



people's  
advocate  
OMBUDSMAN

# SHADOW REPORT

**submitted by the People's Advocate Office of the Republic of Moldova to the European Committee of Social Rights under the European Social Charter (Revised), concerning the acceptance of the provisions not accepted by the Republic of Moldova**

*(The non-accepted provisions addressed in this Alternative Report are: Articles 4§1, 7§5, 13§4, 14§1, 14§2, 19§12, 23, 27§1, 30, and 31§1–2)*



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*"This report has been prepared by the People's Advocate Office (Ombudsman Institution) of the Republic of Moldova, in its capacity as a National Human Rights Institution, reaccredited with 'A' status."*

**2026**



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## Abbreviations

**PAO** – People's Advocate Office

**ESC** – Revised European Social Charter

**MLSP** – Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

**NBS** – National Bureau of Statistics

**TCPDs** – Temporary Placement Centers for Persons with Disabilities

**AHSSM** – Agency for the Management of Highly Specialised Social Services

**SSI** – State Social Inspectorate

**RPCEPD** – Residential Placement Centre for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities

**HPEPD** – Placement Home for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities

**CPT** – Council for the Prevention of Torture

**NHIC** – National Health Insurance Company

**MHI** – Mandatory Health Insurance

**TASA** – Territorial Agency for Social Assistance

**UNICEF** – United Nations Children's Fund

**UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

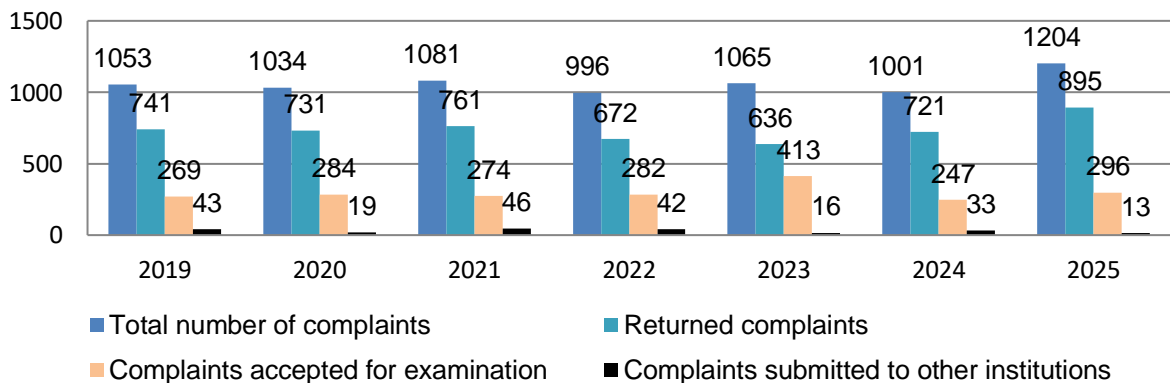


## About the People's Advocate Office

The People's Advocate Office (Ombudsman Institution) is the National Human Rights Institution of the Republic of Moldova, established under the Constitution.<sup>1</sup> The People's Advocate Office The Office of the Ombudsman is independent of other public authorities and institutions, regardless of their type or structure. The Ombudsman Institution operates in accordance with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (the Paris Principles), which define the mandate, responsibilities, composition and guarantees of National Human Rights Institutions. In 2023, the Institution was reaccredited with "A" status,<sup>2</sup> reaffirming its full compliance with the Paris Principles and confirming its commitment to independence, pluralism and effectiveness in the promotion and protection of human rights in the Republic of Moldova. The reaccreditation reaffirmed the People's Advocate Office (PAO) compliance with all the standards and requirements set forth in the Paris Principles, which constitute an essential framework for ensuring respect for human rights in accordance with international standards. In carrying out its mandate, the People's Advocate is guided by the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, Law No. 52 of 3 April 2014 on the People's Advocate (Ombudsman)<sup>3</sup>, as well as the international treaties to which the Republic of Moldova is a party. As part of its mandate, the PAO prepares and publishes the Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova

At the same time, the People's Advocate has the authority to examine complaints filed by both individuals and legal entities, to request information, documents, and other relevant materials, as well as to hear from individuals in positions of responsibility and to request the explanations necessary to clarify the circumstances of the cases under review.

### Complaints Filed with the People's Advocate's Office in 2019–2025



<sup>1</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, Art. 59<sup>1</sup>: The Status and Role of the Ombudsman. Available at:

[https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=136130&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136130&lang=ro)

<sup>2</sup> Report and Recommendations of the Session of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) Online, 25-29 September 2023 Geneva, 23-27 October 2023. Available at: <https://ganhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/SCA-Report-Second-Session-2023-EN.pdf>

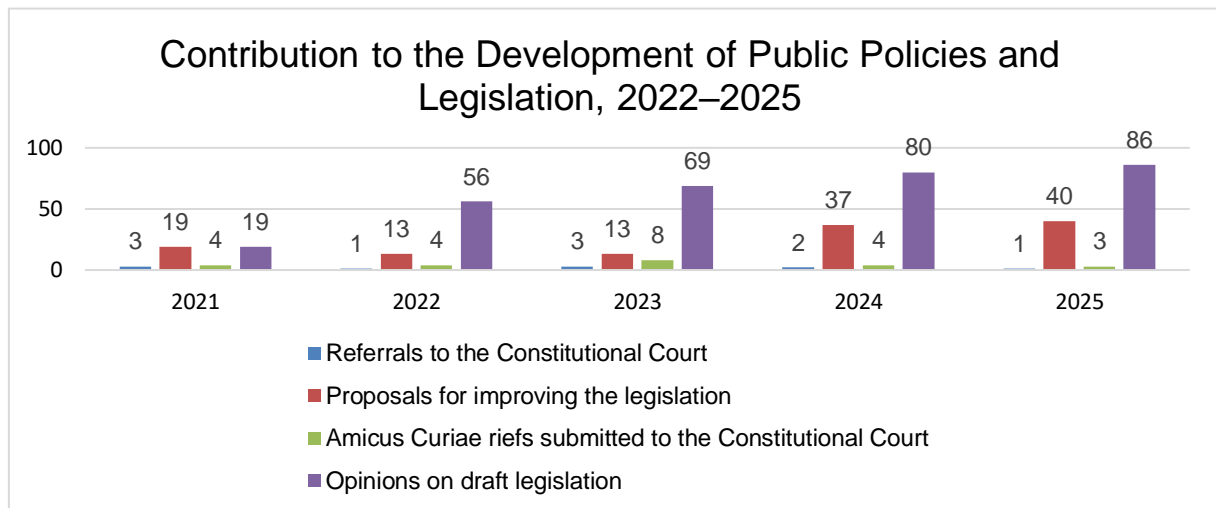
<sup>3</sup> Law No. 52/2014 on the People's Advocate (Ombudsman). Available at:

[https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=141519&lang=ro#](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=141519&lang=ro#)

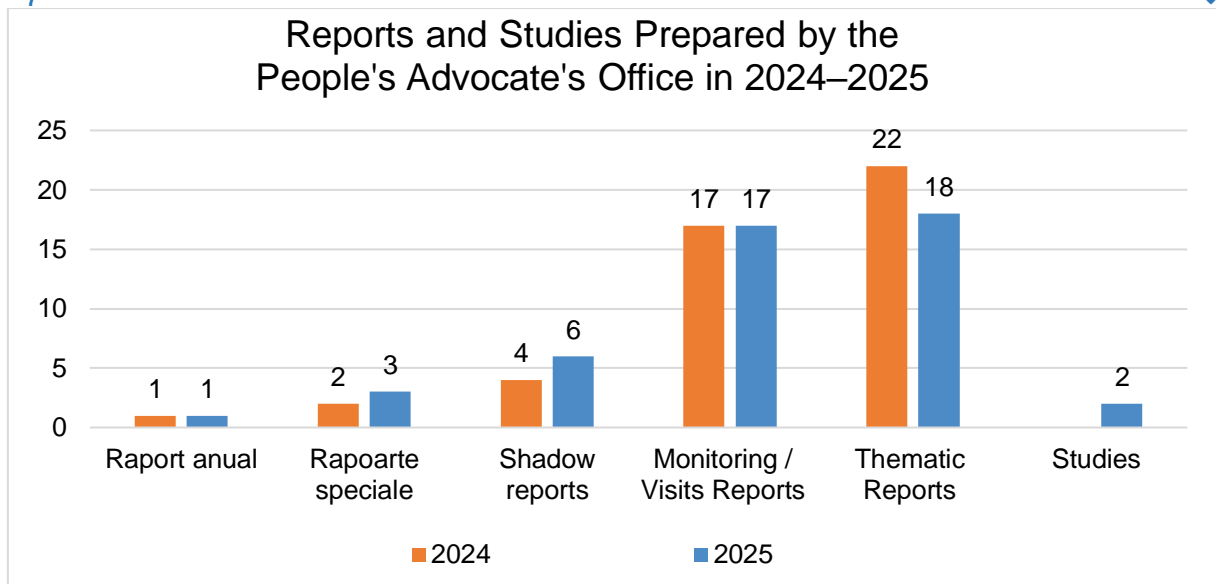


Furthermore, the People's Advocate has the power to take up cases on its own initiative in matters of particular social importance, or when it is necessary to defend the rights and interests of individuals who are unable to exercise legal remedies on their own, as well as in situations where it identifies serious or widespread violations of human rights and freedoms. Thus, in 2025, the People's Advocate Office initiated proceedings on its own initiative in **52 cases**.

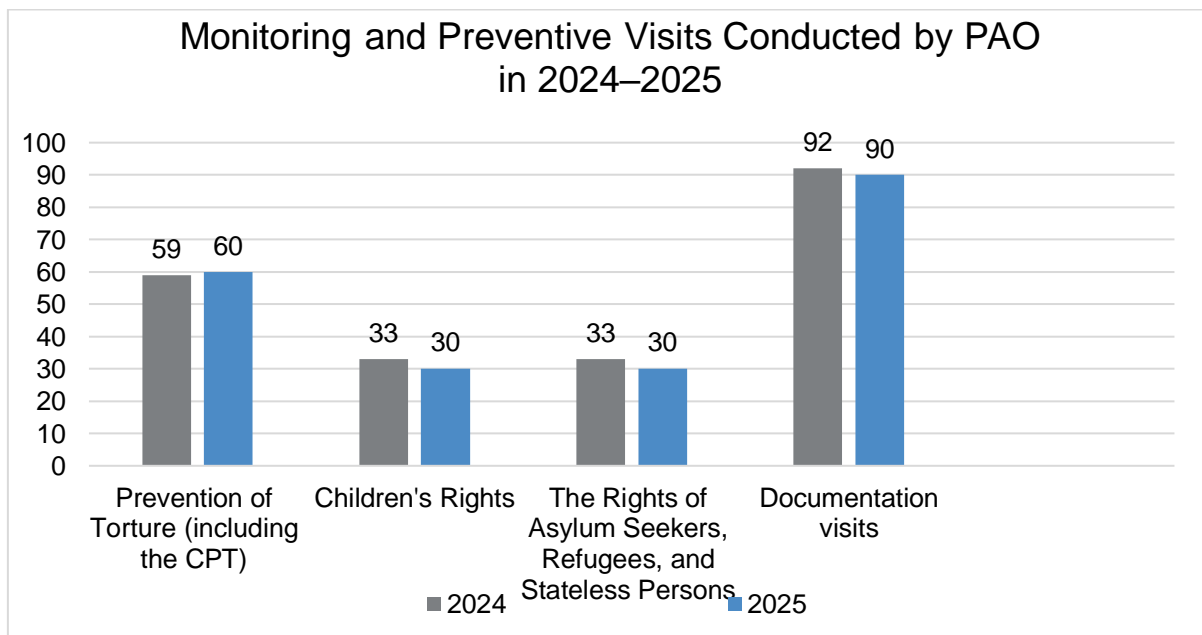
The People's Advocate, in accordance with Article 16 of Law No. 52 of April 3, 2014, contributes to the improvement of legislation concerning human rights and freedoms. To this end, the People's Advocate submits proposals and recommendations for improving legislation to entities with the right to initiate legislation, issues opinions on draft legislative acts, assesses the compatibility of national legislation with international standards, and refers matters to the Constitutional Court regarding the constitutionality of legislative acts.



At the same time, the Ombudsman is entitled to prepare special and thematic reports, which are submitted to public authorities, as well as alternative reports, which are sent to relevant international and regional organizations. The alternative reports describe the level of implementation of the international and regional conventions to which the Republic of Moldova is a party. Additionally, they contain recommendations for improving the process of implementing the provisions of the conventions, so that the highest standards in this field are properly observed.



In addition, in 2025, the People's Advocate's Office conducted 210 monitoring visits in the exercise of its legal duties to oversee compliance with fundamental human rights and freedoms.





## Background to the Preparation of the Report

This Shadow Report has been prepared by the PAO in the context of the periodic reporting procedure before the European Committee of Social Rights under the Revised European Social Charter, ratified by the Republic of Moldova on 8 November 2001.

The Report concerns a number of provisions of the Revised European Social Charter that have not yet been accepted by the Republic of Moldova, namely Articles 4§1, 7§5, 13§4, 14§1, 14§2, 19§12, 23, 27§1, 30 and 31§§1–2. Building upon the information presented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in the State Report submitted in March 2026, the PAO provides an independent monitoring perspective by identifying both the progress achieved and the remaining shortcomings affecting the effective implementation of these social rights.

