists from the Republic of Moldova.

Law No. 262/2017¹⁹⁷ on Museums establishes the general legal framework for the organization and functioning of museums in the Republic of Moldova, also regulates specific activities for the protection of museum heritage. The law establishes the organization of museums, the functions, the classification of museums. At the same time, the procedures for setting up, registering and accrediting museum institutions are described. A special chapter is dedicated to the museum heritage, which includes movable and immovable cultural goods,

¹⁹⁷ Law No.262/2017 on Museums, available in Romanian at:
https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=115926&lang=ro#

reservations, sites, etc. The legislative act stipulates provisions regarding the formation of museum collections, the technical-material base and financing of museums, the administration and staff of museums, as well as the attributions of the institutions with competences in the field.

In order to implement the Law on Museums, the following secondary normative acts were approved:

- The framework regulation for the organization and operation of museums;
- Regulation on the evidence and conservation of museum heritage;
- Museum accreditation regulations;
- the regulation regarding the Museum Register;
- the framework regulations for organizing the competition for the position of museum director;
- the framework regulation for the organization and functioning of museum boards;
- the framework regulation for the organization and functioning of the scientific councils of museums.

Law No. 58/2012¹⁹⁸ on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage establishes the legal framework for the identification, documentation, research, conservation, transmission, promotion, revitalization and enhancement of the intangible cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova. The purpose of this law is to protect the intangible cultural heritage as part of the national cultural heritage, to cultivate respect for the intangible cultural heritage of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals to ensure the recognition of local and national heritage values.

The legislative act contains the following provisions:

- characteristics of the intangible cultural heritage;
- rights in the field of intangible cultural heritage;
- measures for the protection of the intangible cultural heritage: research, classification, characteristics of the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage;
- conservation, transmission, promotion, revitalization and enhancement of the intangible cultural heritage;
- the tasks of the competent authorities.

¹⁹⁸ Law No.58/2012 on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106304&lang=ro

In order to implement Law No. 58/2012, the following secondary normative acts were approved:

- Regulation of the National Commission for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;
- Regulation on the classification of intangible cultural heritage elements and keeping the Register;
- Regulation of the National Catalogue of Archives with Intangible Cultural Heritage Records;
- Regulation on the granting of the honorary title of Bearer of the Living Human Treasure.

Law No. 1530/1993¹⁹⁹ on the protection of monuments, for the purposes of this law, monuments are objects or sets of objects of historical, artistic or scientific value, which represent evidence of the evolution of civilizations on the territory of the republic, as well as spiritual, political, economic and social development, and which are entered in the Register of Monuments. Republic of Moldova protected by the state. All monuments located on the territory of the Republic of Moldova are part of its cultural and natural heritage and are under state protection. The legislative act establishes the mechanism for the protection of historical monuments, their research, study, conservation, restoration and enhancement, as well as the attributions of the institutions with competences in the field and the financing of the protection activities.

In order to implement Law No. 1530/1993 and to ensure the necessary framework for the protection of the built cultural heritage, the following normative acts were approved:

- Parliament Decision No. 1531/1993²⁰⁰ for the implementation of the Law on the protection of monuments.
- Government Decision No. 73/2014²⁰¹ on the approval of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Council of Historical Monuments.

Law No. 192/2011²⁰² on Public Monuments was developed in order to create the optimal conditions for the promotion of national and international values through monumental works of art located in public spaces, their integration in cultural, educational, urban development and spatial planning, ensuring an adequate legal framework for building and the protection of such monuments, in accordance with

¹⁹⁹ Law No.1530/1993 on the protection of monuments, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130151&lang=ro#

²⁰⁰ Parliament Decision No. 1531/1993 for the implementation of the Law on the protection of monuments, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=85370&lang=ro

²⁰¹ Government Decision No. 73/2014 on the approval of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Council of Historical Monuments, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=18571&lang=ro

²⁰² Law No.192/2011 on Public Monuments, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106450&lang=ro

the provisions of the UNESCO and Council of Europe conventions and recommendations in the field of cultural heritage. For the purposes of this Law, the notion of *public monuments* means immovable works of monumental plastic works of art (spatial-volumetric compositions, statues, busts, commemorative plaques with sculptural relief, crosses, crosses), together with the land delimited for them, having a decorative character, commemorative or religious, located in public spaces, on lands in the public domain of the state or of the administrative-territorial units. The normative act contains provisions regarding the procedure for classifying public monuments, their construction, property rights, the establishment and protection of public monuments. At the same time, provisions are included regarding the attributions of the competent authorities in the field and of the National Council of Public Monuments.

