



**STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
OF THE PEOPLE'S ADVOCATE OFFICE
FOR 2023-2030**

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List of Abbreviations

HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
NSAA	National Social Assistance Agency
PA	People’s Advocate
CPA	Central Public Authority
PACR	People’s Advocate for Children Rights
LPA	Local Public Authority
NLAC	National Legal Aid Council
NSIH	National Social Insurance House
NHIC	National Health Insurance Company
CTP	PAO Council for Torture Prevention
CRD	Children Rights Department of PAO
HRCD	Human Rights and Communication Department of PAO
CMID	Claim Management and Investigation Department of PAO
PPLD	Public Policy and Legislation Department of PAO
TPD	Torture Prevention Department of PAO
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
MER	Ministry of Education and Research
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
MH	Ministry of Health
NEET	Persons neither in education, nor employment or training
PAO	People’s Advocate Office
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
NGO	Non-government organizations
OPD	Organizations of persons with disabilities
CSO	Civil society organizations
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
BA	Bar Association
EU	European Union

Foreword

The Strategic Development Program of the People’s Advocate Office (SDP) for the period 2023 – 2030 has been prepared based on the information collected on human rights situation and experience acquired over years. Additionally, SDP incorporates the opinions and needs of the rights holders, both individuals and organizations, and duty bearers (following participatory consultations held between July 2022 and February 2023). The People’s Advocate Office (PAO) has 25 years of experience in protection and promotion of human rights and has been accredited with “A” status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). This Strategy builds on the achievements and lessons learned from the previous strategy implemented between 2018 and 2022. We will leverage the good practices of cooperation with the central and local public authorities to improve protection of human rights and will use the tools developed during the previous strategic cycle to improve our performance in relation to claim management and *ex officio* investigations, prevention of violation of human rights, in shaping legislation so as to integrate the human rights perspective.



This Strategy will guide our efforts to apply the human rights based approach. We will make sure that legislation, public policy documents are anchored in the international and regional human rights standards. We will focus on empowering women and men to know and claim their fundamental rights. We will provide support and practical guidance to the state institutions to effectively fulfill their human rights obligations. Last but not least, we will strive for greater accountability of those who violate human rights, for adequate remedies for victims of violence and we will work towards preventing similar situations from happening.

While working on our strategic development program, we had to prioritize. Though not an easy exercise, it was a crucial and necessary effort. Prioritization will allow us to look deeper into the priority issues and allocate appropriate funding to address them.

Therefore, based on the information collected by PAO over the years and people’s concerns voiced during our previous research activities we prioritized the right to health, education, social security, employment, the right to a healthy environment, to a fair trial, the right to freedom and security, prohibition of torture and ill-treatment. Building on the human rights based approach, the strategic development program is centered on the protection and empowerment of the most vulnerable groups, including but not limited to children, women, persons with disabilities, LGTBQ+, the elderly, Roma community, Muslims, people of African descent, NEET young people, detainees and former detainees, post-institutionalized persons, people living with HIV, persons from the rural areas, refugees, stateless people, migrants. While keeping in mind that besides benefits, the digital and e-transformation age can also lead to human rights violations, we are also determined to achieve a better integration of human rights in the digital space.

We are confident that jointly with the state institutions, civil society and other non-state actors we will succeed to make significant progress on human rights protection and ensure that the people live their lives in dignity in Moldova, and the Moldovan citizens feel better protected abroad.

Ceslav Panico, People’s Advocate (Ombudsman)

1. Background

The **human rights** situation has not improved much over the past years. After the third Universal Periodic Review (2022), the Republic of Moldova accepted 186 out of 209 recommendations, i.e. four recommendations fewer than in the previous review in 2016. Most of the accepted recommendations focus on the legislative, institutional and policy frameworks, reducing inequalities, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.¹

According to a perception survey commissioned by the People's Advocate Office, **the right to health** is among the most frequently violated rights in Moldova.² Despite this, the share of people who claimed their right to health is very low.³ The number of women and men who did not join the compulsory health insurance plan is alarming.⁴ Similarly alarming is the unmet need for sexual and reproductive health services.⁵ Certain groups, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, Roma people face physical and attitudinal barriers to accessing health services.⁶

Approximately one third of the respondents in the human rights perception survey believe that the **right to education** requires more attention. Children in the education system face physical, information and attitudinal barriers. The public policy documents do not address sufficiently the inequalities in the education system based on social, socio-economic status, sex, disability, ethnicity, place of residence etc. The awareness of human rights is low. Human rights education has been introduced in a very limited number of education institutions and the human rights subject is only optional. The secular nature of education is ignored in many education institutions. The current accountability mechanisms for abuse are not efficient.

A large number of the ECtHR cases lost by the Republic of Moldova concerned the **right to a fair trial**. One of the main reasons was the poor justification of court decisions. A judicial system that allows poor reasoning of court decisions increases the likelihood of injustice and mistrust of people in it. Other violations found by ECtHR concern failure to protect the fundamental rights during criminal investigation. Some vulnerable groups, such as the people with disabilities, encounter physical, information or attitudinal barriers to enjoying their procedural rights. The justice system does not fully ensure the special protection of children. Judicial integrity is another major issue that undermines the public trust in justice.⁷ Finally, there is a series of findings and recommendations of relevant international bodies within the UN and CoE system stressing the need to improve access to justice in Moldova.

