
INTRODUCTION and CONTENT

1. Republic of Moldova is a country with European Union integration aspirations which continues its efforts to ensure the fulfilment and protection of fundamental human rights to all its citizens. It has an institutional structure to ensure implementation of human rights standards including Governmental bodies, Ombudsman institutions and Nondiscrimination Council. However, Moldova still fails to ensure that young people (according to the legislature a young person in Moldova is an individual from 14 to 35 years old) would be able to fully enjoy fundamental rights which belong to them, including the rights to meaningful participation. Therefore, this report will focus on the main areas which need to be improved regarding youth participation in the Republic of Moldova.

2. National statistics show that the population with habitual residence in the Republic of Moldova on 1 January 2019 comprised 2,681,700 people, of which 743,200 or 27.7% are young people aged 14 - 34 years.

3. This alternative report drafted for the 3rd cycle of UPR evaluation in Moldova is drafted by the youth lead coalition conducted by National Youth Council of Moldova under the initiative "Youth of Moldova for meaningful participation in the UPR". Youth coalition for UPR consisting of 4 youth organisations.

5. The report has the goal to present youth perspectives in promoting and advocating for youth rights in Moldova and level of youth participation in the decision-making process and the barriers met by youth in dialogue with decision makers.

6. This report has 7 main topics relating to youth rights and their meaningful participation, namely:
- I. Youth participation in the decision-making process (page 1)**
 - II. Structured dialogue between public authorities and youth organisations and perspectives for implementation of co-management structures on youth in Moldova (page 3)**
 - III. The right to vote and to be elected (page 4)**
 - IV. Inclusiveness of participation processes (page 5)**
 - V. Financing the Youth-Related Activity on the Local Level (page 6)**
 - VI. Youth organisations and challenges in promoting youth rights (page 7)**
 - VII. Recommendations from 2nd UPR cycle which currently are actual (page 9)**

1. Youth participation in the decision-making process

7. In the light of the normative acts and policies targeting youth participation that come to ensure the participation of young people, it is clear that efforts have been made towards creating an environment where adolescent participation is fully and effectively implemented. Despite the fact that the subject of youth participation has been promoted and debated, youth participation principles are not meaningfully and consistently approached in the Republic of Moldova¹.

8. Despite the widespread recognition that youth participation is a fundamental human right, there are still some strong challenges and barriers for accepting participation in Moldova, largely because of the lack of connection and partnerships between state institutions with the capacity to monitor and coordinate the development of local and national youth policies.

¹ Republic of Moldova contribution to the EU YOUTH WIKI, CHAPTER 5: PARTICIPATION <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/58896112/Moldova-YouthWiki-Chapter-5.pdf/b362021c-839a-b1c9-dc11-814d958b8ae3>

9. Thus, problems in the youth sector in Moldova may be exacerbated by the non-functioning of the Governmental Commission for Youth Policies, the failure to establish a national agency for the development of youth programmes and activities, and the lack of co-management commissions at district level. At the same time, a barrier to ensuring sustainable partnerships in the youth sector is the fact that young people and youth organizations are not members of the 'colleges' established under ministries or other state institutions connected to youth.²

10. Additionally, to these institutional gaps, young people's suggestions are not always implemented by decision-makers, for various reasons such as a lack of financial resources in the local budgets; young people are considered that they do not have the skills or the experience to participate; young people and their initiatives are treated skeptically by decision makers, disinterest and ignorance.³

11. Another problem is generated by imitation of youth participation in the decision-making processes by the authorities, hence the process of youth participation at the local level often takes the form of tokenism.

12. When it comes to e-participation, according to the Law on Transparency in the Decision-Making Process and the Law on Normative Acts, public authorities have to consult citizens, associations and concerned parties about drafts of legislative and administrative acts, and announcements regarding the organisation of a public sitting shall be placed on the official website of the public authority according to the law and promoted through an open governmental portal (www.particip.gov.md) in order to increase participation in the decision making process. However, at local level, many public authorities used to announce the initiation of a decision-making process, but without presenting a draft decision under the examination or publishing it on www.particip.gov.md, which is a barrier for efficient participation of youth, CSOs and their constituents in the decision-making process.

