



Executive summary

The international review of youth policy in Moldova is part of the Council of Europe's series of youth policy reviews; Moldova is the 16th country to have been reviewed since 1997. The report is thus based on the experience gained from the previous reviews undertaken in several countries in both eastern and western Europe, including one country from the Commonwealth of Independent States (Armenia). Since these reviews were published they have, over the past decade, become an important part of the body of knowledge that is needed in order to further develop the thinking behind youth policy in an evidence-based and informed way and to develop implementation strategies for the policy. Two synthesis reports, prepared after the seventh and 14th reviews respectively, highlighted both common topics and significant differences in the thinking behind and approaches to national youth policy in Europe (see Williamson 2002; 2008). The review process consists of the production of a national report, followed by an international report prepared by a delegation of experts on the basis of two visits to the country. The first visit to Moldova took place in June 2008, when the team visited the capital city and areas outside of Chişinău. The second visit took place in November 2008. It included contact with youth policy actors in some southern and western regions situated a considerable distance from the capital, as well as some in Chişinău itself.

This report is based on a cross-sectoral understanding of youth policy. The focus lies on youth policy structures, youth education (formal and especially non-formal), youth transition to the labour market and entrepreneurship. There is also an overview of policy related to social security (health and social protection, childcare), youth justice and sport, while the areas of values and religion, leisure time, housing and military service have been dealt with in less detail or omitted altogether. In terms of transversal issues, attention has been paid to migration, urban–rural division and the Transnistria issue. A special chapter is dedicated to cross-cutting issues (youth information, youth participation, and social inclusion).

It is important to mention some particularities related to Moldova as an independent state.

First, the Republic of Moldova is a member state of the Council of Europe. Therefore, all the recommendations resulting from the research and observation undertaken by the international team can be of significant value for the Moldovan



Government, which is striving for good and productive relationships with other Council of Europe countries. It also means that all the decisions taken by the Council of Europe in the sphere of youth policy are of relevance for Moldova's commitment to the development of its own youth policy.

Second, 2008 was proclaimed as the "Year of Youth" in Moldova by Presidential Decree No. 1451-IV on 26 December 2007.¹ The government therefore established a special programme of youth activities for 2008 and invited the Council of Europe team to share their European experience and contribute to the improvement of the youth policy in the country. Indeed, the younger generation represents hope and great potential for the future of Moldova; investing in youth means securing the very existence of the country. Youth policy is undoubtedly viewed by the Government of the Republic of Moldova as one of the most important governmental activities. It has visible strategic importance because of the extremely difficult situation in respect of migration. If the government fails to create the appropriate legal, economic and social conditions and to provide secure foundations for the all-round development of young people, the country is likely to remain "the poorest in Europe", as it is often depicted, for a long time to come. That is why providing youth with the values that are common to the younger generation in other European countries can literally help to safeguard and enhance the future of the Republic of Moldova.

Third, in 2009 Moldova is to hold both parliamentary and presidential elections. It is therefore important for the country to receive support from the Council of Europe to ensure that the direction of policy making selected by the Moldovan Government in respect of youth is reasonably on track, purposeful and effective (the team tried to check whether this was indeed the case, and in what respects). The international review team (IRT) was not, however, conducting the review to "rubber stamp" current orientations and developments in Moldovan youth policy. It is quite possible that some critical remarks made by the international team will not be welcome. However, it is part of the mission of the IRT to identify the controversial issues in the process of youth policy implementation in Moldova and to openly discuss them with the interested parties.

Fourth, the Republic of Moldova is not yet on the shortlist of countries to be accepted as candidates for the European Union (EU), but it is fully committed to achieving the goals and prerequisites necessary for European integration. Some recommendations can therefore be viewed as supporting that aim for the future and not necessarily as urgent or immediate priorities for youth policy. Moldova is already open to both EU and Council of Europe initiatives related to its youth policy. That is why the international report on the youth policy in Moldova initiated by the Moldovan Government will show both the Moldovan authorities and representatives of the EU how far Moldova is pursuing a European youth agenda and how successfully the government is implementing programmes and plans similar to those already adopted by its European neighbours.