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/md-index>

² People's Advocate Office (2021). *Perceptions of human rights in the Republic of Moldova Study*, available online at <http://ombudsman.md/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Final-STUDIU-traducere-1.pdf>

³ *ibid*, p. 68

⁴ NHIC (2020). *Activity Report for 2020*, pg. 6, available online at http://www.cnam.md/httpdocs/editorDir/file/RapoarteActivitate_anuale/2021/Raport%20de%20activitate%20CNAM%202020.pdf

⁵ UNFPA (2022), *Generations and Gender Survey*, pg. 27, available online at https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/summary_of_generations_and_gender_survey_1.pdf

⁶ OHCHR (2021). *Impact of COVID-19 on Human Rights in the Republic of Moldova*, pg. 9-20, available online at <https://moldova.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/Summary%20of%20Research%20Impact%20of%20COVID-19%20%28OHCHR%29.pdf>

⁷ CRJM (2023). Analytical Note: *Republic of Moldova at the European Court of Human Rights in 2022*, available online at <https://crjm.org/en/moldova-at-the-european-court-of-human-rights-in-2022/>

The **right to social security** is the third most often violated right in Moldova. Although the share of people living below the poverty line has declined over the past years, data reveals significant differences between men and women, rural and urban areas, high vulnerability of the people with disabilities, Roma people⁸, circular migrants.⁹

Available data show a significant environmental degradation caused by global warming and air pollution (the **right to a healthy environment**). According to the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the effects of global warming are devastating.¹⁰ The environment components have a direct impact on humans throughout their lives, particularly on their health, work efficiency and wellbeing. Therefore, the state has the obligation to take measures to (i) reduce environmental pollution, (ii) collect and regularly disseminate information on the state of the environmental elements, factors and habitats in accordance with the Aarhus Convention, (iii) empower people to know and claim the right to a healthy and sustainable environment.

Over-reliance on **digital systems and artificial intelligence** may lead to the marginalization or exclusion of people who do not have access to them. Algorithm-based systems can change institutions' staff recruitment, decision-making and service delivery procedures. While helpful in many cases, they can also negatively affect human rights and equality.

Over 30% of the survey respondents believe that the **right to work** should be one of the priorities of the national authorities. Economy and jobs faced challenges during the pandemic. Job loss, the change in the working paradigm, including transition to remote work, have been overwhelming for many people in terms of the work conditions, remuneration and career development.

Among the most frequently violated rights found by ECtHR is also the **right to liberty and security**, the main cause being the excessive use of preventive detention, and almost a fourth of the violations found by ECtHR concern the **prohibition of torture and ill-treatment**. The CTP reports have systematically revealed cases of violence and a criminal subculture in places of detention, which are often tolerated or tacitly encouraged by penitentiary institutions. Finally, the efforts to prevent and combat domestic violence require scaling up in light of the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, recently ratified by the Republic of Moldova.

In recent years, the national authorities have taken legislative, institutional and policy measures related to the protection of **children's rights**. They include adoption of legislation on protection of children at risk, the national deinstitutionalization program, a separate chapter on children's rights in the 2018-2022 National Human Rights Action Plan, reactivation of the National Council for Child Rights Protection, adoption of the 2022-2026 National Child Protection Program. Yet the reports of the People's Advocate for Children Rights¹¹ and the international reports reveal a number of deficiencies that require immediate action.¹² They include: (i) lack of a comprehensive legislative and policy framework anchored in all the rights and principles stipulated by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; (ii) poor cross-sector coordination for protection of children's rights; lack of a system for data collection on vulnerable groups; (iii) insufficient efforts to apply the principles of the international framework on

⁸ FEE and CPD (2021). *Moldova inegală. Analiza celor mai relevante inegalități din Republica Moldova 2021*, available online at https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CPD_MOLDOVA-INEGALA-2021.pdf

⁹ IOM (2020). *IOM rapid field assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of the Moldovan diaspora: an evidence base regarding migrants' coping strategies and contributions*, available online at https://moldova.iom.int/sites/moldova/files/documents/IOM_Diaspora_Survey_Report-EN_FINAL_3.pdf

¹⁰ IPCC (2022). *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change*, available online at https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6/wg3/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_Full_Report.pdf

¹¹ People's Advocate for Children Rights (2022). *Report on observance of child's rights in the Republic of Moldova in 2021*, pg. 116-117, available online at https://ombudsman.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/RAPORT-COPII_RED_eng.pdf

¹² Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017). *Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic report of the Republic of Moldova*, paras. 5-17, CRC/C/MDA/4-5, available online at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fMDA%2fCO%2f4-5&Lang=en

protection of children’s rights. Actions are needed to address the abuse and neglect, gender stereotypes, sexual exploitation, the situation of children deprived of family environment and the children with disabilities, and to improve the administration of juvenile justice.

The available reports show significant inequalities related to **human and economic development**.¹³ The emergence and persistence of inequalities in Moldova call for a better use of the human rights based approach in the process of drafting and implementing the country’s development policies by effectively integrating the needs of women and men belonging to vulnerable groups and international and regional human rights standards in the country’s development strategies and programs.¹⁴ Besides the existing obligation not to discriminate and leave out anybody, the national authorities must seek harder to adopt a positive approach to reducing inequalities. The first efforts in this regard were made through the National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030” and they must continue and be scaled up, including in the tax, trade, agriculture and regional development policies.

The **business environment** can have a strong impact on the rights of employees, consumers and their communities. The effects on human rights can be positive, such as improved access to jobs or service delivery, but also negative, such as environment pollution or unfair remuneration of employees. To prevent such negative effects, the authorities and the private sector must operationalize the three UN pillars: protection, respect and remedies.¹⁵

The current context is conducive to influencing policy-making in this regard. Currently, the national authorities are working on policies that will have significant implications on the issues mentioned above. They include the new National Human Rights Action Plan; the new 2022-2030 National Healthcare Strategy; the new strategy Education 2030; the new program on sexual and reproductive rights; the new program on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence; the new inclusive education program; the new Strategy for reducing and preventing inter-prisoner violence in the Moldovan penitentiary system. The People’s Advocate Office will take advantage of these opportunities and contribute to shaping the policy framework to make sure it is aligned with the human rights principles and standards and will provide an independent monitoring of their implementation.