In order to implement Law No. 192/2011, the following normative acts were approved:

- Government Decision No. 851/2012²⁰³ on the approval of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Council for public monuments
- Government Decision No. 751/2020²⁰⁴ for the approval of the Framework Regulation on organizing the contest for selecting the author of the public monument or of the war memorials
- Regulation on the National Register and local registers of public monuments, approved by Order No. 380 of 27.12.2016
- The methodical instructions regarding the construction of public monuments, approved by Order No. 23 from 11.11.2021.

Law No. 413/1999²⁰⁵ on Culture has the following objectives: ensuring and protecting the constitutional right of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova to cultural activity and establishing the basic principles of the state's cultural policy and legal norms, based on which the free development of culture is ensured. The Law establishes the obligations of the state in the field of culture, the rights and freedoms in the field of culture, the relations between the state and the people of creation, the organization and economic regulation of culture.

Law No. 135/2003²⁰⁶ on Folk artistic crafts aims to create the legal framework for the activity of folk craftsmen in order to preserve folk art crafts and develop them based on the authentic traditions of folk art. The object of regulation of the

²⁰³ Government Decision No. 851/2012 on the approval of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Council for public monuments, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=19873&lang=ro

²⁰⁴ Government Decision No. 751/2020 for the approval of the Framework Regulation on organizing the contest for selecting the author of the public monument or of the war memorials, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=123860&lang=ro

²⁰⁵ Law No. 413/1999 on Culture, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=108404&lang=ro

²⁰⁶ Law No. 135/2003 on folk artistic crafts, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/search/getResults?doc_id=27751&lang=en

law is the activity in the field of artistic crafts, an activity that includes both the creative aspect and the socio-economic and cultural aspect of the phenomenon. The law establishes the general principles governing the activity in the field of artistic crafts, the activity of folk craftsmen, their organizations and enterprises in the field of artistic crafts, the powers of public authorities, the realization and protection of property rights over handicrafts, the economic framework of craft activity, social protection of folk craftsmen.

43. What legal regime applies to the cession of rights (exclusive or otherwise) to exploit aspects of cultural heritage (e.g. digitisation of art collections)?

Law No. 139/2010²⁰⁷ on copyright and related rights regulates the relations that appear in the creation and capitalization of literary, artistic and scientific works (copyright), interpretations, phonograms, videograms and broadcasts of broadcasting organizations (related rights), as well as other rights that are recognized in connection with intellectual activity in the field literature, art and science. Art.8 stipulates that copyright protection does not extend to folk expressions (creation consisting of elements characteristic of traditional cultural heritage, manifested and perpetuated by the community or by individuals, reflecting the traditional artistic heritage of the community).

Each normative act that regulates a distinct aspect of the cultural heritage contains provisions regarding the rights and ways of granting them.

According to Art.10 of Law No. 262/2017²⁰⁸ on Museums, the museum heritage is the object of the public property right of the state, of the administrative-territorial units, of the Gagauzia ATU or, as the case may be, of the private property right. The museum heritage under public law, including the buildings and lands in / where the museums operate, is part of the public domain of the state and is inalienable, imperceptible. At the same time, it is provided that the right to the first publication (reproduction) of the cultural goods from the museum heritage belongs to the museum holding rights over the respective heritage. The transfer of commercial reproduction rights for museum pieces and collections is the responsibility of museums. The elaboration and manufacture of all types of products using the images of museum pieces and collections, museum buildings, objects located on the territory of museums, as well as the use of museum names and symbols is done only with the consent of the respective museum administration.

According to Art. 6 of Law No. 58/2012²⁰⁹ on the protection of the intangible cultural heritage, all citizens have the right to use and access the intangible cultural

²⁰⁷ Law No. 139/2010 on copyright and related rights, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=4405&lang=ro

²⁰⁸ Law No.262/2017 on Museums, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=115926&lang=ro#

²⁰⁹ Law No.58/2012 on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106304&lang=ro

heritage. Communities, groups and carriers have the right to design and use symbols and trademarks of local heritage, registered in accordance with the law, to help increase its visibility in society.

