

**JOINT SUBMISSION**  
**to the 26<sup>TH</sup> UN Human Rights Council session**  
**on the UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**  
**of the Republic of MOLDOVA**

## **Introduction**

1. This joint submission has been prepared by the:
  - Public Association of mothers with many children and women entrepreneurs of Gagauzia “Vesta”, which deals with empowering of vulnerable groups (women, teenagers, and children), motivating them to participate in the decision making process, assistance to large families, low-income people (people with disabilities, unemployed, elderly);
  - NGO European Center of Civic Initiatives "STALKER" information on and protection of economic, civil, social and cultural rights, freedoms and interests of people living in UTA Gagauzia, increasing economic and social capacities of Gagauzia population;
  - Public Association “Alliance of Women in Southern Moldova” fostering a democratic society of equal rights and opportunities for women and men by changing the stereotypes of public consciousness through awareness-raising activities and encouraging women to self-realization, creation of conducive conditions to growth of social and economic activity of women.

## **Summary**

2. This report deals with **access to education in native language for linguistic minorities**, which historically live on the territory of Republic of Moldova, **the right to preservation and development of cultural identity, access to information for ethnic minorities**,

### **Access to education in native language for linguistic minorities**

3. Republic of Moldova is a multinational country. There are several regions with the compact residence of Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Gagauz and Roma people. In spite of that, Moldova still has not organized educational process (at all levels of education - from pre-school to higher education) in the native languages for the representatives of these national minorities (Russian minority is the only exception). In some schools, there is the possibility to learn minority native languages (Ukrainian, Bulgarian and Gagauz) within the course on “native language and literature”. However, none of the Moldavan educational institutions has a program entirely in any of these languages, i.e. on native languages of these ethno-linguistic groups.

4. ATU Gagauzia does not have pre-school education institutions, where the teaching is in Gagauz, Ukrainian, Bulgarian or Moldavian languages (4,8% of ATU Gagauzia population are ethnic Moldavians). There are only experimental groups in some pre-school institutions in Comrat city, Chadyr-Lunga city and Congaz village with teaching in Gagauz and Moldovan languages.

5. None of the subjects of the curriculum (with the exception of the subject "Native language and literature") is taught in minority languages (except for Russian), curriculum and methodical literature are not developed, there are no prepared school teachers specialized in teaching in minority languages.

6. Children, whose native language is Ukrainian, have no possibility to learn in their language even in the communities mainly populated by Ukrainians. For instance in the village Ferapontievca, which is located on the territory of ATU Gagauzia.

7. Moreover, the school graduates from Ferapontievca (1-9 forms), who are planning to continue their education at the Lyceum (10-12 forms) have to choose as a subject "native language" Bulgarian or Gagauz and then have to pass an exam on this subject in order to receive Bachelor's degree. In the majority Gagauz educational institutions, ethnic Ukrainians have no possibility to learn Ukrainian language because of lack of teachers.

8. Lack of educational institutions with teaching in the native language leads to a constant psychological stress of children and develop a sense of alienation. Children are under constant stress from early ages and they feel an inferiority complex due to the fact that they do not have the opportunity to learn in their native language environment, to preserve and develop their language, culture and identity.

9. Recommendation:

- Moldovan Government and Ministry of Education to immediately revise its educational programs to provide for educational programs at all levels in minority languages (Gagauz, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Romani), according to the number of parents/children freely choosing this option.

10. The possibility to get vocational and higher education in Russian is shrinking year by year with reported discriminatory or discouragement practices while candidates are applying for education in Russian, and decreasing the number of faculties and groups with education in Russian. In many cases professors have discriminatory attitudes about the students with education in Russian. As a result the students are getting lower marks during the studies, comparing to students with education in Romanian, and therefore they are losing the possibility to receive State sponsored education (scholarships) and need to pay for their university studies on the commercial basis.

11. Recommendation:

- Moldovan Government and Ministry of Education to immediately revise its enrolment and educational programs to provide for vocational and higher education in Russian language, according to the number of children/parents freely choosing this option, to ensure equal variety of vocational and higher education in Russian comparing to the education in Romanian, to ensure enrolment and marking without discrimination.

**The right to identity, on the preservation and development of culture**

12. The national practice of registering personal names and family names distorts the phonetic system and authentic spelling/pronunciation in case of Gagauz names and surnames. The current system allows registration of names and surnames (in civil status documents, in the public databases, etc.) only in the Romanian language and in Latin script with the Romanian layout. Due to the fact that the Gagauz alphabet contains letters and sounds that do not exist in the Romanian language, such a modality of name registration often leads to mispronunciation/misspelling of the Gagauz names and surnames (Kicuk in Gagauz vs. Ciciuc in Romanian, Kürkcü – Gagauz vs. Chiurciu – Romanian, Güüllü – Gagauz vs. Ghiuliu – Romanian).