The human rights situation in the **Transnistrian region** has not seen significant progress in recent years and continues to be a matter of concern for the People’s Advocate. The state must continue to watch over the situation of the people living on the left bank of the Nistru River and in Bender municipality and make sure their rights are fully protected. Hence, the Ombudsman notes that the Government of the Republic of Moldova must make every effort to implement the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

The People’s Advocate Office is also concerned about the unprecedented humanitarian situation caused by the **war in Ukraine**. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has resulted in a mass influx of refugees at the Moldova-Ukraine border. Since the outbreak of the war, Moldova has hosted over 700 thousand people, approximately 87 thousand of whom have remained in the country. About half of the refugees are children, while most of the adult refugees are women and elderly people.¹⁶

¹³ UNDP (2022). *Human Development Report*, available online at https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2021-22pdf_1.pdf; CPD and FEE (2021). *Moldova inegală: analiza celor mai relevante inegalități din Republica Moldova 2021*, available online at https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CPD_MOLDOVA-INEGALA-2021.pdf

¹⁴ PNUD (2017). *Report on mid-term evaluation of National Development Strategy “Moldova 2020”*, available online at www.undp.org/moldova/publications/mid-term-evaluation-report-national-development-strategy-moldova-2020-key-findings

¹⁵ UN (2011). *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*, available online at https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf

¹⁶ People’s Advocate Office (2023). *Report nr. 3 on the monitoring of the respect for the rights of refugees in the context of the armed conflict in Ukraine for the period August – December 2022*, available online at <https://ombudsman.md/wp->

Refugees are extremely vulnerable and need protection and support. Their vulnerability is exacerbated by the risk of discrimination, physical or sexual violence, exploitation, human trafficking, detention in inhumane conditions or even the risk of refoulment or expulsion while trying to reach other countries looking for better opportunities. They often do not report such violations because of fear of reprisals, previous negative experience with the law enforcement, poor or lack of training of personnel on sensitive approach to their vulnerability.¹⁷

The People's Advocate Office has monitored the rights of refugees from Ukraine since the very first days of the war, focusing particularly on how the Moldovan authorities fulfill their international commitments concerning refugee rights.¹⁸ A Consultative Council for preventing violation of the rights of refugees from Ukraine was established and appropriate monitoring tools were designed to support the monitoring efforts.¹⁹ The rights of refugees will be tightly integrated in all the priorities of this strategic development program.

At institutional level, it should be mentioned that the **legal framework regulating the work of the People's Advocate** has been improved through the recent amendments to the Law 52/2014 on People's Advocate (Ombudsman)²⁰ and to the Law 164/2015 on the approval of the Regulation on organization and operation of the People's Advocate Office.²¹

[content/uploads/2023/02/Report-No-3-on-the-monitoring-of-the-respect-for-the-rights-of-refugees-in-the-context-of-the-armed-conflict-in-Ukraine-for-the-period-August-December-2022.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.md/content/uploads/2023/02/Report-No-3-on-the-monitoring-of-the-respect-for-the-rights-of-refugees-in-the-context-of-the-armed-conflict-in-Ukraine-for-the-period-August-December-2022.pdf)

¹⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2022), *Ukraine crisis creates new trafficking risks*; available online at <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2022/4/62569be24/ukraine-crisis-creates-new-trafficking-risks.html>

¹⁸ Monitoring reports available online at <https://ombudsman.md/rapoarte/tematic/>

¹⁹ <http://ombudsman.md/alaturi-de-ucraina/initiativele-oficiului-avocatului-poporului/>

²⁰ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=135501&lang=ro#

²¹ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=135503&lang=ro#

2. Institutional Profile

Our Vision, Mission, Principles and Values

Our vision

The Republic of Moldova is the country where women and men, including the vulnerable groups, know and claim their rights. The public authorities and institutions fulfill their commitments in full compliance with the international human rights and equality standards.

The People's Advocate institution is a human rights Center of Excellence (model institution), which has a high standing recognized by all the public authorities and institutions and enjoys high level of public confidence.

Our mission

PAO campaigns for respect, protection and realization of human rights by the State through advocacy, monitoring, protection, education and empowerment and accountability activities.

Our principles

Independence	PAO is an organizationally, functionally, operationally and financially independent institution. It fulfills its mandate fairly and with courage.
Dignity and respect	PAO treats all people, its partners, stakeholders and staff with empathy, dignity and respect in all its actions and activities.
Confidentiality	PAO maintains confidentiality of the data and information of all those who seek its support and does not disclose any information without their permission and in full compliance with the <i>Do no Harm</i> principle.
Equality and nondiscrimination	PAO promotes the principle of equality, designs and implements measures aimed at preventing and combating discrimination, as well as positive measures to support and empower the under-represented groups.
Neutrality and impartiality	PAO is a neutral and impartial institution; it does not engage in any action conducive to conflicts of interest.
Accessibility	PAO respects and ensures the accessibility of services for all its beneficiaries, considering their diversity.
Pluralism, inclusion and participation	PAO seeks to engage all the social groups in its activities, protects human rights, in particular those of the most vulnerable groups.
Integrity, transparency and openness	PAO adheres to the highest standards of ethical conduct in its work. We believe that honesty, transparency and good governance ensure the trust of our beneficiaries and partners.

Dialogue and participation	PAO encourages vertical and horizontal dialogue, as well as the participatory approach by engaging all relevant stakeholders in its activities.
Professionalism and efficiency	PAO team has good knowledge of the international and national human rights system and all the related processes. PAO team is efficient and effective and has a professional approach to the security issues in all the mandate areas of the institution.

Our Strategic Approach

PAO builds its activities on the human rights based approach. In our work we place emphasis on legislation and public policies, empowerment of rights holders, capacity building and accountability of duty bearers.