**The methodology** underlying this Report is based on an analysis of the national legislative and regulatory framework, the examination of official statistical data, and the findings and recommendations resulting from the activities carried out by the PAO in the exercise of its mandate. These include monitoring missions and field visits, the examination of individual complaints submitted to the Institution, *ex officio* investigations into issues of major social impact or systemic concern, as well as the conclusions and recommendations contained in thematic reports, special reports, monitoring visit reports and the PAO's annual reports.

In particular, this Report draws upon the findings accumulated by the People's Advocate during the period 2023–2026 while exercising the Institution's mandate to promote, protect and prevent violations of human rights and freedoms. The preparation of the Report also took into account the Fourth Report on the Non-Accepted Provisions of the Revised European Social Charter concerning the Republic of Moldova.<sup>4</sup>

The People's Advocate Office emphasizes that the acceptance of the provisions of the Revised European Social Charter represents not only an international legal commitment but also a tangible expression of the Republic of Moldova's commitment to European values in the context of its European integration process. Accordingly, this Report seeks to contribute constructively to the ongoing efforts to align national standards with the requirements of the Charter by providing an objective assessment of the situation in practice.

The People's Advocate further notes that this Report does not include information regarding the enjoyment of social rights in the territory on the left bank of the Dniester River (the Transnistrian region), as the PAO lacks effective physical and informational access necessary to carry out monitoring activities in that territory. Nevertheless, the PAO's Varnița Representative Office continues its efforts to collect information and assess the actual human rights situation in the region. At the same time, the People's Advocate expresses deep concern

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<sup>4</sup> The Fourth Report on the Provisions of the European Social Charter Not Accepted by the Republic of Moldova. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/4th-report-non-accepted-provisions-republic-of-moldova/1680a5eef6>



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regarding the situation in the transnistrian region, where the lack of access to social institutions and the absence of independent monitoring raise serious concerns as to the effective enjoyment of the rights guaranteed by the Revised European Social Charter.



## Information on the Non-Accepted Provisions of the Revised European Social Charter by the Republic of Moldova

### Article 4 §1 The right to fair remuneration

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to a fair remuneration, the Parties undertake:*

*1) to recognise the right of workers to a remuneration such as will give them and their families a decent standard of living*

The People's Advocate Office (PAO) notes that the national legal framework guarantees the right to fair remuneration and to a statutory minimum wage, periodically established by the Government with the aim of ensuring a decent standard of living and providing social protection for employees.

Between 2022 and 2026, the statutory minimum wage increased from MDL 3,500 (approximately EUR 174) to MDL 6,300 (approximately EUR 313), representing a cumulative increase of approximately 80%. However, the annual adjustments have not been uniform. In 2023, the minimum wage increased by approximately 14.3% (to MDL 4,000 (approximately EUR 199)); in 2024, by 25% (to MDL 5,000 (approximately EUR 248)); in 2025, by 10% (to MDL 5,500 (approximately EUR 273)); and in 2026, by approximately 14.5% (to MDL 6,300 (approximately EUR 313)). PAO considers that the successive increases in the statutory minimum wage during the period 2022–2026 constitute a positive development and demonstrate the State's commitment to improving living conditions. Nevertheless, the current level of the minimum wage remains insufficient to guarantee workers and their families a decent standard of living for a significant number of people.

According to data published by the National Bureau of Statistics, throughout 2025 both average monthly disposable income and average monthly consumption expenditure per person remained consistently higher in urban than in rural areas during all four quarters of the year. In **urban areas, average monthly disposable income** per person increased from **MDL 6,737 (approximately EUR 334)** in the first quarter to MDL 7,743.9 (approximately EUR 384) in the fourth quarter, representing an increase of approximately 15%.<sup>5</sup> During the same period, **average monthly consumption expenditure** increased from **MDL 5,728.1 (approximately EUR 284)** to **MDL 6,427.8 (approximately EUR 319)**, corresponding to an increase of 12.2%.<sup>6</sup> The constant positive difference between income and expenses was

<sup>5</sup> Average Monthly Disposable Income per Person by Year, Income Sources, Averages, Quarters, and Unit of Measure. Available at:

[https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala\\_04%20NIV\\_NIV010/NIV010100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/](https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala_04%20NIV_NIV010/NIV010100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/)

<sup>6</sup> Average Monthly Consumer Expenditures per Person by Year, Expenditure Categories, Averages, Quarters, and Unit of Measure. Available at:

[https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala\\_04%20NIV\\_NIV020/NIV020100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/](https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala_04%20NIV_NIV020/NIV020100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/)



maintained throughout the year, and the savings margin increased from 1,008.9 lei (approximately EUR 50) in the first quarter to MDL 1,316.1 (approximately EUR 65) in the fourth quarter, representing an increase of approximately 30.5%, indicating a relatively stable and growing capacity to save in urban areas. These developments contribute to ensuring a more stable standard of living and facilitate the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living in urban areas.

In **rural areas**, average **monthly disposable income** per person ranged from **MDL 3,618.2** (approximately EUR 180) in the first quarter of 2025 to MDL **4,567.3** (approximately EUR 227) in the fourth quarter<sup>7</sup>, remaining below the statutory gross minimum wage of MDL 5,500 throughout the year. Average monthly consumption expenditure increased from **MDL 3,431.9** (approximately EUR 170) in the first quarter to MDL 3,978.6 (approximately EUR 198) in the fourth quarter.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, **the average gross monthly earnings** in the first quarter of 2026 amounted to **MDL 15,987.1** (approximately EUR 793), representing an **increase of 9.7%** compared with the first quarter of 2025, although remaining **2.3%** lower than in the fourth quarter of 2025.<sup>9</sup> The analysis of average monthly income and expenditure per person in 2025, disaggregated by household composition and area of residence, reveals significant disparities. In rural areas, couples with children had an average per capita income of **MDL 3,521.1** (approximately EUR 175) and average monthly expenditure of **MDL 3,218.2** (approximately EUR 160). In contrast, single-parent households recorded an average per capita income of **MDL 2,884.8** (approximately EUR 143), while their average monthly expenditure amounted to **MDL 3,291.2** (approximately EUR 163), exceeding available income. In **urban areas**, couples with children had an average per capita income of **MDL 6,828.2** (approximately EUR 340) and average monthly expenditure of **MDL 6,268.9** (approximately EUR 312). However, for single-parent households, average per capita income amounted to **MDL 5,087.9** (approximately EUR 253), while average monthly expenditure reached **MDL 5,115.7** (approximately EUR 254), again exceeding disposable income.<sup>10 11</sup>

Although the authorities have undertaken sustained financial measures aimed at improving income levels, the analysis of household income and expenditure demonstrates the persistence of substantial disparities between urban and rural areas, as well as the continued difficulties faced by certain categories of households, particularly single-parent families in securing an adequate standard of living.

<sup>7</sup> Average Monthly Disposable Income per Person by Year, Income Sources, Averages, Quarters, and Unit of Measure.

Available at:

[https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala\\_04%20NIV\\_NIV010/NIV010100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/](https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala_04%20NIV_NIV010/NIV010100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/)

<sup>8</sup> Average Monthly Consumer Expenditures per Person by Year, Expenditure Categories, Averages, Quarters, and Unit of Measure. Available at:

[https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala\\_04%20NIV\\_NIV020/NIV020100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/](https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala_04%20NIV_NIV020/NIV020100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/)

<sup>9</sup> Average Gross Monthly Wages and the Average Number of Employees Index for the First Quarter of 2026. Available at:

[https://statistica.gov.md/ro/castigul-salarial-mediulunar-brut-si-indicele-numarului-mediulunar-al-salariatilor-i-9436\\_62476.html](https://statistica.gov.md/ro/castigul-salarial-mediulunar-brut-si-indicele-numarului-mediulunar-al-salariatilor-i-9436_62476.html)

<sup>10</sup> Average Monthly Disposable Income per Person by Income Source, Averages, Household Type, Unit of Measure, and Years. Available at:

[https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala\\_04%20NIV\\_NIV010/NIV010500.px/sortedtable/tableViewSorted/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774](https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala_04%20NIV_NIV010/NIV010500.px/sortedtable/tableViewSorted/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774)

<sup>11</sup> Average Monthly Consumer Expenditures per Person by Year, Expenditure Category, Average, Household Type, and Unit of Measure. Available at:

[https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala\\_04%20NIV\\_NIV020/NIV020500.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774](https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala_04%20NIV_NIV020/NIV020500.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774)



The European Committee of Social Rights has previously underlined, in its conclusions concerning the Republic of Moldova, that the notion of a "decent standard of living" extends beyond the satisfaction of basic material needs and requires sufficient resources to enable effective participation in social, cultural and educational life. In this context, and in line with its commitments under the European integration process, the Republic of Moldova has undertaken to align its national legislation with the European Union *acquis* concerning adequate minimum wages.

As a result, the Government committed itself to transposing Directive (EU) 2022/2041 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union, an action that was scheduled for implementation by September 2025. To this end, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) conducted public consultations between 26 November and 9 December 2025 on Draft Law No. 867/MLSP/2025,<sup>12</sup> aimed at transposing the Directive into the national legal framework. Subsequently, in February 2026, a working meeting was held to finalise the draft law on the transposition of Directive (EU) 2022/2041 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union. The discussions, organised by the MLSP, focused on aligning the national legislative framework with the requirements for ensuring the adequacy of minimum wages, with particular emphasis on strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining in the process of setting minimum wages.<sup>13</sup> The Directive establishes indicative reference values for assessing the adequacy of statutory minimum wages, providing that they should correspond to at least 50% of the average wage or approximately 60% of the median wage at national level. Consequently, on 4 June 2026, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted, at first reading, Draft Law No. 171 of 27 May 2026 amending several normative acts concerning adequate minimum wages.<sup>14</sup>

The draft law pursues three principal objectives: **introducing an additional criterion for assessing the adequacy of the minimum wage, strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining, and establishing a mechanism for monitoring their coverage.**<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, the draft provides that the need to revise the minimum wage shall be assessed at least once a year by the Government in consultation with employers' organisations and trade unions. In carrying out this assessment, indicative reference values may be used, including 50% of the forecast average monthly wage in the economy for the previous year.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the measures undertaken by the State are consistent with the position of the European Committee of Social Rights concerning the Republic of Moldova. The Committee has indicated that where the statutory minimum wage in a State Party does not reach the 60% threshold, but is not substantially below it (in practice, between 50% and 60%), the Government is invited to provide detailed evidence demonstrating that the minimum wage

<sup>12</sup> The draft law amending certain legislative acts (adequate minimum wages) is being submitted for public consultation. Available at: <https://particip.gov.md/index.php/ro/document/stages/se-plaseaza-spre-consultare-publica-proiectului-de-lege-pentru-modificarea-unor-acte-normative-sala/15344>

<sup>13</sup> The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection is making progress in transposing the EU Directive on adequate minimum wages and strengthening collective bargaining in the Republic of Moldova. Available at: <https://social.gov.md/comunicare/comunicate/ministerul-muncii-avanseaza-in-transpunerea-directivei-ue-privind-salariile-minime-adevate-si-consolidarea-negocierilor-colective-in-republica-moldova/>

<sup>14</sup> Meeting details. Agenda. Available at: <https://parlament.md/sitting-details-md.nsp?meetingId=89a32945-6535-4596-9d1d-612f377b7b28>

<sup>15</sup> Indicative reference values may be used in the assessment process, including 50% of the average monthly wage for the economy as projected for the previous year.

<sup>16</sup> Passed on first reading: Clear benchmarks for calculating the minimum wage. Available at: <https://multimedia.parlament.md/votat-in-prima-lectura-valori-de-referinta-clare-la-calcularea-salariului-minim/>



nevertheless ensures workers a decent standard of living despite remaining below the established threshold. In this assessment, account is also taken of the costs associated with healthcare, education, transport and other essential needs.

In its 2025 Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova,<sup>17</sup> the People's Advocate reiterated the recommendation first issued in 2023, calling upon the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to expedite the process of fully accepting Article 4§1 of the Revised European Social Charter, with a view to ensuring a minimum wage capable of guaranteeing a decent standard of living for workers, while also contributing to the reduction of economic migration and the promotion of employment in the Republic of Moldova.

The Ombudsman further observed that, in the absence of acceptance of Article 4§1, the protection of the right to fair remuneration remains incomplete, directly affecting the effective enjoyment of the right to work, the prevention of economic migration and the guarantee of an adequate standard of living. In this context, the full acceptance of Article 4§1 continues to constitute an essential measure for strengthening the protection of the social and economic rights of workers in the Republic of Moldova.

**Casework of the People's Advocate Office.** During 2025, the People's Advocate successfully examined a complaint submitted by a group of employees of a state-owned enterprise specialising in security and protection services. The complainants alleged that they had not been paid the guaranteed statutory minimum wage and had been subjected to harassment by the enterprise's management, including intimidation and threats of dismissal.

Based on the documentation provided by the competent authorities, the People's Advocate also examined the findings of the State Labour Inspectorate, which identified a number of labour law violations, including: failure to pay the guaranteed minimum wage; incorrect calculation of wages; unlawful salary deductions; failure to remunerate overtime work performed on weekly rest days, public holidays and during night work; failure to inform employees about the composition of their remuneration; non-compliance with the statutory obligation to employ persons with disabilities; and incomplete or inaccurate recording of working time, particularly in relation to extended shifts.