13. At the same time a lot of disparities have been identified in various domains through a range of thematic studies, among which the domain of participation in the process of making decisions is a vulnerable one. This kind of conclusion was identified by the Youth Index.⁴

Recommendations:

- a) Emergency approval of draft law for amending law on youth adopted by Parliament in first lecture in December 2020 and ensure its proper implementation;
- b) Ministry of Education Culture and research to ensure creation of an effective and sustainable National Agency for Programmes Development and Youth Work;
- c) Government have to review the internal regulations of the ministries of the Republic of Moldova and other state institutions connected to youth and ensure that young people and youth organizations will be represented in the board of these institutions;
- d) Ensure the implementation of the Law on transparency in the decision-making process and Law on Normative Acts (in part to the art. 22 related to e-legislation) at the local level in order to create opportunities for an efficient consultation of all stakeholders;
- e) Promoting and ensuring the participation of young people in decision-making processes at all levels, with young people suggesting initiatives and making decisions with adults, guaranteeing the use of the potential and resources of both groups on an equal footing;
- f) Developing training on youth meaningful participation programmes for civil servants and dignitaries with leadership positions working with young people;
- g) Instructing the level II representatives of the LPA on the procedures regarding the youth implication in the decision-making processes and their impact from a civic perspective;
- h) Increase youth participation in the decision-making process, taking into account their needs and proposals for improving accessibility to the participatory activities;

² National Youth Council of Moldova on the Situation of Young People in Moldova and Their Interaction with Sustainable Development Goals <https://cntm.md/resurse-de-specialitate/report-on-the-situation-of-young-people-in-moldova-and-their-interaction-with-sustainable-development-goals>

³ Survey on the participation of adolescents and young people and their vision on the National Strategy "Moldova 2030", available at <https://moldova.ureport.in/poll/991/?fbclid=IwAR1Z-cq9uz3E9IDwbWllT-Jy--BbSAbBbXvLFyWY25BneYKv10ePld66B6c>,

⁴ https://www.expert-grup.org/media/k2/attachments/Indicele_de_Tineret.pdf

- i) Conducting the information campaigns regarding the involvement of the youth in the decision-making processes, and their civic participation by the Level II LPAs. The Youth NGOs which possess the necessary experience might assist with methodological support for the authorities regarding the efficient conduct of these campaigns;
- j) The mandatory inclusion of the representatives from the regional Youth NGOs in the dialogue with the Parliament and the Government.

II. Structured dialogue between public authorities and youth organisations and perspectives for implementation of co-management structures on youth in Moldova

14. In the decision-making process, youth cannot express their views on issues of real relevance to their lives because they are involved in the consultation process just at the final stage (not at the initial stage of consultation which can serve as the main point in drafting the concept of the policy, which should be based on the real necessities of youth). At the same time, usually decision makers do not accept the recommendations of young people, invoking various reasons.

15. Regarding the meaningful participation topic, it is relevant to present the results of the U-Report survey conducted in 2018 amongst 823 young people. According to the survey results, 50% of the respondents said that the national and local authorities never take into account their opinion, while 30% of them said that the local authorities only sometimes take their opinion seriously.

16. Structured dialogue is a mechanism through which is assured involving young people in decision-making from the initial stage, in order to assure the effectiveness of the local or national youth policies and to teach active and effective participation of young people and the civil society.

17. During the period of 2019-2020, the National Youth Council of Moldova promoted on the local and national level the institutionalization of the local Commissions on co-management for youth as an essential part of the National Strategy for the Development of the Youth Sector from Moldova 2020, however it must be mentioned that the efforts have not yielded a successful outcome. In this context, we noticed a lack of political will on the central level, as well as the local level to institutionalize the efficient tools for the participation of the youth in the decision-making processes, and to assure a steady cooperation between all the competent authorities regarding the assurance of the significant participation of the youth. The institutionalization of the co-management commissions is vital in ensuring a fair balance of power between the youth structures and the local authorities in the decision-making processes.

Recommendations:

- a) Government and Ministry of Education, Culture and Research has to re-launch the activity of the Intergovernmental Commission on Youth Policy;
- b) Government and Ministry of Education, Culture and Research has to support creation of the local co-management commissions on youth participation in decision-making processes in order to coordinate sectoral interventions for young people, including youth from underrepresented groups at the local and regional level;
- c) Elaboration of a medium and long-term strategy of youth engagement in decision-making through the co-management commission;
- d) Deployment of training courses for the public authorities' representatives regarding the co-management commissions' activity and engaging young people in decision-making processes;
- e) Elaboration of a national program of structured dialogue between Public Authorities and Youth Organisations, based on the CoE and EU models.