- **Structural changes:**
 - Analysis of and influencing legislation and public policy documents in light of the international and regional human rights standards;
 - Referral to the Constitutional Court;
 - Identification and investigation of strategic cases.
- **Capacity building for duty bearers:**
 - Systemic, sustainable approach to training;
 - Guidance and advice on practical application of international human rights standards and principles.
- **Accountability of duty bearers:**
 - Monitoring and reporting (at national and international levels) on the status of implementation of human rights commitments;
 - Acting to ensure the accountability of duty bearers for human rights violations.
- **Empowerment of rights holders to claim their rights:**
 - Promoting mandatory human rights education at all levels of the education system and throughout life;
 - Outreach and empowerment campaigns targeting the most disadvantaged groups.
- **Facilitating the access of rights holders to remedies:**
 - Simple, accessible and clear application procedures;
 - Formulation of recommendations on restoration of rights of victims of abuse;
 - Representation of individuals or groups of individuals before public authorities and courts in complex cases involving human rights and liberties or in cases of public interest;
 - Monitoring the implementation of recommendations given by the People’s Advocate.

Importance of Prioritization

Human rights have implications for all aspects of life. People can become victims of human rights violations anywhere: at work, in the street, in public transport, in shops, at school, in the healthcare institutions and places of detention, in the digital space or social networks.

The list of issues we can focus on is long. Prioritization is not easy, but essential and necessary. Both the rights holders, whether individually or associated in organizations, and duty bearers (after a participatory consultation process held between July 2022 and February 2023) suggested us to focus on a limited number of issues, but for a longer period of time.

This approach will allow us to look deeper into each issue and allocate the appropriate resources. We are in a difficult position of having to make tough decisions about how broad the scope of our strategy should be in order to be able to achieve sustainable changes. We have prioritized those issues that we can address by virtue of our prevention, protection and promotion duties. Yet, we will not leave out the problematic areas that have not been put on the list of the priorities of the People's Advocate Office for 2023 – 2030. They will also be addressed, but in a more sporadic and reactive manner.

Strengthening Partnerships and Cooperation with International Mechanisms

Building and developing sustainable partnerships for prevention, protection and promotion of human rights and equality is one of the main objectives of the People's Advocate Office. PAO will continue to strengthen its partnerships, in particular the sector partnerships at local, national and international levels with civil society organizations, state authorities, international institutions and partners. In the context of the country's accession efforts to the EU and the role of the Ombudsman institution to contribute to the improvement of the living standards from a human rights perspective, experience-sharing and strengthening the relationships with the national human rights institutions from the EU member states will play a significant role in the development of PAO.

In line with the Paris Principles, cooperation with the international human rights mechanisms is a central element of the mandate of the People's Advocate Office. Therefore, PAO will intensify cooperation with the most important human rights institutions, in particular by improving reporting and data exchange on the human rights situation in Moldova.

Implementation of the Strategy in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova

The People's Advocate Office will seek to facilitate the implementation of the strategy on the left bank of the Nistru River. To this end, we will engage PAO representation in Varnita (and strengthen PAO capacity to deal with the Transnistrian dimension in general), we will build on our cooperation with the non-governmental organizations from both banks of the Nistru River and the international and regional human rights mechanisms. The People's Advocate Office will make every effort to improve the understanding of human rights in the Transnistrian region. We will identify efficient solutions to violations of human rights in the region as part of the solutions for the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova. Finally, we will monitor the human rights situation on the left bank of the Nistru River. Thus, we will contribute to improved cooperation with the international human rights mechanisms and we will make sure they are better informed about the situation in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova.

3. Framework of Strategic Priorities

Public Policy Priorities

Medium and long term policy priority	Source
17 sustainable development goals	The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ²²
10 strategic objectives	National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030” ²³
Sector policies in the following areas: good governance, digital transformation, justice and anti-corruption, economy and entrepreneurship, infrastructure and regional development, health, social and labor protection, public finance, agriculture, environment protection, administration and local autonomy, education and research, youth and sport, external policy, internal affairs, security and defense, country reintegration, Roma support, gender violence prevention, environment	Government Work Program “Moldova of Good Times” ²⁴ Government Work Program “Prosperous, Safe and European Moldova” ²⁵ 2022-2025 Roma Support Program ²⁶ National Strategy on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence for the years 2018-2023 ²⁷ Environmental Strategy for the years 2014-2023 ²⁸
16 intervention areas	National Human Rights Action Plan for the years 2018-2022 ²⁹
Strategic direction I. Independence, accountability and integrity of the justice sector actors Strategic direction II. Access to justice and quality of justice	Strategy on ensuring independence and integrity of the justice sector for 2022–2025 ³⁰

The Strategic Priorities of the People’s Advocate Office

Taking into account the most pressing issues facing the Moldovan society, in the period until 2030 we will focus on 11 strategic priorities, which will be covered in our annual plans and reports. However, we will also seek to

²² <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/70/1>

²³ <https://www.parlament.md/LegislationDocument.aspx?Id=86a24d77-8f52-4422-8834-672e6a1ff855>

²⁴ https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/hg_nr.235_13.10.2021-engl.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.parlament.md/ProcesulLegislativ/Proiectedeactelegislative/tabid/61/LegislativId/6347/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

²⁶ <https://www.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/subiect-06-nu-217-mec-2022.pdf>

²⁷ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=101802&lang=ro

²⁸ <http://green.gov.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=41&t=/Regulatory-framework/Environmental-Strategy>

²⁹ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=110031&lang=ro

³⁰ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=129241&lang=ro

respond in a prompt and efficient manner to the burning human rights issues and challenges that are not directly linked with the priorities below.