On the basis of these findings, the competent authority required the enterprise, through the inspection measures adopted, to prepare a compliance plan providing for concrete measures to identify all affected employees, recalculate outstanding wage entitlements and ensure full compliance with the applicable labour legislation.

This case illustrates the importance of effective national inspection and monitoring mechanisms. It demonstrates that the intervention of both the People's Advocate and the State

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<sup>17</sup> Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova in 2025. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-anual-privind-respectarea-drepturilor-si-libertatilor-omului-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2025/>



Labor Inspectorate played a significant role in securing the effective protection of employees' labour rights.

**Conclusion regarding the acceptance of Article 4§1.** PAO considers that the Republic of Moldova has taken important steps to align the regulatory framework with the requirements of Article 4§1. However, at present, the minimum wage level still does not meet the European standard for ensuring fair remuneration. The adoption in first reading of Draft Law No. 171 of June 2026, which establishes the legal mechanism for setting the minimum wage in accordance with European principles, represents significant progress in this process. In this context, PAO considers that the Republic of Moldova has the necessary premises to gradually achieve, in the coming years, the level of protection provided for by Article 4§1, including by bringing the minimum wage closer to at least 50% of the average wage. Therefore, it is considered that, with the full implementation of the new mechanism and the effective achievement of this standard, the necessary conditions for the acceptance and ratification of Article 4§1 of the European Social Charter (revised) will be met.

## Article 7§5 The right of children and young persons to protection

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of children and young persons to protection, the Parties undertake:*

*5. to recognise the right of young workers and apprentices to a fair wage or to an appropriate allowance.*

Article 7§5 of the Revised European Social Charter requires States Parties to recognise the right of young workers and apprentices to a fair remuneration or an adequate allowance. This obligation must be interpreted in conjunction with Article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>18</sup> which enshrines the child's right to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, as well as with the provisions of General Comment No. 16 (2013) of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child<sup>19</sup> concerning State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights.

In the State report submitted within the framework of the examination of non-accepted provisions of the Revised European Social Charter, the authorities of the Republic of Moldova highlighted the existence of a regulatory framework governing the employment of minors and their protection in employment relations. In particular, the State refers to the provisions of the Labour Code concerning the minimum age for employment, working time limits for persons under 18 years of age, prohibitions on certain types of work, and guarantees regarding occupational safety and health. The State report also emphasises the existence of control

<sup>18</sup> Convention on the Child's Rights. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

<sup>19</sup> General Comment No. 16 (2013) on States' obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/crc/2013/102811>



mechanisms exercised by the State Labour Inspectorate and measures aimed at preventing the exploitation of children and adolescents through labour.

The Child Ombudsman notes that, in recent years, the Republic of Moldova has made significant progress in strengthening the legal framework on the protection of children in employment. The Labour Code expressly establishes the conditions under which persons aged between 15 and 18 may be employed, and national legislation provides specific safeguards concerning reduced working time, mandatory medical examinations, and restrictions on hazardous work activities. Furthermore, Article 20 of Law No. 370 of 30 November 2023<sup>20</sup> on Children's Rights enshrines the State's obligation to ensure the protection of children against any form of economic exploitation and, through its measures, to prevent the coercion of children into any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with their education or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

However, an analysis from the perspective of children's rights shows that the existence of a legal framework alone is not sufficient to demonstrate that the Republic of Moldova is fully prepared to accept the obligations under Article 7§5. One of the main challenges remains the scale of the informal economy, which disproportionately affects adolescents and young people at the beginning of their professional careers. In practice, some young persons engaged in seasonal, occasional or temporary work operate outside formal employment relationships, thereby being deprived of legal guarantees concerning remuneration, working time and social protection.

The obligation under Article 7§5 of the Charter is not limited to the existence of rules on remuneration; it requires effective guarantees ensuring that young workers receive remuneration proportionate to the work performed and sufficient to prevent economic exploitation. From this perspective, it is relevant that the legislation of the Republic of Moldova does not currently provide a distinct regulation on the minimum wage for young workers or specific criteria for assessing the adequacy of allowances granted to apprentices and persons engaged in vocational training programmes.

Particular attention is required with regard to adolescents involved in vocational and dual education and training programmes. Although the dual vocational training system has developed considerably in recent years and represents an important tool for the integration of young people into the labour market, the need persists to monitor the extent to which the economic rights of students engaged in practical training activities at economic units are respected. Accordingly, any productive activity carried out by young persons must be accompanied by sufficient guarantees regarding remuneration, occupational health and safety.

At the same time, the Child Ombudsman notes that available statistical data on employment among persons under 18 years of age remain limited. The absence of disaggregated data on the number of employed young persons, their level of remuneration, the economic sectors in which they are active, and any violations identified by supervisory authorities reduces the

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<sup>20</sup> Law No. 370 of November 30, 2023, on the Child's Rights. Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=140710&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=140710&lang=ro)



State's capacity to objectively assess the degree of implementation of the obligations under Article 7§5.

It should also be taken into account that poverty and economic vulnerability continue to be factors increasing the risk of children being involved in economically exploitative activities under inadequate conditions. The State must address child labour not only through control and sanctioning measures, but also through social policies aimed at reducing poverty, supporting vulnerable families, and ensuring children's continued participation in the education system.

From the perspective of the Child Ombudsman's mandate, the assessment of readiness for accepting Article 7§5 must also take into account the effectiveness of mechanisms for identifying cases of economic exploitation. Although the legal framework provides clear competences for child protection authorities and the State Labour Inspectorate, challenges persist in identifying children engaged in seasonal, agricultural, or informal economic activities, particularly in rural areas.

**In conclusion**, the Child Ombudsman considers that the Republic of Moldova has the essential elements of a legal framework necessary for the protection of children and young persons in employment relations. However, acceptance of Article 7§5 of the Revised European Social Charter requires strengthening mechanisms for monitoring child labour, developing effective data collection tools, intensifying inspections in sectors with a high risk of informal employment, and assessing the adequacy of remuneration paid to young workers and apprentices. From a children's rights perspective, the progress achieved indicates the existence of a relevant legal and institutional framework; however, additional measures are necessary to ensure full and effective implementation of the standards under Article 7§5.

## Article 13 §4 The right to social and medical assistance

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to social and medical assistance, the Parties undertake:*

*4. to apply the provisions referred to in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this article on an equal footing with their nationals to nationals of other Parties lawfully within their territories, in accordance with their obligations under the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance, signed at Paris on 11 December 1953*

Article 13§4 of the European Social Charter (Revised) requires States to apply the provisions concerning social and medical assistance to nationals of other States Parties who are lawfully present within their territory on an equal footing with their own nationals. This obligation entails effective, non-discriminatory and practical access to social benefits, social services and medical assistance, including for children in situations of vulnerability. Although the wording of the provision refers to nationals of other States Parties, contemporary human rights standards require that such protection also extend to refugees, asylum seekers, beneficiaries of temporary protection, stateless persons and other categories of children lawfully present within the territory of the State.



In the report submitted under the procedure concerning the examination of the non-accepted provisions of the European Social Charter (Revised), the authorities of the Republic of Moldova highlighted the legislative and institutional developments relating to the integration of foreigners and the provision of protection to refugees, including the measures adopted in response to the influx of displaced persons from Ukraine. The State emphasised that the national legal framework provides access to essential services for persons lawfully present in the Republic of Moldova and that the national social and healthcare protection system has been adapted to respond to the needs arising from the refugee crisis. The State report also refers to existing inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms and programmes implemented with the support of international organisations.

The People's Advocate for Child's Rights acknowledges the efforts undertaken by the authorities to manage an unprecedented humanitarian situation and notes that, particularly after 2022, the Republic of Moldova demonstrated considerable capacity to ensure the immediate protection of refugee children and their families. Nevertheless, assessing the State's preparedness to accept the provisions of the present Article requires an evaluation that goes beyond the emergency response and examines the extent to which equal access to social and medical assistance is guaranteed in a sustainable, predictable and non-discriminatory manner.

The United Nations Convention on the Child's Rights, in Articles 2, 24 and 26, establishes the obligation of States to ensure access for all children to healthcare services and social protection without discrimination based on nationality, migration status or any other ground. In its General Comment No. 6 (2005)<sup>21</sup> on the Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin (paragraph 12), the UN Committee on the Child's Rights stated: "State obligations under the Convention apply within the borders of a State, including with respect to those children who come under the State's jurisdiction while attempting to enter the country's territory. Therefore, the enjoyment of rights stipulated in the Convention is not limited to children who are nationals of a State Party and must therefore, unless explicitly stated otherwise in the Convention, be available to all children – including asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children – irrespective of their nationality, immigration status or statelessness."

At the national level, the relevant legal framework includes Law No. 270 of 18 December 2008 on Asylum in the Republic of Moldova, Law No. 200 of 16 July 2010 on the Regime of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova, the legislation governing healthcare and social assistance, as well as Law No. 370 of 30 November 2023 on the Rights of the Child. These legislative acts enshrine the principle of the best interests of the child and recognise the obligation of the authorities to ensure the protection of all children present within the territory of the country. From a normative perspective, they constitute an important basis for the acceptance of the obligations arising under Article 13§4 of the European Social Charter (Revised).

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<sup>21</sup> General Comment No. 6 (2005), The Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside Their Country of Origin. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/566055?ln=ru&v=pdf>



Over recent years, the People's Advocate for Child's Rights has examined several complaints concerning foreign children holding temporary residence permits in the Republic of Moldova, refugees and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection who were either required to pay the compulsory health insurance premium or whose discharge from medical institutions was made conditional upon the payment of the medical services provided. This issue was also reflected in the Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova for 2024.<sup>22</sup>

Article 24 par. (2) (b) of the United Nations Convention on the Child's Rights provides that States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure "the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children, with emphasis on the development of primary health care."

Paragraph 11 of the Joint General Comment No. 3 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and No. 22 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the General Principles regarding the Human Rights of Children in the Context of International Migration states: *"States shall ensure that children in the context of international migration are treated first and foremost as children. States parties to the Conventions have an obligation to comply with the obligations under the Conventions to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children in the context of international migration, regardless of their or their parents' or legal guardians' migration status."*<sup>23</sup>

Pursuant to Article 19(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, *"foreign nationals and stateless persons shall enjoy the same rights and shall have the same duties as the citizens of the Republic of Moldova."* Furthermore, Article 50 par. (2) of the Constitution provides that: *"Children and young people shall enjoy special assistance in the exercise of their rights."* According to Article 12 par. (1) of Law No. 370 of 30 November 2023 on the Rights of the Child, the State guarantees every child the right to benefit from preventive measures, medical treatment and rehabilitation at the highest attainable standards in order to achieve the best possible state of health, while respecting the best interests of the child, and guarantees children's priority access to healthcare services at all levels.

In the same context, pursuant to Article 84<sup>3</sup> of Law No. 200 of 16 July 2010 on the Regime of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova: *"Foreigners having the right of residence in the Republic of Moldova shall enjoy the right to rest and the protection of health on the same general basis as citizens of the Republic of Moldova."* Paragraph (2) of the same Article further provides: *"The foreigners referred to in Article 2(1)(a)-(c) of Law No. 274 of 27 December 2011 on the Integration of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova [...] shall enjoy the same rights and bear the same obligations in the field of compulsory health insurance as citizens of the Republic of Moldova, in accordance with the legislation in force, unless otherwise provided by international treaties."*

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<sup>22</sup> Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova in 2024. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-anual-privind-respectarea-drepturilor-si-libertatilor-omului-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2024/>

<sup>23</sup> International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families Convention on the Rights of the Child. Available at: <https://docs.un.org/en/CRC/C/GC/22>



According to Article 2 par.(1) of Law No. 274 of 27 December 2011 on the Integration of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova: *"This Law shall apply to the following categories of foreigners:*

- (a) foreigners holding temporary residence rights;*
- (b) foreigners holding permanent residence rights;*
- (c) foreigners recognised as stateless persons in the Republic of Moldova;*
- (d) beneficiaries of international protection or political asylum."*

Article 19 par.(1) of Law No. 274 of 27 December 2011 on the Integration of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova provides: *"Foreign minors shall have access to healthcare under the same conditions as minors who are citizens of the Republic of Moldova."* Accordingly, it is beyond doubt that the foreign children whose situations were raised in the complaints submitted to the People's Advocate for Child's Rights fall within the scope of Article 2(1) of Law No. 274/2011 and, consequently, are also covered by the provisions of Article 84<sup>3</sup> of Law No. 200/2010.

Pursuant to Article 4 par. (4) of Law No. 1585/1998 on Compulsory Health Insurance, the Government acts as the insurer for children under the age of 18, and no exceptions are specified that would exclude any category of children from benefiting from health insurance financed from the State budget.<sup>24</sup>

In practice, however, the National Health Insurance Company (NHIC) does not recognise the status of persons insured by the Government for beneficiaries of international protection who fall within the categories of unemployed persons domiciled in the Republic of Moldova referred to in Article 4 par. (4)(a), (h) and (j) of Law No. 1585 of 27 February 1998 on Compulsory Health Insurance. According to the NHIC, subparagraph (o) of the same paragraph constitutes the only legal provision applicable to beneficiaries of international protection within the compulsory health insurance system, and its application is limited to the period during which such persons are enrolled in integration programmes.

On 1 January 2026, amendments to Law No. 270 of 18 December 2008 on Asylum in the Republic of Moldova<sup>25</sup> entered into force. The new provisions introduced the concept of an *"asylum seeker with special needs"* and expanded the categories of persons falling within the scope of this definition. Pursuant to Article 3 of the Law, children are expressly included among the categories of asylum seekers with special needs.