III. The right to vote and to be elected

18. In the last local elections held in 2019 in the Republic of Moldova, the turnout of young people was 32% lower, compared to the local elections in 2015, while the number of adult voters increased by 23%. At the same time, during the parliamentary elections of 24th February 2019, at the polling stations there were 326 422 voters aged 18-25 on the electoral roll, of which 123 486 participated in the voting process. According to the age criteria, it was determined that the following participated in the voting:

- a) young people aged 18 - 25 – 8.5%
- b) 26 - 40 years – 25.69% and other categories.

19. The situation related to the Presidential elections also shown not so high results on youth participation in the elections⁵, around 50% of young people participated in the election.

20. Taking into account that the youth are active in the virtual environment, the introduction of the electronic vote would assure greater participation, since the procedure is simple and accessible. Lastly, this innovation might solve the problem of the youth/students who do not manage to vote in the region/city where they established their home.

21. At the same time, in Moldova, we can see that political parties actively engage in their electoral campaigns young people under the age of 18, and this is an alarming situation, as they do not have the rights to vote, being in impossibility to elect the candidates for whom they are doing electoral campaigns. Voting from the age of 16 might solve the reduced participation of the youth in the decision-making process, forming the habit of participating from a younger age; this initiative also contributes in creating a diligent and informed generation. For this practice to have a substantial impact is it crucial to revise the educational system, which must focus on developing a participatory culture.

22. When it comes to the youth candidates, the position of youth in election did not substantially change after state facilities for youth engagement by political parties (5% from the Central Election Commission annual budget allocated for political parties in proportion to the number of young people actually elected in the parliamentary and general local elections). If we look at the proportion of young people in the party lists registered at the February elections of 2019 youth candidates are not so many. Meanwhile, the top 15 positions on the list are not proportionally represented by young people, and some political factions do not include young people in top positions at all⁶. Following the parliamentary election in February 2019, 16 young people represented the youth sector in the Parliament. Of the 16 elected young people, only two come from rural areas, and only three are women.⁷ These figures show a very weak involvement of young people in governing bodies that has a direct impact on the quality and on the diversity of activities meant to ensure the development of the youth section.

Recommendations:

- a) Central Election Commission has to ensure the collection of statistical data on youth participation in the elections according to the Law on Youth provision, namely 18-35 years;
- b) Develop educational and awareness-raising programs on the right of youth to vote for formal and non-formal youth engagement;
- c) Encourage continuous youth participation and civic education in schools and universities;
- d) Pass a law to amend the Electoral Code by introducing the right to vote from 16 years;
- e) Conduct disaggregated data on youth participation in elections (both in the context of the right to elect or to be elected);
- f) Introduce alternative methods for voting, ex. i-Voting;
- g) Facilitate access to funds for youth-led national youth council and youth organisations in order to support their projects and mobilization initiatives at national and local level.

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/CICDE/photos/a.529147850502455/3452699508147260>

⁶ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/58896112/Moldova-YouthWiki-Chapter-5.pdf/b362021c-839a-b1c9-dc11-814d958b8ae3>

⁷ Young people in the 10th legislature of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, available at http://cntm.md/ro/news/tinerii-%C3%AEn-cea-de-x-legislatur%C4%83-parlamentului-republicii-moldova?fbclid=IwAR38zBp3A8SVry_e9NiXiq7_LgqD8ryYUBEnWTNDX5T2V0kMefBV8YCvc7w

IV. Inclusiveness of participation processes⁸

23. Regularly, youth with fewer opportunities such as youth with disabilities, Roma, etc, are not involved in the youth activities and programmes for several reasons, such as stereotypes, lack of resources to adapt events to the individual needs of youth with hearing, visual or mental disabilities and the lack of accessible infrastructure for those with limited mobility. At the same time, youth with disabilities are often excluded from participation in decision-making because the public participatory processes are not fully inclusive and the information provided in the process of consultation is not presented in an accessible format for young people with disabilities.