Our strategic priorities are as follows:

Priorities	Period	
	2023-2026	2027 - 2030
Priority 1. All people have access to quality and reliable healthcare services	x	
Priority 2. The education system provides equal opportunities, promotes social cohesion and human rights	x	
Priority 3. Every person that comes in contact with the justice system enjoys effective access to justice and a fair trial	x	
Priority 4. Persons at risk and in vulnerable situations receive protection, social assistance, community social services	x	
Priority 5. People live in a healthier and more sustainable environment		x
Priority 6. Digital services and artificial intelligence respect and facilitate realization of human rights		x
Priority 7. Women and men enjoy equal access to work and equal treatment in the workplace		x
Priority 8. The person’s right to liberty and safety is ensured; torture and ill-treatment are eradicated	x	x
Priority 9. All children enjoy the rights protected by the UN Convention on the rights of the child	x	x
Priority 10. The country’s social and economic efforts are anchored in the human rights standards and principles	x	x
Priority 11. PAO operates at a higher level as an effective, efficient and well-governed professional institution	x	x

4. Results Framework

Priority 1. All people have access to quality and reliable healthcare services

We will make sure:

- to influence the public policies and legislation in the health sector to align with the human rights standards, focusing on sexual and reproductive health, mental health, access to healthcare institutions and medicines, child health;
- that health data is sensitive and disaggregated from the human rights perspective;
- that the most vulnerable social groups know and claim equally their right to health;
- that the medical personnel, including the personnel in the mental health institutions, know and respect the rights of patients, taking into account the most vulnerable groups;
- that healthcare institutions apply effective accountability measures and have appropriate institutional accountability arrangements for violations of the right to health;
- that courts apply the international human rights framework in adjudication of claims of violation of the right to health.

We will achieve this:

- by shaping and monitoring legislation and public policy documents on (i) sexual-reproductive health, (ii) child health, (iii) access to institutions and essential medicines;
- by promoting collection of health data from human rights perspective;
- by integrating human rights in the initial and ongoing training curricula for healthcare professionals;
- through evidence-based dialogue with service providers to ensure accessibility to and reasonable accommodation in healthcare facilities;
- by providing guidance and support to the staff of healthcare institutions and custody institutions to improve accountability for violation of the right to health;
- through a strategic partnership with the National Institute of Justice for integrating the right to health in the initial and ongoing training curriculum for judges and prosecutors;
- through strategic partnerships with NGOs working in the health sector to empower the most vulnerable groups to claim their right to health;
- in strategic cases concerning violation of the right to health.

Priority 2. The education system provides equal opportunities, promotes social cohesion and human rights

We will make sure that:

- the legislative and policy framework guarantees the accessibility, inclusion, freedom and opportunity of education;
- the state collects sufficient and disaggregated data which allow monitoring the right to education in a comprehensive manner;
- the most vulnerable social groups know their right to education and have equal access to education;
- human rights education is anchored in the international standards and is effectively delivered at all education levels;
- education institutions provide good education conditions and apply effective child protection mechanisms in cases of abuse, bullying or discrimination;

- courts apply the international human rights framework in adjudication of violations of the right to education.

We will achieve this:

- by analyzing, influencing and monitoring the legislation and policy documents on education from the human rights perspective;
- by promoting a system of collection of education data disaggregated from the human rights perspective;
- through advocacy to promote introduction of human rights education at all education levels;
- through a strategic partnership with the Institute of Education Sciences for integrating human rights education in the ongoing training programs for teachers;
- by reviewing and contributing to the development of the protection and accountability mechanisms in cases of bullying, discrimination and abuse.

Priority 3. Every person that comes in contact with the justice system enjoys effective access to justice and a fair trial

We will make sure that:

- the criminal justice system provides effective protection of human rights to everyone, including to the most vulnerable groups;
- the persons with disabilities have effective access to support services to realize their right to legal capacity;
- the state collects comprehensive and disaggregated data on access to justice;
- the vulnerable groups have equitable access to quality counselling, assistance and legal representation services;
- the justice system actors provide special protection for children;
- whistleblowers in the justice sector are effectively protected and have access to adequate remedies.

We will achieve this:

- through the strategic partnership with the National Institute of Justice to deliver more training to judges and prosecutors on human rights protection in criminal proceedings, children's rights;
- by analyzing and influencing the national legislation regulating the access to justice from the perspective of the international standards;
- by promoting more ambitious policy commitments to improve the access to and quality of justice, the integrity of the judiciary, justice for children;
- by providing support to the National Legal Aid Council to improve the access to effective counselling and representation for everyone, taking into account the reasonable accommodation of vulnerable groups;
- by proposing amendments to legislation to improve protection of whistleblowers.

Priority 4. Persons at risk and in vulnerable situations receive protection, social assistance, community social services

We will make sure that:

- the legislative and policy framework is anchored in the international standards concerning the right to social security and the right to independent living in the community;
- social security data are sensitive to the human rights dimension;
- the most vulnerable persons know and claim their right to social security in cases of risk and vulnerability;

- the protection and social assistance institutions operate in compliance with the human rights standards;
- the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and its subordinated institutions, decentralized entities, NSIH and its territorial units apply the institutional accountability mechanisms in relation to the civil servants that violate the right to social security;
- national courts apply progressively ICESCR provisions in adjudication of violations of the right to social security.

We will achieve this:

- by conducting reviews with recommendations on the status of compliance of the social services with the provisions of Article 19 of ICESCR;
- by drafting policy proposals and amendments to legislation aimed at progressive realization of the right to social security, with a focus on the most vulnerable social groups;
- by monitoring the implementation of social security policies;
- through the strategic partnership with NSAA to facilitate the revision of the training programs for social workers and providers of community social services in line with the international human rights standards;
- by drafting and submitting *amicus curiae* opinions on strategic cases involving the right to social security and the right to independent living in the community;
- through outreach and legal empowerment campaigns on the right to social security (with women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, young people, Roma people as target groups).

Priority 5. People live in a healthier and more sustainable environment

We will make sure that:

- the state takes actions to reduce environment pollution and all the people have access to quality water;
- national authorities collect and regularly disseminate information on the condition of environmental elements, factors and habitat;
- the people know and claim their right to a healthy environment;
- the environment protection institutions take accountability measures for violations of the right to a healthy environment;
- national courts use the international framework on protection of the right to a healthy environment in adjudication of violations of the right to a healthy and sustainable environment.