At the same time, art. 30 of law no. 270 of 18.12.2008, which regulates access to medical care for asylum seekers, was supplemented with para. (5), according to which asylum seekers with special needs are provided with emergency medical care and basic treatment of diseases. This legal norm aimed to expand the types of medical care that asylum seekers with special needs can benefit from, compared to asylum seekers without special needs. At the same time,

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<sup>24</sup> Law No. 1585 of February 27, 1998, on Mandatory Health Insurance. Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=131982&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=131982&lang=ro)

<sup>25</sup> Law No. 270 of December 18, 2008, on Asylum in the Republic of Moldova. Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=23676&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=23676&lang=ro)



para. (4) of the same article provides that child asylum seekers have access to medical care under the same conditions as children who are citizens of the Republic of Moldova.

Despite this, medical institutions continue to arbitrarily apply these provisions. In practice, asylum-seeking children are granted, in certain cases, only the minimum amount of medical services provided for asylum seekers with special needs, namely emergency medical assistance and basic treatment of illnesses, ignoring the distinct guarantee of art. 30 paragraph (4) of the Asylum Law.

**In conclusion**, the People's Advocate for Child's Rights appreciates that the Republic of Moldova has established a legislative framework that provides an important basis for the acceptance of Article 13§4 of the European Social Charter (Revised). Nevertheless, the persistence of administrative and institutional practices that restrict the effective access of certain categories of foreign children to healthcare services demonstrates the need for additional measures aimed at clarifying the legislative framework, ensuring the consistent application of the law by the competent authorities, and strengthening monitoring mechanisms, so that equal access to social and medical assistance is effectively guaranteed to all children lawfully present within the territory of the State, irrespective of their nationality or migration status.

## Article 14 §1 The right to benefit from social welfare services

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to benefit from social welfare services, the Parties undertake:*

*1) to promote or provide services which, by using methods of social work, would contribute to the welfare and development of both individuals and groups in the community, and to their adjustment to the social environment;*

The People's Advocate Office (Ombudsman) reiterates that, during the reference period 2023-2026, significant progress was achieved in the field of social assistance. In this regard, the State report highlights the adoption of approximately 30 normative acts governing the organisation and functioning of social services, representing an important step in the process of harmonising the national legal framework. PAO also welcomes the establishment of two new social services aimed at diversifying and strengthening the social protection system.

The first is the Child and Family Psychosocial Assistance and Rehabilitation Service, established by Government Decision No. 786 of 23 December 2025, approving the Framework Regulation on the organisation and functioning of the Child and Family Psychosocial Assistance and Rehabilitation Service, together with the Minimum Quality Standards applicable thereto.<sup>26</sup> The second is the "Assisted Social Housing" Social Service, established

<sup>26</sup> Government Decision No. 786 of 23.12.2025 for the approval of the Framework Regulation on the organisation and functioning of the Child and Family Psychosocial Assistance and Rehabilitation Service and the Minimum Quality Standards. Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=152252&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=152252&lang=ro)



by Government Decision No. 787 of 23 December 2025, regulating the organisation and functioning of the service and approving the applicable Minimum Quality Standards.<sup>27</sup> These initiatives contribute to expanding the range of available social services and strengthening the support provided to persons and families in situations of vulnerability.

At the same time, in the Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova for 2025,<sup>28</sup> the People's Advocate reiterated that there are eight residential institutions in the Republic of Moldova, redesignated as Temporary Placement Centres for Persons with Disabilities (TPCPDs), operating under the management and coordination of the Agency for the Management of Highly Specialised Social Services (AMHSS).<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the authorities have undertaken to implement major structural reforms, including the "RESTART" social assistance reform, the digitalisation of social services, and the acceleration of the deinstitutionalisation process through the development of community-based services such as the "Community House" and "Protected Housing."

**The deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities** in the Republic of Moldova is not a recent process. It has been embedded in public policy since 2008, with the adoption of the National Programme for the Development of an Integrated Social Services System for 2008-2012, which provided for the development of community-based services as an alternative to institutional care. Subsequently, the Social Inclusion Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2010-2013) and the monitoring reports on its implementation reaffirmed the need to reduce long-term institutional placement and promote independent living. A further policy framework was established through the National Deinstitutionalisation Programme for 2018-2026, which set specific objectives for reducing the number of institutional residents and expanding community-based services, including Protected Housing and Community House services.

Nevertheless, the deinstitutionalisation process for persons with disabilities continues to progress slowly. The number of persons remaining in institutional care continues to exceed the targets established under the reform (with only one to two residents leaving institutions annually), while the development of alternative community-based services has not ensured an effective and sustainable transition to independent living and community inclusion. A considerable number of beneficiaries have requested to be transferred from Protected Housing services back to the Temporary Placement Centres for Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, in 2025, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection did not initiate any post-implementation evaluation of the reform, thereby hindering the identification of setbacks and preventing a comprehensive assessment of its actual impact on the residents concerned.

During monitoring visits carried out by the People's Advocate Office and the Council for the Prevention of Torture, a number of shortcomings were identified, including: material conditions unsuitable for the long-term placement of residents; the absence of occupational activities; the lack of measures to prepare residents for social reintegration; shortages of qualified staff; gaps

<sup>27</sup> Government Decision No. 787 of 23.12.2025 for the approval of the Framework Regulation on the organisation and functioning of the "Assisted Social Housing" Social Service and the Minimum Quality Standards. Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=152253&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=152253&lang=ro)

<sup>28</sup> Annual Report on the observance of human rights and freedoms in the Republic of Moldova in the year 2025. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-anual-privind-respectarea-drepturilor-si-libertatilor-omului-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2025/>

<sup>29</sup> Map of social services in the Republic of Moldova. Available at: <https://agssi.md/harta-serviciilor-sociale/servicii-de-plasament-adulti>



in the internal regulatory framework (updated internal regulations lacking a rights-based approach and provisions ensuring the resident's consent); reductions in staffing levels; the introduction of punitive rules applicable to residents (e.g. restrictions concerning leaving the institution's premises, possession and use of mobile telephones, and the sale or exchange of personal belongings); and the deterioration of an exhausting and vulnerable environment affecting both staff and residents.

The majority of residents interviewed stated that they opposed the restrictions introduced by the Agency for the Management of Highly Specialised Social Services (AMHSSS) concerning their right to leave the Centres, engage in employment within the community, and manage their personal financial resources. Some residents complained of pressure and intimidation when submitting complaints to higher administrative authorities. Others reported feeling unsafe, being exposed to violence by both staff and fellow residents, the poor quality of food, the alleged misappropriation of food by employees, intimidation by members of the management, and other similar practices. At the same time, certain Temporary Placement Centres for Persons with Disabilities (TPCPDs) succeeded in involving residents in artistic and cultural activities and organised excursions outside the Centres.

In 2025, a total of 33 deaths of residents were recorded in residential institutions (22 men and 11 women, aged between 19 and 91 years). The preliminary causes of death included severe cardiorespiratory failure, oncological, hepatic, pulmonary and neurological diseases, post-stroke complications, multiple coexisting somatic and mental disorders (poly pathology), tuberculosis, advanced malignant diseases, severe intellectual disability, dementia, schizophrenia, epilepsy, aggravated medical conditions, respiratory infections and sepsis.

During the same period, one case of homicide between residents was reported at the Temporary Placement Centre for Persons with Disabilities in Cocieri. The case is currently under police investigation. In addition, the following incidents were reported: two cases of assaults against employees arising from episodes of aggressive behaviour by beneficiaries, requiring staff intervention to stop the conflicts; one attempted suicide; and seven cases of altercations between residents. In all of the above-mentioned situations, the residential institutions stated that staff intervened to de-escalate the incidents and that the necessary medical and legal assistance was provided in accordance with the applicable procedures. In certain cases, internal investigations were conducted and disciplinary sanctions were imposed for negligence. These sanctions primarily concerned nursing assistants rather than specialised or managerial staff.

Residential institutions continue to experience shortages of specialised personnel, including medical, occupational, professional and nursing staff. Although, to a large extent, the existing workforce ensures the minimum operational functioning of the institutions, the number of professionals such as social workers, general practitioners, social pedagogues and community social workers responsible for supporting persons with disabilities in educational processes and social inclusion remains insufficient. Furthermore, in several Temporary Placement Centres for Persons with Disabilities, the authorised staffing establishment has been reduced, including through the reduction or elimination of posts involving a high level of professional responsibility, such as psychiatrists and psychologists. This adversely affects the capacity of



these institutions to provide beneficiaries with adequate assessment, psychological support and specialised medical care.

Residential institutions have reported that the existing workload exceeds their financial capacity to maintain certain posts, many of which have remained vacant for a prolonged period despite repeated recruitment efforts.<sup>30</sup> The prevailing staffing structure within the placement centres continues to reflect a model insufficiently oriented towards therapeutic intervention and rehabilitation. This underscores the need to reform the staffing structure through the strengthening of specialised professional capacities and decision-support mechanisms.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, in the context of the RESTART reform, certain uncertainties persist regarding the extent to which the reform process was sufficiently focused on placement centers, given that, within the framework of monitoring activities, various irregularities and difficulties were found that continue to affect their functioning.

During preventive monitoring visits, the People's Advocate Office identified a number of common needs across residential institutions, relating both to the quality of life of beneficiaries and to the institutional capacity to provide services in compliance with current standards. In particular, with regard to living conditions, there remains a need to reduce overcrowding in dormitories, ensure personal living space and the possibility for residents to keep their personal belongings, and adapt sanitary facilities to the needs of persons with reduced mobility.

Furthermore, there is a need to ensure the provision of meaningful daily occupational programmes aimed at developing independent living skills and promoting the participation of beneficiaries in community-based activities, in order to prevent institutional dependency and support the process of deinstitutionalisation.<sup>32</sup>

A particularly important role in assessing the compliance of the social services provided by residential institutions is performed by the State Social Inspectorate (SSI). The Inspectorate has carried out a number of assessments of the activities of the Temporary Placement Centres for Persons with Disabilities (TPCPDs), in accordance with Law No. 547 of 25 December 2003 on Social Assistance and the relevant regulatory framework. These assessments examined respect for the rights of beneficiaries, the quality of the social services provided, the institutional capacity of social service providers, and the conformity of their activities with the quality standards applicable to social services for persons with disabilities.

Nevertheless, the People's Advocate has encouraged the State Social Inspectorate to maintain its commitment to good standards and a high quality of services within the institutions subject

<sup>30</sup> Hincesti TPCPD: The Center currently houses 240 residents, including those receiving related social services. The direct care staff consists of 112 nurses, who work in 12-hour shifts. Taking into account statutory vacation and sick leave, as well as the need to ensure 24-hour continuity of care, the Center's administration has determined that the staffing plan needs to be supplemented with an additional 25 nurses. TPCPD Balti: The facility has 237 employees serving 367 beneficiaries, of whom approximately 140 are nurses involved in the direct care of beneficiaries. Medical care is provided by 2 general practitioners, 1 gynecologist, and 2 psychiatrists. The general practitioners also work in the private sector, a situation that indicates professional overload and insufficient remuneration in the public system. Consequently, a need for additional staff (e.g., therapist, psychologist, educator, occupational therapist) has been identified.

<sup>31</sup> Report based on the monitoring visit to the Temporary Placement Center for People with Disabilities in Hincesti, conducted on December 5, 2025. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-in-baza-vizitei-de-monitorizare-la-centrul-de-plasament-temporar-pentru-persoane-cu-dizabilitati-municipiul-hincesti-efectuate-la-data-de-5-decembrie-2025/>

<sup>32</sup> Report based on the preventive visit to the Temporary Placement Center for People with Disabilities in Orhei, conducted on May 29, 2025. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-in-baza-vizitei-preventive-la-centrul-de-plasament-temporar-pentru-persoane-cu-dizabilitati-municipiul-orhei-efectuate-la-data-de-29-mai-2025/>



to inspection. Furthermore, although the reported assessments are generally aligned with the individual assessment criteria developed for this purpose, these criteria should be further improved and adapted to the evolving approaches to the management of TPCPDs, including the provisions of the United Nations conventions, the General Comments of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD Committee), the United Nations Guidelines on Deinstitutionalization, the standards of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), and other relevant international standards.<sup>33</sup>

In 2025, with the support of UNICEF and UNHCR, the Office of the People's Advocate prepared the Thematic Report on the Impact of the Social Assistance System Reform on the Rights of Vulnerable Persons, including children, asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international protection and beneficiaries of temporary protection.<sup>34</sup>

The data analysed in the thematic report demonstrate notable progress in strengthening the child protection system, particularly through the reduction in the number of children placed in residential institutions and the increasing orientation towards family-based care services. The findings also indicate improvements in financial support mechanisms for vulnerable children and families.

The report further identifies as a positive development the increase in staffing levels through the introduction of two new categories of specialists within the social assistance system, enabling more targeted interventions to improve access to social services for families with children experiencing difficulties, children in situations of risk, and victims of domestic violence:

- + 201 child rights protection specialists were recruited out of 215 approved positions. Prior to the implementation of the RESTART reform, only 46 such specialists were employed nationwide.
- + 43 specialists were recruited in the field of domestic violence and the rehabilitation of victims of crime.

The number of professional foster carers increased from 426.75 positions prior to the implementation of the RESTART reform to 443 positions in 2025.