1. This detail was provided by the Ministry of Education and Youth as part of its response to the final draft of the international report.

There were several steps leading up to the international review of youth policy in Moldova. First, the Council of Europe (Directorate of Youth and Sport) was asked by the Ministry of Education and Youth (MEY) of the Republic of Moldova to establish an “advisory mission” to Chişinău. An advisory mission undertaken by the Directorate of Youth and Sport within the Council of Europe is a confidential arrangement between the inviting ministry and a team assembled by the Council of Europe. The mission had a very specific focus and function: to advise on the issue within a short space of time in order to assist the inviting ministry to clarify its “direction of travel” and to move with more confidence in that direction. The advisory mission took place from 5-7 December 2007. This mission also served as a preparatory visit for the Council of Europe international review, by agreeing some of the youth policy priorities that should be focused on during the review itself. The focus of the advisory mission was specifically on out-of-school learning and development; recommendations on that issue were made to the MEY before the end of 2007.

Second, the Ministry of Education and Youth prepared a draft national report on youth policy, which was distributed in early June 2008. This text is used extensively in the international report as one of the main sources of official information related to youth policy and its implementation in Moldova.

Third, the IRT, made up of five team members, was assembled by the Directorate of Youth and Sport within the Council of Europe. The first trip to Moldova took place from 9-14 June 2008. Some important issues were covered during the first visit, while further issues were addressed during the second visit from 3-7 November 2008. During these visits, several important meetings with key governmental and non-governmental institutions concerned with youth policy, as well as with youth practitioners and young people, were held in Chişinău, Ungheni, Comrat and other smaller cities and villages.

In addition to the National Report, several official and non-official documents on youth policy were provided for the team (leaflets and brochures, handouts, protocols of meetings, and specially prepared information from several ministries, such as the Ministry of Education and Youth, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child, and the Ministry of Health). The rest of the information was acquired by the team members through observation, interviews, websites and visits to the local and national organisations connected with the issue.

Overall, the main sources of information for this report included the following:

- the draft national report on youth policy in Moldova prepared by the Ministry of Education and Youth;
- two one-week visits to Moldova by the international review team in June and November 2008;
- a complete protocol of the meetings and discussions of the IRT during the two country visits;



- documents and handouts provided by the Moldovan authorities and partners during the review process;
- official websites of the Republic of Moldova and other Internet sources;
- research findings of an INTAS² project on Moldovan youth run by the Independent Sociology and Information Service “Opinia”, under the direction of Professor P. Abbot and presented to the MEY in November 2008 during the meeting with the IRT; and
- additional documents and sources consulted in the course of the preparation of the international review.

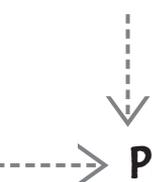
All the above-mentioned sources made it possible to produce an overview of the current state of the youth policy and to provide some recommendations for the particular organisations involved in the implementation of youth policy in Moldova. These recommendations were presented at a national hearing in Chişinău on 5 February 2009 and led to a vigorous discussion. The feedback from key stakeholders in youth policy, together with a more formal response from the Ministry of Education and Youth, has been incorporated by way of footnotes in this text.

The dedication and involvement of the Moldovan partners, the openness of the Moldovan youth workers and effectiveness of their presentations, as well as their hospitality and generosity, were crucial to the review process. The IRT wants to express its gratitude to all the parties and individuals involved.

The IRT also expresses its sincere thanks to the staff of the Ministry of Education and Youth: its careful work and devotion helped the team a great deal in learning about the situation of youth in Moldova, and it helped by arranging several visits and meetings with youth activists. Special thanks are expressed to the Minister, Ms Şavga, whose support, involvement and hospitality also helped the IRT to learn about Moldova and its younger generation.