We will achieve this:

- by analyzing and influencing legislation and public policy documents on protection of the right to a healthy and clean environment;
- by developing and promoting the minimum data set on the right to a healthy and sustainable environment;
- by monitoring how authorities implement the commitments to inform people on the quality of environment and engage them in environmental decision-making;
- through a strategic partnership with the Environmental Protection Inspectorate to intensify the accountability measures for violations of the right to a healthy environment;
- by initiating strategic cases which contribute to improving legislation and environment protection practices.

Priority 6. Digital services and artificial intelligence respect and facilitate realization of human rights

We will make sure that:

- the legislative and policy framework on digitalization ensures respect for private life, protection of children in the online space, prevention and reduction of hate speech, positive measures for marginalized or vulnerable people;
- the vulnerable groups know their rights in the online space and are able to defend themselves;
- the public authorities and the private sector have knowledge about the human rights in the digital sphere;
- users of digital platforms and services are provided adequate protection against abuse or discrimination in the online space;
- the dialogue with courts on protection of human rights in the online space is strengthened.

We will achieve this:

- by analyzing and influencing legislation and public policy documents on digitalization from the human rights perspective;
- by monitoring the policy commitments for effective protection of children in the online space;
- by developing and disseminating guidelines on protection of human rights during the implementation of digital systems;
- by identifying and thoroughly investigating the strategic cases of violation of human rights in the digital space.

Priority 7. Women and men enjoy equal access to work and equal treatment in the workplace**We will make sure that:**

- the state ratifies the UN Convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families;
- the legislative and policy frameworks guarantee equal treatment in the workplace, accessibility of jobs, reasonable accommodation in the workplace for vulnerable groups;
- the most vulnerable groups know and claim their right to work;
- the National Employment Agency and its territorial units facilitate progressively the access of persons from marginalized and vulnerable groups to career guidance and professional training services;
- employers ensure the right to decent and productive work, equal and non-discriminatory remuneration;
- courts apply the international standards related to the right to work and equal treatment in the workplace.

We will achieve this:

- through advocacy for ratification of the UN Convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families;
- by analyzing, influencing and monitoring labor legislation and public policy documents following HRBA;
- through a strategic partnership with the State Labor Inspectorate and Equality Council for developing the capacities of inspectors in the field of equal remuneration;
- by scaling up the cooperation with the National Employment Agency to facilitate the access of persons from marginalized and vulnerable groups to career guidance services;
- by assessing the current child labor situation and formulating appropriate recommendations;
- by identifying the strategic cases of violation of the right to work and equal treatment in the workplace.

Priority 8. The person's right to liberty and safety is ensured; torture and ill-treatment are eradicated

We will make sure that:

- preventive arrest is applied only as an exceptional measure, based on a reasoned court decision;
- authorities adopt and implement appropriate and ambitious measures to prevent and eradicate inter-detainee violence and criminal subculture;
- the legislative and policy framework on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence is anchored in the standards of the Istanbul Convention;
- the state collects comprehensive and disaggregated data on the right not to be subjected to torture and ill-treatment;
- custodial personnel are informed and aware about the rights of children and other vulnerable groups in places of detention;
- the custodial institutions apply genuine accountability mechanisms for ill-treatment.

We will achieve this:

- through a strategic partnership with the National Institute of Justice to deliver capacity building to judges and prosecutors on the European and international standards on arrest application;
- by analyzing, influencing and monitoring the implementation of public policy documents and legislation on prevention and eradication of (i) inter-detainee violence and (ii) violence against women, gender-based violence, domestic violence;
- by preparing thematic reports on the situation of the rights of children in detention with recommendations and through policy dialogue;
- by building on the partnership with the Training Center of the National Administration of Penitentiaries to deliver capacity building to the penitentiary system staff;
- by strengthening the partnership with the Police Academy "Stefan cel Mare" to train the Ministry of Internal Affairs staff on prevention and combating torture and any form of violence;
- through friendly and accessible legal empowerment of inmates of psychiatric facilities and placement centers for persons with disabilities.

Priority 9. All children enjoy the rights protected by the UN Convention on the rights of the child

We will make sure that:

- the state ratifies the Optional Protocol no.3 to the UN Convention on the rights of the child;
- the legislative and public policy framework is comprehensive and covers all the areas covered by the scope of the UN Convention on the rights of the child;
- the state collects comprehensive data on the rights of the child;
- the children, including the most vulnerable ones, know and claim their rights;
- the institutions in charge of child protection have the knowledge, skills and tools to apply the general principles of the international framework on protection of children's rights (the best interest of the child, the right to opinion, non-discrimination);
- the children victims of abuse, neglect and violence receive protection and adequate remedies;
- courts apply the international standards on children's rights.

We will achieve this:

- through advocacy for ratification of the Optional Protocol no. 3 to the UN Convention on the rights of the children;
- by promoting public policy solutions on prevention and protection of children at risk;

- by developing practical guidelines and recommendations for the child welfare authorities, education institutions on practical application of the principles of the Convention on the rights of children: the best interest of the child, the right to participation, the right to opinion;
- through strategic partnerships with NGOs and mass-media for legal empowerment of children from disadvantaged groups;
- by ensuring diligence in quick and in-depth examination of claims of violation of the rights of children;
- by identifying the strategic cases pending in courts; drafting and submitting *amicus curiae* briefs anchored in the international framework on children's rights.

Priority 10. The country's social and economic efforts are anchored in the human rights standards and principles

We will make sure that:

- the country development strategies and programs in areas like development of private sector, agriculture or regional development take into account the vulnerable groups and lay down ambitious targets to reduce inequalities;
- the fiscal policies are more inclusive and ensure fair taxation of the private sector actors, whose excessive profits are driven by crises rather than increased performance or investments and technological progress;
- national authorities and businesses are familiar with and follow the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in their operations.