The study also indicates that, although the RESTART reform is perceived as improving the accessibility of services for children and families, the situation in practice demonstrates that the system continues to face significant territorial barriers, insufficient information and coordination, complex administrative procedures, and an inadequate availability of services adapted to the needs of families raising children with disabilities. A major challenge currently facing the Republic of Moldova is the insufficient budgetary allocation for the Personal

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<sup>33</sup> Report based on the preventive visit to the Temporary Placement Center for Persons with Disabilities (adults) in the municipality of Bălți, conducted on June 11, 2025. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-in-baza-vizitei-preventive-la-centrul-de-plasament-temporar-pentru-persoane-cu-dizabilitati-adulte-din-municipiul-balti-efectuate-la-data-de-11-iunie-2025/>

<sup>34</sup> Thematic report “The Impact of Social Assistance System Reform on the Rights of Vulnerable Persons, Including Children, Asylum Seekers, Beneficiaries of International Protection, and Temporary Protection.” Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-tematic-impactul-reformei-sistemului-de-asistenta-sociala-asupra-drepturilor-persoanelor-vulnerabile-inclusiv-asupra-copiilor-solicitantilor-de-azil-beneficiarilor-de-protectie-internationala/>



Assistance Service. Waiting lists for this service continue to exist, with the consequence that it does not adequately meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families.

The Ombudsperson for Children's Rights also stated, in the Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova for 2025,<sup>35</sup> that the number of active child protection cases increased significantly, by 8.9 times, from 2,726 cases covered by an Individual Assistance Plan in 2024 to 23,417 cases in 2025. This development reflects both the increased capacity to identify and monitor situations of risk and the expansion of the responsibilities of the Territorial Social Assistance Agencies (TSAA) in managing complex interventions.

At the same time, access to services for child victims and witnesses of crime has improved through the operation, since March 2022, of the first Barnabus North Centre, an integrated child protection model that is scheduled to be expanded to the southern and central regions in 2026. The Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova for 2025 also highlights the continued decrease in the number of children placed in residential institutions, the increase in the number of children placed in family-based care services, and the growth in external investment supporting children displaced from Ukraine. These developments confirm the continued orientation of the system towards community-based services, prevention measures and targeted support for the most vulnerable groups.<sup>36</sup>

According to the statistical data of the National Bureau of Statistics, as of 1 January 2024, there were 11.4 thousand children with disabilities aged 0–17 years in the Republic of Moldova. Persons with disabilities represented 6.7% of the usually resident population, while children with disabilities accounted for 2.2% of the total number of children with usual residence in the Republic of Moldova.<sup>37</sup>

Children newly recognised as having a disability are predominantly from rural areas, with mental disorders and congenital malformations remaining the principal causes of disability. In 2024, approximately 1.6 thousand children aged 0–17 years were newly recognised as having a disability, of whom 56.3% were from rural areas. One in five children recognised as having a disability was aged between 0 and 2 years (18.3%), almost one-third were aged between 3 and 6 years (35.2%), while 42.7% were between 7 and 15 years of age and 3.8% were aged between 16 and 17 years. The predominant causes of newly recognised disability remained mental and behavioural disorders (46.3%), congenital malformations, deformities and chromosomal abnormalities (17.0%), and diseases of the nervous system (11.3%).<sup>38</sup>

The Ombudsperson for Children's Rights notes that assistance and support services for children with disabilities remain fragmented, as they are provided by different service providers, financed through different mechanisms and delivered in different locations. In the provision of medical, rehabilitation, social and educational services for children with disabilities, a

<sup>35</sup> Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova in 2025. Page 187. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-anual-privind-respectarea-drepturilor-si-libertatilor-omului-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2025/>

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, pag 187

<sup>37</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, People with Disabilities in the Republic of Moldova in 2023. Available at: [https://statistica.gov.md/ro/persoanele-cu-dizabilitati-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2023-9460\\_61550.html](https://statistica.gov.md/ro/persoanele-cu-dizabilitati-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2023-9460_61550.html)

<sup>38</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, The Situation of Children in the Republic of Moldova in 2024. Available at: [https://statistica.gov.md/ro/situatia-copiilor-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2024-9578\\_61802.html](https://statistica.gov.md/ro/situatia-copiilor-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2024-9578_61802.html)



significant distinction continues to exist between informal care provided by families and other support persons and formal services delivered by public authorities and civil society organisations. A major challenge currently facing the Republic of Moldova is the insufficient budgetary allocation for the Personal Assistance Service. Waiting lists for this service continue to persist, with the result that the service does not adequately meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families.

A case examined by the People's Advocate Office concerned the measures adopted by the municipal authorities of Chisinau at the end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024, which had a serious impact on the activity of personal assistants and on the effective enjoyment of the rights of persons receiving assistance. As a result, some personal assistants were dismissed, while the working time of others was reduced, their employment being changed from full-time to 0.5 full-time equivalent positions.

Following the adoption of Decision No. 7 of 29 December 2023 by the Commission for Emergency Situations of the Municipality of Chisinau, the People's Advocate and the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights initiated an ex officio investigation<sup>39</sup> and examined numerous complaints submitted by various groups of beneficiaries of the Personal Assistance social service in the Municipality of Chisinau, including personal assistants, relatives of persons with disabilities and civil society organisations. The complaints alleged, on the one hand, violations of the right to work and, on the other hand, violations of the right to social assistance and social protection, in particular the deprivation of personal assistance as a consequence of Decision No. 7 of 29 December 2023 of the Commission for Emergency Situations of the Municipality of Chisinau and the legal acts deriving therefrom, including the individual administrative acts issued in each specific case.

The Municipality of Chisinau intended not to renew the individual employment contracts of personal assistants, thereby leaving hundreds of persons with severe disabilities without support, notwithstanding their legally guaranteed entitlement to personal assistance.

In this regard, on 31 January 2024, the People's Advocate and the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights issued and transmitted an Opinion<sup>40</sup> to the Chairperson of the Commission for Emergency Situations of the Municipality of Chisinau, containing recommendations for the immediate restoration of the rights to social assistance, social protection and employment of all persons concerned, while ensuring compliance with the principle of the best interests of the child and the rights to life, survival and development.

The Opinion was also transmitted, for information, to the Chairperson of the Commission for Emergency Situations of the Republic of Moldova, namely the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova. Pursuant to the Regulation of the Commission for Emergency Situations of the Republic of Moldova, approved by Government Decision No. 1340 of 4 December 2001,<sup>41</sup> the

<sup>39</sup> The Ombudsmen's Concerns Regarding the Chişinău Municipality's Decision to Stop Funding Extended-Day Classes in General Education Institutions and the Personal Assistance Service. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/sesizarea-avocatorilor-poporului-legata-de-decizia-municipalitatii-chisinau-de-a-stopa-finantarea-claselor-cu-program-prelungit-in-institutiile-de-invataman-general-si-a-serviciului-de-asistenta-person/>

<sup>40</sup> Opinion dated January 31, 2024, regarding the immediate reinstatement of rights, sent to the CSE in Chişinău. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/avizul-din-31-01-2024-privind-repunerea-imediate-in-drepturi-expediat-cse-chisinau/>

<sup>41</sup> Decision No. 1340 of December 4, 2001, regarding the Commission for Exceptional Situations of the Republic of Moldova. Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=146231&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=146231&lang=ro)



Commission is empowered to supervise the activities of the emergency commissions of the central and local public authorities and to examine, during its meetings, the reports submitted by the chairpersons of those commissions.

Subsequently, in April 2024, the Government intervened through Government Decision No. 271 of 17 April 2024 amending certain normative acts, including the establishment of the Highly Specialised Personal Assistance Social Service<sup>42</sup> within the Agency for the Management of Highly Specialised Social Services. As a result, approximately 1,600 personal assistants were transferred to a specialised state agency, thereby ensuring the continuity of support for persons with severe disabilities. Although the financing of the service should have remained the responsibility of the local level, the continuity and stability of the service were secured through exceptional allocations from the State budget.

Furthermore, in Recommendation 1.5.10 of the Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova for 2025, the People's Advocate recommended that the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection initiate an urgent review of the remuneration policy applicable to the social assistance sector, as the current level of remuneration does not reflect the complexity of the work performed and continues to perpetuate the chronic shortage of personnel.

**Conclusion regarding the possibility of accepting Article 14§1.** Although the Republic of Moldova continues to face challenges in ensuring effective access to social services for all persons in need, the legislative and institutional reforms implemented during the period 2024–2025 demonstrate the existence of a legal framework and institutional commitment directed towards the development of community-based social services. In this context, the People's Advocate Office considers that the acceptance of Article 14§1 of the Revised European Social Charter is feasible, provided that the Personal Assistance Service is further strengthened, the continuity of essential social services is guaranteed, the process of deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities is accelerated, and adequate human and financial resources are ensured for the effective functioning of the social assistance system.

## Article 14§2 The right to benefit from social welfare services

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to benefit from social welfare services, the Parties undertake:*

*2. to encourage the participation of individuals and voluntary or other organisations in the establishment and maintenance of such services.*

The State Report indicates that civil society organisations are encouraged to participate in the provision of social services through public financing and social service procurement mechanisms. Furthermore, the State Report presents examples of cooperation between public

<sup>42</sup> Decision No. 271 of April 17, 2024, on the amendment of certain normative acts (regarding the establishment of the "Personal Assistance" Social Service with high specialization within the Agency for the Management of Social Services with High Specialization). Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=142867&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=142867&lang=ro)



authorities, civil society organisations and development partners in the field of social services, including in the prevention and combating of domestic violence and violence against women.

A relevant example is the free telephone assistance service for victims of domestic violence and violence against women - the Women's and Girls' Helpline (08008 8008), operated by the non-governmental organisation "La Strada" and procured by the State in order to ensure continuous access to specialised services. The service is free of charge, anonymous and confidential, operates 24 hours a day, and provides counselling in Romanian, Russian and English, as well as online chat support, including for persons with hearing impairments.

These examples demonstrate that the authorities recognise the role of civil society organisations in the provision of social services and promote their participation in the implementation of social policies intended for persons in situations of vulnerability.

The People's Advocate Office considers that the existence of cooperation mechanisms between public authorities and civil society organisations constitutes an important element in fulfilling the obligations arising under Article 14§2 of the Revised European Social Charter. At the same time, the Office considers it necessary to further strengthen a permanent, open and institutionalised dialogue between public authorities and civil society organisations, based on transparency, mutual trust and effective participation.

In this regard, public consultations should be organised in a transparent and inclusive manner and within reasonable timeframes, enabling civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders to make an effective contribution to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social policies and social services. A continuous and constructive dialogue between public authorities and civil society contributes to the development of social services that are more accessible, more effective and better adapted to the needs of beneficiaries.

**Conclusion regarding the possibility of accepting Article 14§2.** Having regard to the information provided by the State, the existence of mechanisms through which public authorities cooperate with civil society organisations and finance the social services provided by them, as well as the examples of good practice presented in the State Report, **the People's Advocate Office considers that the acceptance of Article 14§2 of the Revised European Social Charter is feasible**, as the existing legal framework and current practice demonstrate that the State encourages the participation of civil society organisations in the establishment and maintenance of social services.

At the same time, it is recommended that the institutional dialogue between public authorities and civil society be further strengthened and that effective, transparent and participatory public consultation mechanisms be ensured, enabling the meaningful involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the development, delivery and evaluation of social services, in accordance with the requirements of the Revised European Social Charter.



## Article 19 §12 The right of migrant workers and their families to protection and assistance

*(facilitating the learning of the mother tongue by the children of migrant workers)*

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of migrant workers and their families to protection and assistance in the territory of any other Party, the Parties undertake:*

*12. to promote and facilitate, as far as practicable, the teaching of the migrant worker's mother tongue to the children of the migrant worker.*

From the perspective of child's rights, this provision should be examined in conjunction with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognises the child's right to preserve his or her identity, including cultural and linguistic identity. Article 30 of the Convention guarantees the right of children belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities to use their own language in community with other members of their group, while Article 29 par. (1)(c) provides that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for his or her own language, cultural identity and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which the child may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own.

In the State Report submitted within the framework of the procedure concerning the examination of the non-accepted provisions of the Revised European Social Charter, the authorities of the Republic of Moldova highlighted the measures adopted to facilitate the integration of foreign and refugee children into the national education system. The Report refers to the access of refugee children to educational institutions, the support measures implemented in response to the influx of displaced persons from Ukraine, and the efforts undertaken to facilitate educational inclusion.

The Ombudsperson for Child's Rights welcomes the commitment demonstrated by the authorities of the Republic of Moldova in integrating refugee and migrant children into the national education system. In particular, following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the national education system was placed under considerable pressure, and the authorities made significant efforts to ensure refugee children's access to education. Nevertheless, the obligations arising under Article 19 §12 extend beyond ensuring access to schooling and require the adoption of measures supporting the preservation of the linguistic and cultural identity of migrant children.

At present, the legal framework of the Republic of Moldova guarantees non-discriminatory access to education for foreign children and for children benefiting from various forms of international protection. However, there is no developed or institutionalised system specifically designed to support the learning of the mother tongue of children of migrant workers or refugee children originating from other States. In practice, the preservation of mother-tongue language skills depends largely on the efforts of families, community initiatives, or projects implemented by international and non-governmental organisations.

The experience of recent years has demonstrated that the educational integration of refugee children may be adversely affected by significant language barriers. For many refugee children



from Ukraine, as well as for other migrant children, communication difficulties have constituted a major obstacle to successful school integration. In these circumstances, the principal focus of the authorities has been on teaching the Romanian language and facilitating access to the national curriculum.