The property right over the handicraft objects that fall under the incidence of Law No. 135/2003²¹⁰ on folk artistic crafts is inalienable and is exercised in the form of private or public good, in the manner and within the limits established by Law. Handicrafts are protected by copyright, in accordance with national legislation and international conventions on intellectual property to which the Republic of Moldova is a party.

Art. 8 of Law No. 1530/1993²¹¹ on the protection of monuments, stipulates that the monuments and their components in public ownership are inalienable, imprescriptible and imperceptible. State institutions may transfer possession or use of monuments in their possession to state or public institutions and organizations, as well as to natural and legal persons, giving priority to museums, archives, libraries and other specialized institutions. Monuments that are privately owned may be sold, donated or alienated with mandatory notification by state bodies for the protection of monuments. When buying and selling monuments, the state has the right of preemption.

44. What systems are in place as regards statistics pertaining to the cultural sector?

In the Republic of Moldova, the system of official statistics is regulated by Law No. 93/2017²¹² on official statistics. According to Art. 42 of Law No. 93/2017, the producers of official statistics collect, process, systematize, centralize, analyse, estimate and disseminate statistical information according to the fundamental principles of official statistics. Pursuant to Art.131 of the respective Law, the producers of official statistics have the right to obtain and collect the data necessary for the production of statistical information from all natural and legal persons falling under the scope of this law. And according to Art. 132, the data may be collected by the producers of official statistics on paper, on magnetic media, via the Internet, telephone, post or other means. The methods of data collection shall be established by the producers of official statistics. The institutions responsible for providing statistics on the cultural sector are: the National Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Culture. These institutions have a clear legal mandate to collect information related to the cultural sector in order to produce official statistics.

²¹⁰ Law No. 135/2003 on folk artistic crafts, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/search/getResults?doc_id=27751&lang=en

²¹¹ Law No.1530/1993 on the protection of monuments, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130151&lang=ro#

²¹² Law No. 93/2017 on official statistics, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=105689&lang=ro

The National Bureau of Statistics produces statistical data in the cultural field, on the following compartments:

- Editing books and brochures;
- Editing magazines and other periodicals;
- Publishing newspapers;
- The national library system;
- Indicators regarding the activity of public libraries;
- Public libraries, in territorial profile;
- Cinematographic installations;
- Museums;
- Museums in territorial profile;
- Theatres and musical institutions;
- Cultural institutions;
- Cultural institutions in territorial profile.

The Ministry of Education and Research provides statistical data on music schools, fine arts, choreography, creative houses, etc., which are included in extracurricular education.

The Ministry of Culture provides statistics on Houses of Culture, museums and libraries. As a producer of official statistics on the cultural sector, the Ministry of Culture transmits on request statistical information, internationally, in accordance with the international treaties to which the Republic of Moldova is a party.

It is important to mention that in accordance with Art. 32 of Law No. 93/2017, this Law is partially compatible with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No. 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 on European Statistics and repealing Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 1101/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transmission of data subject to statistical confidentiality to the Statistical Office of the European Communities, Council Regulation (EC) No. 322/97 on Community Statistics, and Council Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom establishing a Committee on the Statistical Programs of the European Communities and the European Statistics Code of Practice.

45. What measures have been taken in the context of the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions?

In order to implement the goal 2 of the Convention: Achieve a balanced flow of cultural goods and services and increase the mobility of artists and cultural professionals, the Ministry of Culture organizes major cultural events that have the mandate to promote the diversity of cultural expressions and to host a large number of foreign artists.

One of the most impressive events is *DescOperă festival*: a unique music event, of rare beauty, held at the foothills of the Orheiul Vechi Reserve cliffs. This event brings opera and classical music out of the traditional settings into the heart of nature. The festival goers have the opportunity to enjoy perfect weather, fresh air, beautiful scenery and classical music, performed live on an improvised stage, set right in the middle of nature.