2. The International Association for the promotion of cooperation with scientists from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union (NIS).





Preface

The framework of youth policy used in this report has its foundations in two books: volumes 1 and 2 of *Supporting Young People in Europe* by Howard Williamson (Williamson 2002; 2008). According to these texts, youth policy includes (but is not restricted to) such policy domains as education, training and employment, health, values and religion, leisure and culture, military service, youth justice, family policy and childcare.

As for the Report on Youth Policy in the Republic of Moldova (2008),³ for the time being, the term “youth policy” lacks a clear definition in this document. At the same time, there is an operational understanding of youth policy that makes it possible to elaborate the policy and then deliver it to the youth. In many cases, the National Report refers to the youth policy as the “state policy in the youth field” and describes this policy as “a system of measures for ensuring the social, economic, political and juridical-social guarantees for the development of a multilateral developed personality” (National Report, p. 24).

The legal system for the youth policy in Moldova has been developed during the last decade and has made it possible to orient the national youth policy of Moldova to the standards that have been defined in European documents.

The National Report (p. 13) also defines the National Youth Strategy that helps to construct a precise view of the youth policy in Moldova.

The National Youth Strategy foresees the development of young people’s capacities to understand and make use of their rights, the adoption of an institutional framework for improving participation of young people in all social processes, as well as the creation of a favourable environment for the development and affirmation of young people.

The strategy establishes the following priorities for the youth sector:

1. Access of young people to information and services;
2. Increased participation of young people in public life and active citizenship;

3. This report is referred to as the National Report elsewhere in the text.



3. Opportunities for employment of young people;
4. Development of human and institutional capacities in the youth field.

In this international report, the IRT will make use of the above-mentioned documentary information in order to compare the officially constructed model of youth policy in Moldova (as presented in the legal and other official documents) with the empirical implementation of the youth policy as observed during its visits. The IRT will also consider to what extent the Moldovan youth policy matches the “European standards” of youth policy, which was one of the declared aspirations of the Moldovan officials in the youth field.





Methodology

The Council of Europe established an embryonic process for reviewing national youth policy over a decade ago. Finland was the first country to volunteer for the process. Since then the process has been refined but the initial objectives have remained the same. These are the following (Reiter et al. 2008, p. 5):

- to provide an external reflection on a country’s youth policy;
- to offer ideas from that country to the other member states of the Council of Europe;
- to build a framework for thinking about youth policy across Europe.

The methodology of the reviews is as follows (after a country has requested that such a review takes place):

- a preparatory visit to establish key issues and priorities;
- the composition of an international review team, usually comprising three youth researchers (one of whom is designated as rapporteur), one representative from each of the statutory bodies of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe (the CDEJ, composed of senior officials in the youth field from member governments, and the Advisory Council on Youth, which represents non-governmental youth organisations) and a member of the Secretariat;
- the production of a national report on youth policy by the country concerned;
- a first visit by the international review team – usually focused on the central administration and youth policy objectives and aspirations;
- a second visit by the international review team – usually involving visits beyond the capital city and exploring issues of youth policy implementation and practice;
- the preparation of a draft international report;
- a national hearing in the country concerned;
- the completion of the international report;



- an international hearing before the Joint Council on Youth of the Council of Europe;
- a follow-up meeting with the country concerned, ideally taking place about two years later.

The process is public and transparent. Both the objectives and the nature of the review process have been defined and elaborated in a number of publications (for further details see Williamson 2002; 2008).

However, depending on the particular country and its priorities in the area of youth policy, as well as on other contextual conditions (such as the level of economic development of the country and the amount of finance the government can invest in youth policy, the political status of the country, the relationship between the national government and the European structures), the focus of the review can be more on the issues that indicate the achievements of a particular country in the sphere of youth policy or, on the contrary, on some concerns about a proper understanding of the goals of youth policy at a national level.