At the same time, it should be noted that, since 2024, several classes with Ukrainian as the language of instruction have been established at Taras Shevchenko Gymnasium in Chişinău. At present, the Gymnasium operates eight classes providing instruction in the Ukrainian language, attended by 180 pupils. The institution also enrolls 339 Ukrainian refugee pupils, out of a total of 401 pupils.

**In conclusion**, the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights considers that the Republic of Moldova has made significant progress in ensuring access to the national education system for foreign children, refugee children and children benefiting from various forms of international protection, and has demonstrated, particularly in the context of the influx of displaced persons from Ukraine, its capacity to respond promptly to their educational needs. However, acceptance of Article 19 §12 of the Revised European Social Charter requires the adoption of more comprehensive and sustainable measures aimed at supporting the preservation of the linguistic and cultural identity of migrant children, including through the development of institutionalised mechanisms facilitating the learning and use of their mother tongue. From the perspective of child's rights, the existing legal framework provides favourable conditions for the acceptance of this provision. Nevertheless, further measures are required to develop inclusive educational policies and practical mechanisms capable of ensuring the effective enjoyment by migrant children of their right to preserve and develop their linguistic and cultural identity.

## Article 23 The right of elderly persons to social protection

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of elderly persons to social protection, the Parties undertake to adopt or encourage, either directly or in cooperation with public or private organisations, appropriate measures designed in particular:*

- *to enable elderly persons to remain full members of society for as long as possible by means of:*
  - a) *adequate resources enabling them to lead a decent life and to participate actively in public, social and cultural life;*
  - b) *the dissemination of information concerning the services and facilities available for elderly persons and the opportunities for making use of them;*
- *to enable elderly persons to choose their lifestyle freely and to lead independent lives in their familiar surroundings for as long as they wish and are able to do so by means of:*
  - a) *the provision of housing suited to their needs and state of health or adequate support for adapting their housing;*
  - b) *the health care and services required by their condition;*
- *to guarantee elderly persons living in institutions appropriate support with regard to respect for their privacy and participation in determining the living conditions within the institution.*

The State Report addresses a range of policies and programmes aimed at promoting active and healthy ageing. It provides information on the National Health Strategy "Health 2030"



(Government Decision No. 387 of 14 June 2023)<sup>43</sup>, which establishes the strategic framework for the sustainable development of the health sector in the Republic of Moldova. The priorities established under the Strategy are intended to guide structural reforms aimed at improving public health, strengthening the efficiency and resilience of the healthcare system, and ensuring equitable access to quality health services.

The State Report also provides information on the Programme on Active and Healthy Ageing for 2023–2027 (Government Decision No. 434 of 28 June 2023)<sup>44</sup>, the adoption of which was driven by the need to strengthen the efforts of all relevant stakeholders in promoting policies responding to the needs of an ageing population. In this context, the programme establishes policy priorities in such areas as health, education, the labour market, culture, participation, social protection and other related fields.

The State Report further describes the "University of the Third Age" initiative, which offers elderly persons courses in computer literacy, foreign languages, legal education and health promotion. In addition, the Report contains demographic data concerning population ageing, information relating to the pension system, and an overview of the social services available for elderly persons.

The Report also confirms the acceleration of demographic ageing in the Republic of Moldova. The number of persons aged 60 years and over increased from approximately 584,000 at the beginning of 2021<sup>45</sup> to 616,500 in 2025, representing approximately 26% of the total population. This demographic development highlights the need to strengthen and implement sustainable, integrated and human rights-based public policies capable of responding adequately to the increasingly complex needs of elderly persons.

At the same time, in the Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova for 2025<sup>46</sup>, the People's Advocate notes that, in December 2025, a package of 14 Government Decisions concerning the efficient organisation and modernisation of social services was adopted. The principal measures introduced by these decisions include the establishment and regulation of new social services, such as psychosocial assistance and rehabilitation services for children and families and assisted social housing for young persons deprived of parental care.

Another objective of these Government Decisions is to modernise and update the regulatory framework governing social services for children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable beneficiaries. Their overall purpose is to harmonise the legislation governing social services with European Union standards and to align it with European good practices, thereby ensuring improved access to social services, enhanced quality and greater efficiency.

<sup>43</sup> Decision No. 387 of June 14, 2023, on the approval of the National Health Strategy "Health 2030." Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=138493&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=138493&lang=ro)

<sup>44</sup> Decision No. 434 of June 28, 2023, on the approval of the Program on Active and Healthy Aging for the years 2023-2027. Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=138059&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=138059&lang=ro)

<sup>45</sup> Older Adults in the Republic of Moldova in 2020. Available at: [https://statistica.gov.md/ro/varstnicii-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2020-9578\\_3489.html](https://statistica.gov.md/ro/varstnicii-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2020-9578_3489.html)

<sup>46</sup> Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova in 2025. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-anual-privind-respectarea-drepturilor-si-libertatilor-omului-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2025/>



In particular, the People's Advocate examined the draft Regulation governing the Food Support Social Service, through which persons in situations of vulnerability may benefit from free meal services.<sup>47</sup> Depending on the specific circumstances, these services may also be provided to persons who are able to cover part or all of the associated costs.

The People's Advocate also expressed an opinion on the regulation of the Social Laundry Service,<sup>48</sup> which complements the range of social services available to persons in situations of vulnerability and contributes to promoting their social inclusion.

In order to strengthen the social protection system, pensions were indexed by 10% in 2025, compared with 6% in 2024. Furthermore, pursuant to the Government Decision of 25 March 2026<sup>49</sup> on the indexation and increase of social benefits, all relevant social benefits are indexed, as from 1 April 2026, by an indexation coefficient of 6.84%.

**At the same time, the minimum old-age pension amounted to MDL 3,055.65 (approximately EUR 152)<sup>50</sup> in 2025 and MDL 3,264.66 (approximately EUR 162)<sup>51</sup> in 2026, reflecting an increase of MDL 209.01 (approximately EUR 10).** In 2025, the average old-age pension at national level amounted to **MDL 3,983.85** (approximately EUR 198). At the same time, the gender pension gap remains significant: male pensioners received an average monthly pension of **MDL 4,469.04** (approximately EUR 222), whereas female pensioners received an average of **MDL 3,740.20 (approximately EUR 186)<sup>52</sup>.**

Nevertheless, the level of pensions continues to raise concerns from the perspective of ensuring an adequate standard of living. Although the average old-age pension in 2025 amounted to **MDL 3,983.85** (approximately EUR 198), it remained approximately **MDL 1,140** (approximately EUR 57) below the average monthly consumer expenditure per person, which amounted to **MDL 5,122.4** (approximately EUR 254).<sup>53</sup> This disparity indicates that pension income does not cover the average costs necessary to meet a person's basic needs, thereby adversely affecting the ability of elderly persons to secure a decent standard of living.

In the Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova for 2025, the People's Advocate, through **Recommendation No. 1.5.2, called upon the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to take measures to review the level of pensions and social benefits so as to ensure a decent standard of living, particularly for**

<sup>47</sup> Decision No. 794 of December 23, 2025, approving the Framework Regulation on the Organization and Operation of the Social Food Assistance Service and the Minimum Quality Standards. Available at:

[https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=152279&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=152279&lang=ro)

<sup>48</sup> Decision No. 833 of December 29, 2020, approving the Framework Regulation on the organization and operation of the Social Laundry Service and the Minimum Quality Standards. Available at:

[https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=152381&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=152381&lang=ro)

<sup>49</sup> Decision of March 25, 2026, on the indexation and increase of social benefits. Available at:

[https://gov.md/sites/default/files/media/documents/sedinte-de-guvern/2026-03/NU-221-MMPS-2026\\_1.pdf](https://gov.md/sites/default/files/media/documents/sedinte-de-guvern/2026-03/NU-221-MMPS-2026_1.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Decision of 2025 on the indexation and increase of social benefits. Available at:

[https://old.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/nu-176-mmeps-2025\\_0.pdf](https://old.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/nu-176-mmeps-2025_0.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Decision of March 25, 2026, on the indexation and increase of social benefits. Available at:

[https://gov.md/sites/default/files/media/documents/sedinte-de-guvern/2026-03/NU-221-MMPS-2026\\_1.pdf](https://gov.md/sites/default/files/media/documents/sedinte-de-guvern/2026-03/NU-221-MMPS-2026_1.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> Statistical Database. Average Old-Age Pension Amount as of January 1, by District/Region, Year, and Gender. Available at:

[https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala\\_09%20PRO/PRO011700reg.px/table/tableViewLayout2/](https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala_09%20PRO/PRO011700reg.px/table/tableViewLayout2/)

<sup>53</sup> National Bureau of Statistics. Average Monthly Consumer Expenditures per Person by Year, Expenditure Category, Average, Quarter, and Unit of Measure. Available at:

[https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala\\_04%20NIV\\_NIV020/NIV020100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/](https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala_04%20NIV_NIV020/NIV020100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/)



**pensioners, persons with disabilities and vulnerable families. The People's Advocate further recommended the preparation of a comprehensive assessment of the pension and social benefit indexation formula to ensure that annual adjustments reflect not only economic developments but also actual inflation and the subsistence minimum, differentiated according to the place of residence.**

Furthermore, monitoring visits conducted by the People's Advocate Office to residential institutions revealed persistent shortcomings relating to living conditions, the shortage of specialised personnel and the absence of programmes aimed at promoting the autonomy of beneficiaries. PAO also identified unjustified restrictions on freedom of movement and other practices adversely affecting the rights of institutionalised persons.

In addition, the thematic report of the People's Advocate Office entitled "The Impact of the Social Assistance System Reform on the Rights of Vulnerable Persons, Including Children, Asylum Seekers, Beneficiaries of International Protection and Temporary Protection"<sup>54</sup> concludes that, although the reform has resulted in institutional progress, significant disparities continue to exist between urban and rural areas with regard to the availability of and access to social services. The absence of a standardised national minimum package of social services has a disproportionate impact on elderly persons residing in rural communities.

In this context, elderly persons frequently incur additional, and often unforeseen, expenses, which further increase their economic vulnerability. Consequently, the current level of social benefits remains insufficient to ensure a decent standard of living, making additional support measures for elderly persons necessary. The "Help with the Energy Bill" programme continued to provide compensation for energy-related expenses to a large number of citizens; however, shortcomings regarding eligibility criteria and the exclusion of certain households in comparable situations of vulnerability persisted.

**Case examined by the People's Advocate Office.** With a view to improving the mechanism governing the entitlement to free travel on the municipal public transport network for all old-age pensioners lawfully domiciled in the Municipality of Chisinau, irrespective of the State responsible for the payment of their pension, the People's Advocate submitted a proposal to that effect to the Chisinau Municipal Council and to the executive authority. The reply received demonstrated the absence of any intention on the part of the authorities to adopt positive measures in favour of the pensioners concerned, thereby confirming the continuation of the existing practice under which such persons are denied entitlement to free travel on municipal public transport. Furthermore, the local authorities failed to acknowledge that, with regard to elderly persons, individual need constitutes the primary eligibility criterion, without any requirement of affiliation to a social security scheme intended to cover a specific social risk, and without any requirement relating to previous professional activity or the payment of social insurance contributions.

<sup>54</sup> Thematic Report: The Impact of Social Assistance System Reform on the Rights of Vulnerable Persons, Including Children, Asylum Seekers, and Beneficiaries of International Protection and Temporary Protection. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-tematic-impactul-reformei-sistemului-de-asistenta-sociala-asupra-drepturilor-persoanelor-vulnerabile-inclusiv-asupra-copiiilor-solicitantilor-de-azil-beneficiarilor-de-protectie-internationala/>



**Conclusion regarding the possibility of accepting Article 23.** The People's Advocate Office notes that the social protection system for elderly persons has undergone certain improvements in recent years. Pensions were indexed by 6% in 2024, 10% in 2025 and 6.84% in 2026. At the same time, the average old-age pension increased from MDL 2,777.86 (approximately EUR 138) in 2024 to MDL 3,264.66 (approximately EUR 162) in 2026, representing an increase of approximately 17.5%. Nevertheless, the level of pensions remains insufficient to ensure a decent standard of living. In 2025, the average old-age pension amounted to MDL 3,983.85 (approximately EUR 198), remaining below the average monthly consumer expenditure per person, which amounted to MDL 5,122.4 (approximately EUR 254). This demonstrates a significant gap between pension income and the actual cost of living. **In these circumstances, the People's Advocate Office considers that acceptance of Article 23 of the Revised European Social Charter would not be possible at this stage.** Although certain progress has been achieved, shortcomings persist with regard to the adequacy of pensions, gender inequalities and regional disparities in access to social services. Moreover, the information currently available does not permit a comprehensive assessment of compliance with the requirements of Article 23. Accordingly, prior to accepting this provision, further measures are required, including the establishment of a pension indexation mechanism linked to the actual cost of living, as well as the adoption of policies aimed at reducing territorial and gender inequalities.

## Article 27§1 – The right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and equal treatment

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to equality of opportunity and treatment between men and women workers with family responsibilities and between such workers and other workers, the Parties undertake:*

1. *to take appropriate measures:*
  - a. *to enable workers with family responsibilities to enter and remain in employment, as well as to re-enter employment after an absence due to those responsibilities, including measures in the field of vocational guidance and training;*
  - b. *to take account of their needs in terms of conditions of employment and social security;*
  - c. *to develop or promote public or private services, in particular day-care services and other childcare arrangements.*

Although the Republic of Moldova has not accepted Article 27§1 of the Revised European Social Charter, in recent years a number of legislative measures have been adopted which contribute to bringing the national legal framework closer to the standards laid down in this provision.