13. The same situation is with the preservation of traditional names for geographic objects in ATU Gagauzia – cities and villages (Komrat – Gagauz vs. Comrat – Romanian).

14. There are many cases when the authorities deny registration of NGOs with names in Gagauz in ATU Gagauzia. Thus, an initiative group wanted to register their NGO with the name in Gagauz language (meaning Gagauz Team). The authority denied registration of Gagauz organization name and obliged them to choose a name for the organization in state or Russian language. They were forced to change the name of their NGO. Now they activate as NGO Modern Generation (in Russian - “Современное поколение”). We consider this as a flagrant violation of the right to preserve Gagauz cultural identity, as well as freedom of association.

15. As a result of amendments introduced in 2012 into the Law on the ID Documents and the National Passport System:

(a) Names in ID cards (*bulletin de identitate*) are not officially recognized and not written any more in Russian (in Cyrillic script) and English, and

(b) Patronymic names in ID cards are not officially recognized and not written (in both Cyrillic script and Latin script in English) at all.

This is unjustifiable regress in the official recognition of names (including patronymic names) of ethnic minorities.

16. Recommendation:

- Central Moldovan authorities and Gagauzian regional and local authorities to revise without delay the normative framework and administrative practices to allow for official recognition of personal names (including patronymic names) in the national ID and other documents, geographical and organizational/institutional names in minority languages as per the choice of the relevant identity-holder(s).

17. Art. 13(2) of the national Constitution guarantees that the State is recognising and protecting the right for the preservation, development and functioning of Russian language and other languages spoken on the territory of the State. In spite of this, following the adoption of the new Educational Code in 2014 the teaching of Russian in schools with education in Romanian became optional (it has been an obligatory subject previously), which is undermining the preservation, development and functioning of Russian language as the language of interethnic communication in Moldova.

18. Recommendation:

- Central Moldovan authorities to revise without delay the Educational Code in order to reintroduce the teaching of Russian language as an obligatory subject in schools with education in Romanian.

**Access to information for ethnic minorities**

19. According to the national legislation of the Republic of Moldova, Russian language has a status of the language of interethnic communication on the whole territory of the country, and it also has a status of official language in UTA Gagauzia and Transnistrian region. In spite of this the national authorities are continuously and unjustifiably shrinking the space of the use of Russian language through the legislative amendments and introducing new practices.

20. National Broadcasting Code contains linguistic quotas and requires radio and TV broadcasters (both public and private ones) to broadcast 80% on news and analytical programmes in Romanian language with the exception for UTA Gagauzia where the requirement is 20%. This requirement is effectively preventing setting up and functioning of genuine minority radio and TV, is preventing from the development of variety of programmes in minority languages, is affecting the freedom to receive

and to impart information in the preferred languages. The use of languages needs to be promoted with different kinds of administrative, tax, technical and other incentives, but not with the restrictions.

21. Recommendation:

- Central Moldovan authorities to abolish the linguistic quotas in broadcasting, and to introduce incentives for the use of languages in broadcasting.

22. At the moment Romanian and Russian languages are mostly used in national broadcasting. There are several draft laws registered in the Parliament in 2015 in order to further revise the Broadcasting Code. If adopted, these draft laws would have the effect of banning rebroadcasting from Russia. One of the draft laws would have the effect of banning broadcasting in any languages except Romanian and Gagauzian (for the UTA Gagauzia) in Moldovan public and private radio and TV, prohibition of broadcasting of movies and documentaries dubbed and/or subtitled in Russian. This will lead to the unjustifiable limitation of freedom of expression, including freedom to receive and to impart information, especially affecting broadcasting in Russian.

23. Recommendation:

- Central Moldovan authorities to ensure there will be no restrictions rebroadcasting from other countries, including Russia, and to ensure languages spoken in Moldova, including Russian, can be further used in broadcasting without restrictions.

24. As a result of the European integration processes, public institutions started preferring the provision of information in English and decreasing the provision of information to the Moldovan public/citizens in Russian. Thus, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Health replaced their plates with the title of ministries from Russian into English. Many public institutions are superficially supporting (for example, the Government) or discontinued their support (for example, police, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Ministry of Justice) for their webpages in Russian thus decreasing access to the information important for the Moldovan public/citizens.

25. Recommendation:

- Central Moldovan authorities to ensure the plates with the names of their institutions are in Russian and preferably in other languages spoken in Moldova, as well as to ensure they fully support Russian version of their websites.

**Ratification of international instruments**

26. Moldova has not yet ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in spite of commitments made in 1995 while joining the Council of Europe.

27. Within the 1st UPR cycle Moldova has committed to ratify the Optional Protocol to UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Both Protocols are not ratified yet.

28. Recommendation:

- Central Moldovan authorities to ratify without any further delay the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Optional Protocol to UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.