24. According to the *Special Report on the Ethnical Minorities Issues from 2016*, a key issue is the underrepresentation of the ethnical minorities in the state institutions on the local, as well as the central levels, where organizations and institutions are poorly adapted for ensuring the necessary special conditions, such as accessible descriptive materials adapted to the Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, and Romani-speaking youth.)

25. Due to the lack of access platforms according to the necessary standards there is a very low implication of youth with locomotor disabilities in the state institutions and the Local Youth Councils. There is also a lack of information adapted to the Braille System and/or optical correction devices and visual aid necessary for the incorporation of peoples with visual disabilities.

26. Therefore, youth organisations and related institutions must make their information accessible in accordance with WCAG and ISO standards on accessibility, which will ensure that youth with disabilities can access and understand the information provided. Moreover, since the internet tends to be less text-centric, it is crucial to ensure that youth with hearing impairment do not become excluded from full participation in online activities. Thus, it is vital to provide the text version of podcasts and the transcription of video files into text, etc. Moreover, it is necessary to adapt the infrastructure for young people with disabilities which will allow them to be directly involved in the decision-making processes and not let the participatory e-platforms serve as a way of replacing the work on providing physical infrastructure (accessibility of buildings, roads and public transport, among others).

27. If we refer to systemic social and structural barriers, some students and young people saw a link between their non-involvement and the family of origin (disorganized, with migrant leader.) part of the lack of encouragement from parents, on the other hand, in the sense of social stereotypes and their marginalization. The latter finding can also determine a behavior of self-exclusion, due to the lack of a sense of empowerment, belonging to a strong group and the support of a social network. Some of the students and young people who do not participate explain their non-involvement through the deficiencies of the institutional mechanism.

28. A controversial issue in the field of participation in general is the issue of representativeness of all social categories (age, sex, race / ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disabilities, place of residence, socio-economic status, etc.). Students and young people, like adults, are not a homogeneous group, with similar needs and interests. They are as diverse as adults and have variable access to decision-making processes, with some risks of further exclusion until adulthood, when they gain autonomy and independence.

29. Students and young people most often excluded from the decision-making processes are those with special educational needs, those with low academic success and those who are disinterested. Also, students and young people who face certain family barriers (e.g. socio-economic status, limited opportunities,

⁸ [Unequal Moldova: Analysis of the most relevant inequalities in The Republic of Moldova.](https://cntm.md/resurse-de-specialitate/unequal-moldova-analysis-of-the-most-relevant-inequalities-in-the-republic-of-moldova/)
<https://cntm.md/resurse-de-specialitate/unequal-moldova-analysis-of-the-most-relevant-inequalities-in-the-republic-of-moldova/>

absence of parents) are less likely to participate in school and local/national decision-making.

30. Representation practices are predominantly elite-based (“Priority is given to “ good ”students) and even school boards, not just local / national ones, are often composed of exceptional, talented young people with available time and social capital to invest in, in order to reach such positions. Moreover, even alternative or innovative forms of participation are less accessible to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, access to the Internet and social media is becoming problematic for students from low-income families. At the same time, dominant forms of communication and expression, such as through the Internet, exclude young people with disabilities (physical, sensory, cognitive or learning).

31. From a gender perspective, increasing the participation of boys/young people remains a challenge; they are less involved in decision-making, especially at the level of educational institutions (SACs).

32. All these lead to the outcome that the level of accessibility for the participation for different groups is reduced and for the remedial of the situation it is required the intervention with certain actions to mitigate the stated issues:

Recommendations:

a) Ensure proper accessibility for all the public institutions towards the existing national and international standards (informational and infrastructural), including for transport infrastructure, including using universal design approach in participatory processes;

b) Ensure that all the information provided by state institutions related to participation processes has been adapted to the needs of people with disabilities by providing reading/audio alternative versions of the material and also with accessible informational support for the ethnical minorities;

c) Development of a programme and logistic and methodologic support for the involvement of the youth with limited opportunities, people with disabilities and ethnical minorities in the decision-making processes through the NGOs and the Local Youth Councils (equipping the spaces with access platforms, visual aid gadgets, and ensuring them with the necessary space in case they lack it) and provide funds for youth organisation for these needs;

d) Development of manuals and technical guides for specialists working with young people with reduced opportunities in the field of participation and continuous training of them on the participation of vulnerable young people;

e) Involve children, adolescents and young people in promoting effective participation by encouraging young people to set up organizations to participate in a variety of ways, including through the media;

f) Applying mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the participation process, as well as empowering young people in monitoring developments and changes made as a result of their involvement in decision-making processes;

g) Amendment and modernization of the law regarding the access to information to ensure a balance in the relationship between access to public information and the protection of personal data;

h) Modifying and reducing the deadline for providing the requested public information.