In this regard, Law No. 46 of 10 March 2022 amending certain normative acts<sup>55</sup> introduced amendments to the Labour Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 154 of 28 March 2003,<sup>56</sup> by

<sup>55</sup> Law No. 46 of March 10, 2022, amending certain legislative acts. Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=130448&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130448&lang=ro)

<sup>56</sup> Labor Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 154 of March 28, 2003. Available at:



supplementing Article 10(1) with subparagraph (c<sup>1</sup>), which provides that: *"The employer has the right to provide employees who have children under the age of 3 with childcare services."* In addition, Article 252<sup>2</sup>, entitled *"Childcare services for children under the age of 3"*, was incorporated into the Labour Code, providing that: *"With a view to ensuring the reconciliation of professional and family life, the employer may provide employees with childcare services for children under the age of 3, in accordance with the regulatory framework approved by the Government."*

These provisions are further reflected in Government Decision No. 572 of 2 August 2023 approving the Regulations on the organisation and operation of alternative childcare services.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, Law No. 367/2022 on Alternative Childcare Services establishes the legal framework governing the establishment, organisation and operation of alternative childcare services for children under the age of 3, as well as certain specific aspects of the legal regime applicable to the initiation and provision of such services within the territory of the Republic of Moldova. These legislative amendments constitute progress in the development of mechanisms for reconciling professional and family life, contributing to the reduction of barriers faced by parents, particularly women, in accessing and remaining in the labour market.

As a result, a project for the development of public nursery services has been launched under the National Programme "Public Nursery Services - Employed Parents, Children in Nurseries". The objective of the programme is to expand nursery services for children under the age of 3, thereby significantly increasing access to early childcare services throughout the country. Early childcare services facilitate the earlier return of mothers to the labour market. In the Republic of Moldova, the employment rate of women with young children aged 0–6 increased from 39.4% in 2019 to 50.7% in 2024. Through the implementation of these projects, 155 new nursery groups are to be established or rehabilitated, benefiting more than 3,100 children. At the same time, these investments are expected to support approximately 6,000 parents, enabling them to return to or remain active in the labour market and to continue their professional development.<sup>58</sup>

Nevertheless, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, in 2024 the employment rate of women stood at 40.0%, compared with 45.9% for men, representing a gender employment gap of 5.9 percentage points. Furthermore, the employment rate of women aged 25-49 with at least one child under the age of 16 was 60.8%, compared with 62.7% for women without children, illustrating the impact of family responsibilities on women's participation in the labour market. This situation is also reflected in the reasons for economic inactivity, with family responsibilities constituting the principal cause of economic inactivity for every second woman aged 25-54 (51.9% of all economically inactive women in this age group), whereas only 2.1% of men in the same age category reported this reason.<sup>59</sup>

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[https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=151096&lang=ro#](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=151096&lang=ro#)

<sup>57</sup> Decision No. 572 of August 2, 2023, approving the Regulations on the organization and operation of alternative child care services. Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=139046&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=139046&lang=ro)

<sup>58</sup> Results of the call for projects to develop public daycare services in the country, under the National Program "Public Daycare Services—Working Parents, Children in Daycare," 3rd edition. Available at: <https://social.gov.md/comunicare/comunicate/rezultatele-apelului-de-proiecte-pentru-dezvoltarea-serviciilor-publice-de-cresa-din-tara-in-cadrul-programului-national-servicii-de-cresere-publice-parinti-angajati-copii-la-cresere/>

<sup>59</sup> National Bureau of Statistics. Statistical Profile of Women and Men in the Republic of Moldova. Available at: <https://statistica.gov.md/ro/portretul-statistic-al-femeilor-si-barbatilor-in-republica-moldova->



In addition, the legislation of the Republic of Moldova provides parental rights for both women and men, including paternity leave, the possibility for either parent to take childcare leave, and protection against discrimination on the grounds of sex and family status. These measures reflect a trend towards a more equitable sharing of family responsibilities between women and men. According to data provided by the National Social Insurance House<sup>60</sup>, the beneficiaries of family benefits for children during the reference period up to 1 October 2025 are as follows:

- 24,394 beneficiaries received the lump-sum childbirth allowance (including 24,391 women and 3 men) for 24,757 children;
- 24,566 beneficiaries received the childcare allowance until the child reaches the age of 3 (including 18,304 women and 6,262 men) for 25,541 children;
- 1,418 beneficiaries received the monthly support allowance for raising twins or multiple children born from a single pregnancy, applicable to both insured and uninsured persons (including 1,378 women and 40 men) for 3,096 children.

Furthermore, in order to support persons with family responsibilities, the Labour Code of the Republic of Moldova was amended by Law No. 195 of 14 July 2022 amending certain normative acts. Article 1 was supplemented with the definition of "flexible working arrangements", defined as "*working arrangements enabling employees to adapt their working schedule, including through telework, home-based work, flexible working schedules, part-time work or compressed working weeks.*" In addition, Article 100<sup>1</sup> on Flexible Working Arrangements was introduced, providing that:

*"(1) Flexible working arrangements shall be established by agreement between the employee and the employer, at the request of either the employee or the employer, both at the time of recruitment and after the conclusion of the individual employment contract, for a fixed or indefinite period.*

*(2) Flexible working arrangements shall be specified in the individual employment contract or in an addendum thereto.*

*(3) Employment under flexible working arrangements shall not affect the employee's rights and guarantees concerning the calculation of length of service, the duration of annual paid leave, or any other employment-related rights provided for by this Code."*

**Conclusion regarding the acceptance of Article 27§1.** The People's Advocate Office recommends the acceptance of this provision. The recommendation is based on the fact that the legislative framework of the Republic of Moldova has been substantially aligned with the requirements of Article 27§1, including the regulation of telework and other flexible working arrangements, the establishment of a legal framework for family-type nursery services, and the provision of parental leave rights for both parents.

[9617\\_62343.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawQYzThleHRuA2FibQIxMABicmlkETFJSmZCT01ZWVFFTjRSUzFWc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlYMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHobY4SmWhpS9hrC5STHD0ddQkEXX5ekqYOEKfcqSGqefKEql2F3ydf2Rsa3t\\_aem\\_J5zli22ituj\\_YWHY9wrkX\\_A](https://old.cnas.gov.md/doc.php?l=ro&idc=244&id=7282&t=/Statistica/Informatia-privind-beneficiarii-de-pensii-alocatii-sociale-si-indemnizatii-adresate-familiiilor-cu-copii-aflati-la-evidenta-CNAS-la-situatia-01102025)

<sup>60</sup> Information on recipients of pensions, social allowances, and benefits for families with children, as recorded by the National Health Insurance House (CNAS) as of October 1, 2025. Available at: <https://old.cnas.gov.md/doc.php?l=ro&idc=244&id=7282&t=/Statistica/Informatia-privind-beneficiarii-de-pensii-alocatii-sociale-si-indemnizatii-adresate-familiiilor-cu-copii-aflati-la-evidenta-CNAS-la-situatia-01102025>



## Article 30 The right to protection against poverty and social exclusion

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion, the Parties undertake:*

- a. to take measures within the framework of an overall and coordinated approach to promote the effective access of persons who live or risk living in a situation of social exclusion or poverty, as well as their families, in particular to employment, housing, training, education, culture, and social and medical assistance;*
- b. to review these measures, where necessary, with a view to their adaptation.*

In the report submitted by the State under the reporting procedure concerning the non-accepted provisions of the Revised European Social Charter, the authorities of the Republic of Moldova highlighted the reforms undertaken in the field of social protection, the measures aimed at reducing social vulnerability, and the policies designed to support families with children. The State referred to the existence of various social benefits, support programmes and assistance measures for persons in vulnerable situations, as well as to recent reforms in the field of social assistance. In this context, the State report also addresses developments in the labour market, highlighting positive trends such as the increase in labour force participation and employment rates among persons aged 15 years and over, as well as the reduction in unemployment rates, including among persons aged 20-64 and young people aged 15-24. These data demonstrate both progress in increasing employment and the persistence of inequalities based on age, sex and place of residence, which are relevant for assessing policies aimed at reducing poverty and social exclusion.

The State report further presents data indicating a significant decrease in the number of social assistance beneficiaries, from 46,946 persons in March 2023 to 14,086 persons in December 2025, reflecting a reduction in dependence on social assistance. Correspondingly, the proportion of beneficiaries registered as unemployed decreased from 23% in April 2023 (10,503 persons) to 8% in October 2025 (1,009 persons), indicating a decline in unemployment among the working-age population. Budgetary developments demonstrate a more efficient use of public resources, with expenditure amounting to MDL 705.2 million (approximately EUR 35.5 million) in 2023 and MDL 479.6 million (approximately EUR 35.5 million) in 2025, of which 87.8% was allocated to families with children. At the same time, the average amount of the social benefit increased substantially, from MDL 868 (approximately EUR 43) in 2019 to MDL 2,807 (approximately EUR 140) in 2025 at national level, while for families with children it increased from MDL 1,583 (approximately EUR 79) in 2019 to MDL 5,001 (approximately EUR 249) in 2025, reflecting strengthened financial protection. The profile of beneficiaries in 2025 indicates that 73% resided in rural areas, while 51% were families with children, 33% were households including persons aged 62 years and over, and 46% included persons with disabilities, demonstrating the targeted nature of these benefits towards socially vulnerable groups. Overall, these developments indicate that public policies have increasingly focused on promoting labour market activation and reducing dependency on social assistance, while strengthening support for categories exposed to the risk of poverty and social exclusion.



However, according to data published by the National Bureau of Statistics, the absolute poverty rate in the Republic of Moldova was 31.1% in 2025. The data further reveal considerable territorial disparities, with an absolute poverty rate of 21.1% in urban areas and 40.0% in rural areas.<sup>61</sup> Compared with 2024, when the absolute poverty rate stood at 33.6%, this represents a slight reduction. According to disaggregated data for 2024, the absolute poverty rate was 42.9% in rural areas and 10.0% in urban areas.<sup>62</sup>

In the 2025 Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova,<sup>63</sup> the Children's Ombudsman noted that child poverty in the Republic of Moldova remains high. The absolute poverty rate among children reached 33.6%, representing an increase of 3.4 percentage points compared with 2023. Children living in rural areas remain at significantly greater risk of poverty than those living in urban areas. In 2024, the absolute poverty rate among children in rural areas was 46.6%, compared with 18.6% among children in urban areas.<sup>64</sup>

In 2025, the multidimensional child poverty rate was 31.4%. The data for 2025 are not directly comparable with those for 2023 and 2024, as they are based on different methodologies. For 2023 and 2024, the indicator reflects the absolute poverty rate, calculated on the basis of household consumption in relation to the absolute poverty threshold. By contrast, the 2025 indicator measures multidimensional child poverty, simultaneously taking into account several dimensions of well-being and deprivation, including housing conditions, education, access to services, health and other relevant aspects.

In this regard, the Child Ombudsman welcomed the initiation of the drafting process of the National Child Protection Programme 2027-2030, the purpose of which is to implement the European Child Guarantee, an undertaking assumed by the Republic of Moldova in accordance with Action No. 33 of Annex A to Chapter 19 of the National Programme for Accession to the European Union 2025-2029.

The objective of the European Child Guarantee (Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004) is to prevent and combat social exclusion by guaranteeing children in need effective access to a set of essential services, thereby supporting children's rights through the reduction of child poverty and the promotion of equal opportunities. The essential services covered by the Child Guarantee include:

- free early childhood education and care;
- free education, including school-based activities and at least one healthy meal on each school day;
- free healthcare;
- healthy nutrition;

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<sup>61</sup> Absolute Poverty Indicators by Region, Indicator, and Year Table: Absolute Poverty Indicators by Region, 2025. Available at: [https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala\\_04%20NIV\\_NIV070\\_NIV0710/NIV070100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/](https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala_04%20NIV_NIV070_NIV0710/NIV070100.px/table/tableViewLayout2/)

<sup>62</sup> National Bureau of Statistics. Multidimensional Poverty in the Republic of Moldova in 2024. Available at: [https://statistica.gov.md/ro/saracia-multidimensionala-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2024-10102\\_61803.html](https://statistica.gov.md/ro/saracia-multidimensionala-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2024-10102_61803.html)

<sup>63</sup> Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova in 2025. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-anual-privind-respectarea-drepturilor-si-libertatilor-omului-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2025/>

<sup>64</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, The Situation of Children in the Republic of Moldova in 2024. Available at: [https://statistica.gov.md/ro/situatia-copiiilor-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2024-9578\\_61802.html](https://statistica.gov.md/ro/situatia-copiiilor-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2024-9578_61802.html)



- adequate housing.

For the implementation of the European Child Guarantee, the following categories of children have been identified as beneficiaries of the National Child Protection Programme 2027-2030:

1. children with disabilities and mental health conditions;
2. children from migrant backgrounds or belonging to ethnic minorities, in particular Roma children;
3. children placed in alternative care services;
4. children living in disadvantaged family environments or situations of risk;
5. children at risk of offending or in conflict with the law.