Research for and structure of the report

Many domains of the Moldovan youth policy can be viewed as key ones. In this report we mainly followed the grid of youth policy domains as defined by Howard Williamson (2008, pp. 22-28): education, training and employment, health, values and religion, leisure and culture, family and childcare, housing, and youth justice. During our work in Moldova, the IRT members tried to cover as many spheres as possible within the above-mentioned youth policy framework. In cases when the information was not available to the IRT, our understanding was consequently minimal, and therefore these domains are only briefly discussed in this report. For these reasons there are no special sub-chapters on religion, housing, military service or youth justice; these issues are only mentioned briefly in other parts of the report.

At the beginning of the discussion of each issue, the report describes the information on the particular domain that was received from Moldovan sources during the IRT's two visits. The analysis that follows the description indicates the IRT's views: those actions and events that can be considered as being successful and going in the right direction within the framework of the European concept of youth policy; those actions that are only the starting points for further development; and those activities that are currently missing but that arguably need to be introduced. On the basis of such analysis, the international review team makes recommendations suggesting further directions for development and – where necessary – the introduction and/or improvement of actions in several domains of youth policy.

It is clear that not all domains of youth policy have equal importance for the country. During the complex modernisation of Moldova's youth policy during Youth Year, some domains were selected as having priority. These issues are directly related to the general process of reform in several spheres of the national economy and culture (including education), with the goal of adjusting them to the market. Education-related issues that are affected by the Moldovan transition to the market are also the crucial ones in terms of youth policy. However, many aspects of this transition (such as changes in non-formal education, vocational training, or in the distribution of information on an equal basis in a diverse environment) are not yet entirely clear. Officials from the different ministries expressed their understanding that, regardless of what has been already accomplished, Moldova

needs to pay more attention to teaching styles, place stronger emphasis on information systems, and make a serious appraisal of the role of non-formal education in the learning pathways of its young people. Within the labour market, the current focus on enterprise support is also worthy of further development.

- The main priority areas in youth policy development were indicated in the draft national report of the Republic of Moldova as follows (National Report, pp. 24, 27, 28, 33-37): (a) vocational education; (b) youth employment; (c) non-formal education; (d) voluntary work; (e) capacity building; (f) access to information; and (g) participation.

Some of these key priorities were indeed central themes in the European Commission's White Paper on "A new impetus for European youth" (COM(2001) 681 final) – information, participation, voluntary service and better knowledge about youth – while the others reflect the new challenges related to the market transition of the country and the necessity to adjust to the new conditions.

Additionally, the Moldovan officials focused their attention on three issues of paramount importance for the economic survival of the country during the transition period:

- transition to the labour market;
- entrepreneurship; and
- non-formal learning.

The international report therefore pays particular attention to these aspects of youth policy development and implementation in Moldova. They are considered to be essential prerequisites when attempting to ameliorate contemporary youth challenges for Moldova, such as emigration, trafficking, widespread social exclusion and health risk behaviour.

The structure of this report consists of general information on the situation in Moldova and the conditions provided by the Moldovan Government for its young generation. The legal basis for the youth policy in the Republic of Moldova is also discussed and the key spheres for the selected youth policy are then described. Next, we analyse the youth organisations that exist in Moldova and that contribute to the implementation of youth policy there.

Some attention is then paid to issues of particular importance in the existing social and economic conditions and which affect the practical implementation of youth policy in Moldova. The three most prominent are:

- the Transnistria region;
- migration; and
- urban–rural division.

Other transversal questions and issues are also addressed, before concluding with some of the areas that previous international reviews have suggested are



important foundations for the development of youth policy: research, training and the dissemination of good practice.

The report seeks to distinguish between what has already been done in Moldova and what can be done to develop its youth policy in the future. The report highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of national youth policy in Moldova in order to help its policy makers reflect on their current practices and consider a range of recommendations that may benefit youth policy development in the country.