V. Financing the Youth Activities at the Local Level

33. Financing the youth activities at the local level takes a considerable role in enabling the endeavors of the youth and the development of the youth area at the local level. This ensures a supportive environment for the development of the key-skills in the youth activity, such as leadership and community participation. Financing the youth activities at the local level is crucial. However we have encountered shortcomings. At the local level, in regions⁹ could be observed the low budgets for the youth sector, a phenomenon which is generated due to the fact that at the local level in Moldova can be observed miscommunication among youth sector and public administration, or if this communication exists, then we have the incapacity to advocate for the interest of the youth sector at the local level due the stereotypes. Since 2016, the funding of the youth sector at LPA II level has been constantly growing. Regarding funding of the youth sector at the district

⁹ Administrativ regional unity in Moldova

level, if in 2018 we had an increase of 15,740,500 lei¹⁰, or 121.5% increase compared to 2017, in 2019 we had a decrease of 3,453,200 lei or 12% compared to 2018. It is worth mentioning, however, that some rayons (regions) did not allocate or spend anything in 2018 and 2019 on youth activities at rayon level (under the programme TINERET (YOUTH))¹¹.

34. When it comes to financing the youth sector, from the evolution of youth budgeting in Moldova we can observe that the funding for the youth sector has been decreasing in the last period at national and local levels and this has a negative impact on youth participation.

35. The participation in the decision-making process is an essential component in the activities of the youth. The primary mechanism of participation is the Youth NGO and the Local Youth Council, these undertaking the task of ensuring the constructive dialogue between the youth and the authorities. In contrast with the imperative need of the lucrative Local Youth Councils, the Level II LPAs ensured resources for their consolidation only at 6,25%).

36. It is vital to mention the fact that financing the youth activity in the Republic of Moldova is uneven and poorly-ensured at the central level. The Level II LPAs, although possessing the methodologic resource, do not ensure the application of the above-mentioned mechanisms.

Recommendations:

a) Ensure proper financing for the development of the youth sector at the local level through the local budgets, regarding the insurance of the activity of the youth centers, ensuring the civic participation of the youth through the development and strengthening the youth representative structures, ensuring the quality services for the youth and the methodological and financial support of the activities and the initiatives of the youth on both the local and regional levels;

b) Ensuring the sustainability of state policies that affect the SDGs and youth by allocating sufficient financial resources for their implementation at local, district and national level, and diversifying sources of finance;

c) Developing and ensuring the access of the youth structures to the local grant programmes for the youth initiatives with the potential of locating SDGs and stimulating the youth organisations, local youth councils, and the initiative groups to participate at the programme competitions and/or youth projects;

d) Filling in the frames inside the Level I and Level II LPAs with the position of expert in youth field;

e) Ensuring the necessary infrastructure for providing the services for the youth by creating, facilitating and financing the Youth Centers everywhere in the Republic of Moldova.

VI. Aiding the NGOs in Difficulty

37. One of the key components in ensuring the achievement of the aspirations and passions of the youth in the current environment is represented by the existence of the lucrative youth organisations

38. According to the most recent mapping of the Civil Society Organisations conducted by the EU Delegation in Moldova, the official number of noncommercial organisations registered on the 18.04.2018 is 11.5622, out of which 59% of the CSOs are conducting their activity in the education, culture, and youth areas.¹² At the same time, the number of active CSOs is much smaller than the number of registered CSOs¹³, which is generated by the lack of financial means meant for achieving the objective of the organisation

¹⁰ Moldavian currency.