The festival is held annually, each third weekend of June and is visited by more than 5000 local and foreign tourists from Sweden, Germany, Austria and Romania. During the event, the spectators can discover the beauty of classical music in a genuine rural landscape. The natural amphitheater provides an ideal sound for the orchestra and the voices of opera soloists. The participants have the opportunity to visit and explore the Reservation – the site, the monastery, the Christian ruins, the museum and the households of the local people.

The idea to organize an open-air opera concert in Orheiul Vechi Reserve belongs to the Austrian conductor Friederick Pfeiffer who in the summer of 2015 visited the National Opera and Ballet Theatre „Maria Biesu” of Chisinau to conduct a production of Verdi’s “Requiem”, in memoriam of Maria Biesu. During his stay, he was accommodated at Butuceni, where every morning he strolled along the Reserve enjoying its scenic landscape to find inspiration to better rehearse Verdi’s music. On one of such strolls, he met Anatol Butnaru – the host of Eco-Resort Butuceni and that is how the idea to hold a musical event at the foothills of ancient cliffs, in the heart of nature, was born.

Each year, notable international artists are invited to participate at the event. DescOpera is financed from the public budget with investments from the private sector.

The editions of DescOPERA mark a leap forward in cementing partnerships and investing in long-term infrastructure to ensure a sustainable future for the festival. DescOPERA’s success is due to the strength of its public-private partnerships between the local community, the Moldovan Government’s heritage/cultural institutions and private sector festival professionals. The event is organized each year with the support from Sweden, USAID, and strategic partners including Wine of Moldova and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. More than 5000 visitors attended each year the event from Moldova, Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Ukraine, and USA, proving the potential of the festival

to act as a magnet for inbound tourism and an engine for regional economic growth. Over 23,500 USD was generated from ticket sales in 2019, up 30% from 2017, resulting in higher revenues for locally-owned businesses. This success is the result of the event's growing reputation as a unique world-class cultural event, improved effectiveness of marketing strategies on social media and Moldovan TV, and easier ticket access for festival attendees including via online ticket hub iticket.md.

The event plays a key role in institutionalizing and strengthening this partnership for long-term sustainability, ensuring that each partner takes on risks as well as benefits. Resulting key developments include a firm agreement for the festival to take place every third weekend in June, the inclusion of the festival in the national cultural agenda/budget, and reinvestment of revenues in essential infrastructure in the local community, including adding ambient external lighting, building a second footbridge across the river, and creating an additional summer stage to showcase performances.

After the editions of DescOPERA, opera became more attractive amongst Moldovan consumers by its staging in a unique natural landscape. There is growing interest in how cultural festivals can help to build strong and cohesive communities. This project explores ways in which the opera festival may contribute to social inclusion goals. Findings suggest that these festivals may contribute to social inclusion across four areas of society – consumption, production, political engagement, and social interaction or communities – through factors such as providing opportunities for local participation, learning new skills, and promotion of cultural tourism.

Due to the open-air music festival DescOpera, both Moldovan opera and Orheiul Vechi Reserve will become more popular and will increase their touristic potential. DescOpera, being at the fourth edition, will continue to be hosted at Orheiul Vechi, thus becoming a beautiful tradition and important cultural event at the national and even international scale.

Other major events that are organized with respect to the principles of the Convention are *The National Day of the Traditional Costume* and *The National Carpet Fair „Covorul Dorului”*. They have the goal to promote the Moldovan traditional costume and the costume of different ethnic groups, the carpet weaving, and dissemination of the components and symbols used in the traditional crafts; promotion of the techniques of confectioning costumes and carpets at national and international level. One of the activities objectives is to enhance marketing capacities of the local craftsmen, museums workers, specialists from regional departments of culture etc., including the ethnic groups from the Republic of Moldova. The events include large exhibitions of heritage costumes from the Republic of Moldova to which can be discovered and analysed by different groups of interest. Artists and craftsmen from Romania are usually invited to participate at the event and to present to the public the particularities of their craft or art.

46. Does Moldova subscribe to the objectives of the European Agenda for Culture?

Yes, the Republic of Moldova broadly subscribes to the objectives of the European Agenda for Culture. The objectives set in the field of arts, creative industries and cultural heritage were developed in accordance with the European Agenda on Culture and then approved by Government Decision No. 235 of 2021²¹³ *on the approval of the Government Action Plan for 2021-2022*. The basis for the elaboration of the Action Plan was Art. 34 of Law No. 136/2017²¹⁴ on the Government, according to which the Government is empowered to develop and approve its action plan based on the criteria of priority and consistency of actions, in order to implement the normative acts of the Parliament and the implementation of the Government's Work Program.