A note on timescale

The international report was finalised in the middle of June 2009, following feedback and comments from both the national hearing (February 2009) and the Ministry of Education and Youth (June 2009). Readers will be aware that, following its national elections, Moldova figured prominently in the international news in the early part of 2009. However, the formal review of national youth policy in Moldova was concluded prior to the end of 2008 – subject only to factual corrections and consideration of alternative perspectives from the national hearing and from the ministry – and any developments since that time are an internal matter for the authorities in Moldova and not a matter for comment by the international review team.





1. introduction to Moldova

Formerly part of Romania, Moldova was incorporated into the Soviet Union at the end of World War II. During the period of struggle between the two world ideological camps, the communist and the capitalist, Moldova was one of the 15 Soviet republics of the USSR. It was primarily an agricultural region: the majority of the population lived in villages and were employed on collective farms. However, after World War II, new industrial enterprises were created and Moldova became partly industrialised. It was a great achievement, even though the majority of the population still lived in rural areas. The second achievement of Moldova's Soviet past was the universal literacy of the Moldovan population.

After the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991, Moldova became an independent state. During its first years of independence, the Republic of Moldova did not achieve any significant positive economic progress. As a result of the military conflict in the Transnistria region, where the most developed industrial enterprises were situated, there was a high level of out-migration. The rapid reforms in the agricultural sector meant that agricultural production deteriorated, and many people lost their jobs. According to official data, the Moldovan economy returned to positive growth only in 2000. Since then it has shown a small but constant level of annual growth. However, being strongly dependent on Russian energy resources (like many other former Soviet republics), the economy of the Republic of Moldova is vulnerable and therefore needs further reform and investment. As one official explained, the Moldovan economy needs much more investment than the government can currently provide. Moldova has been ranked 111 in the Human Development Index.

Currently, the major problem for Moldova is poverty. At the beginning of the 21st century, Moldova was one of the poorest nations in Europe (according to the CIA World Factbook, almost 30% of the population lived below the poverty line). Currently, only one fifth of the Moldovan gross domestic product (GDP) accrues from agriculture, although 20 years ago the republic was primarily agricultural. Another fifth of the GDP comes from industry and the remainder from services. Moldova has close trading relations with the Russian Federation and that greatly influences its economy; the Russian financial crisis of 1998 severely affected Moldova causing, according to official data, an exodus of some 600 000 Moldovans. It is expected that the current Russian financial crisis that began

in 2008 will also negatively affect the Moldovan economy. Additionally, many migrants from Moldova (primarily men) work in Russia.

The Republic of Moldova is a parliamentary democracy with a president as head of state and a prime minister as head of government. The Constitution of Moldova (adopted in 1994) sets the framework for the government of the country. In 2001, Moldova became the first former Soviet state to democratically elect a communist, Vladimir Voronin, as its president. The Republic of Moldova is a member of the Council of Europe. As a result, the authorities are oriented to meeting European criteria in many spheres, including that of youth policy. Moldova is also a member state of the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development (ODED), also known as GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and other international organisations. Since its independence, Moldova has officially been a neutral country; it became a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace programme at an early stage. Moldova currently aspires to joining the European Union and is implementing its first three-year action plan within the framework of the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

The Constitution of Moldova declares the Moldovan language to be the sole state language. However, it is officially acknowledged that Moldovan and Romanian “use a common literary form” (National Report, p. 3). In Moldova’s declaration of independence, the state language is called Romanian. Use of the term “Moldovan language” is mainly limited to the political sphere, whereas “Romanian” is used on other occasions – in schools and in part of the media. As in all the CIS states, Russian is also widely spoken and it is the native language of 11% of the population.

Moldova is a multi-ethnic state, though one ethnic group dominates the population. The last census in 2004 indicates that more than three quarters of the population are ethnic Moldovans/Romanians (76.1%), less than 10% are ethnic Ukrainians (8.4%) and 5.8% are ethnic Russians. The remainder consists of some smaller minorities: Gagauz (4.4%), Bulgarians, Roma/Gypsy and Jewish. In order to provide equal opportunities in primary education, the government has established a department for the education of national minorities; the tasks of this department are to train teachers capable of teaching children in their native languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, and other languages).