¹¹ National Youth Council of Moldova reports on "Evaluation of local youth budgets" <https://cntm.md/resurse-de-specialitate/ro-publication-evaluarea-cheltuielilor-destinate-sectorului-de-tineret-apl-urilor-de-nivelul-ii/> and <https://cntm.md/rapoarte/evaluarea-cheltuielilor-destinate-sectorului-de-tineret-a-apl-urilor-de-nivelul-ii/>

¹²EU ROADMAP FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA 2018 – 2020

¹³<https://cntm.md/resurse-de-specialitate/studiu-defezabilitate-privind-dezvoltarea-programului-national-cu-privire-la-sustinerea-organizatiilor-de-tineret-aflata-indificultate/>

39. The grant programmes for the youth organisations represents the most budgeted program in the youth sector. During the 2015-2018, the allotted sum for this programme consisted of 18885,4 thousand MDL, or 16% of the youth sector expenditures allocated from the National Public Budget. Even so, the annual grant programme for the youth sector has an average beneficiary number of 25-30 organisations¹⁴, out of which not all of them are for youth, but organize activities for the youth.

40. As a result, we can deduce that the youth organisations are feeble because they do not have a constant financing (core budget) of the administrative expenses from the benefactor's side. A similar conclusion can be found in the Roadmap of the EU regarding the implication with the civil society in the Republic of Moldova 2018-2020, where it is mentioned that a number of small organisations from the region, as well as in Chişinău, have a very limited to financing and capacity building programs. They rarely have access to grants, and if they do, the projects may be unsustainable. Simultaneously, such a conclusion forms after the institutional evaluation of the youth organisations done by the NYCM during the last years, which shows that the public youth associations face a number of organizational and financial problems.¹⁵ According to the 'Sustainability Index of the CSOs for Moldova' on average for the 2017-2018, the financial viability indicator of CSOs is on average 4.4 points out of 7 possible¹⁶, and for 2019 the indicator registered 4.3 points.¹⁷

Recommendations:

- a) Providing political and financial support for involving the youth organisations in the participation and representation mechanisms of the youth at all the stages of the decision-making process (development, implementation, monitoring, and feedback), as well as simultaneously respecting their autonomy and independence;
- b) Creating of a sub-programme regarding the support of the youth organisations in difficulty in the youth grant programme of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Research (MECR) based on the previous financials from the grant programme "Tineret" ("Youth");
- c) Bolstering the financial aid for the regional Youth NGOs by growing the budget of the Grant Programme for the Youth Organisations done by the MECR;
- d) Financial Aid for the youth organisations which attempt to be more inclusive and to enable the exclusion of every type socio-economic barrier for the youth participation in their activities;
- e) Organising a yearly assistance programme for the development of the organizational capacities of the Youth Organisations inside the Republic of Moldova;
- f) Training at the national level for a periodic evaluation of the youth organisations regarding their sustainability with promoting the measures of improving their activity, and with specifying the services they are offering;
- g) Modifying the legislation in order to introduce a provision regarding the creation of the sectorial lines for direct financing of the OSC Programmes.

VII. Recommendations from 2nd UPR cycle which currently are actual

1. Take concrete actions in implementing the Law and the 2020 National Strategy on Youth, especially by matching the planned measures with appropriate funding¹⁸;

¹⁴ <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/programul-de-granturi-pentru-organizatiile-de-tineret>

¹⁵ <https://cntm.md/resurse-de-specialitate/studiu-defezabilitate-privind-dezvoltarea-programului-national-cu-privire-la-sustinerea-organizatiilor-de-tineret-aflata-indificultate/>

¹⁶ <https://management.md/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Indexul-Sustenabilității-OSC-urilor-din-Moldova-2017.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Indexul-Sustenabilității-OSC-2018.pdf> / <https://management.md/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Indexul-Sustenabilității-OSC-urilor-2019.pdf>

¹⁸ A - 121.42 - Turkmenistan

2. Take concrete measures to eliminate violence against children, and to protect and support victims, including by implementing measures to ensure that such abuse is more frequently denounced and reported by different stakeholders in contact with children¹⁹;

3. Continue the dialogue and substantive cooperation with human rights non-governmental organizations, in particular those involved in protecting human rights defenders²⁰;

4. Support the work of human rights defenders and other representatives of civil society, acknowledge their contribution to the advancement of human rights in the country, thoroughly and promptly investigate threats, attacks, harassment and intimidation against human rights defenders or independent journalists, and bring their perpetrators to justice in fair trials and ensure effective remedies to the victims²¹.

¹⁹ A - 121.103 - Belgium

²⁰ A - 121.133 - Romania

²¹ A - 121.135 - Poland; A - 121.136 – Uruguay; A - 121.137 - Belgium, etc.