Chapter XIX of the Government Action Plan 2021-2022, is focused on the field of culture: heritage, arts, creative industries and tourism. The key objective in the cultural field is to ensure a viable cultural environment, by promoting and supporting the proper functioning of the creative industries, restoring, conserving and promoting the national heritage, supporting creative people, adjusting the regulatory framework in the field of tourism.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova has proposed for the period 2021-2022 to achieve the following objectives:

- To have the number of participants in cultural events increased by about 5% annually;
- *2030 Culture and Heritage Strategy* to be finalised and approved;
- To improve the regulatory framework for the financing of cultural projects;
- To have the number of new jobs in the cultural-tourist fields increased by 3% annually;
- To improve the regulatory framework for the protection of improved cultural heritage;
- To improve the regulatory framework for the arts and creative industries;
- To implement the national framework for boosting the competitiveness of the creative industry and the creative professions "Creative Moldova" developed;
- To finalise and approve National tourism development program "Tourism 2025";
- To finalise and approve national program "Rural tourism";

²¹³ Government Decision No. 235 of 2021 on the approval of the Government Action Plan for 2021-2022, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=105700&lang=ro

²¹⁴ Law No. 136/2017 on the Government, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=125861&lang=ro#

- To create the Culture Fund and the Cinematography Fund;
- To increase the number of accommodation units in rural areas increased by 3% in 2022 compared to 2020;
- To increase the number of foreign citizens who visited the Republic of Moldova by 5% in 2022 compared to 2019;
- To increase the number of tourists accommodated in the tourist reception structures increased by 7% in 2022 compared to 2019 number of cultural events by about 5% annually compared to 2019.

47. How does Moldova intend to participate in the structures established under the Open Method of Coordination?

In the Republic of Moldova there is a mechanism of public consultation with civil society in the decision-making process, based on Government Decision No. 976/2016²¹⁵ and the Regulation on public consultation procedures with civil society in the decision-making process approved by this Government Decision. According to para. 5, chapter I of the Regulation, the Public Authority ensures access to the draft decisions and to the related materials by their obligatory publication on the official web page of the public authority, as well as on the web page www.particip.gov.md.

Just as the Public Authorities of the Republic of Moldova understand the importance of cooperation with civil society and harmonization of draft decisions, laws, government decisions, normative acts, with the recommendations of the European Commission, the Republic of Moldova is open to the exchange of good practices through Open Method of Coordination.

An experience of the Republic of Moldova to harmonize the legislative framework through collaboration and coordination with an EU Member State would be the Twinning project "Support to Promote Cultural Heritage in the Republic of Moldova through its preservation and protection" which was implemented during 26 months of 2017 to 2019. During this period, representatives of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (now the Ministry of Culture - Government Decision No. 147/2021²¹⁶) and subordinate agencies (National Archaeological Agency and Agency for Inspection and Restoration of Monuments) collaborated with colleagues from the Italian Ministry for Cultural Property, Activities and Tourism as well as other experts from EU countries, in order to obtain the mandatory results, set in the project.

²¹⁵ Government Decision No. 976/2016 on the mechanism for public consultation with civil society in the decision-making process, available in Romanian at:

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=119856&lang=ro

²¹⁶ Government Decision No.147/2021 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Culture, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=129937&lang=ro#

As the objectives of the Open Method of Coordination are to jointly identify and define the objectives that have to be achieved (adopted by the Council); to jointly establish the measuring instruments (statistics, indicators, guidelines); and benchmarking, for long-term development, this would be a great opportunity for Republic of Moldova to significantly improve the legal framework when it comes to procedural measures for cultural good and more specifically, heritage. Besides, this would provide a vast job market for art enthusiasts, which is currently lacking in the Republic of Moldova. The labour market in the cultural field, that is yet to be developed, will benefit from an exchange of good practices and experiences that other EU state members have had. The Ministry of Culture - central specialized body of public administration in cultural policy, is ready and open to collaborate with other countries and peer institutions in order to create an effective, practical and beneficial legislative framework for subordinate institutions as well as NGOs, individuals and legal entities in the cultural field.