The religious affiliation of 98% of the people of Moldova is Eastern Orthodox. This is in contrast to neighbouring Ukraine, where almost one quarter of the population indicates their non-religiosity. The religious situation in Moldova is similar to that in Romania, with its high level of religious affiliation with the Orthodox Church. This is in line with the mostly traditional national culture and lifestyle of the majority of the population, more than half of which lives in the countryside.

On a European scale, the Republic of Moldova has a relatively small population. According to the latest official statistics provided on the website of the National



Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (www.statistica.md), the total population as at 1 January 2008 was 3 572 700.

The proportion of youth in the population is rather significant. According to two tables in the National Report (p. 6), Moldova had a population of young people aged 16-30 of between 1.1 and 1.45 million as at 1 January 2008. The reason for this variation is probably the enormous and partly temporary migration, so that accurate figures for the youth population and for the total population are not available in practice (*ibid.*).⁴ Nevertheless, the website of the National Bureau of Statistics shows statistics for different age groups for 2007. Simple calculations show that the population aged between 16 and 30 was 1 029 280 – a little less than one third of the country’s population. In comparison with other parts of Europe, this is not an ageing nation, although the birth rate is not high.

It is no secret that the Republic of Moldova has an extremely serious problem with migration of the population. This problem greatly influences the situation of the younger generation: they either go abroad themselves or lose their parents who go abroad to seek employment in Italy, Portugal, Russia and other countries (see UNICEF Study Report 2006). As for the number of out-migrants, it was close to 2 million in 2006 (among them 71 000 young people under 16), while the ratio between men and women was 2:1. Only around 100 000 migrants did not have at least a high school level of education, while 600 000 migrants had a university degree, and the rest (more than a million) had completed high school or a higher level of education. Hence, migration leads to the loss of an educated stratum of the Moldovan population. Another aspect of out-migration is the huge number of abandoned children and young people left without parental care.

As estimated in the National Report, the number of young people is approximately equal to one third of the total population. With the high level of migration already mentioned,⁵ and with, according to some estimates, at least half of migrants being young people under 30, the country greatly depends on the willingness of its younger generation to “stay at home”. In order to realise this, the country has to improve the social and economic conditions for youth in the context of a general improvement in the economic situation in Moldova. Only through this will the country will be able to meet the current global challenges, complete the

4. In order to determine the number of youth more precisely we can use other sources of information. Thus, according to the United States Census Bureau, in 2005 Moldova had a population of some 4.3 million, 820 000 (19%) of whom were young people aged 15-24. According to the National Report, in 2008 the population aged between 16 and 30 comprised approximately one third of the country’s total population. This number is close to the 800 000 that was mentioned by the official representative of the Ministry of Education and Youth during the ITR’s first visit to Moldova in June 2008.

5. Official estimates suggest between a third and half a million Moldovans are, at any time, working abroad. However, it is difficult to prove any particular figure. According to some other estimates, at least 25% of the working age population work abroad; the amount of money they earn and bring home is estimated to be 30% of the country’s GDP. This means that the economy of Moldova broadly depends on the migrants’ contributions.



economic and social modernisation, establish a knowledge-based economy and create a basis for its future economic growth. These radical changes are necessary if Moldova wants to fight the high level of poverty and unemployment that the country is currently facing.

For these reasons, the idea of a “youth policy” has become the main priority for the Government of the Republic of Moldova. Within the wide scope of youth policies, the issues of youth education (both formal and non-formal) and the related issues of training and employment have become paramount under the new market conditions. These issues are directly connected with the process of a successful transformation of Moldova into a market economy and democracy. In the long-term perspective, they are also connected with the full inclusion of Moldova in the enlarged European economic space.