We will achieve this:

- by analyzing policy drafts on social development from the human rights perspective;
- through advocacy to promote fair and more inclusive development policies;
- by monitoring the implementation of the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030";
- through a constructive dialogue with and awareness raising activities for national authorities and the private sector to identify and examine thoroughly the strategic cases involving the private sector and human rights;
- by preparing and disseminating periodic reports with recommendations to make sure the private sector respects human rights.

Priority 11. PAO operates at a higher level as an effective, efficient and well-governed professional institution

We will make sure that:

- all the internal working procedures, processes are described, institutionalized and followed;
- PAO has sufficient staff, appropriately skilled, motivated and satisfied with their jobs, oriented towards professional development;
- the internal communication in PAO is efficient and contributes to a positive psychological environment; PAO's external communication is efficient and contributes to the development of partnerships and to the visibility of the institution;
- PAO's improved information system responds to its functional needs and provides all the necessary information, allows for reduced bureaucracy related to routine documents and facilitates decision-making based on quality information received in a quick and easy manner;
- PAO staff work in a safe and healthy environment, where no logistical/infrastructure-related issues can obstruct their work;
- PAO influences the national legislation regulating its work/operation;

- PAO has sufficient territorial representation offices to allow better fulfillment of its mandate at local level.

We will achieve this:

- by creating a base of internal policies and guidelines to ensure efficient and accurate performance of PA and PAO and to allow the implementation of quality standards;
- by designing and putting in place a staff recruitment, maintenance, motivation and professional development system, including for management staff;
- by designing and institutionalizing a system for internal communication and a strategy for external communication;
- by designing/developing the IT system and training staff how to use it;
- by creating appropriate work conditions in PAO's headquarters and its representations through full renovation of premises in line with the safety and occupational health requirements, which allow efficient implementation of all planned activities;
- by submitting to Parliament, Government, other relevant public authorities, proposals for amendment of legislation related to PAO, including PAO organization and operation, organizational chart, funding;
- by developing PAO's territorial representations and extending their number.

5. Risk Management

Following a risk assessment, PAO identified the potential external and internal risks which could impact the implementation of its 2023-2030 Strategic Development Program. The major risks and mitigation measures are included in the table below.

Risk	Mitigants
Decision-makers are not interested in the recommendations of the People’s Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bilateral meetings with decision-makers will be held to explain the recommendations; – The recommendations will be clearly formulated, with clear deadlines and clearly assigned responsibility to ensure greater accountability; – Public awareness will be raised through media coverage of PAO activities; – Strategic coalitions with specialized NGOs and development partners will be built; – PAO’s recommendations will be made public on its webpage and disseminated through mass media and social networks.
Beneficiaries (professional groups and/or individuals) are not interested in the long run in the activities organized by PAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The performance of PAO staff participating in external meetings held in other institutions will be improved; – PAO staff will seek to organize interactive training activities, so as to arouse the interest of the target groups.
Beneficiaries and/or potential beneficiaries do not see the usefulness/effectiveness of provided services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Success stories of helping a person or a group of persons, whose rights have been restored, will be identified and disseminated; – PAO will monitor the investigated cases, which will improve the services provided.
Politicians might attempt to discredit or influence PAO priorities (including those related to the Transnistrian region)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Broad dissemination of strategic priorities; – Consultation and validation of PAO’s recommendations with human rights NGOs and experts; – Consultation and cooperation with decision-makers and the public at large in order to explain the independent mandate and duties of the People’s Advocate and autonomy of intervention, including on the Transnistrian segment.
Lack of professionalism and limited capacities of the staff involved in the core processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PAO will seek to improve its image by recruiting professional staff who will promote the institution at national and international levels; – PAO will seek to attract volunteers by organizing internships. Internships can further turn into full time jobs in PAO for some of the interns;

Risk	Mitigants
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PAO will put in place the efficient/unbiased individual performance evaluation procedure; - Ongoing training for PAO staff with post-training evaluation.
Lack of financing for human rights promotion activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternative methods for human rights promotion which do not involve large costs will be identified; - Information on successfully addressed cases, other useful public information will be regularly disseminated.
Reluctance of central and local public authorities to cooperate with PAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The approach in the relations with CPA and LPA will be revised so as to promote the idea that PAO's purpose is not to criticize, but rather to help authorities to fulfill their human rights-related obligations; - Joint consultative meetings will be held to identify the issues that have a negative impact on the cooperation between the public authorities and PAO.
Some business processes lack methodological guidelines/standardization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidelines will be drafted and approved to describe and standardize the core business processes; - Good methodological practices of similar institutions from other countries will be adopted.
The current professional development system does not respond to the needs of PAO staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular identification of training needs; - Coordination of training programs with PAO staff; - Delegation of PAO staff to training activities (in the country and abroad) with post-training evaluation.
PAO staff has limited skills for statistical and policy analysis and human rights monitorin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing capacity-building will be delivered to PAO staff who critically need such skills, including by requesting assistance from the institutions specialized in statistical/sociological analysis; - An individual professional development plan will be designed and put in place for every employee.
Middle managers have poor managerial skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PAO will seek to fill the non-managerial positions, so as to avoid situations when managers do the job of non-managerial staff because of understaffing; - Training activities will be organized to develop the managerial skills of middle managers including post-training evaluation; - Strengthening the result-based management approach (RBM); - An individual managerial development plan will be designed and put in place for the managers of the institution.