B. EU programmes

48. Please explain measures taken/planned to promote the Creative Europe programme and enhance participation of cultural operators in the country.

Cultural operators in the Republic of Moldova were eligible to apply to all components of the Culture subprogram and to 4 of the components of the Media subprogram starting with 2015. The evolution of the number of applications for the period 2015-2017 showed a gratifying growth rate and sustained, but unfortunately in recent years the interest of cultural operators in the program seems to be rather declining, despite the obvious intensification of work by the Creative Europe Bureau. This is most likely explained by the very tough competition within the program; some experienced organizations in the Republic of Moldova that have had failures in previous applications are no longer motivated to apply. Another explanation would be the weak interest of potential partners in the last years of the program. Thus, in 2015, 5 projects were submitted (3 cooperation projects, 1 literary translation project, 1 film festival), in 2016, 8 projects were submitted (5 cooperation projects, 3 literary translations projects, 1 film festivals), in 2017, 17 projects were submitted (11 cooperation projects, 1 film festival, 1 educational film, and 4 literary translation projects), in 2018, 6 projects were submitted (6 projects cooperation), in 2019 at least 4 projects were submitted (3 cooperation projects, 1 film festivals).

In the period 2015-2020 there were two winning projects submitted by organizations from the Republic of Moldova. The International Documentary Film Festival "Cronograf" (Chronograph) was funded in 2016 by the Media subprogram with 35 thousand Euros. In 2018, the Musical-Choral Association together with 12 other similar organizations from 10 other European countries were selected in a project worth 200 thousand euros that took place between 2018-2021 and which involved exchanges of experience between the orchestras involved.

Another problem of low interest of cultural operators in the Republic of Moldova is the weak capacity to co-finance their participation in cultural projects. Thus, through the amendments operated by the Government of the Republic of Moldova to the Government Decision No. 503/2019²¹⁷ on the approval of the Regulation regarding on the way of financing from the state budget of cultural projects carried out by non-commercial organizations and the abrogation of Government Decision No. 834/2014, para. 21. In order to cover the budget quota, the projects selected for funding under the “Creative Europe” Program may benefit from funding up to 200 thousand lei (approx. 10 thousand Euro). The conditions for participation in the competition are identical to those for the other projects, except for the evaluation process, which are automatically selected for funding. In conclusion, it can be seen that the participation of cultural organizations in the Republic of Moldova in the Creative Europe Program 2014-2020, was quite weak.

Thus, before starting new negotiations for the participation of cultural operators from the Republic of Moldova in the new Program 2021-2027, a more incisive national promotion strategy is needed, including by supporting and stimulating public institutions and public associations to apply for project calls. It is also necessary to conduct systematic training of cultural operators on how to implement and manage projects. At the same time, it is necessary to institutionalize the Creative Europe Office as an independent institution that achieves the settled objectives and responsibilities, as well as a clear strategy for creating contacts and promoting national cultural operators at European level.

²¹⁷ Government Decision No. 503/2019 for the approval of the Regulation on the financing from the state budget of cultural projects carried out by non-commercial organizations and the abrogation of Government Decision No. 834/2014, available in Romanian at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=118597&lang=ro

III. SPORT

49. Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009, the EU has been attributed a new competence for sport (Article 165 TFEU). In this respect, please provide a description of the organisation of sport in Moldova, including the competent authorities, and the role sport plays in societal (health, education and social inclusion terms) as well as economic terms.

The Republic of Moldova carries out the state policy in the field of physical culture and sport, as well as directs their development through the central and local specialized authorities.

The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova provides that public authorities ensure conditions for the free participation of young people in the social, economic, cultural and sports life of the country.

Public administration authorities, educational institutions and sports organizations, non-governmental organizations in the field have the obligation to encourage sport for all as well as performance sports, paying special attention to the creation of conditions for their practice.

The structure of the system of physical culture and sport in the Republic of Moldova is composed of Sports Schools and Public Associations with sports profile (National Olympic and Sports Committee, Sports Federations, Sports Clubs).