According to the main goals on the current Moldovan political agenda, the Republic of Moldova is orientated towards the further development of its close ties with the European Union. This political direction is viewed as a way to achieve prosperity. However, in order to move in this direction, Moldova needs to quickly develop its human resources, that is, educate its youth for the needs of the current market, provide the young people with life management skills, create new jobs at home, as well as totally reconstruct its national economy and find new sources of investment. If it does not, the proclaimed political goals may remain unrealistic and will never be implemented.

To a great extent, the realisation of state strategic goals depends on the political regime of a country and the structure of its main political institutions. Moldova meets the legal and political requirements to move in the “European direction”. Moldova is a presidential republic. The Moldovan central legislative body is the unicameral parliament, which has 101 seats; its members are elected by popular vote every four years. The president, as head of state, is elected by the parliament and in order to be elected, a candidate must win the support of three fifths of the deputies (a minimum of 61 votes). The president appoints a prime minister who functions as the head of government, and who in turn assembles a cabinet, both appointments being subject to parliamentary approval. The constitution also establishes an independent Constitutional Court, which has the power of judicial review over all acts of parliament, presidential decrees and international treaties. The Constitutional Court is composed of six judges: two are appointed by the president, two by the parliament, and the remaining two by the Higher Magistrates’ Council. The judges serve for a term of six years, during which time they are not subordinate to any other power and cannot be removed from their positions.

The Republic of Moldova has several political parties; among them are the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova (it currently holds a majority of seats in the parliament (55)), the Party Alliance Our Moldova, the Democratic Party of Moldova, the Social Liberal Party, and the Christian-Democratic People’s Party. There are also 17 independent deputies in the parliament. The next parliamentary election is scheduled for 2009.



The territory of Moldova is divided into 32 districts (rayons) with two autonomous regions (Găgăuzia and Transnistria). The status of Transnistria is, however, under dispute. Although it is de jure part of Moldova and is recognised as such by the international community, Transnistria is not de facto under the control of the central Government of Moldova. The real administration there is an unrecognised breakaway authority under the name of the Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic. The solution to this problem is one of the priorities declared by President Voronin (see wikipedia.org/wiki/Moldova).

Currently, the status of Transnistria is restricting the economic development of the region and the functioning of the youth NGOs conducting youth programmes there, as well as hindering the organisation of joint actions with NGOs from the other parts of Moldova.

Another serious problem for Moldova is unemployment. In general, it relates to the poor economic progress of Moldova in the world economy and to the country's limited financial resources. Although the unemployment rate in 2006 was only just over 7%, this is one of the major reasons for migration of the workforce, although the low level of wages is an even more important reason for the outflow of young people from Moldova. Therefore, in order to find a solution, youth policy must reflect this situation and provide young people with new opportunities in the labour market, including giving them an education that will enable them to develop the skills they need to obtain a well-paid job.

Youth policy in Moldova also has to meet the current global challenges related to the construction of civil society; young people must learn how to be active citizens and find opportunities for self-realisation in different spheres of life. The modern system of education can provide the younger generation with the high-level knowledge and skills that they need in today's world. Therefore, key areas of youth policy must include several patterns of non-formal and informal education that can help young people to prepare themselves for the uncertainties of adult life in contemporary society. It is a priority for state institutions to provide young people with the opportunities to receive proper vocational training, learn the skills needed for personal life management, and obtain the information required for active participation in society.

It is important to mention one more economic problem that makes the Moldovan situation uncertain and not sustainable. According to the statistical information available and observations made by the IRT, Moldova remains a donor-driven country. The Republic of Moldova does not have the financial means necessary in order to develop the country from within. This is true for all spheres of the Moldovan national economy and its social welfare programmes. That is why outsiders, rather than Moldovan citizens and/or the state institutions offer many of the important activities and programmes for youth. The lack of state financing creates additional problems for delivery of youth policy. However, this does not mean that the youth policy has to be dramatically curtailed: on the contrary, this situation makes it necessary to seek alternative sources of finance and to develop youth initiatives probably on a greater scale than in more economically stable and less dependent countries.