Risk	Mitigants
Poor internal communication and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PAO will draft an internal communication strategy which will clearly define what information must be communicated, who will communicate and the consequences of non-compliance; – PAO will seek to create a friendly environment for its staff by organizing informal outings which will contribute to team cohesion.
Lack of partnerships with media outlets, lack of journalists specialized in human rights reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PAO will draft an external communication plan, including with mass-media; – Capacity development will be provided to PAO staff in charge of communication with mass-media.
Lack of a financial management and control system aligned with the National Internal Control Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PAO will put in place a financial management and control system aligned with the national internal control standards.
Lack of financing or poor financing for improving work conditions, equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PAO will request from Parliament to create appropriate work conditions; – PAO will seek to raise the awareness of relevant authorities and the public of the poor working conditions with the help of mass-media.
Poorly developed staff security system, including cyber security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PAO will design and implement a complex staff security system, including cyber security system.

6. Monitoring and Reporting

Reporting on Strategy implementation

The mid-term report on the implementation of PAO's Strategic Development Plan for 2023 – 2030 will be prepared at the end of 2026. The report will include a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results achieved per each strategic priority set for the period of 2023 – 2026, and a section on lessons learned and recommendations for the following strategic planning cycle.

The final report will be prepared at the end of 2030. It will cover all the identified strategic priorities and will focus on the structural changes and impact achieved by PAO in the implementation period.

Annual reporting

PAO's annual activity report will contain analytical information, which will include, among other things, the following:

Findings:

- Which of the planned results have not been achieved? Why?
- Which of the planned activities have not been implemented? Why?
- Any other unintended effects, achieved effects and results.

Conclusions:

- Is PAO on track with its strategic objectives?
- What are the major capacity gaps and how to address them?
- What are the conclusions for each strategic priority?
- What are the achievements and failures?
- What are the lessons learned?

Recommendations:

- General recommendations – do we need to change the direction or approach?
- Recommendations for each strategic priority;
- Recommendations to integrate lessons learned and best practices.

Results-based reporting

The results-based communication demonstrates the effectiveness of a development intervention using a clear and concise language; provides a balanced picture of the results achieved and challenges faced, such as potential inefficiency and poor performance. The results-based reporting shows how PAO applies the results-based management and leverages learning at all levels.

The following issues will be taken into account in the reporting period:

- Description of achievements and achieved performance indicators;

- Comparison of effective results against expected results;
- Quantification of achievements against the baseline;
- Supporting findings with evidence, i.e. examples, quotes, testimonials, pictures etc.;
- Reasons for over- or under-achievement;
- The unexpected challenges or opportunities, which might require new strategies or rethinking an initiative;
- Accounts of how results have been achieved and highlighting the potential for a more comprehensive learning of the lessons identified during the reporting period;
- Recognition of other parties' inputs (partners, stakeholders, right holders) and giving credit where possible;
- Making sure there is sufficient data to describe the activities carried out.

7. SWOT Analysis

INTERNAL FACTORS	
Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (S)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The regulatory framework is in line with the Paris Principles, ensures institutional independence and allows diversity of the interventions covered in the scope of the institutional mandate; ▪ PAO's "A" status; ▪ Organizational structure; PAO has territorial units, including covering the localities in the Transnistrian region; ▪ Regulations on organization and operation of PAO and its units are in place; ▪ Involvement of PAO staff in working groups, operational and methodic meetings, etc. through analyses, proposals and initiatives; ▪ Strong cooperation with the human rights civil society organizations; ▪ Partnerships with similar human rights institutions and international organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of financial independence, insufficient financial resources for carrying out mandated activities; overly bureaucratic financing mechanism; excessive control from state authorities; ▪ Rather reactive than pro-active approach to business-processes, many activities are ad-hoc and urgent; ▪ Business processes are insufficiently standardized and described; ▪ Shortage of staff and skills; high staff turnover; ▪ Internal communication, team cohesion, psychological environment and organizational culture require improving; ▪ Cooperation with human rights NGOs, other national institutions, including mass-media, requires improving; ▪ Lack of an IT system: data needed for analyses, reports, decision-making, claim management, organization of information flows, organization, coordination and supervision of the business processes in all PAO units; ▪ Severely damaged building of PAO's central office; the premises rented by PAO's territorial offices do not meet PAO's needs; limited access for the persons with special needs; ▪ Limited visibility of the People's Advocate and PAO at national and international levels.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “A” status award is evidence that PAO meets the minimum standards of a human rights institution; ▪ More attention from the European institutions for human rights in Moldova due to the EU candidate status granted to the country; ▪ Access to financing provided by development partners/foreign donors; ▪ Development and implementation of cooperation projects with national institutions and international bodies; ▪ Strengthened cooperation with the Parliament, Government and other public authorities that focus on human rights; ▪ More attention from the civil society and mass-media to human rights; ▪ Capacity building for employees, including development of managerial skills of decision-makers; ▪ Creation of consultative councils on strategic human rights issues under PAO; ▪ Engaging national and international experts in consulting PAO on various organizational and methodological issues; ▪ Establishment of the Human Rights Methodical and Training Center and carrying out activities to ensure its financing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change in the attitude of politicians towards the role of the People’s Advocate: amendments to legislation regulating PAO operations without consulting the People’s Advocate; ▪ Amendments which might limit the People’s Advocate mandate, leading to more interference in or stagnation of the People’s Advocate activity; ▪ Increased number of human rights violations; reduced integration of human rights based approach in public policies; ▪ Financial independence might be limited even more; lack, shortage of funding for activities; ▪ Lack of motivation and eagerness among staff to make changes; ▪ Loss of expertise opportunities, including international expertise; ▪ The opinions/comments of the People’s Advocate are not taken into account; ▪ Low credibility of PAO among beneficiaries, civil society organizations; ▪ Reluctance of authorities to cooperate and consider the recommendations of the People’s Advocate/People’s Advocate for Children Rights; ▪ Reluctance of mass-media to disseminate PAO’s messages; ▪ Loss of the reputation as an effective mechanism for restoring human rights at national and international levels; ▪ Loss of the “A” status.