In the context of the protection and support of vulnerable groups, particular attention should be paid to the situation of persons residing in the Transnistrian region. The People's Advocate noted that these persons continue to face multiple vulnerabilities, including an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion, as well as limited access to certain essential services. Consequently, in the 2025 Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova<sup>65</sup>, the People's Advocate **recommended the establishment of specific social protection mechanisms for vulnerable groups residing in the transnistrian region**. At the same time, the Ombudsman observed that, during 2025, certain progress was recorded in a number of areas within the Transnistrian region.

***The Right to Social Assistance and Social Protection.*** During 2025, citizens of the Republic of Moldova residing in the Transnistrian region received social benefits to MDL 138.53 million, financed from the State Social Insurance Budget. The total value of payments increased by approximately MDL 40 million (+40.7%) compared with 2024, when the total amounted to MDL 98.45 million. The number of beneficiaries also increased significantly, by approximately 213.6%. Thus, in 2025, 10,134 persons received social benefits, compared with 3,231 persons in 2024.

The principal categories of benefits granted in 2025 included:

- 4,624 monthly childcare allowances (4,149 for children up to the age of 2 and 475 for children up to the age of 3);
- 1,891 lump-sum childbirth allowances;
- 1,169 old-age pensions;
- 1,155 temporary incapacity for work benefits;
- 514 monthly State allowances for war veterans (pursuant to Law No. 317 of 26 December 2024);
- 185 maternity benefits; and other social benefits.

The most significant increases were recorded in the area of family and child protection. The number of lump-sum childbirth allowances increased from 284 in 2024 to 1,891 in 2025, while

<sup>65</sup> Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova in 2025. Pages 108-109. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-anual-privind-respectarea-drepturilor-si-libertatilor-omului-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2025/>



the number of childcare allowances for children up to the age of 2 increased from 615 beneficiaries in 2024 to 4,149 beneficiaries in 2025.<sup>66</sup>

Notwithstanding these developments, during 2025 the People's Advocate Office continued to receive complaints from citizens residing in the transnistrian region concerning the refusal of the National Social Insurance House (NSIH) to reinstate their pensions, despite the fact that they fulfilled all the legal requirements. The refusals were based on Article 31 par.(2) of Law No. 156 of 14 October 1998 on the Public Pension System, which requires insured persons to apply to the territorial social insurance authority corresponding to their place of residence, where they must be mandatorily registered.

**Conclusion regarding the acceptance of Article 30:** The Office of the Ombudsman considers that the acceptance of Article 30 is possible, provided that additional measures are implemented to ensure the effective reduction of poverty and social exclusion, with particular emphasis on the situation of children and residents of the transnistrian region, categories still exposed to increased risks of social vulnerability. In this regard, it is necessary to adopt a coordinated national poverty reduction plan, with clear objectives and measurable indicators, including ensuring effective access to social benefits for citizens of the Transnistrian region, strengthening the financing of community social services and reducing disparities between urban and rural areas in access to services. With reference to ensuring children's rights, we note that there is progress in collecting and analyzing data on their situation, but there remains a need to develop indicators that allow for the effective monitoring of poverty and social exclusion at a multidimensional level.

## Article 31§1 – The right to housing *(to promote access to housing of an adequate standard)*

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to housing, the Parties undertake to take measures designed:*

- 1. to promote access to housing of an adequate standard.*

The People's Advocate Office notes that access to adequate housing remains a major challenge in the Republic of Moldova. Although Law No. 75 of 30 April 2015 on Housing recognises the right to housing and establishes the legal framework for the development of social housing, the effective implementation of these provisions at local level remains insufficient.

At the same time, young persons leaving residential care institutions receive support through the "Assisted Social Housing" Social Service, established pursuant to Government Decision No. 787 of 23 December 2025 approving the Framework Regulation on the Organisation and

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<sup>66</sup> Over 138 million lei will be provided in 2025 as social benefits to citizens of the Republic of Moldova residing in the Transnistrian region. Available at: <https://gov.md/ro/comunicate-de-presa-bpr/peste-138-milioane-de-lei-oferite-anul-2025-cu-titlu-de-prestatii-sociale>



By Order of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) No. 117 of 31 May 2024,<sup>68</sup> minimum quality standards applicable to Temporary Accommodation Centres for Displaced Persons were introduced. The most relevant standards concerning infrastructure and living conditions include Standard 9, which provides that *"the Centre shall be located in a safe and accessible area, in proximity to essential services (healthcare, education and transport). The buildings shall ensure adequate conditions, including natural lighting, the absence of dampness, outdoor spaces, and access to telephone and internet services."* Standard 10 provides that *"service providers shall ensure a safe internal environment adapted to the needs of beneficiaries, equipped with functional facilities (bedrooms, sanitary facilities, kitchen, dining room and recreational areas), with particular regard to persons with disabilities, older persons and children."* Standard 11 requires that *"Centres shall have a sufficient number of functional and accessible sanitary facilities, equipped with basic amenities and ensuring privacy and safety."* Standard 13 further provides that *"each beneficiary shall be allocated a personal living space that complies with the requirements of comfort, privacy and hygiene, while sleeping areas shall be adequately ventilated and safe."*

Following the introduction of these standards, external assessments and monitoring visits revealed significant disparities among centres. The deficiencies identified include inadequate and overcrowded premises, insufficient or deteriorated sanitary facilities, limited accessibility for persons with disabilities, inadequate food-related infrastructure, and the absence of sustainable accommodation solutions. Many centres continue to operate in buildings that have not been adapted for this purpose, while certain facilities have been found to be incompatible with the social function of accommodation centres.

An assessment conducted by the Regional Refugee Response Platform for the Ukraine Situation (*Regional Accommodation Centres Assessment - Final Report 2024*)<sup>69</sup> examined the infrastructure and living conditions in 28 accommodation centres. The findings indicate that, overall, living conditions were relatively satisfactory. Nevertheless, several shortcomings were identified, including the accommodation of multiple families in shared sleeping rooms, deteriorated or insufficient sanitary facilities, limited accessibility for persons with reduced mobility, and the limited involvement of beneficiaries in the maintenance of the premises.

Similar findings were reflected in the thematic report of the People's Advocate Office entitled *"Respect for Human Rights in Temporary Accommodation Centres for Persons Displaced from the Territory of Other States: Developments in Accommodation Policies and Practices during the Period 2022–2025"*, as well as during monitoring visits conducted between 2022 and the first quarter of 2025.<sup>70</sup> These assessments identified centres operating in buildings with

<sup>67</sup> Government Decision No. 787 of December 23, 2025, approving the Framework Regulation on the Organization and Operation of the "Assisted Social Housing" Social Service and the Minimum Quality Standards. Available at: [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=152253&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=152253&lang=ro)

<sup>68</sup> MLSP Order No. 117 of May 31, 2024. Available at: <https://social.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Ordin-nr.-117-din-31.05.2024-.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> RAC Summary Report 2023–2024. The Situation in Ukraine–Moldova: Summary Report on Refugee Accommodation Centers 2023–2024 (ENG). Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116780?utm>

<sup>70</sup> Thematic Report: Respect for Human Rights in Temporary Shelter Centers for People Displaced from Other Countries. Trends in Accommodation Policies and Practices, 2022–2025. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport->



deteriorated infrastructure requiring major repairs, as well as improvised accommodation facilities established in premises not intended for the provision of social services, including student dormitories, hospitals and kindergartens. In certain cases, serious situations of functional incompatibility were identified, including accommodation centres operating within hospital premises. For example, the accommodation of refugees in the Phthisiopneumology Hospital in Chisinau prompted direct intervention by the People's Advocate, who called for the immediate discontinuation of the use of those premises for refugee accommodation. Furthermore, access to sanitary and hygiene facilities varies considerably among centres. While certain centres provide adequate conditions, others continue to exhibit serious shortcomings, including non-functional shower facilities, a lack of privacy and limited access to hot water.

**In conclusion**, although progress has been achieved at the normative level and certain centres comply with the minimum quality standards, disparities between accommodation centres, the temporary nature of many facilities, and the lack of sustainable investment continue to undermine the effective enjoyment of the right to adequate housing. Acceptance of this provision would be possible; however, it requires the adoption of a comprehensive national strategy providing for dedicated investments, the modernisation of infrastructure, and the consistent implementation of minimum quality standards in order to guarantee decent living conditions for all beneficiaries.

## Article 31§2 – The right to housing (to prevent and reduce homelessness)

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to housing, the Parties undertake to take measures designed:*

*2. to prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination.*

In the 2025 Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova,<sup>71</sup> the People's Advocate noted that there are eight residential institutions, redesignated as Temporary Placement Centres for Persons with Disabilities (TPCPDs), operating under the management and coordination of the Agency for the Management of Highly Specialised Social Services (AMHSSS).<sup>72</sup> The institutions responsible for the placement and care of persons with disabilities include the Placement Centre for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (CPEPPD) Chisinau, Placement Centre for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (CPVPD) Cocieri, Temporary Placement Centre for Persons with Disabilities (TPCPD) Cocieri, TPCPD Badiceni, TPCPD Balti, TPCPD Brinzeni, TPCPD Orhei, and TPCPD Hincesti.

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<sup>71</sup> Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova in 2025. p. 259. Available at: <https://ombudsman.md/post-document/raport-anual-privind-respectarea-drepturilor-si-libertatilor-omului-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2025/>

<sup>72</sup> Map of Social Services in the Republic of Moldova. Available at: <https://agssi.md/harta-serviciilor-sociale/servicii-de-plasament-adulti/#a1>



As a result of the deinstitutionalisation process (the process through which persons with disabilities are transferred from residential institutions to community-based services or protected housing in order to promote their social inclusion and autonomy), the residential institutions which, until 2023, had exclusively accommodated minors-girls at the TPCPD Hîncești and boys at the TPCPD Orhei-were redesignated and reorganised in accordance with actual needs. Under the new regulatory framework, these centres now provide care and assistance to persons over the age of 18. These amendments were prompted by the fact that approximately 90% of the residents had reached the age of majority.

It should be recalled that General Objective No. 6 of the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030" provides for the establishment of a robust and inclusive social protection system aimed at reducing poverty, decreasing inequalities, and ensuring equal opportunities for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities.<sup>73</sup> In this context, the authorities have undertaken to implement major structural reforms, including the "RESTART" social assistance reform, the digitalisation of social services, and the acceleration of the deinstitutionalisation process through the development of community-based services such as Community Houses and Protected Housing. Nevertheless, although the implementation period established by the authorities for these latter objectives covers 2025-2027, significant delays in achieving the envisaged results persisted as of 2025 (beginning of 2026).

At the same time, in 2025, the situation of persons accommodated in the Temporary Placement Centres for Persons Displaced from the Territory of Other States (TPCPDs) was characterised by a reduction in institutional accommodation capacity following the implementation of the so-called "EXIT Strategy", which aimed to facilitate the transition from collective accommodation to alternative community-based housing solutions. The number of operational centres decreased to 18, compared with 93 centres in 2022, while the number of persons accommodated in these centres declined to approximately 1,000, representing only a small proportion of all beneficiaries of temporary protection. Although this development reflects a structural shift in the response model, the absence of sufficiently developed alternative housing solutions gives rise to risks regarding the continuity of protection for persons who do not have access to stable accommodation alternatives.

The assessment carried out by the People's Advocate Office highlights considerable disparities in living conditions and admission procedures among the Temporary Placement Centres for Persons Displaced from the Territory of Other States. Differences between centres with regard to infrastructure, overcrowding, accessibility for persons with disabilities and compliance with minimum accommodation standards may result in unequal treatment and adversely affect the right to an adequate standard of living. Admission procedures and the procedures governing the termination of accommodation remain characterised by a lack of clarity and by inconsistent administrative practices, including the use of informal referral mechanisms for accommodation. This reduces the transparency and predictability of access to services, particularly for persons in situations of vulnerability.

From the perspective of financing and sustainability, the centres continue to rely predominantly on external financial assistance, in particular from the United Nations High Commissioner for

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<sup>73</sup> Moldova 2030 National Development Strategy. Available at: [Moldova 2030 National Development Strategy | Particip.gov.md](https://particip.gov.md)  
People's Advocate Office  
11/3 Calea Ieșilor str  
Chisinau municipality, MD-2069  
Republic of Moldova



Refugees (UNHCR Moldova) and other international partners, in the absence of a clear and predictable national budgetary framework. Such dependence creates structural risks for the post-2025 period, including the risk of further reductions in the number of centres or their closure, repeated relocations of beneficiaries, and the absence of durable housing solutions. These risks disproportionately affect vulnerable persons, including children, older persons, persons with disabilities and women, for whom the loss of access to accommodation may result in social exclusion, housing insecurity and deterioration of their health status. In this context, there is a need to develop an integrated and sustainable approach to the housing of beneficiaries of temporary protection, ensuring continuity of protection under State responsibility and guaranteeing the effective enjoyment of fundamental rights beyond temporary institutional accommodation.

Another problem identified by the Ombudsman concerns the lack of sufficient support mechanisms for access to housing for vulnerable groups. In particular, people leaving the transnistrian region and settling in the territory controlled by the constitutional authorities face difficulties in finding housing and integrating into the community. At the same time, people released from prison receive limited support in securing housing and in the process of social reintegration, which increases the risk of social exclusion.

**Conclusion** regarding the acceptance of Article 31§2: The People's Advocate Office considers that acceptance of this provision appears possible. Nevertheless, the Republic of Moldova should strengthen the mechanisms for preventing homelessness through the development of durable housing solutions, the maintenance of a functional network of temporary placement centres, and the establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms capable of reducing dependence on external assistance.