Performance sport is governed by three fundamental laws: the Law on Physical Culture and Sport, the Law on preventing and combating doping in sport, the Law on the Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Approach to Safety, Security and Service during football matches and other sporting events. The Republic of Moldova has completed the Contravention Code, through Art. 365³ which provides for sanctions for violating the rules of behavior of spectators at official sports competitions held inside sports halls or stadiums.

The competences of the central specialized authority (Ministry of Education and Research) in carrying out state policies in the field of physical culture and sport are:

- Financing performance sport;
- Construction, endowment, maintenance of sports buildings including the insurance of the technical-material basis for practicing physical culture and sport;
- Organization of sports competitions of national interest;
- Delegation to international sports competitions;
- International sports cooperation;

- Ensuring the right of citizens to practice physical culture and sport;
- Awarding prizes to athletes and coaches for the performance obtained at international sports competitions at the Olympic / Paralympic and Non-Olympic events;
- Establishing (granting) scholarships for top athletes in order to provide financial support;
- Maintaining and strengthening the health of children, teenagers by systematically and continuously practicing physical exercise in educational institutions;
- Drafting and implementing the National Strategy for the Development of Sport;
- Promoting projects to motivate citizens to carry out an active and healthy lifestyle .

According to Art.15 of the Law no.330/1999 on physical culture and sport, public and private institutions support the development of sports activities among persons with disabilities.

The Republic of Moldova subsidizes programs for the training and participation of athletes with disabilities in national and international sports competitions, including the Paralympic Games.

The following are structures with a sports profile that protect and represent the rights and freedoms of athletes with disabilities: Specialized Sports School of Judo "Oleg Crețul", Sports Center for The Preparation of National Lots, Paralympic Committee, Sports Federation for People with Locomotor Disabilities of the Republic of Moldova, Federation of Blind Athletes of the Republic of Moldova, Judo Federation for Persons with Disabilities and Public Association „Special Olympics" for people with intellectual disabilities.

50. Please describe the national policy (including legal acts) in the field of anti-doping and matchfixing on the one hand and the fight against violence in sport on the other hand.

The Republic of Moldova has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Manipulation in Sports Competitions (Macolin Convention), by Law no. 285/2018, and by doing so confirmed its commitment to tackle the problem of manipulation of sports competitions and to participate in the international collaboration in fighting against the manipulation of sports competitions and protecting the integrity of sport.

As provided in Art. 13 of the Convention the identification of a National Platform is a key element for the effective implementation of the Convention. The Republic of Moldova has launched the process of establishment of its National Platform. In

this respect, the Republic of Moldova was included in the Council of Europe Project Keep Crime Out of Sport (KCOOS+), which resulted in the release of the Roadmap and Action Plan on addressing the manipulation of sports competitions in Moldova 2022-2023 aimed at supporting the establishment of the governance of the National Platform, including mobilizing stakeholders and facilitating better co-operation at national and international levels. The next step to undertake in this direction is to give legal status to the National Platform. At this stage, the establishment and hosting of the National Platform, goes through a process of transfer from the Ministry of Education and Research to the National Antidoping Agency. This decision was reached due to similitudes of anti-doping and anti-match-fixing programs and policies and common goals which are a clean sport, the protection of integrity in sport and the promotion of the spirit of sport that is characterized by values such as ethics, fair play, honesty, compliance with laws and regulations.

The implementation of the national anti-doping program is carried out in accordance with the principles and standards formulated by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Accession to the International Convention against Doping in Sport, adopted at the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris on 19 October 2005, ratified by Law No. 298-XVI of 21.12.2007 and to the Council of Europe Convention against Doping, adopted in Strasbourg on 16 November 1989 and ratified by Law No. 247-XVI of 27.11.2008, obliges the Republic of Moldova to comply with and implement at the national level the World Anti-Doping Code (WADA Code) developed by WADA.

Republic of Moldova adopted the Law for preventing and fighting against doping (No. 185/2012) in 2012, which established, *inter alia*, the National Antidoping Agency (created in 2014) and a system for fighting and preventing doping in sport. Pursuant to Law No. 185/2012, athletes and all participants in sport are prohibited from taking, giving to others and encouraging the use of illegal performance-enhancing drugs according to WADA Code and International Standards. The above Law established the National Antidoping Agency, as a public institution under the Government of the Republic of Moldova, for monitoring and enforcement of the international anti-doping convention in sport in Republic of Moldova. It stipulates that the Agency is managed by a General Director appointed by Government of Republic of Moldova and assisted by a vice-director.

The National Antidoping Agency carries out the following activities: systematically monitors and coordinates the anti-doping program and anti-doping activities in sport, proposes and implements the antidoping measures in sport, is responsible for the implementation of antidoping conventions, the WADA Code, International Standards of WADA, National Antidoping Rules, manages the preparation and the procedures of adoption of the Law regulating this area.

The entry into force on January 1, 2021 of the new World Anti-Doping Code (Code), developed by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), whose main purpose is to harmonize anti-doping policies, regulations on relations between sports structures and public authorities throughout led to the creation of a discrepancy between the national provisions of the Republic of Moldova and the international ones. Thus, Law No. 185 of 11.07.2012 for preventing and combating doping in sports does not correspond to the current requirements of the Code and International Standards, which required the development of a new law, being in the process of consultation.

At the same time, WADA closely monitors the implementation of national anti-doping programs and policies, as reflected in the Corrective Action Report sent to the National Antidoping Agency and the Moldova-Slovakia-Croatia regional cooperation project on the proper implementation of the National Anti-Doping Program.

The Republic of Moldova, by Law No. 207/2017, has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on violence and uncontrolled exits of spectators at sports events, especially at the football matches - Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (Saint-Denis, July 3, 2016).

51. Do the public institutions subsidise sport federations and what is the procedure?

The Republic of Moldova in carrying out its policies in the field of physical culture and sport finances performance sports.

The subsidization of sports federations from the state budget is carried by the Ministry of Education and Research.

National sports federations address with individual programs for the training and participation of athletes in official sports competitions.

The programs presented by the Federations must correspond to the calendar of national and international sports activities approved yearly by the Ministry of Education and Research. The financial means are allocated to the Sports Federation on the basis of a financing contract (grant agreement) for the performance of sports activities.

The financial allocations transferred from the state budget to the Sports Federations for the implementation of the Calendar of national and international sports actions for the years 2018 – 2021 can be accessed on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Research.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ The Calendar of national and international sports actions for the years 2018 – 2021 available in Romanian at:https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/sume_federatii_2018-2019-2020_-2021_29_03_2022_.pdf

52. What is the situation of sport in the education system (e.g. number of hours of Physical Education)?

In the Republic of Moldova, physical education activities for children are implemented at the stage of early education institutions. The subject of Physical Education (2 hours per week) is compulsory taught in primary education, general secondary education level I and II and higher education in the first year.

The school curriculum approved in 2019 is based on (includes) the following modules: gymnastics, athletics sports games, including the "national sports tests" module, thus the educational institutions have the possibility to choose the tests they will practice, both during the lessons and sports circles on interests.

Students are given the opportunity to practice more some sports activities outside of lessons in different sports sections, thus having the possibility to double the number of hours of practising physical exercise. Also, within the institutions, different sports competitions are organized on a monthly basis, with the participation of pupils of different ages, such as: "Happy starts", "Runner's Day", "Cyclist's Day", "Football competitions, basketball, volleyball".

Also, on an annual basis, the Physical Education Olympiad is organized, which aims to assess the competences of the students trained in sports activities.

53. Please describe existing policy measures in support of physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

The education of a healthy lifestyle is formed (advocated) both within public institutions and within the activities organized by non-governmental structures with partial support from the state budget. The promotion of an active lifestyle is achieved through activities, organized by central and local public authorities such as:

- "Athlete's Day";
- "Olympic Day";
- "Eco Fest",
- "Cycling races organized by the amateur cycling association";
- "Festival of motion games";
- Sports activities organized with the participation of people with disabilities "Golden Bull" and "PEACE-FRIENDSHIP-COLLABORATION".
- European Week of Sport #BeActive (23 – 30 September).

54. Are there any national programmes to support sport organisations (including NGOs) and their activities? If so, please provide information about their structure and management modalities.

Public associations in the field of sports are eligible to apply to the Grant Program carried out by the Ministry of Education and Research. The development of mass sport and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle are priorities announced in the competition²¹⁹.

²¹⁹ The National grants program for youth organizations available in Romania at: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/programul-de-granturi-pentru-organizatiile-de-tineret>